

O. Jason Osai

IN HIS IMAGE AND LIKENESS: PONDERINGS OVER CREATION AND THE DIVINE ESSENCE

ABSTRACT

Artikel ini mengambil inspirasi dari teologi berbagai agama, berragam kosmogoni dan bermacam mitos. Berdasarkan itu ia mengajukan suatu tesis bahwa manusia pada dasarnya mempunyai potensi yang sama dengan Penciptanya, yang tidaklah sama dengan Tuhan yang immortal, omniscient, omnipotent dan omnipresent . Kemampuan manusia sejajar dengan Penciptanya dalam hal “Kapasitas Mental Kolektif”nya (CMC), namun berbeda dan lebih rendah dalam hal “Abilitas Mental Kolektif”nya (CMA). Perbedaan

itu analog dengan perbedaan antara seorang professor dan seorang anak sekolah yang inteligensinya secara potensial sama tinggi dengannya. Perbedaan terletak pada pendidikan dan pengalaman yang dimiliki sang professor. Lebih lanjut artikel ini mengajukan gagasan bahwa terdapat dua dunia yang parallel dunia etereal dan dunia korporeal. Yang etereal adalah realitas super-consciousness Roh Ilahi, yang juga mengontrol segala kehidupan di dunia korporeal. Tahapan evolusi dan penciptaan di dunia korporeal berjalan dibawah bimbingan dunia etereal. Artikel ini lantas menyimpulkan bahwa manusia diciptakan oleh entitas yang juga mortal, namun dibawah bimbingan Tuhan yang immortal, menuju proses penciptaan yang makin menyerupai Dia.

Key Words:

Conjectural • Experiential phenomenology • Equi-potentiality with the creator • Collective mental capacity • Collective mental ability • Disparity • Divine anatomy • Society of cells • Hierarchy of Gods

Cosmogony has been a great quest for humanity from the time when man became conscious of his being and was perplexed by his rather inclement environment and the innumerable, visible mysterious bodies in the sky. The perplexity and resultant curiosity over man's source and destination have led to this eternal search, which is propelled by the questions: "Who are we? How did we get here? How did the world come into being? What is the purpose of creation? And where do we go from here?"

Majority of creation myths holds that in the beginning everything was covered with water. This is reflected in African, Babylonian, Buddhist, Hebrew, Siberians, Oceanian and North and South American myths. (Encyclopedia Americana, 1988) If we take this common feature in creation myths, then we would naturally ask "who caused or created the water? On what did the water rest? What things were covered by the waters and who created them?" We could further ask: "did the Creator create from existing materials or did he create from nothing?" (*creatio ex nihilo*). If he created from existing materials then, like the case of the water, we would ask "what materials and again who caused or created those materials?"

Questions, questions, questions; this enterprise is an endeavor at answering these questions within the limits of the author's infinitesimal knowledge.

Patai (1988:162) takes the lead in this effort by contending that:

Creation myths offer a vast variety of views on the person of the creator; animals, humans and deities, who often procreate, rather than create, the world. A rich variety of myths recounts the creation of the constituent parts of the world, such as the sun, moon, stars, plants, animals and man. Many myths tell that man was created from the blood, sweat, spittle and the like of the creator, or that he was the creator's offspring. Some state that man came out of an egg that originated from various animals, or that he descended from the sky or ascended from under the earth. Others have men being born from the womb of mother earth or made from earth, clay or stones.

The Judeo-Christian account of creation as contained in the Bible (and extra-biblical literature) has been chosen as the pivot of this analysis for the following reasons:-

- a. Its lucidity and therefore greater yield to critical analysis,
- b. Its multi-religion relevance (to Judaism, Christianity and Islam),
- c. Christianity is said to have “become by far the world's largest religion [with] 1.9 billion adherents.” (Economist, April 3, 1999:85) According to John Stone (1993), Christianity accounts for 32.8% of world population with an annual growth rate of 2.3%, and constitutes a majority in seven out of nine 'regions' and in one hundred and forty-nine out of two hundred and thirty-seven States and Territories of the world. Again, the cross-religion element as in 2 above enhances the world population percentage ascribable to the adherents of the religions whose creed derive from the scriptures, and
- d. Apart from certain obviously Jew centric portions of the Bible, its uncanny prophetic accuracy on major milestones and issues in human history and development emphasize its spiritual authenticity.

