

The Emotions of Our Creator

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The deepest experience we have in our human lives is dealing with our emotions. Recognizing us as created beings, the question arises if our Creator Himself, who ultimately is also the source of our emotions, can be understood as someone who feels. How far can you go to express God's emotional reality in a comprehensible language? Since man existed he tried to describe God more closely by choosing anthropomorphisms. The problem arose to determine in what aspects can God be understood in human terms, and where is He different.

One way to describe God's reality is to see His creation as His revelation. As an artist expresses his thoughts and feelings in his works, he is fully part of a creative process. Aspects of the artist's invisible essence of personality becomes substantial in his works. The Apostle Paul uses the very same approach in making his listeners believe that God can be known. In the Epistle to the Romans we read:

"Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."

Paul asserts that everything which exists has its origin in God, whose qualities are revealed to us through His creation.

Man as God's direct image is the final source for more answers concerning God's feelings. Following Paul's observation, The Divine Principle states that all aspects of the human life are to be found in their original form in God Himself. If we as human beings are endowed with emotion, intellect, and will then likewise God as the first cause has to contain those aspects in their essential form. These similarities are describable to at least the same degree as we experience oneness or similarity between artist and work. The Divine Principle states:

"When man makes something, he first forms an idea in his mind from his idea his works come into being. Likewise God's idea is formed from God's nature and the idea comes to have substantial form in His creation. Thus the invisible idea takes a substantial form."

Looking at the unlimited variety of aspects within God's personality we understand "substantial form" as 'something not necessarily visible. It is something which can be "in front of God" or "partner to God." Man experiences himself in his qualities as someone who feels. Therefore man's essential reality is the invisible, but very substantial, realm of emotions. Here man is able to meet God and to understand God's feelings. Looking back at man's creative desire to express himself in works, we find that his original motivation is grounded in feelings such as joy, happiness, and love. We define these feelings as our ideal, which permeates our whole being. Likewise we attribute to God His motivation for creating us. His feelings are pure and most powerful, His reality is the ideal.

The artists feels toward his work a certain fulfillment corresponding to the degree the work is expressing the artist's emotion and idea. Man as God's "masterpiece" has emotions himself and is qualified to reflect God's feelings. The artist relating to his work feels stimulation and a certain degree of attachment. God relating to man exposes His ultimate reality of unconditional love. The mere expression on an idea in a substantial object as it is shown in man's creativity served as an analogy which is switching now to a new realm. God surprises us with a miracle. In expressing His feelings in man He was able to create us as a reflection of His total reality, which is His loving heart. God gave Himself completely in the creation of man and did not hold back one little bit from the essence of His reality. We all should be able to respond fully to His love.

From this position it is easy to perceive God as a loving Father full of compassion for His children. Jesus emphasized in his teachings God's parental heart, able to feel joy and suffering. God's emotions may be beyond our comprehension in their depth and purity, but we can assert one conclusion: God is One who feels.

From our experience we know that our deepest feelings are centered around love, which is the dominating force in our emotional life. We speak about the flow of love and mean that in a fulfilling love relationship response is as essential as the initiating loving impulse. The same principle applies in the relationship between God and man.

The Old Testament reveals that man deviated from God's original plan and fell. The result of this fall was mainly that man lost his ability to respond to God's love. This is described in the Bible as man's spiritual death. In this regrettable situation of spiritual ignorance, man showed throughout history the tendency to forget or even deny God's feelings and His ardent desire to lead man back into the flow of love.

One extreme is shown in Deism, also known as the theology of reason. Its founder, Edward Herbert (1583-1648), asserts that God is like a watchmaker letting the creation run on its own, without any emotional involvement and completely disengaged towards man's situation. Other theologians defend the position that God has emotions like joy and happiness, but because of His perfection, His love experience is independent of man's response.

But in Genesis 6:6 it says: "And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him to his heart." Because of man's alienation from God, suffering, grief and sorrow were the realities of God's feelings. Jesus spoke to us clearly in the parable of the prodigal son of God's longing for His children to come back and overcome sin.

