

A Quick Thought on the Virgin Birth

By Phyllis Chesler

Dear People:

Why is this concept so very difficult to comprehend? Aren't we all children of God—no matter by what means God accomplished this? Might interpretations of the Gospels not necessarily be taken literally so much as metaphorically, meaningful in another way? In Judaism, we are created “b'zalmo,” in God's image. From a literal point of view, how is that possible—we do not all look alike. Or, does God have an endless number of “faces,” appearances?

In response to my piece on Handel's “Messiah,” a reader challenged me by first demanding to know whether I was Jewish or not—and by demanding to know whether or not I believed in Jesus's virgin birth. His tone was aggressive. I took umbrage.



Sir: Despite exceptions, for millennia, at least on earth, most infants, toddlers, and children only knew that women, (their biological and adoptive mothers, as well as

their female helpers), were the sole sex that took care of them. Thereafter, the best of sperm-donors were probably away for long hours and were rarely primary care-givers when they were at home. Mothering was considered “women's work.” Our fathers, might very well have been in heaven, were longed-for

absent presences; they were even God-like in their absence. So unfair. And thus, male womb-envy led to so many Creation myths in which God-the-Father gave birth to practically everyone.

The story of Mary actually puts women in the picture.

There's much more to say but I've run out of time for now. What do you think?

Happy Hannukah, Merry Christmas, Kwanzaa, Solstice (which alas, has passed), and a better Next Year.

First published in [Phyllis' Newsletter](#)