I shall further on this effort by asserting that any discourse on the Divine essence, creation, birth, death and life after death is clearly conjectural.

Conjecture and speculation derive from an open mind in the thought process. This, in fairness, demands that hearing and some consideration be given to resultant postulates and shades of opinion. Even those that may seem foolish, absurd, preposterous and sometimes blasphemous and sacrilegious by our understanding and practice of certain religions deserve a fair hearing given the fact that no one, in our times, has ever been to the great beyond and back. The sacred books all urge man never to tire in the search for the truth. Meanwhile, the truth has proven to be very illusive. Time was when the world was believed to be flat; and that was taken as the gospel truth until Copernicus committed what was then considered a sacrilege by stating that the world was spherical. Today, humanity knows better; a product of searching. Before Jesus Christ, Plato (c428-348/347 BC) averred "we shall be better men if we inquire than if we do not." The Bible, on its part, specifically encourages man to "seek, and" it promises, "ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." (Matthew 7:7) The nineteenth century English physician and author, Sir Arthur Keith, maintains that "no creed is final, such a creed as mine must grow and change as knowledge grows and changes." Collingwood (1889-1943) also posits that "the very religious always shock the slightly religious with their blasphemous attitude towards religion and it was precisely for blasphemy that Jesus was crucified." In his exhaustive and monumental study, *The Death of a Messiah*, Rev. Father Brown, in agreement with Collingwood, asserts that: "Jesus was considered a blasphemer and seen as arrogant in making claims that belong to God alone." (Newsweek, April 4, 1994:39) From these, we can see the dynamic essence of religion, which is, unavoidably, strengthened by knowledge.

This effort draws from intuitive knowledge or perception of the Divine and subjects it to analysis through conscious rational process; it therefore presupposes the adoption of both the ascending and descending processes of gaining knowledge. Since the subject is phenomenological and we are taking an experiential approach to the study, I would venture dubbing this an effort in experiential phenomenology. I could therefore not agree more with Puligandla (1981:ix-x) that:

The view, prevalent among contemporary philosophers, that one can do philosophy in an experiential vacuum, with total disregard for factual information from empirical investigations, and will nevertheless be able to make claims about man and the world is, to say the least, absurd and self stultifying.

Invariably, this effort is an exercise and stretch of man's God-given brain, mind and imagination and is inspired by the infinity of the universe and the enormity of the capacity and potentialities of the human brain. If scientists' claim that man is yet to utilize up to ten percent of the capacity of his brain is correct, it therefore means that from the Lower Paleolithic era (more than 2.6 million years ago) through the cave man, de Elcano's circumnavigation of the earth, Kitty Hawk and the historic landing on Mare Tranquillitatis to the Pathfinder's exploits on Mars are but a streak of feats accomplished with less than ten percent of man's potentialities. *Ipsa facto*, man still has more than ninety percent of the capacity of his brain to explore and exploit.

The major thesis of this effort is that *man is of equi-potentiality with his Creator who is not same as the omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent immortal God. It posits further that, though man is basically equal to his Creator in terms of collective mental capacity (CMC), there is apparent superiority of the Creator over man. This superiority is apparent since, in essence, it is a reflection of the disparity between the Creator's and man's levels of collective mental abilities (CMA) within the CMC.* This disparity is analogous to the mental and intellectual disparity between a university professor and an equally intelligent grade school child who has not had the education and experience of the professor. Obviously, given the right guidance, environment and time, that grade school child will achieve the knowledge and status of the professor later in life. In other words, the CMC is the 'reality', which Albert Einstein (1879-1955) referred to when he said, "all our science, measured against reality, is primitive and childlike." (Clarke, 1985:17) The CMC, Einstein's 'reality,' is achievable by man within the context of eternity.

Who man's Creator is, has been, and will ever remain, a mystery until man looks inward and diligently and collectively works towards harmony within the earth community and achieves global brotherhood of man. This will be facilitated if and when man achieves a state of global relationship in which the conflicts resulting from the differences in color and creed recede into the annals of human history. Given this, man's collective receptivity will qualify the human society to make contact with and acquire more knowledge from its source.

