

27 *And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten **created I him; male and female created I them.***

27 a **created I him... created I them.** In light of the interplay between “him” and “them” in this verse, one strand of rabbinic tradition proposes that “man was originally created male and female in one.” In the creation of woman, it was suggested that “God... separated the one (female) side,”³³⁵ in a fashion that recalls Greek traditions telling of originally androgynous humans who were split because of their rebellion, older Egyptian texts where the male earth god (*Geb*) and the female heaven (*Nut*) were separated in the beginning of Creation,³³⁶ and Zoroastrian texts that describe the couple as having been at first “connected together and both alike.”³³⁷ More conventionally, however, we might rather suppose that the three lines of this stately poetic diction are structured as they are in order to successively draw our attention to three things: first, to the creation of man in the Divine image; second, to the fact that this resemblance exactly parallels the one that exists between the Father and the Son; and third, to the essential distinction of gender.³³⁸

With respect to the oneness of man and woman, Elder Erastus Snow expressed that “there can be no God except he is composed of the man and woman united, and there is not in all the eternities that exist, nor ever will be, a God in any other way. There never was a God, and there never will be in all eternities, except they are made of these two component parts: a man and a woman, the male and the female.”³³⁹ Similarly, the *Talmud* comments that “a man without a wife is not a man, for it is said, ‘male and female He created them... and called their name Man’³⁴⁰ [i.e., only together, as man and wife, is he called ‘Man’].”³⁴¹

b **male and female.** Both men and women are created in the divine image and likeness, which has implications not only for human nature but also for the character of God.³⁴² The 1909 and 1925 First Presidency statements commenting on the origin of man both include the assertion that: “All men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother, and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity.”³⁴³

Though masculine verbs and adjectives are used with God’s name (also masculine), evidence exists that the Ugaritic goddess Asherah was sometimes worshipped as a female consort to Jehovah in preexilic times.³⁴⁴ Allusions to a female deity are also seen by some in biblical references to Wisdom³⁴⁵ and in the texts of mystic Judaism referring to the *Shekhinah*.³⁴⁶ Jeremiah spoke out against the worship of the “queen of heaven,”³⁴⁷ though, as Peterson points out, such prophetic opposition does not seem to appear before the eighth century BCE.³⁴⁸ From his study of this verse, Freedman concludes: “Just as the male God is the model

- 335 A. Cohen, *Chumash*, Genesis 2:21, p. 11. See J. Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah 1*, 8:1, p. 73. See W. A. Meeks, *Androgyne*, p. 185 for relevant discussion, including evidence that rabbis had access to a version of the *Septuagint* with the reading: “male and female created I him.”
- 336 Plato, *Symposium* 189d-190a, pp. 85-87; H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 7, pp. 88-89.
- 337 F. M. Müller, *Bundahis*, 15:2, p. 53. See references to related concepts in additional cultures in J. E. Seach, *Ancient Texts* 1995, pp. 916-918.
- 338 Cf. U. Cassuto, *Adam to Noah*, pp. 57-58. See D. N. Freedman, *Humanity*, p. 23; *Commentary* 2:27-b, p. 115.
- 339 E. Snow, *3 March* 1878, p. 270.
- 340 See Moses 6:10.
- 341 Yevamos 63a, cited in R. M. Zlotowitz, et al., *Bereishis*, p. 167; cf. 1 Corinthians 11:11. See *Endnote* 2-19, p. 128.
- 342 R. E. Friedman, *Commentary*, pp. 16-17.
- 343 H. J. Grant, et al., *Evolution*, p. 244; J. F. Smith, et al., *Origin*, p. 203. Additional information relating to the LDS concept of a “Mother in Heaven” can be found in K. L. Barney, *Mother in Heaven*; E. A. Cannon, *Mother in Heaven*; J. M. Derr, et al., *Relief Society*, pp. 57-58, 449 nn. 129, 131; G. B. Hinckley, *Daughters*; D. L. Paulsen, *Are Christians Mormon*, pp. 96-107. See also M. Barker, *Christmas*, pp. 39-44.
- 344 D. C. Peterson, *Asherah* 1998, pp. 202-209. See also e.g., Deuteronomy 16:21; 1 Kings 14:15, 23; 2 Kings 17:15-16.
- 345 *Hokhmah* in Hebrew, *Sophia* in Greek—see, e.g., Proverbs 8:1-31.
- 346 H. Schwartz, *Tree*, pp. 45-59.
- 347 Jeremiah 44:17ff.
- 348 D. C. Peterson, *Asherah* 1998, p. 201. See also M. Barker, *Wisdom*; M. Barker, *Revelation*, pp. 204-206; M. Barker, *Queen*; M. Barker, *Temple Theology*, pp. 75-93; D. N. Freedman, *Humanity*, pp. 22-25 (cited in Moses