

Man as God's Image

essay of an interpretation

First printed in "Philosophical Studies" Nr. 6, 2002. Tbilisi© Levan Gvelesiani

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him;” (Gen. 1:27)

We can say that this biblical word has, to a large degree, formed our self-consciousness, molded our self-confidence and strengthened our self-acceptance. From these words, we learn that we are not like all other creatures around us; we resemble our Creator.

However, when observing what happens around us in nature, but also in society, we ask ourselves wherein this *similarity* lies. What can these words in the bible mean? Is man like God, does he really *look* like God? Which are the properties which are similar to God in man?

To answer these questions, we must define the concept of “man” in relation to other living creatures. Natural science, especially biology, has clearly shown that man's body resembles that of many other creatures on earth. The similarity of the genetic structure in chimpanzees with man is even 99%. Man's body is genetically as well as structurally very similar to that of an animal.

A certain similarity can in part also be found in the behavior of man. The instincts and motives which influence man in connection with food, sexual and social life, but also with some other necessities for survival are to a great extent alike in animal and man.

These facts induced many scientists to speak of a common natural descent of animals and men. Darwinism, a theory based on tautology and by far not yet proved, has gained a dominant role in biological sciences in the last 140 years and influences many fields of research in nearly all directions. The idea of evolutionism, the natural descent of the complex from the simple form has consciously and unconsciously pervaded nearly all fields of science. Even those scientists not being friends of “vulgar” materialism (e.g. Max Scheler) speak of “man's development”. [1] Moreover, Darwinism has established

itself in schools and universities as the overwhelming and only correct theory of man's coming into existence/ development.

According to Darwinistic conception, a living being is first of all a physical being, arising from the natural biological development and maintaining its ground during a course of development lasting millions of years. Evolutionists want to describe the state of affairs as if evolution were already a fact instead of deriving the theory from the facts. Facts, however, are lacking today just as they did last century when Darwinism was born. Even the founder of this theory, Charles Darwin, arranges the matter, starting out from observances regarding the domestication of animals, as if the development of species by "natural selective breeding" were a fact already and only the mechanism of this process needed to be explained. His model is based on the observance of domestication and of variations of living beings within the species. [2] Where Darwin got the idea that species develop from other species, remains nebulous and unexplained.

There are many examples of this scientific erroneous opinion at a later time. However, we only want to state one, written by one of the most renowned neo-Darwinists. On genetic similarity of living beings, Richard Dawkins writes "Evidently the total information capacity of genomes is very variable across the living kingdoms, *and must have changed greatly in evolution*, presumably in both directions" [3] [The *italics* are the author's. L.G.] Here we have a transparent example of how evolutionists put the cart before the horse: Evolution is a fact, and if living beings are similar or different, evolution should have induced this. Facts are pressed into theory, without questioning the probability of the theory. Thus, as evolutionists say, if man and jellyfish resemble one another in various genetic or other aspects man must be the distant successor of jellyfish or a similar being – and all this should have been induced by evolution (according to Charles Darwin by coincidental gradual changes favored in the struggle for existence). One of the characteristics of Darwinism is the reductionism, according to which the intellectual properties of living beings are reduced to the development of the physical body. However, in the theory of Darwinism it remains unclear, how anything new in the world comes into being. Also unexplained is, how specialized species swing from one extreme to the other in a very short space of time. How do living beings manage the leap over the abyss lying between the specialized species? There are other problems of the living world the Darwinists cannot solve.

The fact of similarity in the mechanisms of life in living beings is complex, and no Creationist will doubt this. The problems begin where the descent is concerned. The Darwinists believe similarity (or the difference in similarity) means relationship by descent. This is really the main issue (point of controversy) between Creationists and Evolutionists. The development in modern genetics aggravated the controversy between

Darwinists and the followers of Creationism. If man is a being similar to an animal, evolutionists claim, he is an animal also in his nature and differs only slightly or *in degree* from other animals. This is allegedly supported by genetics.