Definitions

Globally, the terms used in reference to various religious entities are generally reflective of the culture, environment etc. of various communities. A study of the literature of world religions shows the

utilization of various names for same entities. Tanner (1973) holds that the names we impose on various religious entities are reflective of the extent of our knowledge and understanding of things around us. Since God is beyond man's comparatively infinitesimal knowledge, attributes ascribed to the divine entity are profound under-statement of Divine excellence; they (the names and attributes) are limited by the extent of man's knowledge, his standards, and environment.

Resultantly, effort has been made here to evolve a workable and, hopefully, acceptable common terminology that would attempt a clear distinction amongst the entities referred to in this analysis. Unavoidably, the terminology will borrow from the existing relevant diction though variations, where necessary, will be made for the purposes of distinction.

God

Regarding creation, Plato saw a designer God (the demiurge) who created things in imitation of existing ideas; Brumbaugh (1988:30) contends that: "Plato's God is not omnipotent." St. Augustine sensed some danger in that doctrine, which implied the existence of an absolute entity higher than God. In same vein, Tertullian could not hypothesize existence without some form of corporeality. Nwigwe (1994:11) offers that:

[Tertullian however] did not think that matter as we know it could be part of God. The consequence of course would be that God is as mutable as the material world is. Tertullian tried thereafter to avoid this by suggesting a kind of light material component different from our known matter.

Be that as it may, matter is of course matter; difference in material composition is a natural assumption given the need for the material component not only to survive but to thrive in its particular and obviously peculiar environment. The material composition of beings living in another planet would certainly differ from those of earthlings except in the very unlikely circumstance where the atmospheric and environmental contents of both planets are precisely the same. If we take the experience of Copernicus, Galileo and countless pioneer astronomers and philosophers of that epoch, who were subjected to varying degrees of punishment for holding views, which were erroneously considered blasphemous, then we would appreciate the fact that Tertullian expressed his honest belief but had to quickly water it down for self preservation purposes given the powers

and attitude of the Holy See at the time. *Enresume*, for Plato, St. Augustine and Tertullian, there is an entity higher than the Biblical God.

The position of this effort is in consonance with those of Plato, St. Augustine and Tertullian but with a slight point of departure regarding the nomenclature; it can therefore be considered cosmetic and minor. For our analysis, the name God is understood to be in reference to the Divine Spirit whose manifestation is the infinite universe and whose super-consciousness permeates all there is, including the atom. Perhaps a little cosmology would give an inkling of the enormity of the limited portion of the universe the Divine anatomy so far known to man.

Our planet, earth, with a diameter of 7,925 miles, is only one of nine known planets and other terrestrial bodies under the gravitational pull of our star, the Sun. These entities, collectively known as the solar system, occupy a space of 3.7 billion miles and orderly move with and amongst the star and other interstellar entities in our galaxy the Milky Way. Encyclopedia Americana (1988) informs that our galaxy is a collection of more than 200 billion stars and is about one billion times bigger in size than the area occupied by the Solar System. Perhaps a more effective way of driving home the point being made here is to state that this enormous entity (Solar System) is only one microscopic piece of the Milky Way galaxy, which is, in turn, just one very tiny part of the universe containing billions of galaxies.

In other words, our Solar System is one of over 200 billions of stars that make up our galaxy the Milky Way, which is in turn one of the billions of galaxies in the portion of the universe known by man for now. Scientists put the figure at 50 billion galaxies known to man while there may be about 100 billion more. Sacks (2000), offers that “we are particles of dust on the surface of infinity.” Invariably, these arguments point to how infinitesimal, bordering on insignificance, planet earth is in the universal context.

