

The Importance of Being Gay

By Joe Perez

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29

Prologue to T.I.O.B.G.

Homosexuality is a mystery. It's a puzzle that invites reflection without predetermined answers and openness to discovering knowledge that we can't predict in advance. What's the purpose of homosexuality? What's the point of being gay, if having a same-sex orientation is not mere aberration or random chance?

I believe there are answers to these questions beyond those that we've been taught by psychology, biology, and conventional religion. I believe that the search for the meaning of homosexuality is ultimately a spiritual quest.

In this journal, I propose to explore The Importance of Being Gay (T.I.O.B.G.). I'll be asking: For what special purpose, if any, are gays here? What is homosexuality for? In short, how can we unravel the mystery? I will begin to assemble a vision of how homosexuality fits into a big picture of everything in the cosmos.

You can think of this vision as a metaphysics, cosmology, or worldview. You can even call it a mythology if you like. I will. However, by "myth" I don't mean to imply that I think this vision is untrue. On the contrary, I very much believe that the story that I will be telling is accurate. I just don't expect to necessarily be able to prove the truth as fact.

Before I get started, there's something I want to say that may help you to follow the story that I will be telling about homosexuality: I believe that human beings are souls on a spiritual journey. God (or Spirit, or Higher Power, or whatever you call it) is at the beginning and end of that journey, and is the force or process of evolution along the way. Our souls have two archetypal desires: the desire for reunion with God and the desire for separation from God. The desire for union with God is the stronger of the two, but they are both strong desires. These desires play out in the course of an individual's spiritual journey (some say this journey lasts more than one lifetime). Based on these desires, we perceive our needs, make choices with free will, perform actions, experience consequences based on those actions, and ultimately experience reactions. Following Eastern traditions, I call this dynamic of action and reaction karma, which

basically means that we reap what we sow. Our soul manifests with certain personality traits or characteristics because we're at a particular point in our spiritual journey and have to find our way back to God. In other words, babies are not born *tabula rasa*, empty containers to which the substance of personality is added. Their innate characteristics seem to come from somewhere; that place is the origin of karma. This is true regardless of whether you believe in reincarnation, souls that pre-exist in the mind of God, the legacy of ancestors passed down through DNA, or some admixture of these possibilities.

Some brief notes regarding terminology are in order. I regard a homosexual as a person who has affectional, emotional, and sexual attractions predominantly to members of the same sex. A bisexual has similar attractions to members of both sexes. Most commonly, I use gay as a term referring to all persons who have adopted a sexual identity as a homosexual person. For variety, I will sometimes speak of gay men and lesbians. I use transgender as an umbrella term to refer to all persons who don't fit neatly into the narrow boxes of gender identity widely accepted in our society. I also frequently use gay in an inclusive sense that embraces in its definition all homosexual, bisexual, and transgender persons. Queer is another frequently used umbrella term; however, many gay people feel excluded by it. Along with the vast majority of individuals of my generation and younger, I am comfortable with the term "queer" and will use it interchangeably with gay or GLBT (an acronym for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender).

One more thing: I'm a gay man and I write from that perspective. Much of what I say may be relevant for heterosexuals, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender folks. But then again, it may not be. I do not claim to speak for anyone but myself. In these posts, I am speaking primarily to an audience of gay men. If you are not a gay man, you will have to make the necessary adjustments for you. And I wouldn't dream of speaking on behalf of any group, especially one to which I don't belong.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30

T.I.O.B.G. 1 of 6: God Is Gay

Human nature teaches us about the nature of God, the Source of All and the Destiny of Everything. Human beings include male and female. God is like a man and God is like a woman. There is beauty in mankind and in womankind, and God is so beautiful that God's beauty includes all the beauty of women and men.

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We can try to express what these aspects of human nature teach us about God with words, but only poorly. We could say, for instance: God is male. God is not male. God is female. God is not female. These are all fine (but limited) ways of talking about God.

Human nature teaches us about the nature of God. We include gay people and straight people. Gay people love in gay ways and straight people love in straight ways. We can try to express what human nature reveals about God with words, but only poorly. We could say, for instance: God is gay. God is not gay. God is straight. God is not straight. These are fine (but limited) ways of talking about God.

God is like a gay person and God is like a straight person. There is beauty in gay people and in straight people, and God is so beautiful that God's beauty includes all the beauty of gays and straights. There is beauty in gay ways of loving and in straight ways of loving, and God's ways of loving are so beautiful that they include all the beauty of gay and straight ways of loving.