As our goal here is not a detailed critic of the theory of Darwinism (other authors have done this much more creditably [4]), we only mention that Darwinism has neither the facts for the truth of the theory nor can explain the variety in nature. Of course, the similarity of man with animals cannot automatically be ascribed to a common descent. Relationship does not necessarily point to descent.

Materialistic scientists often disregard the fact of tremendous and vital differences between man and the animal world. This concerns the body as well as the behavior. The genetic similarity between man and monkey does not speak for a common descent, but against it. If it was only 1% of difference that matters, man's behavior and his way of living should not differ so enormously from that of a monkey. 1% of genetics cannot bridge the abyss existing between chimpanzee and man. [5] If language, arts, science, upright walk, fabrication of ingenious instruments and tools, epimetheuistic (analysis of the past) and prometheuistic behavior (activity planned in advance) among many other things were carried by this 1% of genes, the difference between various species of monkeys with their genes varying by 1 to 5% should be obvious, too. This, however, is not the case. This 1% of difference on the genetic level cannot correspond with the quantitative abyss lying between man and animal. Even some of the evolutionists (partly doubting the doctrine), for example Brian Goodwin that the importance their scientific colleagues attribute to genetics is not adequate. [6] Genetics do play a role, but the decisive factor are those properties which only man and no other being has. These properties were mentioned above.

You can retort that many of the properties mentioned above are in part or as a trace existent in various animals. Many animals behave socially, they build something, they use primitive tools, they have a communication based on a behavior similar to language etc. What then remains in man? What is specific in man which gives us the opportunity to distinguish man from animal and call him God's image?

The godlike in man cannot lie in what man has in common with the world of animals and plants, but in those things where he differs from the other beings. Two important points can be named which are essential and decisive. These two points create a unbridgeable abyss between man and the world of all other living beings. Man does not differ from the animals by degrees, as Darwinists and other evolution theorists maintain, but

qualitatively, in his fundamental properties. These difference are found in the body as well as in the intellectual field and cannot point to a common descent, but to one Creator.

As many anthropologists unambiguously confirm man's bodily structure is characterized by a high non-specialization. An animal is finely tuned to its environment. It lives in the given environment and is an essential part of it. The animal body uses its limbs as tools for the interaction with this environment and adapts to it. Its body is extremely and minutely specialized. Limbs and organs are utilized as tools. Man on the other hand is a generalist; he has an inclination for everything, but is not really specialized for anything regarding the interaction with the environment. In all fields of specialization man is excelled by one or another animal. Man can run, but not as fast as a panther, man can swim, but not as well as a dolphin, man can climb, but not as well as a monkey etc. Man has nearly all properties found in animals in an underdeveloped form, sketchily as it were. As the actual materialistic anthropologist Arnold Gehlen cites Friedrich Nietzsche, man is "the not yet finished animal". Gehlen himself calls man "unfinished", "unspecialized", "unadapted", "primitive", "defective" [7] and refers to Herder's observations. Thus Hermann Poppelbaum in his fundamental work "Mensch und Tier" [8], Wolfgang Schad [9], Wolfhart Pannenberg [10], Max Scheler and others. Man is, as it were, immature, childlike. In man everything is predisposed, but nothing completely developed, apart, perhaps, from the abilities being connected with the intellectual. If it were a matter of descent and evolution, man should not descend from the monkey, but the monkey from man, because the primate's limbs are much better developed and more finely tuned to their environment than man's. In comparison with an animal, man is a generalist making tools. To manage his environment man has the ability of forming the environment.

In order to practice this generalistic-instrumentalistic activity, man needs something which selects him from the ranks of the other living beings. First of all, this is the property of planned activity. Man is a Janus being in the sense of time. His two faces are *Epimetheus* and *Prometheus*. As *Epimetheus* he looks to the past and gains experience. With the other face he looks into the future and plans his future activities. Man knows time. He structures time (in the sense of Eric Berne [11]) and works in time. This work results in an *artificial* world. Man builds, unlike an animal, a new artificial world between himself and nature. In his important work "Was ist der Mensch?" Wolfhart Pannenberg writes: "He becomes lord of the world by an artificial world which he spreads out between himself and his surroundings." [12] Man's creative activity producing this artificial world surrounding him is one of the most important human abilities at all. When analyzing this activity we see that just the creative abilities are those distinguishing man from the rest of the animal world. Some animals can build to a small extent, but they do not create a *technology*. Technology is the art of changing the materials to be found in nature and to place them between oneself and nature. We cannot expect this from any animal. The materials animals take from nature for building or other

use are not treated, but used in the state they were found. Only man can sharpen the stone to an axe.

