

Excursus on the Origin of Man

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From as far back as records exist man has believed that he was a created being. In every culture on earth, in Eastern and Western civilizations alike, man has believed in the existence of the supernatural: supernatural beings, supernatural events, supernatural realms of existence, and supernatural or divine causation. The supernatural beings have varied from belief in one God (monotheism), to belief in many gods, goddesses, and spiritual beings (polytheism), and belief that God is in all that exists (pantheism), and belief in one god over other gods (henotheism).

Monotheism in its oldest form is the belief system of Judaism, Christianity (which began as a messianic movement within Judaism), to Islam, (a hybrid of Judaism, Christianity, and Arabian polytheism). Polytheism is the religion of most nations of the ancient world, from the nations of Mesopotamia or the Middle East (Sumer, Assyria, Babylon, Persia) to the Mediterranean world (Egypt, Greece, Rome), to the religions of Oriental or Far Eastern cultures (China, Korea, India, Japan). The Eastern cultures are the primary source of polytheism, which later became known in Europe in what is called the Pagan Earth Religions, and one other continents as, the native religions of Africa, the Americas, and the Northern and Southern Polar regions, and also the western ideology of transcendentalism.

Until the eighteenth century, belief in God was virtually universal on this planet; however, with the eighteenth century philosophical movement called the Enlightenment, which began in Europe and quickly spread to America, belief in divine causation or the supernatural was rejected and replaced with belief in the laws of nature as the only absolutes, which excluded anything that was

above or beyond nature or "*supra*" (from the Latin *superus* – beyond, above, or greater than) natural.

The most influential dictum of the Enlightenment was the principle of "the absolutism of natural law," which implies the impossibility of divine causation or the supernatural. This concept was quickly embraced by much of the philosophical and scientific communities of Europe and, eventually, America. Only that which could be empirically verified was considered reality; all else was the product of subjective desire and could not be called "real" by the enlightened mind. Of course, non-empirical realities such as mind, thought, intelligence, or emotion was acknowledged as realities of subjective experience, but could not be a reality in terms of scientific verification. One can see, however, from the academic departments of the universities that this position has not been consistently followed. All such experiences could only be considered "subjective beliefs" or matters of faith, but not matters of fact. With the insights gained by "enlightenment" belief in the supernatural, whether supernatural beings (deities), events (miracles), and divine causation (creation by divine fiat) were disqualified from the realm of fact and were relegated to the realm of fiction.

With this shift in what could be accepted as reality or believable as fact came the question of the origin of human life on this planet. If man was not a created by God, then how does he account for his origin and his existence? Was he "just here" and that was all that could be empirically verified? To be consistent with the principle of empirical verification, this would be the case; however, this was unacceptable to the masses of the human race. Within the discipline of historical research, especially anthropology, this became a major quest. For those who had rejected the possibility of the supernatural, especially a Supreme Being, this became a quest to explain man's existence as a natural phenomenon. The outcome of this quest resulted in what came be called "The General Theory of Evolution." Man began his existence as a form of life called "a primate" and evolved to the phenomenon of human existence he is today.

Lest it appear from what has been said thus far that the whole of the academic community of Europe and America accepted the "no

divine causation” dictum of the Enlightenment, let me quickly say that such was not the case. In fact, only a small minority of the philosophical and scientific community, and even less of the academics of the eighteenth century were willing to throw away their belief in God and divine causation, especially as relates to the explanation for the origin and existence of man. There were those who insisted that historical research clearly showed that the hypothesis of the biological evolution of man had little if any empirical data to substantiate it and, in fact, historical research showed that man has held the concept of creation as the means accounting for his existence for as long as memory could be determined. Throughout the history of Western and Eastern Civilization man has consistently held to the belief that he was the product of divine causation divine causation.

If one approaches this issue with the presupposition that divine causation is a possibility, this data shows that when laid side by side, the accounts of man’s origin reveal that the data for the creation of man is much older and much ore believable than the data for the evolutionary hypothesis that man evolved from the primate species to his present state of existence. However, if one approaches the issue with the presupposition that there can be no such thing as divine causation, the data of the believer is rejected out of hand. It is the case, however, that evidence for the creation of man is found in the anthropological data of man as far back as can be traced reveals a consistent belief that man was a product of divine causation, man was a created being.