In a manner of speaking, man or humanity is part of Divine anatomy and may be so in the same vein and proportion as the cells of the human body are part of the human anatomy performing specific functions for the sustenance of the human body for the specific duration of two years and dying off thereafter creating room for another set of cells. Going by the Biblical injunction on human life span of three scores and ten years, it takes thirty-five sets of billions of cells to sustain the human body through one lifetime. Webster's (1991:158) defines cells as the “smallest structural unit of living tissue capable of functioning as an independent entity. [They are] able to carry on independently all basic life functions of reproduction,

growth etc.” It certainly requires some degree of intelligence, however minute, for the cells to 'function as an independent entity' and 'carry on all basic life functions of reproduction and growth'. About 7000 years ago, Chinese physicians visualized all the organs of the human body as being controlled and supervised by 'little men'. For the old Chinese,

All organs of the body had 'little men' [cells] looking after them...helping the passage of food down the throat, blowing wind into the lungs, stirring up all the chemicals in the liver and controlling various sphincters.” (Rampa, 1967:182)

Subsumed in the Chinese perception of the cells is that the cells are sentient having the capacity for feeling and responding to sensory stimuli. In discussing what they captioned “a society of cells,” Vander et al (1980:1-3), inform that:

Individual cells are the basic units of both the structure and the function of living things. One of the crucial unifying generalizations of biology is that certain fundamental activities are common to almost all cells and represent the minimal requirements for maintaining the integrity and life of the cell....

Irrespective of cellular differentiation during which cells undergo anatomical alteration and acquire specialized functional properties, Vander et al further that:

All cells [nerve cells, muscle cells, epithelial cells, connective tissue cells] are remarkably similar in their means of exchanging materials with their immediate environments, of obtaining energy from organic nutrients, of synthesizing complex proteins, and of duplicating themselves.

If we further on the rather intellectually exciting concept of “society of cells,” we can extrapolate that, given the 'specialized functional properties,' the liver cells, for instance, operate as a sub-group in that 'society' tending to the needs of the liver and perhaps completely oblivious of the existence of the nerve cells or other cellular sub-groups. That does not mean that connective tissue cells and others do not exist in the human anatomy, their universe of sorts. Compared to the cell life of two man-years, man's

seventy years, going by the Biblical injunction, is relative immortality or eternity. Methuselah's nine hundred and sixty-three years stay on earth would be the definite definition of the endlessness of eternity for the 'society of cells'.

Just as the “society of cells” does not possess the intellectual capacity to comprehend human anatomy, so man's mind is incapable of imagining the complexities of the concept of endlessness and infinity. The human body is certainly endless to the cells as the universe is endless to man. Von Daniken (1970), likens humanity to ants in the grand context of the universe. Tanner (1973), furthers that God is imperceptible to any created intellect hence man cannot attain to a perfect way of knowing him. The intellectual disparity between God and man may therefore be similar to the intellectual disparity that exists between man and the cells of the human anatomy. In comparison with Divine intelligence, man's intellectual capacity is therefore infinitesimal. The appellation of omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent are all attributes of the Divine God.

The Creator

A manifestation of God, the Creator is characterized by the tri-unity of:

- a. Spirit a spark of God, the Divine
- b. Soul---the essence of man, and
- c. Senses---matter

This manifestation of God has the capacity of growth through various stages of spiritual enfoldment (SU) with concomitant levels of material development (MD) within God-ordained collective mental capacity (CMC). Within the ladder of CMC, there are numerous levels (rungs) of collective mental ability (CMA); specific combinations of SU and MD determine the attainment of these levels.

It is argued here that at a certain stage of CMA within the CMC, the Creator was able to create man in His image and likeness unavoidably giving man all His attributes and potentialities. Rev. Appah, a second-generation Anglican clergy, contends that: “all that is in the original is in the image.” Encyclopedia Americana (1988) further informs that “earlier Hebrew creation myths, alluded to in Isaiah, Psalms and Job, told how the Creator fought and defeated Leviathan, Rahab and other sea monsters” to protect man. Again, the “four living creatures” of Prophet Ezekiel's initial encounter:

Had the likeness of a man...and they had the hands of a man under their wings...they...had the face of a man...and they went everyone straight forward...and the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning. (Ezekiel, 1:5-14)

In a later encounter, Ezekiel vividly chronicles that “the Lord God...put forth the form of an hand, and took me by the lock of mine head.”

Subjecting Ezekiel's account to critical analysis, Blumrich (1974:3) contends that Ezekiel's observations are amazingly accurate descriptions of spaceships whose technology, “even in its extreme aspects, lies almost within reach of [man's] capabilities of today and which is therefore only slightly advanced beyond the present state of [man's] technology. Moreover,” Blumrich furthers, “the results indicate a spaceship operated in conjunction with a mother spacecraft orbiting the earth.” Again, the biblical account of the “chariot of fire and horses of fire” that parted Elijah and his servant Elisha and took the former “up by a whirlwind into heaven” (II Kings, 2:11) grossly fall short of the ways and means of an omnipresent entity.

