

Perfection's Imperfection Part 1 and Part 2

Part 1:

At the outset I want it to be very clear that this an intuitive exploration of the psychological influence of attaching a gender to the Supreme Being and its affect on female and male relationships. Specifically I am wondering about such an influence on women who have had an incident or a past history of being abused by males and in what manner this affects a future relationship with a male. Also I'm wondering how this affects the male in a relationship with such a woman. In addition, I might just be able to include women who have no such traumatic experience, but have been culturally influenced to view men as having an unfair advantage in asserting themselves.

Certainly, given all of the human cultures the Supreme Being has been perceived as either or both male and female as well in some religions there being no conception of gender at all. However, initially I am interested in such an influence for people who live in countries dominated by the Christian religions. I have the impression that the All Powerful Being is viewed as male specifically by Christians endowing the human male form, that being Jesus with the endowment of also being G-d, and G-d as The Father. This is interesting in the sense that in the New Testament, which incorporates the Jewish Bible, somehow bypasses the very essential description in Genesis that portrays male and female being created in the image of G-d. Just a quick clarification, which may help.

The English word "**man**" is **adam** in Hebrew and can have multiple meanings depending upon the context. In the following context the meaning can be expressed as mankind. It is used as a common noun, not the name of a man nor a reference to males only. Note: Perhaps it would have been clearer if the translation was "humankind."

*English Translation of Genesis 1:27 "So God created **man** (adam = mankind) in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Perhaps instead of using the word "He" it would have been more accurate to use the description, "The Lord."*

Another thought that may be a bit relevant is that in the Jewish religion there is no image of G-d as G-d for Jews is infinite and so is beyond the human ability to know. It is my understanding that in the Hebrew Bible there isn't a reference to G-d's gender.. In general, when discussing G-d Jews use the word, "HaShem" that translates into "The Name." However, it still seems to me that at least in English, that many Jews have speak of HaShem as male as the word "His" or "He" is repeatedly used in the English translation. This I believe is a cultural influence, the foundation of which comes from living in countries in which the main religion is Christianity. Given Genesis 1:27 and 1:28 there is no valid reason for the verse in any language including Hebrew to refer to G-d as a male such as in using the words, "His", or "He,"

I'm not versed in the Quran, however from my understanding, in Islam, Allah, Arabic for G-d, is also as for Jews, without name and form.

So specifically of the Three Major Western religions it is only Christianity that has directly associated the male gender to The Supreme Being. In Christianity the

Supreme Being is male in nature and this is reinforced by Jesus being attributed with both human and a Supreme nature. For Christians, G-d is The Father, One of Complete Power, often "terrible to behold," and yet Jesus, the Son of G-d is just the opposite, being humanly vulnerable and an absolute manifestation of Good, Compassion, and Love. I can't help but to wonder if women's expectations of men have somehow been influenced as the result of having been taught to see G-d as a powerful Father and G-d as Jesus being gentle.

This being the perspective that I am exploring, it seems to me that this worship of the All Powerful as a powerful father and a gentle husband has inadvertently given rise to a great deal of conflict in the relationships between many men and women. For such men and women like those in the United States, which is basically a Christian country, this male gender identification of G-d has deeply influenced American culture. This dual perception of these two perfect aspects of the male G-d, being all-powerful and yet completely compassionate may have led to the criteria for a melt down. Women influenced by the Christian perception of G-d being male seem to have a deeply rooted subconscious expectation that a competent male will somehow be able to successfully combine G-d's being Powerful and Terrible to Behold and Jesus' nature of being Vulnerable, Compassionate, Loving, Non-Judgmental and Unconditionally Accepting.

An honest question. Is there any possibility of a male succeeding in the synthesis of these qualities? I understand that for those women who have a history of being abused by a male that they feel very vulnerable in regards to men, and yet being a religious woman I can't help but to wonder how she handles being under the care of her Lord, an all-powerful male. Not only does she perceive her Lord as male, her Lord can be both terrible and compassionate. Wouldn't the dual nature of her Lord subtly influence her relationships with men in that she can never be completely secure? Given her past history of male abuse doesn't the dual nature of the male present a knowing sense of unpredictability; never knowing if the "Terrible to Behold" aspect will suddenly be present in her relationship with her mate. Kind of a Jekyll and Hyde situation. Of course she will seek assurance that her mate will reside in the compassionate aspect of manhood, but then one never can really know, can one? The woman being insecure given her acceptance of the dual nature of the All Powerful of Male, will she not in her anxiety foster an unreasonable expectation for her mate to reside in the aspect of the absolute compassionate aspect of G-d, that being Jesus Christ, for her, the perfect male. Of course there is no possibility of him really satisfying her unless she somehow works through her issue in regards to men.