This data does not show a consistency in the particulars of the record of the creation of man, especially as compared to the Genesis 1-3 account, but there are significant similarities, enough to warrant the conclusion that there was an original account or tradition of the creation from which all other accounts developed. This data if found in the Primal Man research of several academic disciplines viz, anthropology, comparative religions, and classical studies, all branches of the Humanities dealing with ancient literature, history, and art going back as far as the Bronze Age (1000 BC), focusing on the Mediterranean world of classical antiquity as well as Oriental studies centering in the Far Eastern cultures. What is consistently

revealed is that every culture of man has his stories concerning his origins. No culture has ever believed that it evolved from non-human primates.

Primal Man Myths

My family heritage is Irish on my father's side and Scottish on my Mother's side. My ancestors on the Irish side can be traced back for several hundred years. Given the location in Ireland where my Irish ancestors were located, it is likely that they go back further into the history of Ireland. The stories of my ancestors are known by a large number of my kin from all around the country; especially, in the Appalachian region of Virginia and West Virginia.

The point of this personal data is that people are storytellers at heart. This was especially so in ancient times. Most cultures of the world have large amounts of data concerning who they are, where they came from, and how they came to be where they are. It is from the oral tradition of the cultures of the world that our history books have been written. Any culture having such a story as the story of Adam and Eve would surely have been told and retold as far down through the centuries as oral tradition up to the time of the universal flood and the repopulation of the earth. One would think that the story of the origins of man would have been a part of the story tradition of each of the sons of Noah; especially, if you believed that your ancestors could be traced back to such a beginning as recorded in Genesis. In all the cultures of Eastern and Western civilization oral tradition has informed each culture concerning who they are and where they came from.

Would it not be possible that those who descended from the original humans would have told the story of their origins and ancestry everywhere they went? It is a curious fact that virtually every culture of man has a similar story to that recorded in the early chapters of Genesis. One finds parallel accounts of the "primal man" account of Adam with different names, places, and particulars that are changed somewhat; usually with extreme exaggerations in keeping with their worldview. This is why there are Primal Man

stories or myths dating back as far as the earliest recorded history of man. There are several Primal Man myths that show similarities to this scenario.

The Middle Eastern Creation Traditions

The figure of Primordial Man is usually associated with the creation of the cosmos and is found in a number of religious and philosophical traditions or myths (a myth as used in these studies is "a godstory" or a story about a god or goddess, usually as relates to man). One of the oldest creation accounts found in the Middle East is Sumerian Creation Myth, dated somewhere around 2,000 to 1,800 BC. This account was found on a fragmentary clay tablet known as the "*Eridu Genesis*." According to this myth, the gods *An*, the high god of the heavens) and *Enlil* (the lord of the wind), create the Sumerians (the "black-headed people") and the animals. More detail as to the creation of man are given in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, dating somewhere around the same time. In the *Gilgamesh* account, a goddess created man out of clay at the command of the sky god *An*.

It is curious that this account also has a flood story that is very similar to that of Genesis 6-9. The nature of the deity figures of these myths leaves a great deal to be desired; they are typical of pagan deities and lay no claim to supremacy to man in judgment or moral behavior. Even though anthropologists date the records of many of these accounts earlier than the Genesis account, they cannot claim with credibility that the oral tradition is earlier. There can be little doubt that the Genesis account is more consistent with the nature of the God of philosophical theism, who has revealed himself as supreme in all aspect of his being; especially, in moral character. There are no claims that the Genesis account were written down until the time of Moses (1,400 or 1,200 BC), before that they would have been a part of the oral tradition of the patriarchal period from Adam to Abraham, who came out of Ur, today in Iraq, which was in ancient times located in the Fertile Crescent of Mesopotamia, the land of the Sumerians and Babylonians.

