

Human Genetics as Neo-Genesis Exploring the Pathway to the God in Man

O. Jason Osai | Institute of Foundation Studies
(IFS), Rivers State University of
Science and Technology
Port Harcourt, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The article embarks on a critique of man's advancement in human genetic engineering within the context of the creation process from the perspectives of the creation myths as contained in the literatures of Judeo-Christian and Islamic theologies. The author ventures into the perceptions of Hume and Plato on God and the Igbo (Nigeria) cosmogony. He argues that, through the exploits of the painstaking process of genetic engineering, man has commenced exploring the creation course of action, albeit at the rudimentary stages. The creation of man involved not the magic-

wand oversimplification contained in the allegories of Genesis; rather, it took the arduous process of scientific experimentation, embryo culturing and other advanced processes that are beyond man's contemporary level of technological and scientific know-how. This hypothesis is derived from a contemplative scrutiny of the allegories in the Biblical creation myth and the comparatively more explicit Qur'anic account vis-à-vis man's exploits in human genetic engineering. The article concludes that man has commenced exploring the pathway to the God in him and will, somewhere along the line in the endlessness of eternity, create in his image and likeness.

Key Words:

•*Genetic Engineering* •*Creation Myths* •*Genesis* •*God* •*Man*.

Introduction

The wholesomeness of the scriptures as books of life is incontrovertible. What is generally required is for man to read these good books with his God-given intellect switched on, therefore reading between the lines, asking questions and finding answers within the content of the scriptures and the context of contemporary human experience. In other words, the enterprise should be embarked upon with an intellect that is not anaesthetized by the dogmas of religion; after all, we are urged to 'seek' and promised that we 'shall find'. Switching on the God-given human intellect towards this eternal search as recommended also requires understanding the metaphoric and allegorical essence of the narratives and anecdotes in the scriptures. Given this open mind, the

cosmological, scientific, neuro-physical, human relations and mystical wholesomeness of the scriptures crystallize. It is in the light of this open mindedness and realization that this paper seeks to point out the capacities in man – capacities that confirm the palmist's assertion that “ye are gods,” (Psalm 82:6); a declaration that was, subsequently, confirmed by Jesus: “is it not written in your law [...] ye are gods.” (John, 10:34)

A scrutiny of the literature of Judeo-Christian theology with special reference to the New Testament informs that between turning water into wine and resurrection from death, Jesus performed thirty-three miracles; this adds up to a total of thirty-five miracles that include numerous cases of healing the sick, walking of the sea, sufficiently feeding thousands with only fives loafs of bread and five fishes and raising the dead. In the face of all these, Jesus rejected deification as reflected in his admonition when he was addressed as “good master.” Said he: “why callest me good? There is none good but one; that is God.” (Matt. 19:17) Taken alongside Jesus' averments that: “he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do,” (John 14:12) the reality of His rejection of deification becomes clear.” The flipside of this theoretical coin crystallizes the earlier-cited proclamation by the psalmist that: “ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most high.” (Psalm 82:6) In other words, Jesus is Son of God only in the qualitative sense and not in the quantitative since we are all children of God. Taking this argument alongside the above averment by Jesus, it means, therefore, that if we apply ourselves to the teachings of Jesus, we shall all achieve Sonhood of God in the qualitative sense, which Jesus achieved. Elaborating on the numerous diabolical diversions from the focal point of personal Christhood in every individual, Prophet (1986:11) offers that:

“The truth of everyman's being was crucified with Jesus Christ—not by the Jews, not by the Romans, but by a damnable flesh-and-blood orthodoxy that denied the inherent Godhood of the offspring of God. Look what it did! It reduced [people] to mere mortals, consigned them to Death and

Hell, sinners without recourse to the divine spark, and then sent them on their way to while away their time/space, and life/energy made worthless by a false theology that denies the inherent worth of a man by denying the God-worth in him [We are] joint heirs of the essential Godhood of the Sons of God.”