This subtle unreasonable expectation of him being nearly as perfect as Jesus and with the constant underlying presence of an ongoing comparison cannot help but to undermine the inherent nature of love that brought the two individuals into the union of marriage. As a result it seems to me that at no time then is their union unconditional, nor is the love that binds the relationship together unconditional.

Should he be unable to satisfy her and still to be driven to please her, the growing conflict will likely become overwhelming. It may further influence him, due to his inability to satisfy her, to create a defensive layering of resentment. Would not the intensity of this pressure eventually need to be relieved? But how? The intensity of the woman's projected feeling of inadequacy within the relationship, coming from a source of a lack of trust, can easily drive the male to seek a sense of adequacy in a relationship

or an environment outside the marriage. Further, the intensity of the feelings of inadequacy can drive an otherwise kind and loving male into acts of frustration leading to the feared reappearance of spousal abuse. If sublimated elsewhere, such as manifesting in the form of an overbearing dominance of subordinates at work, or ruthlessness in the competitive nature of business and politics, this too then can lead to a personal deterioration that will cause their relationship to suffer. Could it even be that war may be the direct result of man's inability to sufficiently please his mate's expectation? Rape, pillage and so forth may be his subconscious acts of vengeance against the unfair feelings imposed upon him by the subtlety of her worship of the perfect male and the seeking for this inaccessible male perfection in her mate.

Yet, overall it is unfair to blame either the male or the female, for it is not a conscious choice by either of them to be caught up in this dynamic of the imposition of a male gender upon their Lord. They didn't create this imagery. They just are living within a culture that has incorporated the dominance of the male in society. This only reinforces the insecurity of the woman.

Part 2:

I've wondered should the male have had the imagery of a female deity could it possibly change all of these dynamics? This worship exists in the Catholic religion in the adoration of Jesus' mother, Mary. Mother Mary is adored if not exactly worshipped, so at least there is a perfect ideal of woman as a Mother, but then not necessarily in the role of wife and lover. This to me is confusing as even Abraham was allowed to father Isaac with Sara even in her advanced years. While I am not a Christian I deeply admire Joseph for being the human surrogate father of Jesus. I feel wonder of him he as an amazing role model for his absolute manifestation of unconditional love for his wife and her offspring. He didn't leave the relationship. He remained one hundred percent committed to parenting Jesus and that act was so exemplary of manhood. In the relationship with Mary her husband Joseph wasn't allowed to be the biological father of Jesus and nor was he allowed to be the father of any children with Mary. Even so, he was perfect in his love for Mary and Jesus and maybe that's why Jesus grew up to feel so strongly about sharing the joy of love.

So taking Mary aside, what woman can either men or women feel powerfully about as they would Jesus or G-d? Maybe the Holy Trinity of Catholic Christianity might have been better served rather than through The Father, The Son, and the Holy Ghost by the imagery of The Father, The Mother, and The Child. And if there was such a personification, I wonder about such an influence on men and women and their children and how it would manifest in their relationships today.

Say, if G-d was personified as a female would men feel that women can never satisfy them given the comparison to the G-ddess? Maybe...probably! So, ideally, neither a male nor female, or a male/female imagery would be workable because of the subtle, but overwhelmingly powerful subconscious feelings these personifications manifest in humans.

Perhaps that is the wisdom in the Jewish and Islamic religions to have no image of G-d thus preventing the outcome of the inherent drive to compare in human nature. Still, as shared above in Part 1., it is my impression from my contact with the personal

side of Jews and Muslims, that there is a perception of G-d as a male and this explains why when speaking of G-d they often refer G-d using the words, "He" and "His."

The sad reality of this is that there are no acknowledged and recognizable cultural females for Western people to accept as the person(s) closest to the ideal of woman, not only for men to adore, but also for women to emulate. What woman in this world do all Western people admire and respect for her wisdom and her fully functional nature as wife, lover, mother, and friend...also professional? Maybe Michelle Obama. I wonder what the consequences are? Still, because there is no perfect woman for Western Civilizations, women do not have an ideal to compete with as men do. That might just be truly fortunate.

It is interesting that in polytheistic religions and cultures, such as for India's Hindu citizens, there are numerous ideal women for men to adore and for women to emulate. A Hindu woman has her choice worshipping any number of female ideals and from which to pattern themselves. There are female deities that have aspects of a warrior, an artist, a mother, a lover, and a friend. There is no conflict with a woman being in a healthy relationship with a man because these female deities are wives to the male deities, and together they promote livable and culturally positive and powerful aspects of adulthood. In my experience with Hindu couples they actually view each other as a Deity to serve and honor. What a wonderful feeling.

The failure of Western cultures to provide their people with a balanced view of G-d as both male and female has given rise to a serious imbalance in imagery and this failure has in many situations results in disruptive tensions between women and men when brought together in an intimate relationship. While it is unlikely that this will change in the near future, in my way of handling the challenges of life there is a benefit in being conscious of the variables that influence my life.