If we allow our God-given intellect to function for just a second and we think, an omnipresent God would certainly not need an environment degrading, fire-spiting chariot (spaceship) to move from one point to another. This would completely ridicule the whole concept and essence of omnipresence. One is inclined to argue therefore that if there was a comparatively primitive civilization on the moon and a 'Lunarite' of similar background as Ezekiel Buzi was within the vicinity of Mare Tranquillitatis on that historic day in July 1969, his observations and reactions may not have been very far from what Ezekiel recorded about 2500 years ago. Furthermore, if, today, man exhumes and reanimates Adam and Eve and his other pre-historic ancestors, they would perceive him (man) as God, given man's state of the art in all spheres of human existence. (Osai, 2002) Reflecting on the American Indians' first perception of the Caucasian, a chieftain of an Indian tribe said: “we first thought he came from the light.” Brogan (1985:56) informs that the white man's arrival in the Americas was “greeted [as] the coming of the people from heaven.” In the same vein, West Africans' general perception of the Caucasian, on first contact, was not different from the American Indian experience. Legend has it that Brass, a city on the Atlantic Seaboard of Niger Delta, acquired its name

from the Nembe word '*barasi*', which means '*pass on*' or '*go away*'. The natives, on seeing the white man, thought that he (the white man) was some sort of spirit or god and said '*barasi*' '*go away*.' Brass, being the English word closest to '*barasi*,' stuck as the name of the community till date.

The appellation "Almighty," which is applied to God in Christian religious worship, is a product of comparison. Implicitly, we are dealing with a polytheist system in which God was compared to other Gods and was adjudged mightier than the rest. Three fundamental questions arise from this: Who created the other Gods? Who conducted the comparative analysis? and what factors and variables informed the analysis?

Tri-unity of the Creator: An Analysis of Biblical Evidence.

The literature of Judeo-Christian theology cites the Creator as saying: "let us make man in our image, after our likeness...so God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Genesis, 1:26-27) The implication of the above statement is a reinforcement of Appah's earlier cited contention that "all that is in the original is in the image." Therefore, the Creator shares same spirit-soul-senses tri-unity with man albeit with possible variations and to varying degrees.

Drawing from various portions of the Bible, we shall attempt a critique of this argument, which is the essence and thesis of this effort.

Coitus, Surprise and Regrets in Eden

Reacting to the coitus between Satan and Eve in Eden, which is allegorically presented as 'shared apple', the Bible tells us that the Creator asked Adam "Where art thou?" (Genesis, 3:9) Thereafter, He asked "Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou should est not eat?" (Genesis, 3:11) Further down in the conversation, the Creator, in obvious exasperation and frustration, rhetorically asked Eve: "What is this that thou hast done?" (Genesis, 3:13) The omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient would not have asked Adam where he was; He would have of course known where Adam was and what he had done. He would not have needed an account of how Eve fell for the 'serpent' for, given His omnipresence and omniscience, He would not only have known what happened but would have known as it was happening. If we take this thought process further in retrospect, He would even have known before creation that it would happen.

Apparently, the Creator did not ordain the coitus between Satan and Eve neither did he ordain the subsequent act between Adam and Eve at least at that point in the process of creation. By the details of human anatomy, with special reference to the genitals, the Creator certainly intended coition as a process of procreation; His resentment of the act (coitus) was therefore to the premature consummation of the union. Therefore, the Creator may have reacted to the Satan-given access to the faculty of the human brain responsible for the recreational utility of coition as against the ordained procreative essence of the act. It is worthy of note that, by Satan's act, man became the only animal that copulates also for recreation. Other inmates of this animal kingdom copulate only for procreation.