It has been offered that: Jesus came to earth not to show off the powers of God, but to show humanity the powers in man (Osai, 2007). We note that, having successfully completed his assignment in line with the requirements of God, Jesus became one with God. Regarding the humanness of Jesus prior to completing His assignment and becoming one with God, He obviously faltered by desiring to opt out of the assignment when He said: “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass over me” (Matt. 26:39) though he quickly recanted by saying: “nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou willeth.” (Matt. 26:39) Again, being deceived by the fruitless fig tree was indicative of his humanness while cursing the poor tree was, certainly, an act of indiscretion, which is nothing but everyday human act of transferred aggression. Furthermore, at the Cross of Calvary, Jesus lost focus and, virtually, confidence in God as he exclaimed: “Eli! Eli! Lama sabachthani,” which translates to; “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me.” (Matt. 27:45) However, he endured and, having completed his assignment, He declared: “It is finished,” (John, 29:30) and gave up the ghost and became one with God. It is asserted here that as it was with Jesus so it would be with everyman that follows the path of righteousness.

A further search of the Bible reveals that resurrection, which is, arguably the highest miracle wrought by Jesus, occurred six times out of which Jesus performed four, which includes his own resurrection. With the command “Tali Takumi,” Elijah raised the dead. Elisha (the servant of Elijah) also raised the son of the Shunammite (2nd Kings, 4:18-27); and even his bones raised a dead soldier buried in his (Elisha's) grave. In contemporary human society, there have been cases of men of God who have performed

numerous miracles: the blind have seen, the lame have worked, spirit of infirmity has been cast out and there have been cases of successfully raising of the dead. Legend has it that an alchemist called D.D. Lawrence resurrected after three days in the grave but was struck down by thunder before he could come out of the grave. These and much more that space does not permit inclusion here attest to the enormity of the power that God inhumed in man. They reaffirm the earlier cited averments of the Godhood of man (Ps. 82:6; John, 10:34). This biblical pronouncement is corroborated in the scriptures of Zen Buddhism in which the final precept says: "Look within, thou art Buddha." (Schade, 2006:142)

In Greek mythology, we note that in *Hercules*, Zeus is recorded as challenging his son, Hercules, as follows: "If you can prove yourself a true hero on earth your godhood would be restored." Implicit in this counsel is the fact that deification (achieving oneness with God) is a function of performance here on earth. The point remains therefore that salvation is sought for and worked for through the God-consciousness, which Buddha, Jesus, Mohamed and other evolved Sons of God said is within every individual and not through the God within Jesus or any other intercessor by means of a vicarious atonement. Jesus carried His cross and taught humanity how every individual should carry his.

Theoretical Framework

It has been posited that man is of equi-potentiality with his Creator who is not the same as the omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent immortal God. It is further posited 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 student who has not had the education and experience of the professor. Obviously, given the right education, guidance, counseling, environment and time, that grade school student will achieve the knowledge and status of the professor later in life and even more (Osai, 2006:639).

The above posit furthers that man, the manifestation of God, has the capacity of growth through various stages of spiritual unfoldment (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 of the eternal ladder of CMC (Osai, 2006:639). 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."

Basically, this thesis is in sync with Hume's contention that: "the Author of nature is somewhat similar to the mind of man, though possessed of much larger faculties, proportioned to the grandeur of the work, which He has executed." (Schick and Vaughn, 1998:357) However, a point of departure is found in the import of Hume's averment that "the Author [...] possessed of much larger faculties." It is offered here that the possession of much larger faculties is not necessarily a reflection of fundamental superiority of the Creator (Author); rather, it is a product of extended development of the CMA of the Creator (Author) over millions of years of concerted conscious advancement and, consequently, enlargement within the context and content of the CMC as against man's relative primitivity. The earlier-cited professor-grade school student analogy is illustrative of this point. This thesis is also in sync with the thoughts of Plato on God and with Igbo (Nigeria) cosmogony to which we

shall now turn.

Plato et al On 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 a similar 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 on another planet would certainly differ from those of earthlings except in the circumstance that 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 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 atoms.

