

Myths in the Bible and Their Genetic Relationship to Indo-European Parallels: What Do They Mean?



The Script for the Radio Series *Myth Is Truth Which Shall Make You Free*
by Ladislaus J. Bolchazy, PhD

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Editors: Marie Bolchazy, Alex Nye, Laurel Draper, and Donald Sprague

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Ladislaus J. Bolchazy, PhD

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Unisex and Androgyny: Reliving Our Mythical Origins?

PROFESSOR BOYLE: I'm Nancy Boyle and with me again is Dr. Lou Bolchazy of Loyola University of Chicago. During this program we'll be discussing the idea of androgyny. Dr. Bolchazy, that's a term that I think you'd better explain to us.

DR. BOLCHAZY: Androgyny comes from two Greek words: male and female. Some English cognates that you know are polyANDRY, philANDERer, and GYNEcology.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: But what does the word "androgyny" mean?

DR. BOLCHAZY: Well, androgyny is a mythical concept, namely a belief that the first human being or even the first god was both male and female.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: Now that would be a very popular concept these days of unisex, with men wearing necklaces and women working on the Alaskan pipeline.

DR. BOLCHAZY: That's very interesting, because I think that what we are trying to do is to androgynize ourselves. I think that we are attempting to regain our mythical androgyny; we are trying to go back to our mythical paradise lost where the first human being was androgynous. What we are doing is reliving our mythical origins.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: Do you think that the whole idea of unisex is a good idea?

DR. BOLCHAZY: Yes. I think this phenomenon you've mentioned is a great humanizing revolution because we are trying to liberate ourselves from the stereotypes of sex. We are trying to escape from the jailhouse of gender.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: Well then, you do see it as a positive thing.

DR. BOLCHAZY: Certainly. We have determined to enjoy, to experience life in all its aspects: I, for example, want to experience my wife's role—doing the dishes, scrubbing the floors, cooking and also her prerogatives, like crying whenever I feel like it.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: Be careful now.

DR. BOLCHAZY: She in turn can experience the agony and the ecstasy of a career. And this is androgynization, an attempt to regain our mythical androgyny. Unfortunately, in the history of Western culture, the belief in mythical androgyny was used to enslave women and to stereotype the male into an untenable role.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: Would you say that examples of this might be that he was not allowed to cry and that the burden of providing for the family fell on his shoulders?

DR. BOLCHAZY: Exactly. But now we are using the myth of androgyny to liberate ourselves and to experience life all the way. But, let me just add one more thing. I mentioned that in our Western culture this concept of androgyny was used to enslave a woman. I have in mind, for example, an apocryphal gospel. According to Thomas, which ends in the following manner, Peter says to Jesus, "Hey Jesus, won't Mary be saved?" and Jesus replies, "Oh yes, she will be saved because I will make a male out of her." This shows you how the Gnostics used this myth of androgyny to enslave women. You see, the whole point was this: if women came out of Adam's rib, then who kept the indivisible soul? Surely not the woman; the male kept the soul.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: That is really interesting and explains a lot to us about where we've gotten our concepts from. Can you tell us a little bit more about this myth of androgyny?

DR. BOLCHAZY: Well, the myth is almost universal. Even in matriarchal societies the chief god was a she. But she possessed both male and female principles so that she could create the universe by means of parthenogenesis. She did not need an external male to make her fertile. She was complete.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: There are many women around who would enjoy that coming again today.

DR. BOLCHAZY: I wouldn't know that, Nancy.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: You said this is a universal myth, but there's not a concept like it in the Christian tradition, is there?

DR. BOLCHAZY: Well, tell me. What is the origin of the first woman? We just went into that.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: You mean that she came from Adam's rib.

DR. BOLCHAZY: And doesn't that imply that Adam possessed both the male and the female principles within himself before Eve came to be? He was androgynous. He was masculo-feminine.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: That's one interpretation. Is there any support for it?

DR. BOLCHAZY: Yes, we have an apocryphal Hebrew myth. According to this myth, we all pre-existed our birth in heaven. There in heaven, each

one of us was both male and female. But just before we became incarnate and born into this world, God cut us in half. Later in life we seek literally the other half in marriage.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: I wonder if that's where the phrase "the better half" comes from.

DR. BOLCHAZY: I don't know, Nancy, but the phrase is descriptive of a whole range of meanings attached to the concept of androgyny. Loss of androgyny means that we are incomplete sexually; we need a partner.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: But suppose that one is homosexual or a lesbian?

DR. BOLCHAZY: In one of his dialogues on love, *The Symposium*, Plato tells an interesting Greek myth which explains the phenomena of homosexuality and lesbianism and heterosexuality. According to this myth, the original human beings were of three kinds: One being was male on both sides, the other human being was female on both sides, and the third kind of being was male on one side and female on the other.

Now at one time they became arrogant and posed a threat to the gods, but all-wise Zeus, instead of destroying this race, decided to eliminate the threat by cutting these beings in half. Now each half is seeking the other half, in order to regain its lost wholeness. Through this etiological myth we try to explain why some people seek complementation in homosexuality, lesbianism, or heterosexuality.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: Then, the salient point here is that the loss of androgyny means the loss of original wholeness and completeness?