Still in Eden, the Creator expressed surprise when He said: "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now lest he put forth his hand and take of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever'... Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden." (Genesis 3:22-23) Take this statement alongside the Creator's reaction in Genesis (6:5-6): "and God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it grieved him at his heart." This is an obvious expression of regrets, which is definitely beneath the Divine God. This is an attribute of the Creator, an attribute of man. Matter-of-factly, one is inclined to ask: could anything be that God did not ordain? I would offer an emphatic NO!; of the Creator? Obviously! So, it is offered that it was not God that expressed surprise in Genesis 3 and regrets in Genesis 6. That would negate HIS multi-omni essence. It is contended therefore that it was the Creator who felt and expressed surprise and regrets in Eden.

The Tree of Life

Following man's transgression in reference to the coitus at Eden, the Creator ensured that man did not have access to the Tree of Life "lest [man] put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." (Genesis, 3:22) Obviously threatened by man's exploits and in a defensive survivalist move, "...the Lord God sent [man] forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken... So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." (Genesis, 3:24)

Is the 'tree of life' not another allusion, this time, to another faculty of the human brain (same as the Creator's brain) that has the capacity of radically enhancing longevity if not some form of, or relative, immortality? The Creator's reaction, in the face of the "shared apple," implies that the Creator was certainly threatened by man's capabilities. CERTAINLY!

Surprise at Babel

The centrifugal scourge of linguistic pluralism inflicted on the human brain by the Creator at Babel has an antecedent, which presents Him in a light certainly not omnipresent:

And the Lord came down to see the city and tower, which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said 'behold, they are one people and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. (Genesis, 11:5-9)

The surprise expressed (behold!) regarding the then prevailing linguistic uniformity in humanity, and the fear or discomfort over the resultant capacity of the sons of men are reminiscent of Dr. Frankenstein's reaction to the powers of his creation the Frankenstein monster. The above account certainly creates the impression of serious concern if not fear, on the part of the Creator, over the capabilities of man.

Taken against the backdrop of the Hollywood dramatization of the scene with the Babelian king ascending the tower majestically over the dead and/or prostrating laborers and subjects, demanding and drawing his bow and arrow with such imperial air and shooting towards the sky the direction of the visible heavenly bodies and assumed direction of the abode of God, that seemed a declaration of inter-planetary war. The Creator of Genesis 3 and 6 certainly expressed surprise and fear, which, if accepted, make a great big joke of the multi-omni essence of God. Those reactions are obviously not of God.

Manifestations of the Senses

The discriminatory, jealous, temperamental, sadistically punitive and, sometimes, egotistic disposition of the Creator, as presented in numerous

portions of the Holy Book, fall short of the attributes of a Supreme Spirit. The Creator, from the scriptural accounts, displayed too many of these behavioral and attitudinal manifestations of the senses not to have some material component.

Supremacy Defied

Apart from creation in His image and likeness and all the human traits enunciated above, the Bible informs that His most trusted angel (Lucifer) rebelled and came down to earth and went into coition with Eve in the allegory of 'shared apple'. This clearly implies impaired authority; *a mon avis*, supremacy defied or challenged, ceases; at least momentarily.

The Creator's Corporeality

It was also from the Creator's kingdom that His subjects (angels), in rebellion (rebellion!?), descended to earth and took the pretty daughters of men as wives and produced giants of heroic and legendary exploits. Lucifer's exploits in Eden and those of the rebellious and randy fallen angels required certain organs of the human anatomy to have succeeded. In Genesis 6:1-2, the Bible states thus:

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

Are we contending here with a bunch of randy and polygamous 'sons of God'? That would certainly spell blasphemy; I would rather say 'sons of the Creator.' Given God's ethereality, HE does not possess the equipment to perform such sensuous acts. The Creator, his people (sons and possibly daughters) and his creation do.

A Plurality

While there may have been spirited attempts by the clergy to explain off the repeated use of the plural 'us' in the scriptures as being in reference to the Trinity, the constant reference to Lucifer, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and other angels plus the multitude of cherubim and seraphim and the

reference to 'war in heaven' imply a plurality. Again, a portion of the Lord's Prayer, as given by Jesus, says "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." (Matt. 6:10) "Will," in this regard, means commandments, which requires obedience by an entity other than the commander. So we ask: Who are those in heaven who have evolved to the point of habitually obeying God's will, which we daily pray to emulate here on earth? Is it Jesus and the Holy Spirit, who, we are told, are one with Him in the concept of Trinity, that obey Him?