Closely associated with the Sumerian culture is the Babylonian culture and its mythology of creation. This account is found on a clay tablet called the *Enûma Elish*, found in Babylonia and Assyria. In this account the god *Marduk* was created by the gods to protect them from the evil ocean goddess *Tiamat*. *Marduk* destroys *Tiamat* in combat, becoming the high god, he then destroys her husband and creates human beings out of his blood to serve the gods; another account has the mother goddess *Ninhursag* creating human beings from clay for service to the gods.

A more specific account of the creation of man is found in the Babylonian Zoroasteriansim (1,400 to 1,200 BC), which supplanted the worship of *Marduk*. In Zoroasteriansim the first or primal man is *Gayomard*, who was created by *Ahura Mazda*, the creator of all that is good. *Ahura Mazda* (the wise lord) was opposed by his evil brother *Ahriman* (the evil spirit), the originator of all that is evil. He spread evil throughout the world through demons that instilled inordinate desire or lust in those he wished to change from good to evil. *Ahriman* introduced death into the world by bring death upon *Gayomard*, whose blood gave birth to the human race. Following the death of *Gayomard*, his blood saturated the earth; in forty years two human beings grew out of the earth, a man and a woman, *Mashya* and *Mashyana*, who produced children and gave birth to the greater human race.

The Upanishads, a very old body of tradition among the Hindus, describe a primal man composed of the very elements that were to become the world. This primal man is called *Prusha* who was created by the creator deity Brahma and bore similarities to the one who created him.

Mediterranean Creation Traditions

The creation accounts of Egypt have received a great deal of attention by scholars of Comparative Religions. There are several Primal Man or creation myths; the primary sources are: the Heliopolis myth, the Hermopolis myth, and the Memphis myth. They present a form of monotheism called henotheism with one

superior god above a collective of other gods and goddesses. The primary god of the earliest traditions is Aman (later called Ra or Re), who begins the creation process, which draws from several sources. Aman creates Shu, the wind, and Tefnut, the primeval waters. They come together and give birth to Nut and Geb, heaven and earth. They come together and produce Osiris, Isis, the fertility deities of Egypt, who rule over the earth as the representatives of Ra and representatives of man.

Each figure of the various myths contributes in some way to the creation of the universe, as the Egyptians understood it, as well as everything in it, including the human race. Some Egyptologists are of the mind that Osiris and Isis are the prototype of Adam and Eve of the Hebrew tradition. They have a sibling, Set, who appears in some artwork as a serpent, who murders Osiris. Osiris body is distributed throughout the land of Egypt, but Isis his sister/wife receives all the parts and calls upon Re to give Osiris back to her. He grants her request but Osiris but divide his time between earth and the underworld. Death then changes everything as in most of the other myths.

These creation accounts of humanity are all diverse and conflicting, but they have some of the motifs found in the Genesis account. In one myth a different creator, Atum, is formed out of land that emerges out of primeval waters and gives birth to a life-force called Sho (in another myth he is Shu, the wind), by the blowing out of his nostrils. According to another Egyptian myth, *Knoumou*, the father of the gods, molded the earliest men out of clay on a potter's wheel. In another myth the ram-headed god *Khnum* made people from clay in the waters of the Nile.

In Greek mythology, Prometheus forms the human race from clay and teaches them the skills of survival, including giving them fire. Zeus tied to destroy these creatures of mud (called "mud people") but Prometheus managed to save them from Zeus. The creation of the first woman is interesting. Pandora was fashioned by Hephaestus out of clay and brought to life by the four winds and all the goddesses of Olympus assembled to adorn her. She was the first

of a deadly race of females (here women are depicted as deadly to men), who lived among mortal men and served as wives, lovers or helpmates to wealthy men, but women were a thorn in the side husbands of poverty. Pandora is known for the jar she carried from which she released evils, pain, and diseases that brought death to man. Scholars of Comparative Religions see her as the precursor of Eve, who the Jewish rabbis portrayed as the cause of Adam's sin, and the cause of suffering and death on the earth. Plutarch writes of a primal man myth that tells of the existence of a *macroanthropos*, a "colossal man," who appears to be one with the universe, but when he dies the human race emerged out of the earth, his body parts serving as the pattern for the human race. Here scholars see the origin of man's creation in the image of God in Genesis.