God in Igbo (Nigeria) Cosmogony

In sync with the position of Plato, St. Augustine, Tertulian and other philosophers of that epoch, is Igbo cosmogony, though this contrasts with the view of Agudosi (2007:42) who claims that African traditional religion as practiced in Igboland is monotheistic. A critique of the Igbo conception of God shows that there is the name Chukwu (Chi ukwu), which, broken down, means Supreme God (Big God). Then again, there is Chineke (Chi na eke): God the creator. Implicit in this is that there is a higher (supreme) being than that which created man. In other words, the God that creates (created man and all there is on earth) is different from Chukwu (Supreme God). Why is Chineke (Creator God) not called Chi nta (small God) in obvious comparison with Chukwu (Supreme God) is because there are yet other lesser gods that serve as intermediaries between Chineke (Creator God) and man. While in agreement with the position that Chineke is God the Creator, Akaolisa (2006:18) furthers in this line of thought by offering that 'Chi' is a reference to the guardian angel, which serves every individual and which serves as an intermediary between the individual and Chineke (God the Creator). In Christianity, Catholics worship God through the intercessory propensity of the Virgin Mary while in Anglicanism and Pentecostalism it is through Jesus Christ. Here, we find elements of the polytheism of Hinduism. This concept of praying to God through the instrumentality of an intercessor is quite common in Christian worship.

Who man's Creator is, has been and will ever remain, a mystery until man looks inward and diligently and collectively works towards harmony achieves global brotherhood. 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 state of global harmony, there would be a global transformation of consciousness and man's collective receptivity will then qualify the human society to make more effective contact with and acquire more knowledge from the infinite source.

Genetics: An Overview

Ceaselessly and in positive haste, man is religiously adhering to the biblical injunction that charged him to “subdue [the earth] and have dominion [...] over every living thing that moveth upon it.” (Genesis, 1:28) While in a lot of instances, this directive has been applied in the negative sense, which results in inter-personal, international and global conflicts with colossal catastrophic consequences, it has been applied in numerous positive ways including the area of genetics and human genetic engineering, which is the rudimentary stage of exploring the pathway towards the God in man.

Genetic Engineering

The science of genetics has undergone and is still undergoing a revolution, largely because of entrepreneurial nuptials between genetic engineers and profit-driven multinational corporations. The result of this is a battery of living factories that have the capacity of producing protein on demand. The living factories are yeast or bacteria cells and other microbes

modified and harnessed to work for man. Jenkins (2003:140) offers that:

“The term genetic engineering is familiar to most people today, having been used in both emotive and trivial contexts by the media and also by science fiction writer. Genetic engineering embraces many concepts including gene manipulation, gene cloning, recombinant DNA technology, gene therapy and genetic modification. In a nutshell, genetic engineering means finding specific genes, cutting them out of chromosomes and slicing them into chromosomes of other species. After

the genes have replicated many times, the proteins made by them are harvested.”

Genetic engineering commenced with agricultural produce, especially the tomato. The first genetically engineered whole product went on the market in May 1994 when the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of the United States of America determined that a new tomato that can be shipped vine-ripened without rotting rapidly is as safe as other commercial tomatoes. Resulting from this public policy pronouncement, the Flavr Savr became the first ready-to-eat food product available to the US public that used recombinant DNA processes.

Theoretically, genetic engineering could be utilized to drastically alter people's genomes that could enable people to re-grow limbs and other organs, perhaps even extremely complex ones such as the spine. It could also be used to make people stronger, faster, smarter, or to increase the capacity of the lungs, among other things. If a gene exists in nature, it could be brought over to a human cell. In this view, there is no qualitative difference (only quantitative one) between, for instance, a genetic intervention to cure muscular dystrophy, and a genetic intervention to improve muscle function even when these muscles are functioning at or around the human average (since there is also an average muscle function for those with a particular type of dystrophy, which the treatment would improve.)

The implicit idea of 'ordering' babies by predetermining their height, comeliness and other human attributes that were hitherto the exclusive preserve of nature, point, in a definitive manner, to the capacities innate in man; capacities vested in him by the Creator who inhaled everything in Him in His creation, man; capacities that are finding expression today through human genetic engineering.

Genetics in Eden

Under this subsection, we take a look at two events that took place in Eden and subject them to critical analysis within the context of the realities of human genetic engineering as it is known today.