The above point, possibly, to a civilizational highly advanced civilization, advanced spiritually and therefore materially. God, of man's creation, is a civilization that has developed to the point of creating in its image and likeness.

Laboratory Earth

Let us revisit Genesis (6:1-2), which, for convenience, we shall reproduce as follows:

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

"When men began to multiply" implies that at some stage, men were not multiplying; more likely, not able to multiply. That perhaps was a stage in the creation process when men were not yet able to procreate. How long this experimentation took is, unfortunately, mystified by the time-defying non-specificity of the statement 'it came to pass.' This mystery-shrouded phrase, which is abundantly used in the text of the Bible, is further compounded when seen within the context of the argument that one God-day may be equal to one thousand man-years or more. For all intents and purposes, 'it came to pass' could mean one day or millions of years a period of meticulous and painstaking scientific experimentation in someone's laboratory, which we call planet earth.

The one-on-one oversimplification of God-man relationship in a universe whose enormity and complexity man is absolutely incapable of grasping and comprehending is, to say the very least, a case of acute morbid self-admirionnarcissism.

The multi-omni God, the Divine Spirit, never created man; a lesser entity did. God-man relationship has a multiplicity of intermediaries

leading, possibly, to a hierarchy of Gods. This may be a linear hierarchy but I am inclined (inspired, if you please) to favor a pyramidal hierarchy with the Ultimate perfect reality at the apex. There are thousands if not millions of habitable and inhabited planets in the endless vastness of the universe. That man has not found one does not mean they do not exist. Jesus it was who said: "In my father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you." (John 14:2) What man's relationship with the inhabitants of these mansions is, will remain a great mystery until at some distant stage in the continuum of human development when man becomes conscious of how much of his Creator there is in him.

In Roman Catholicism, there is the belief that, after death, the soul proceeds to purgatory, which Webster's (1991:881) defines as a "place of purification...where the souls of the departed...are purified by suffering before they enter paradise." For the Catholics therefore, there is a stopover before paradise. How long the sojourn in purgatory takes is not known. How many purgatories there are is also not known though there is the obvious belief in a multiplicity of purgatories in Catholicism. Are these purgatories the mansions in our father's (Jesus', yours and mine) house?

Does the soul enter purgatory in it's the reality or does it assume some material form for the purifying suffering much as the soul enters the earth encased in a newborn baby ready for the strife (purifying suffering?) of life on earth? The soul that enters a new baby born on earth certainly comes from somewhere and certainly goes somewhere at the death of the human body, which is only the expiration of its material encasement. Is earth therefore not a type of purgatory? Contributing to this, Munitz (2000:10 & 12) holds that:

Everything that happens to a person is a just response to his own actions. If someone is killed in an earthquake, for example...it means he deserved that fate even if we don't know the reason. The punishment is purification or restoration for the soul. This belief does not however absolve the perpetrators of any crime that was involved in the process of punishment for purification; being guilty of the crime, they will certainly be punished. This draws from the theological principle of perfect justice in nature, which is a common feature of all major religions.

The obvious disposable reality of the human body emphasizes the illusion of life on earth and reinforces the words of the "Time Traveler" of Ecclesiastes. Therefore, man should critically study himself and his

environment paying attention to numerous subtle details and lessons of nature lessons and statements of nature that are found in every event that occurs on earth. Man should diligently and indiscriminately search the scriptures with his intellect switched on and conscious of the fact that “there are certain questions that religion has no answers to.” (Sacks, 2000) This exercise of the mind should be embarked upon with love, devotion and total surrender to God the Omni Potent, Omni Scient and Omni Present.

The major concern here is man's realization and consciousness of the existence of entities of creation beneath the Ultimate, the Divine essence. If polytheism is implied here, it was intended but has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the worship of wooden or man-made gods. Man is equally a creator. The cloning exploits of Richard Seed, the successful culturing of human organs by the bio-engineers at the laboratories of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and other god-like exploits of man are certainly strides on the intellectual superhighway of *creatio continua*.