Among the ancient Romans, man was called *Homo*, because he was supposedly made from *Humus* - earth. Their creation myths are borrowed from Greek mythology, some similar to the Genesis account from which traditional Judaism, Christianity and Islam drew their traditions concerning the origin of man. Aside from the traditional biblical view of the creation of man, there developed within later Judaism an account of the origin of man (later developed in *Kabbalah*) who was a primal figure called, *Adam Kadmon* ("primal man"), a magnificent being with godlike characteristics.

Oriental Creation Traditions

There exists in the Chinese tradition an ancient myth of the universe coming out of chaos and forming itself into an egg, out of the egg came a cosmic being called *Pangu*, who set in order the universal principles of Yin and Yang, the negative and positive forces of the universe. *Pangu* lived for 18,000 years and died; out of his body the earth was formed by the goddess *Nugua*, who used the mud of a bed of water to form the shape of humans.

There are several motifs in common in many of these creation myths. In all man is created by a deity figure. In most man is made from mud, clay, or comes out of the earth. In most, man was created to served the gods. They are usually caretakers of some special

garden or portion of the earth. In several the wind (breath) is associated with giving them life. There is almost always an adversarial entity who attempts to destroy the humans. In some myths a serpent or dragon is a part of the story. Death is a part of most myths, which is introduced into the world by an evil force or entity, often by the adversarial being who wishes to destroy man.

Many Comparative Religion scholars argue that the Hebrews were too obscure a nation for their creation story to have influenced the other traditions of the ancient world, but this is missing the point; it is not that all these traditions came from the Genesis tradition, but all of these traditions came from a more ancient source, from which the Hebrew drew as well. The motifs these traditions share do argue for an ancient story to which all others accounts can be traced. It is true that all the available traditions have some motif in common. If one assumes the Genesis account as the prototype, we tend to see many of the motifs and much of the symbolism and terminology traceable to the Genesis tradition. But, to use the earliest date of the writing of Genesis, it only goes back twelve to fourteen centuries before Christ. The artifacts discovered containing the creation or primal man myths of many of these other cultures are older than the Genesis account. It is more likely that the Genesis account itself has come from an ancient oral tradition, which was a part of the storytelling genre that develop from lower to more advanced stages through the centuries. It was that oral tradition that appears in Genesis 1-3.

In all of this it must be acknowledged that it cannot be determined as an empirically established historical fact that any given creation tradition was the prototype of the others. The best we can do is own our presuppositions and acknowledge that our conclusions are based on them. We see something others do not see or refuse to see, and that is because of the presuppositions that govern the thinking of everyone involved. This is what everyone is doing. The tradition we accept as true is the one that is more believable to us. If one believes there is divine causation underlying our existence, then it is more likely that the conclusions drawn from the data will be that the Genesis account is more believable than any

other. If one is convinced that there is no divine causation in the universe, then the Genesis account will not be believable because of the presence of divine causation in the account. The issue of honesty in all of this is very important, and honesty demands that we own our presuppositions and acknowledge that they do color our judgment and influence our conclusions.

A large amount of material is available on this subject in the academic study of ancient mythology, anthropology, and comparative religions. There are a number of books in print on the mythology of the origins of man (some out of print which can be located on the internet by searching for “used and out of print books”). Some are based on presuppositions that are the creations of the author of the book or the ideology with which he or she is identified (e.g. Enlightenment philosophy, secular humanism, etc.). There are some that are useful and informative as introductions to the study. Following is a short list of books that may provide the reader with useful data on primal man mythologies: Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 26, 1994; Joan O’Brien and Wilfred Major, *In the Beginning: Creation Myths from Ancient Mesopotamia, Israel and Greece*, Scholars Press, 1982; Stephen Mitchell, *Gilgamesh, A New English Version*, Free Press, 2004; G. S. Kirk, *Myth, Its Meaning & Function in Ancient & Other Cultures*, Cambridge University Press, 1970; Karen Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, Canongate 2005; Mark P.O. Morod and Robert J. Lenardon, *Classical Mythology*, 8th ed., Oxford University Press.