Surgery in Eden

The processes of causing deep sleep to come on an individual, extracting or repairing a part of the individual's internal organs and stitching up the incision are commonly known, in contemporary medical parlance, as anesthetics and surgery. Setting aside the magic-wand over-simplification of the biblical narrative of the creation myth, that was exactly what the Creator did in Eden: "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof." (Genesis, 2:21) This process was beyond the understanding of the chronicler of Genesis given the state and stage of development (or underdevelopment) in humanity of that epoch. So for him, it was a wondrous superhuman feat that only a mysterious entity, God, could achieve. Today, that process is rudimentary in medical practice.

Alien Laboratory on Earth?

From his encounter with 'the Lord' during his interstellar voyage, Enoch (the one who worked with God and was taken without being dead) narrates the painstaking and protracted process the Lord went through in creating Adam. In his account of what the Lord dictated to him, Enoch offers that the Lord created Adam from spittle, sand and other materials (Jared, 1963). However, in the case of the 'helpmeet' the Creator performed the rudimentary surgical act of taking a rib from Adam with which He 'created' Eve: "the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man." (Genesis, 2:22)

Subjected to critical analysis, the act of taking the rib from Adam is seen

from two perspectives: (1) the surgical act of extracting the rib from the ribcage of Adam; and (2) the act of taking the rib somewhere, elsewhere. Obviously, what the Creator did was take the rib off Adam, in the first perspective (through rudimentary surgery) and, in the second perspective, that act is taken alongside the phrase “brought her unto the man,” which, implicitly, indicates bringing the final product (the woman) “unto the man,” in Eden; evidently from elsewhere.

It is, therefore, contended that the Creator took the rib, which he had taken from Adam, to a laboratory that was certainly outside the immediate vicinity of Eden; and that after completing the creation of Eve, which involved the painstaking process of culturing the embryo and other processes that are beyond man's present stage of intellectual, technological and scientific development with special reference to human genetic engineering in His laboratory, the Creator eventually “brought [her] unto the man,” in Eden. Adam provided a ready source of the necessary scientific material to create Eve – through human genetics. Speculating further on the locale of the Creator's laboratory, it is offered that the laboratory may have been in an interstellar voyage vessel that was orbiting the earth or that the rib was taken to another solar system or galaxy where it was cultured and Eve was created and brought to Adam, in Eden, on Earth.

From the above, we note that the Creator completed creation on the sixth day, rested on the seventh day and, subsequently, Adam named all the animals. Seeing that Adam was lonely, the Creator decided to give him a helpmeet; then He created Eve. That the creation of Eve was an afterthought puts a serious question mark on the multi-omni essence of the Creator and reemphasizes the theoretical framework within which this academic enterprise is being undertaken. So we ask: who were the 'them' that God created on the sixth day? Adam and who? Since God created them male and female on the sixth day before creating Eve after resting on the seventh day, was Adam a hermaphrodite? Is the 'rib' another allegorical reference to one

'side' (since the rib is located on the side) of the man – the female side of hermaphrodite Adam? A tickled intellect would wonder if the phenomenon of homosexuality, which manifested in Sodom and Gomorrah and is attracting so much global attention today, is not a manifestation of the element of woman in man from Eden?

Still in Genesis (6:1-2), we are told that: "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." Subjected to critical analysis, we note that "when men began to multiply" implies that at some stage, men were not multiplying; more likely, not able to multiply. 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 by interplanetary, interstellar and intergalactic time difference. Taken within the context of the argument that one God-day may be equal to one thousand man-years or more, the phrase 'it came to pass' could mean thousands or millions of years – a period of meticulous and painstaking scientific experimentation in someone's laboratory, in which we live.