Furthermore, the artificial has another property, it is something that has not been there before, something that was created – it is *new*. The creative in man enables him to reshape the matter, the non-living, in a way that it will appear as something which was not directly produced by God or the former development, but created by conscious human action. This creative power is responsible for the development of arts and science, of language, the *technae*. From the first axe to the last computer the world of *technae* is the creation of the human hand. Man consciously rearranges the world. Therefore everything, which springs from the human mind as a thing in the material world, is a work of art. In this category belong not only the works of art in a stricter sense, but everything man has “brought into the world” by his mental activity. Everything not directly coming from nature is a work of art. All this was not there before man. All this is a product of human creation. Naturally, this creation cannot be put on the same level as divine creation, but undoubtedly it is fundamentally a creation. Thus man, as God’s journey-man, takes hold of the divine craft and creates something new into the world. Therefore the first thing making man godlike is the *ability for creation*.

But that alone is not everything justifying the paradigm of the image. The second most important property making man appear godlike is the ability to *make a choice*, for which he can take responsibility, too. Man has the “ability for choice and action of choice” as Max Scheler calls these properties. [13] Mind you: no being in cosmic hierarchy – higher or lower than man – has both these abilities. It is self-evident that this freedom of choice entails the *responsibility* for one’s own action; to be god-like is not easy. Therefore Jean-Paul Sartre also speaks of man being *condemned* to his freedom. [14] He *must* be free, he *has to be* free and must take the responsibility for his actions. Only man can choose between asceticism and hedonism. He can organize a hunger-strike, can surmount himself, can choose between alternatives, can follow God or Satan. Freedom of choice is the constructing activity in the world. By his choice, man constructs the real world taking it from a potential to a real state. With freedom and responsibility, man takes on duties in the environment, acts and maintains the relative stability, communicates, works on his fate. When we engross ourselves in this question from the point of view of modern physics, we find that the constructive ability of choice in man is also confirmed by one of the interpretations of the quantum theory. [15] The observer is necessary for creation of reality. Without man the wave function will not break down, - reality will not come into existence and will only remain as a potential. [16] Moreover, both, the weak as well as the strong formulation of the so-called *anthropic principle*, presuppose the existence of man affected with consciousness for the necessity of the development of the world. [17]

To sum things up, we can say that when reflecting about God, man and nature we cannot fail to notice that man is a being of two worlds. On one hand, man is related to all other living beings. With his body, he firmly is part of nature. On the other hand, there is a trace of God in man, making him godlike. The godlike in man makes itself felt in the two most important human properties, which in principle are divine, but are not developed to the same extent in man as is the case in God. These two properties are the ability for creative activity and the ability for free, but responsible choice. It is just these two properties which make man God's image.

[1] M. Scheler, 1995

[2] Ch. Darwin, 1992

[3] R. Dawkins, Internet, p.5

[4] Ph. Johnson, 1993, 1998, M. Eigen/ R.Winkler, 1975

[5] M. Jeeves, 1997, p. 133

[6] B. Goodwin, 1997, p. 224

[7] A.Gehlen, 1986, pp. 10, 32, 83

[8] H. Poppelbaum, 1928,1961

[9] W. Schad, 1971

[10] W. Pannenberg, 1962, 1979

[11] E. Berne, 1992

[12] W. Pannenberg, 1962, p. 18

[13] M.Scheler, 1995, p. 32

[14] J.-P. Sartre, 1952

[15] D. Bohm, 1980,

[16] J. Gribbin, 1996

[17] J.Leslie, 1989

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