The Origin of Man in Secular Humanism

The account of the origins of man as an evolved primate has been the major agenda of the renowned mythologists Joseph Campbell; perhaps, one of the best-known spokesmen of this view as represented in his books and media presentations. Campbell is convinced that human life is the product of evolutionary development rather than having been created by a divine being. In the conclusion of his book, *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology*, Campbell writes,

No one of adult mind today would turn to the Book of Genesis to learn of the origins of the earth, the plants, the beasts, and man. There was no flood, no tower of Babel, no first couple in paradise, and between the first known appearances of men on earth and the first building of cities, not one generation (Adam to Cain) but a good two million must have come into the world and passed along. Today we turn to science for our imagery of the past and of the structure of the world, and what the spinning demons of the atom and the galaxies of the telescope's eye reveal is a wonder that makes the babel of the Bible seem a toyland dream of the dear childhood of our brain (p 520).

Campbell is clearly working out of the presupposition that there is no such thing as divine causation, or divine anything except in the myths and fantasies of man. He presents the origin of man as a process of evolutionary development through which a non-human primate evolved over millions of years into a biped ape-like being called *Homo Habilis* (the tool maker), who wandered the earth somewhere around five million years ago, then evolved into *homo erectus* (*Pithecanthropus* or Java man) around 500,000 BC, then into *Homo Sapiens Neanderthalensis* around 200,000 BC.

Around 60,000 BC his brain developed to a size of 1,600 cubic centimeters, at which time he became *Cro-Magnon Homo Sapiens*, who, according to Campbell, began to show signs of becoming a ritual animal through the burial of their dead, and behaviors that took the form of worship of the animals they killed for food believing that the rituals they observed would cause the spirit released from the animal killed to return again in the form of another animal to offer itself to man for food. This ritual activity, according to Campbell, marks the beginning of man's identity as a religious being as well as the beginnings as a maker of myths.

There is no unimpeachable data or evidence in this scenario of man's origin. There are no ancient records, oral or written, that can verify this presentation of the origins of man. All cultures, without exception, know only of man as he is known today; i.e. as an intelligent being with language and social skills by which he lives in

community with other human beings.

The underlying presupposition of Joseph Campbell, as mentioned above, is that the enlightenment conjecture of no divine causation allows for more credibility to be placed in his unsubstantiated conjecture than the cultural traditions of ancient man as we have them. To Campbell and others of his mind-set, the human being called "man" has evolved over millions of years through myriad stages of existence as a non-human being into the intellectual human being he is today. Those who believe this scenario to be true do so on the basis of pure conjecture, creative imagination, and quantum leaps of faith than the most fundamentalist religious practitioner of our culture. All "faith based" views are considered unworthy of acceptance by the rational inquirer. Seemingly, the acceptance of the enlightenment dogma of no divine causation makes such a view as is presented in the General Theory of Evolution plausible, simply because it is not based on divine or supernatural causation. So-called "data" having no scientific credibility, bones and paintings on cave walls, is acceptable purely because it has no supernatural presuppositions.

In 1976, philosophy professor at Harding Graduate School of Religion, Dr. Thomas B. Warren, debated the renowned atheist Anthony G. N. Flew of Reading University on the existence of God. Dr. Warren asked Dr. Flew to explain which was more scientifically credible as to how the first human baby was born: a non-human mother gave birth to a human baby or a non-human female became human during her lifetime and gave birth to a human baby. Dr. Flew's response was, "If you will grant me the General Theory of Evolution, I can answer this question." Dr. Warren's response was, "This is the very point to be proved by you, that there is credibility to the General Theory of Evolution, which is the essential presupposition of your atheistic position." A non-human female cannot become human during her lifetime nor can a non-human female give birth to a human offspring.

Neither of these options is possible given the biological realities of natural law. Dr. Flew was at a loss to argue his case unless granted

the General Theory of Evolution. The point is, without granting the credibility of his presupposition of the General Theory of Evolution, he couldn't justify his conclusion concerning the origin of man. Dr. Flew could not answer a question that could be answered easily by a high school biology student. Only a human female can give birth to a human offspring. Either the first human baby was given birth by a non-human mother or its mother became human during her lifetime. Science will not acknowledge either of these options as possibilities. Such a thing cannot happen according to natural law.

