

GODS

One

1. At first, Wise Man relied on animals and plants for his food and therefore his existence. From time to time, his bigger brain caused him to be bored, and he began to create things when he was idle.
2. He drew pictures on the walls of his caves. From these pictures, we know that he had great respect for the animals he killed and ate. They were for him, the source of life. Without the great beasts, the grassland herds, he would grow hungry and starve. ^{i ii}
3. So, the tribes of Wise Man knew the value of the beasts of the land. They spoke words of respect for the beasts, and the edible plants, and the water.
4. Sometimes the food was plentiful. Other times the food was scarce.
5. And Wise Men wondered why sometimes they had food and other times they did not. They wondered why it rained sometimes and other times it did not. They wondered where the thunder came from and what it meant. And they saw the lightning and it, too, was wondrous.
6. Wise Man tried to answer his questions. He attributed the things he did not understand to beings more powerful than himself—gods.
7. Wise Man's brain helped him find ways to survive in a hostile world. His brain also demanded that he find answers to questions that he did not fully understand. And to Wise Man, these answers lay with more powerful beings, beings who were stronger and wiser than he. The answers, he thought, must lie with the gods.
8. He wondered why the gods did what they did in causing the sun to shine and the rain to fall and the thunder to boom and the lightning to crash.
9. He wondered why sometimes the Earth shook and why sometimes the mountains spewed forth smoke and fire and molten, flowing lava.
10. And Wise Man all over the world began to attribute these mysteries to the actions of gods.
11. And Wise Man said words asking the gods to help him find the herds so that his tribe could eat.
12. He said other words to ask for rain, to ask for peace beneath the ground and in the mountains.
13. To early Wise Man, there were many gods, some of them good and kind, others of them cruel and vicious.
14. And man began to believe more and more in the gods that he had created in his mind.
15. And thus were sown the seeds of enmity, the seeds of hatred among the children of men. For those who believed in *his* gods and did not believe in *our* gods were vile and crude beings and we should not consort with them.
16. As time passed, man's concept of the gods evolved, adapted, and mutated. And the gods multiplied.

17. Now, my child, who were these gods? What gods did Wise Man create? Shall we explore a few of them?
18. “Yes, Father, that would be interesting.”

Two

1. In Northern Europe, before he could write, Wise Man made little dolls, dolls that looked like very pregnant mothers with big round bellies. ⁱⁱⁱ
2. There, we presume, Wise Man was amazed that the females would grow large and round from time to time and somehow, new babies, new Wise Men, would appear from between their legs. It probably seemed a miracle to them.
3. And they worshiped the miracle of the Mother that could do this thing, creating new Wise Man life.
4. They said words to show their respect for this process, for the source of life as they knew it, for the Mothers of the family who replenished the family when the old ones died, for the Mothers who brought new life.
5. They made images of the Mother and hung them around their necks and put them in their dwellings and were mindful of the great power that Mothers had.
6. Wise Man could see the importance of the birth process, but he probably did not yet understand how the process worked, so he assigned it to a mysterious god-like thing, to a *Mother Goddess*.
7. What do you think, my child? Is your mother a goddess?
8. “I love mommy! She makes me feel safe and warm.”
9. Yes, she does, my child. Yes, she does.

ⁱ <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/ist/?next=/history/journey-oldest-cave-paintings-world-180957685/>, May 2016

ⁱⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave_painting, May 2016

ⁱⁱⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_goddess, May 2016