In *Pensees*, Blaise Pascal gives a good historical overview of man's growing emotional relationship with God:

"The God of the Christians does not consist of a God who is simply the author of geometrical truths and the order of the elements; that is the part of the pagans and Epicureans. He does not consist merely in a God who exercises Providence over the life and property of men, to give long life and happiness to those who adore Him; that is the part of the Jews. But the God of Abraham the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, The God of the Christians, is a God of love and consolation; He is a God who fills the Soul and the heart which he possesses."

God dealt with man more as a father to a young child or adolescent in the Old Testament, especially in the Law and the Prophets. Here He ascribed hard-and-fast rules and implied doom and righteous anger for breaking them. In the Writings the same themes are evident although there is some fatherly and motherly inculcating of "Wisdom."

Because Adam and Eve fell from the source of unconditional love, they could not give unconditional love to their children. Cain and Abel consequently had many emotional problems that festered and grew. When God "seemed" to favor Abel more, neither they nor their parents were able to understand or deal with it. Unpremeditated murder was the tragic result. Desire for God's love had become selfish. The emotions God gave to man were twisted, but still powerful and barely understood. God had to separate fighting brothers and groups to save them. "Chosen" men, groups and nations were picked out to learn God's heart, an unusually difficult task, and they show or teach it to others when the time was ripe. There were some successes and many setbacks, but God's purpose and love never stopped.

In Malachi 1:3, it states that God loved Jacob and "hated" (the Hebrew word for "loved less") Esau while they were still in their mother's womb. Actually the one He loved had to suffer more than the one He "loved less." In the end they were both blessed. Part of the education of heart involved separation and testing. In analogy a father spanks his child while saying, "This will hurt me more than it does you." Greater love and emotion has no one.

When the chosen nation of Israel veered from God's narrow path the prophets reflected God. The prophet Jeremiah expresses God's feelings!

"My anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain! Oh, the walls of my heart! My heart is beating wildly; I cannot keep silent; For I hear the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Disaster follows hard on disaster, the whole world is laid to waste. Suddenly my tents are destroyed, my curtains in a moment... I looked and lo, the fruitful land was desert, and all its cities were laid in ruins before the Lord, before His fierce anger."

The Father speaks as to an older adolescent in the "proverbial wisdom" literature of the Old Testament. It previews the coming of God's son to speak more personally and equally to man. Here was a living

reflection of God's feelings. Again emotions are high as men are separated to be educated. However it became clear that men couldn't love God's son more than anything, even life itself. Man still couldn't control or understand his own emotions. Christ's emotion was unconditional love, never changing even to death. By this he saved man and forgave us all the while. Possibly Jesus's spiritual agony was greater than the physical pain. Christ's realization that God's children may suffer longer because of their inability to "lose their life to gain it" must have caused the greatest pain and worry. God was still brokenhearted.

Man is still often a slave to twisted or unconscious emotions, but he is understanding them more and more. God still has to separate us to educate, and then at the right time, bring us all together in the binding power of spirit, truth, and love. During the World War II the Japanese theologian Kazoh Kitamori applied "Tsurasa" the basic principle in Japanese tragedy, to Christian thought and pain.

"'Tsurasa' is realized when one suffers and dies, or makes his beloved son suffer and die, for the sake of loving and making others live. Even though he tries hard to conceal and endure his agony, his cries filtering through his efforts are heard. When the Japanese playgoers hear these cries, they shed tears speechlessly.

"When we find ourselves in the pain of God, we become aware of our own sin and begin to hate ourselves. Yet we know that God loves us intently. This love of God is so intent that it surpasses, and even forgets, the pain of God. The development of the pain of God into the love rooted in his pain reveals its real nature. The pain of God demands that we hate ourselves, but love rooted in the pain of God envelopes us so completely that we cannot even hate ourselves any longer."

Through the pain of God, nations who once fought to destroy one another are now becoming allies and even brothers. God's will and all-encompassing love are irresistible. Today men can relate to God more on the adult level. We can feel his desires and emotions in a purer form and with more understanding. The struggles of history have matured us emotionally, and through science and social science we can understand more. We are a microcosm of history, as are our interactions with one another. Eventually, by rational methods, social sciences, theology, God's spirit and finding God in each person we will untangle our emotions, purify them and share them with God and man in the greatest joy.