Joseph Campbell and others may freely affirm as true what they choose, but they may not legitimately call what they conjecture anything more than their "beliefs" or "conjectures," which have little to offer man that is of any value to him as a moral or social being. This is a curious, if not ludicrous, position for one that places so much value in scientific methodology to assume.

Those holding similar views to those of Campbell do not like to be told that they have no credible evidence warranting their conclusions, but the fact is, they do not. They are convinced that they do, but they cannot produce the evidence warranting their conclusion to the satisfaction of those who do not accept their enlightenment presupposition that there is no divine causation. (cf. Joseph Campbell, *Transformations of Myth Through Time*; *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology*; *Hero with a Thousand Faces*; and *The Power of Myth*).

The Animalistic Behavior of Man

Job raises the question, "What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention?" (Job 7:17). Why should the question of Socrates, "Know thyself" be of interest to man if he is nothing more than a species of animal and the only difference between him and other animals is that he has a more developed intellect and better use of his hands? The Genesis account tells us that every beast of the field, sky, and waters was created before man. The animals came first, but what is the significance of this? If man is no more than an animal then the order of man's creation give him no

priority over the other beasts of creation; if, however, man is distinguished from the animal, then his creation as the last creative act of God is the culminating act of creation. The Genesis interpretation is that man was the culminating act of creation as a being created in the image of God.

The Human Animal

If the argument that man is a species of animal, then is there any difference between a man and an animal. Is there a real distinction between an animal and a person? If so, what is the difference and how is that determined? What are the expectations of an animal's behavior and the behavior of a human being or person? What is the basis for our expectation? Do we have data or proof for what these distinctions are or do we just say that there is a difference and go on as though it were a fact?

Why has it been so easy for some to think of man as an evolved animal? Judged by man's behavior through the centuries, should we have more reason to think of man as an animal than a being created in the image of God? Darwin's conjectures appear to have been easy to believe when considered in view of man's behavior through the centuries. His life on this planet has been a continuing history of predatory behavior, men intent on the assault of others, taking from others what they desire to claim as their own, using violence to force others to do their will, all of this seems to be an established form of human behavior. In fact, it is so prevalent it could be called normal behavior for both animals and human beings alike. It would be difficult to say whether this behavior is more animalistic than human in terms of prevalence.

Behavior as a Criterion of Species

Within the animal kingdom the assault of one animal on another animal is normative behavior, the killing of one animal by another animal is normative behavior, the taking of what one animal possesses by an animal of greater advantage is normative behavior, aggressive sexual behavior with multiple sexual partners is normative animalistic behavior. There are no attempts of an animal

to deny or to excuse itself for any of these behaviors. There does not appear to be any sense of remorse or guilt for any of these behaviors. If we ask whether this description of normative animalistic behavior is unique or exclusive to animals, the answer is obvious; all of these behaviors are as common to human behavior as to those of animals.

So, is there any real difference between men and animals in terms of behavior? Some would say that the only difference is that man does not approve of them; in the language of behaviorist, they are “undesirable behaviors.” In terms of moral philosophy they would be immoral or unethical behaviors. In most world religions such behaviors are considered contrary to the will of a Divine Being (e.g. Judaism, Christianity, Islam), or inconsistent with some higher universal principle (e.g. Hinduism, Buddhism); many minor religions would hold similar views. In the social sciences the question of acceptable or unacceptable behavior is a matter of pragmatism or utilitarianism (i.e. what is in the best interest of the greater number of mankind), and the distinction between man and animal is man’s intellectual ability to determine that some behaviors are better than other behaviors in terms of reason, responsibility, and accountability. Emmanuel Kant’s Categorical Imperative is, possibly, the most representative of secular humanism’s way of determining what behaviors are acceptable or unacceptable, *“All truly moral behaviors must apply to all persons without exception.”* In simple terms, *“If it is right for me to do it, it would be right for everyone to do it; if it would be wrong if everyone did it, it would be wrong for me to do it.”*

If it were said that any person’s behavior is characteristic of what human behavior should be, what would the characteristics of that behavior be? Likewise, if it were said that a given behavior is characteristic of that of an animal, what would the characteristics of that behavior be? The behavior of an animal is not that difficult to identify, especially a predatory animal. Giving an answer to the first question is not as easy. Why is that? Perhaps, there is too much ambiguity concerning what may be called the characteristics of a human being. But, if the second question concerned the characteristics of a being created in the image of God, would such characteristics be easier to define? Without question, the answer would be “yes.”