DR. BOLCHAZY: That's right. The loss of androgyny is synonymous with the Fall, with the loss of paradise. It is the mythopoetic way of saying that I am incomplete, that I need others, that I am not an island.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: That's an excellent concept. Are there any cultural ways in which man attempts to regain this loss of androgyny?

DR. BOLCHAZY: There are two ways that come immediately to mind. In Australia there is an interesting initiation ritual. When a boy is about to become a man, he undergoes a ritual in which a cut is made in his penis. This cut is called the penis vagina. He is told: "Now you are more than a man." In St. Paul's and St. John's theology, androgyny is regained in Christ. In Christ there is no Jew, there is no Gentile, there is no male and no female. In Christ we become one, we become whole again.

Editor's Note: The following section is not included in the radio program. It is added to this script because it is an integral part of the discussion of the myth of androgyny.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: The myth of our lost androgyny is now part of modern psychology, is it not?

DR. BOLCHAZY: Yes. Carl Jung, for example, in a book, *Man and His Symbols*, talks about our dual natures. According to Jung, each male has female qualities called anima, which he acquired from his mother. It is this anima, or female side of him, which makes him gentle, compassionate, capable of love, and appreciative of the arts. When the anima goes awry, it stimulates in the male sentimentality, irritability, self-debasement, vague feelings, and even inability to relate to the opposite sex in love.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: Now, I'm not sure if these female qualities have their basis in nature or in acculturation.

DR. BOLCHAZY: That is also my criticism of Jung's theory of anima. He seems to be stereotyping the female when he attributes these qualities to her nature rather than to her cultural environment.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: What is the male psyche in the female?

DR. BOLCHAZY: Jung calls it the animus. The "beneficent" animus, or male element, makes the female capable of initiative, courage, objectivity, and spiritual wisdom. The "maleficent" or badly developed animus makes the female brutal, reckless, and obstinate, etc.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: Again, these so-called "male" characteristics may come from acculturation rather than from the male's biological make-up.

DR. BOLCHAZY: Very possibly. The point is that Jung seems to have been influenced by the myth of androgyny in formulating his anima/animus theory.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: The story that our ancestors, or that ourselves before our birth, were androgynous, is a myth. We don't accept the literal sense of this myth. We can demythologize this myth and see if the myth of androgyny has some relevant meaning for us here and now.

DR. BOLCHAZY: I believe that every myth has something very significant to say to us. This is true in the case of the myth of androgyny. To answer your question: The myth of androgyny is a mythopoetic expression and an affirmation of our incompleteness or lack of "wholeness." In this sense it is related to another myth, namely the Fall or paradise lost—a myth which gives us a mythological reason for our general weakness, suffering, mortality, and tendency to do things which are harmful to us. But to get back to the myth of androgyny, it says that we are not self-sufficient, that we lack something basic.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: Like a marriage partner.

DR. BOLCHAZY: That is one example. Because sexually we are incomplete, we seek complementation in marriage. This message is obviously behind the three parallel myths of androgyny we mentioned before: namely, the myth of Adam is androgyny before Eve came to be; the myth of double-beings found in Plato's dialogue on love, *The Symposium*, and the Hebrew apocryphal myth which says that we were masculo-feminine in heaven before our birth.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: It is not good for man to be alone.

DR. BOLCHAZY: And for woman. There is even a more fundamental message behind the myth of androgyny.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: What is it?

DR. BOLCHAZY: The myth of lost androgyny affirms human insatiability. From experience we know that we feel a sense of emptiness in the midst of plenty. We yearn; it seems, for nothing less than the infinite. St. Augustine, therefore, concluded:

Oh, Lord, our hearts were made for Thee,
and they cannot rest,
until they rest in Thee.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: Religion, of course, intends to fill that ultimate need for the infinite.

DR. BOLCHAZY: Yes. And if it's true that we were made in God's image, then we are restless until we see and become one with that original model in whose image we are created. If it is true, as the Stoics taught, that we are part of that eternal, divine fiery Logos, now separated from Him, then we are restless until we regain our lost union with Him. The myth of lost androgyny underscores our incompleteness and lack of wholeness. We seek the other half, be it a marriage partner or the ultimate source of our being.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: So, through marriage and religion we try to complement ourselves, that is, we try to regain our mythological androgyny. Is there another way we moderns can try to regain our lost androgyny?

DR. BOLCHAZY: Yes. We can androgynize ourselves by eliminating "Me Tarzan, You Jane" sex roles. The current unisex revolution gives us an opportunity to experience life more fully by engaging in all human activities and emotions. Before this revolution, the jailhouse of my gender discouraged me from doing "feminine" things like caring for our infant son, doing the dishes, crocheting, or crying when I felt like it. Now I can experience the female's traditional prerogatives, her agony and ecstasy. Now I am "more than just a man," because I've regained my mythical androgyny.

PROFESSOR BOYLE: Thank you, Dr. Bolchazy, for a very interesting discussion.

DR. BOLCHAZY: Thank you, Nancy.

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