From the Qur'an, we note rather instructive statements. The holy book quotes the Creator as saying thus:

"We created man (Adam) out of an extract of clay (water and earth). Thereafter, We made him (offspring of Adam) as Nutfah (mixed drops of the male and female sexual discharge and lodged it) in a safe lodging (womb of the woman). Then We made the Nutfah into a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood), and We made the clot into a little lump of flesh then we made out of that little lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, and then We brought it forth as another creation." (Sutrah, 23:12-14)

Sketchy as the above, it lends itself to critical analysis. First, by repeatedly using the word 'We' in self-reference, the Creator clearly

correlates the assertion in the theoretical framework, which holds, *inter alia*, that “the God of man's creation (Creator) [...] is a civilization.” Whereas the Bible uses the same mode of self-reference, the Clergy of Christendom have vigorously attempted to explain away the plural essence of the Creator within the context of the Trinity. Secondly, the account of the creation the Qur'an offers a whole lot more detail of the process, which is a departure from the simplistic mystification of the Biblical account. That 'They' made man from “mixed drops of the male and female sexual discharge,” presupposes extraction of the 'discharge' from a man and a woman either through sexual intercourse or some other techno-scientific process. So: which man and woman? The commonsensical answer to this fundamental and crucial question would be two people (male and female) from amongst the Creator entity - a civilization. This assumptive answer hinges on the fact that no mention was made of the creation of Eve, the woman. However, when taken alongside the next stage in the process, which involved “lodg[ing] it in a safe lodging (womb of the woman),” then it becomes clear that the process may have taken place outside the womb. Given the metaphorical and allegorical essence of scriptural accounts, the term “safe lodging,” into which the “Nutfah made of mixed drops of the male and female sexual discharge” was lodged, might have been a womb or a scientific instrument. The reference to “male and female sexual discharge” implies the utilization of a non-sexual process in obtaining the discharge. While this may be a contradiction of the statement “lodged it in a safe lodging (womb of the woman),” we note that the phrase 'womb of a woman’ may be a human imputation in the scripture since it is put in brackets. In other words, the Creator's direct statement was “and lodged it in a safe lodging.” This “safe lodging” is, most likely, a scientific instrument with the capacity of functioning like a womb in a laboratory - an alien laboratory here on earth or in a space lab orbiting the earth.

Subsequently, 'They' made the Nutfah into "a clot, a piece of thick coagulated blood." From this, we can extrapolate that this making of the Nutfah into a clot took place after it was deposited in the "safe lodging." This leaves the obvious impression that the process did not take place in the womb. Again, the process of making "the clot into a little lump of flesh [...] and bones [...] then [...] clothed the bones with flesh" is such a superhuman scientific feat that is beyond the reach of man's present technology. Bringing it "forth as another creation" could not be in reference to the process of childbirth; rather, it involved bringing the new creation from wherever the final 'product' was finished to Eden. Having repeated the process in the creation of a helpmeet for lonely Adam, the Bible offers that Adam said: "this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Gen. 2:22-3) is instructive. Two worrisome and vital questions arise from the account in the Qur'an: (1) is the narrative an account of the creation of Eve, whose creation is not mentioned elsewhere in the holy book? and (2) is it an account of the procreation process that produced Cain - "the [first] offspring of Adam?"

Apart from the possibilities of creating people from scratch, which human genetic engineering offers, man can virtually 'order' the type of humans he desires through the abilities of the techniques employed by gene manipulations. It furthers that the possibilities are endless as speed, strength, endurance and so on can be enhanced through human genetic engineering.

Conclusion

Human genetic engineering attests to the supernatural capacities in man. It brings to mind the Creator's reaction regarding the hitherto existent linguistic uniformity in humanity in the pre-Babelian epoch; the Creator averred thus: "nothing that they propose to do will now be

impossible for them.” (Genesis, 11:5-7) The statement, which is credited to God further emphasizes the enormity of the capacity innate in man. With a more unrestrained mind, tendency is to argue that the statement implies some element of in-built omni-potency of man – the God element. In the words of the psalmist: “ye are gods.”

Irrespective of the moral issues that trail scientific exploits in the area of human genetic engineering and the global hoopla it has generated, especially in religious circles, man has taken his first definitive steps on the arduous road to creating in his image and likeness, like his Creator. The millions of habitable and inhabited planets in the endless vastness of the universe offer man an endless vista of opportunities to discover one or more that have the capacity of sustaining human life as we know it and, there, replicate what his Creator did here on earth thousands, may be millions of years ago. That man has not found one of those habitable planets does not mean they do not exist. After all, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence and it Jesus 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.

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