The point is that without the moral character of God to serve as a criterion for acceptable human behavior the distinction between the behavior of an animal and that of a man is impossible to determine. There are behaviors that are considered acceptable and those that are unacceptable in given cultures, but no absolute determination can be made. All behaviors become subjective in terms of one's personal opinion of what should or should not be done in terms of behavior. Does a given behavior have to be predatory before it can be differentiated from acceptable behavior?

The Predatory Animal

It is a fact that many men behave as predators in their dealings with their others. In fact, it could be said that in many cultures all persons are viewed as either predator or prey. With the species of predatory animals there are no rules of acceptable behavior; animals have no morals. No behavior is moral or immoral to an animal. They have no prohibitions against assaulting another, murdering another, taking from another, or behaving in such a way as to feed their personal gain or pleasure. Men have rules with reference to acceptable behaviors for animals; dog-fighting events are illegal for human beings, but animals have no standards; all behavior is instinctive and random. A male animal may sexually assault a female animal without being held accountable; however, a man who sexually assaults or rapes a woman is held accountable? Why? Because the behavior of a man and that of an animal are viewed differently, as are the consequences of that behavior. The behavior of an animal, whether cattle, sheep, dogs, cats, beasts of prey of land, sea, and air is differentiated from that of a person, male or female. If man is only a higher order of animal, then why does society consider man's behavior differently from that of an animal?

Grounds for Disbelief?

The religious person should not be amazed at the claims of the scientific agnostic or atheist that man is nothing more than an animal. After all, the scientists' agenda is that of critical inquiry; they are to go about their business of researching the data and drawing the conclusions warranted by evidence. A person being told that man is

a being created in the image of God while his behavior is more like that of a predatory animal, finds it hard to believe that he is more than his behavior would indicate.

On the face of it, man has a lot of difficulty accepting such a claim as that found in Gen 2:7, given the history of his behavior over the centuries. The story of man as far back as his story can be traced portrays him as having more in common with the life-forms created before him than the life-form created after him. He kills, assaults, steals or takes from those weaker than him; his appetites are virtually indistinguishable from those of an animal. The instinct of self-preservation or “survival of the fittest” is as demonstrable in some men as it is in the most predatory animal of the jungle.

The Apostle Paul’s list of the behaviors of man in Rom 1:18-32 and Gal 5:19-21, say nothing commendable about the humanity of man. There are several views held as to how beings on this planet should be distinguished from one another. In the secular and scientific segments of society the difference is that there are those who are predatory and self-seeking and there are those who are the prey of the predator.

Those who would come closest to the human being identified in Gen 1:26-27 and 2:7, are people who have to struggle to stay that way. When man was placed in Eden, he was distinct from the other created beings of the Garden. In 1 Cor 15:39, Paul says that there is a difference between human bodies and those of the field, the sea, and the sky, but the flesh of man is not the only difference? That difference is that man was created in the image of God.

Conclusion

The question that confronts here is this: “If man is created in the image of God, why doesn’t he act like it?” If man is truly a being created in the image of God, why is it not evident in his behavior? Most likely, it’s because he doesn’t believe that he is a being created in the image of God. Those who profess most devoutly that they believe Gen 1:26-27 and 2:7, have a difficult time explaining why the greater part of humanity throughout history have behaved more like animals than beings created in the image of God. Perhaps, this is

why Jesus of Nazareth was here. Not only was he the promised Messiah and the Savior of the world, he was here as an offspring of Adam (a son of man), he was the very image of God and was here to show us what it means to live upon this earth as a being created in the image of God. He was the very presence of God in the midst of mankind; and he became a prey to the predators.

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