

Daily Meditations 9-5-2021

Abortion and Authoritarianism

Good morning.

I end the essay this morning, on authoritarianism and abortion and patriarchy, with a reference to Ralph Abraham's very important book CHAOS GAIA EROS: a chaos premier uncovers the three great streams of history. He's one of the founders of Chaos Theory and in this book he lays out a very important (I think) understanding of history that when patriarchy took over around 4500 BC, the Goddess Chaos which had been accepted as a Goddess in the pre-patriarchal centuries, she was then turned into a villain and no longer a Goddess. You had an entire shift of myths and stories so that for example, Marduk was pictured as killing and dismembering the goddess Tiamat and so forth. Ralph Abraham makes a point then that religion got on board and felt that it was there to control the Goddess and with the goddess's control of women's bodies right up to the 18th century and then science kind of said move over religion we're going to do it and science became very patriarchal and in charge of controlling the truth of women's bodies until the 1960s when chaos theory was brought back, if you will, the myth or the approbation of the Goddess called Chaos recognizing that the universe includes chaos in all of its goings-on.

All creativity includes chaos and I think this really helps to answer the question why do men feel compelled to control women, because they're trying to control the Goddess of Chaos. They're afraid of the chaos and of course, one needs a balance between chaos and order. Order and chaos. But if you check it out, fascism and authoritarianism is order in capital letters, it's not a balance it's control as a basic ideology and a basic virtue, if you will, in quotation marks. I think that (fascism and authoritarianism) is at the heart; it really helps to explain what's behind authoritarianism and the compulsion of so many to want to control women in their bodies

Now another dimension to the subject of abortion, that I think should be introduced, is how other religions approach the subject. For example, in the Jewish tradition the first 40 days of pregnancy the fetus is understood to be "mere fluid" and is considered part of the mother and there's no punishment for "feticide" in the Jewish tradition. A great need of the mother is enough for a therapeutic abortion and that need may be psychological or physical as one Rabbi puts it "women don't have abortions they want; they have abortions they need". In Islam there are diverse views but the most common is that abortion is unlawful after 120 days of gestation. 120 days a minority has that 40 day period that is built into this new law of six weeks. But also that at any time, there's a choice between saving the mother or the fetus, a mother should be saved for she has obligations to fulfill that a baby does not.

The Catholic theologian, Daniel McGuire, comes to this conclusion: those who are dogmatically opposed to all the abortions must realize that most people in most cultures, do not agree with them. He also points out the Catholic tradition has not traditionally had just one answer to the question but that there were a number of versions of the answer to that question. His ultimate conclusion is that the best way to lower the number of abortions is to promote education economic well-being and to make contraceptives available; this is the truly pro-life agenda. Criminalizing abortion is not pro-life, it is anti-woman.

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Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.