In his exploration of science, bioengineering, space, and his spiritual essence, man will one day, in eternity, access the faculty of the brain responsible for immortality; he will chance in on a pristine planet and then he will, inevitably, create in his image and likeness. He will have arrived at a major milestone in his participation in the Divine essence *creatio continua*. Like his creator, he will visit his creation periodically for on-the-spot assessment of progress. And if, in the perpetually polarized and critically competitive human society, a group decides to frustrate the experiment for whatever reason, then the future primitives of man's creation may be defiled prematurely and someone (a future Moses, or was it Enoch?) will write another Genesis. “That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.” (Ecclesiastes, 1:9)

Man should break away from the dogmatism and divisiveness of organized religion and think for himself with God's guidance in a state of global brotherhood; only then, will man's collective receptivity be enhanced and he will qualify to receive more information through inspiration and illumination from God. Succinctly put, there are two parallel worlds the ethereal and the corporeal. The ethereal, which is the single super-consciousness of the Divine Spirit, controls the multiplicity of habitable and inhabited planets in the corporeal world. The imperfect stages and processes of creation, which are conducted underneath the illumination of the ethereal, are attributes of the corporeal. Man was created by a mortal

entity under the guidance of the immortal God. One day in the endlessness of time, man will achieve immortality and create in his image and likeness.

O. Jason Osai

Reference

1. Appah, S.T.K., (1998) Sermon at the inauguration of the Restoration Chapter, Rivers State College of Arts & Science, Port Harcourt.
2. Bible, The
3. Blumrich, J.F. (1974); *The Spaceships of Ezekiel* London: Trans World Publishers.
4. Brogan, H. (1985); *Long Man History of the United States of America*. London: Guild Publishing.
5. Brumbaugh, R.S. (1988); cited in *Encyclopedia Americana* (1988) Vol. 8; Danbury, CT: Grolier Incorporated.
6. Clarke, R. (1985); *Science and Technology in World Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
7. Collingwood, R.G. (1889-1943); Cited in Try on Edwards (1963); *The New Dictionary of Thought*. USA: Standard Books Company.
8. Economist, April 3, 1999.
9. Einstein, A. (1879-1955). Cited in Robin Clarke (1985:17) Op cit.
10. *Encyclopedia Americana* (1988); Vol. 8; Danbury, CT: Grolier Incorporated.
11. John Stone, P. (1993); *Operation World*. Carlisle, UK: OM Publishing
12. Keith, A. (b. 1866); Cited in Try on Edwards (1963); *The New Dictionary of Thought*. USA: Standard Books Company.
13. Koran, The
14. Macklin, J. (1971); *The Exorcism Series, Book III: Caravan of the Occult*. New York: Ace Books.
15. Munitz, J.S. (2000) "Heresy and holocaust" Time, September 18, 2000.
16. Newsweek, April 4, 1994.
17. Nisbet, R. (1982); *The Social Philosophers: Community and Conflict in Western Thought*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Incorporated.
18. Nwigwe, B.E. (1994); *Ideological Links Between Christianity and Greek Philosophy*. Port Harcourt: Hercon Press Ltd.
19. Osai, O.J. (2002); "Towards Religious Syncretism." Paper presented at the Interactive National Conference on Resource Control, Religion, Sharia and Anti-terrorism in Nigeria May 13-18, 2002 at University of Lagos, Akoka.
20. Papamie, E.B.A. (1962); *In Man*. Aba: International Press

21. Patai, R. (1988); *Encyclopedia Americana* (1988) Vol. 8.; Danbury, CT: Grolier Inc.
22. Puligandla, R. (1981); *An Encounter with Awareness*. Wheaton, Illinois: Quest Book.
23. Rampa, T.L. (1967). *Chapters of Life*; London: Trans World Publishers.
24. Sacks, J. (2000); on CNN Q&A
25. Tanner, F. (1973); *The Mystery Teachings in World Religions*. Wheaton, Illinois: The Theosophical Publishing House.
26. Vander, A.J., J. W. Sherman and D. S. Luciano (1980); *Human Physiology The Mechanisms of Body Function*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
27. Von Daniken, E. (1968); *Chariots of Gods*. New York: Bantam Books.
28. Von Daniken (1974); *In Search of Ancient Gods*. London: Trans World Publishers.
29. Webster's Dictionary (1991)
30. Wells, H.G. (1962); *A Short Story of World History*. London: Penguin Books
31. Waisbard, S. (1974); *The Mysteries of Machu Picchu*. New York: Avon Books.