

God's Body

Commentary for June 1, 2008 — Does He Have a Body?

Does God have a body or is He simply a gelatinous mass of energy whose energy is pulsating throughout the universe, or so it is expressed in some religious fantasies? Is the universe itself God (pantheism) or is God found in everything yet is separate from His creation (panentheism)? Is God a trinity?

The questions above are simple to answer. God is and has a personality. He communicates with mankind, His creation. The heavens cannot contain Him (2 Chronicles 2:6). The reality is that the biblical model accurately describes God because the Bible is God's revelation of Himself to mankind.¹

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

• *Deuteronomy 6:4-5 KJV*

That verse is the King James Version of what the Jews call the Shema, the basic statement of the Bible that YHWH is God and that YHWH is unique, **"one,"** and that there is no one like Him. Using the proper terminology the verse is more clearly rendered this way:

"Hear, O Israel: YHWH our Elohim is one YHWH: And you shall love YHWH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."

• *Deuteronomy 6:4-5*

YHWH is an Elohim (God).² He is Israel's God and He reveals Himself to Israel through His revelation of Himself to them. It is true that God's Spirit is everywhere (Psalm 139:7-9), but that Spirit is not a person. **"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all"** (Ephesians 4:6).

With all that description of the Creator's greatness, God has a body, a spiritual body. That is the subject of this month's article by Dr. Ernest Martin, "The Bodily Composition of God." As always, read the ["June 2008 Newsletter"](#) which is a relevant introduction to Dr. Martin's article.

As Dr. Martin notes in his article ["Maimonides - Saint and Heretic,"](#) many Jews today have abandoned the biblical idea that God has a body and accepted the heretical view of two of their most famous sages, Maimonides and Jacob Luria, that God cannot have a body.³

"In all places of the Holy Scriptures (and also among the Jewish Sages of the Talmudic period) God is defined in anthropomorphic terms. That is, He is consistently described as being like humans in appearance. ... When man observes this image of Deity [for example in vision], the Scriptures show that God looks like all humans. This is the scriptural teaching. Indeed, the design of the Holy Temple at Jerusalem showed the anthropomorphic appearance of God."

-
1. The Bible is the written word of God. Christ is the living Word of God (John 1:1-5).
 2. Elohim are plural. Angels are Elohim. Analyze Psalm 8:5 where "angels" in the KJV is "Elohim" in Hebrew. In the New Testament, Hebrews 2:7 confirms that angels ARE Elohim when Paul cites Psalm 8:5 as confirmation of Jesus' superiority over angels (who are Elohim).
 3. At first reading, this is what the apostle John seems to be saying: **"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all"** (1 John 1:5). John is really talking about light and darkness in relation to fellowship. Read all of 1 John 1:5-10. God lives in light (

... Maimonides dogmatically stated in his 'Third Principle of the Jewish Faith' the statement that 'God has no body.'"

Dr. Martin was correct. This was indeed what Maimonides taught.⁴

The apostle Paul talks about God the Father (and by extension Christ) is like at this present moment:

"Who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see [except in vision]: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen."

• *1 Timothy 6:16*

God and Christ dwell in light, yet they also have an image in which they created man (Genesis chapter 1), to be like them. That "image" is not some fuzzy spiritual concept, but has a commonsense and everyday sense of similarity of appearance. The concept of "image" as expressed in Hebrew has little to do with the thought, reasoning, morality, or ability to relate to others. It has to do with appearance first. Note what James, the brother of Jesus, stated about mankind. Even he states that man has an appearance similar to God the Father:

"Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God."

• *James 3:9*

And we know that Christ has an appearance and is a man. There is nothing that indicates God does not have a body composed of Spirit "substance," as Dr. Martin shows in this month's article. The biblical evidence is provable and compelling. Note what the apostle Paul states directly:

"For the invisible things of him [of God] from the creation of the world are clearly seen [in the visible creation now], being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."

• *Romans 1:20*

Is that not clear enough?

Some would have you believe that those "**invisible things of him**" are not real except in allegory, and that "**the things that are made**" have little relationship to reality except as spiritual concepts. Yet Paul states that such things are "**clearly seen, being understood**" because of the relationship of visible things to invisible things that are similar to the visible. Any other way of reading this passage renders the meaning into gobbledygook (unclear wordy jargon)! Man confuses what Scripture plainly states. Remarkable!

David Sielaff
david@askelm.com

4. Read Maimonides' words in [The Guide to the Perplexed, chapter 51](#),

"Philosophers are thus required to establish by proof things which are self-evident, and to disprove the existence of things which only exist in man's imagination. ... some believed that God was corporeal [had a body], and that He possessed attributes: others, abandoning this theory, denied the corporeality, but retained the attributes. The adherence to the literal sense of the text of Holy Writ is the source of all this error ..."

Maimonides is not referring to the idea that God was composed of physical substance like flesh, but that God had a body. That is what is meant by "corporeal" and "corporeality," of whatever essence, even spirit. He plainly denies that fact. He says a similar thing at the end of "Chapter 3, [The Third Principle of the Jewish Faith](#)." He states that God's form "**is perceived only by the intellect.**" This means that God's form is not real, but is only in the mind of the reader of the text.