God made some men gay, because He made them in His image. God made gay men to love in gay ways, because God loves in gay ways. The beauty of gay men reflects the beauty of God. The beauty of gay ways of loving reflects the beauty of God's gay ways of loving. When someone fears and hates a gay man, he or she fears and hates God. When someone denigrates, despises, loathes, and harms a gay man, he or she denigrates, despises, loathes, and harms God.

Some people have repressed the truth about God's gayness, because they have hated and feared God. Some who have repressed the truth about God are straight and others are gay. The truth about God's gayness has been revealed to those whose eyes are open.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1

T.I.O.B.G. 2 of 6: The Soul Is Gay

The deepest truth about human beings is that we are the perfect reflection of God, and that perfection is evident in our soul. In life, every soul manifests or incarnates in particular forms of gender and sexuality, such as man or woman, straight or gay. Every soul necessarily takes a particular form, because it has specific things to learn about reuniting with God that cannot happen in any other way.

The soul's sense of being an independent, distinct entity (that is, a particular form of God's manifestation) is called a self. While on the surface a soul appears as a self, at a deeper

level, every soul contains within its nature the potential for the qualities of all forms (for example, a gay man possesses the potential to exhibit both masculine and feminine qualities).

We can try to express these truths with words, but poorly. We could say, for instance: The soul is male. The soul is not male. The soul is female. The soul is not female. The soul is straight. The soul is not straight. The soul is gay. The soul is not gay. These are all fine (but limited) ways of talking about the soul.

Human beings seek to experience reunion with God by encountering God in relationship to one another. We can speak of the persons who so reveal God to us as our soul mates. Every soul knows the qualities of its soul mates, because every soul knows the qualities of God that it feels separated from. God has placed the knowledge of the soul mates in our intuition.

Straight persons seek soul mates especially in souls manifesting as persons of the opposite sex. God has placed knowledge of the opposite-sex qualities of the soul mate in the intuition of every straight person. Gay persons seek soul mates especially in souls manifesting as persons of the same sex. God has placed knowledge of the same-sex qualities of the soul mates in the intuition of every gay person.

Some people have repressed the truth that some souls may be said to be essentially gay and that all souls have gay qualities at their deepest levels, because they have also denied the truth about the gayness of their own soul and God's own gayness.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2

T.I.O.B.G. 3 of 6: The Two Prime Forms and Directions

All manifestations of God manifest with yin and yang qualities and directions. Traditionally, yin forms are said to be feminine and yang forms are said to be masculine. All persons contain both yin and yang qualities in different measures; it's not always true that men contain more yang qualities than women and vice versa. Furthermore, the qualities considered masculine and feminine vary in different times and places.

It is not simply the case that some manifestations of God are yin while others are yang. Instead, all manifestations contain both yin and yang qualities at their deepest levels. For example, masculine men and butch women may be said, perhaps, to have a greater proportion of yang than feminine persons. But all persons contain both yin and yang. Feminine women and

effeminate men may be said, perhaps, to have a greater proportion of yin than masculine persons. However, yin and yang qualities are universally present.

According to tradition, yin is said to be associated with darkness, the moon, femininity, passivity, receptivity, relationship, connection, and love. Tradition says yang is associated with light, the sun, masculinity, activity, penetration, the self, independence, and freedom. While these are fine ways of talking about yin and yang at a very general level, yin and yang are more than the sum of our associations with them. Yin and yang are also the two archetypal directions of the movement of all souls toward reunion with God. Yang is always directed outward and yin is always directed inward.

In other words, yang forms seek reunion with God in otherness, or that which is beyond the self, and yin forms seek to join with God in sameness, or that which is contained within the self. This duality describes the two prime directions for the soul's fundamental desire to be reunited with God. There are actually an infinite number of directions that this desire may take, but it's helpful to start by talking about just these two.

Having established the two prime qualities and directions of reality, let's talk about gayness. The soul manifests in both gay and straight forms. The gay forms are yin, in the sense that they seek union with God in sameness. The straight forms are yang, in that they seek union with God in otherness. In other words, the contrast between gay and straight is a manifestation of the universal duality between yin and yang directions.

Gayness and straightness are not accidents of social conditions or biological functioning; rather, they are expressions of the principles of unity and duality at deep levels of reality. Gayness happens because all manifestations seek throughout history to achieve unity with God through the principle of unity. The gay self-sense of persons who identify as homosexual is an expression of this deep spiritual truth.

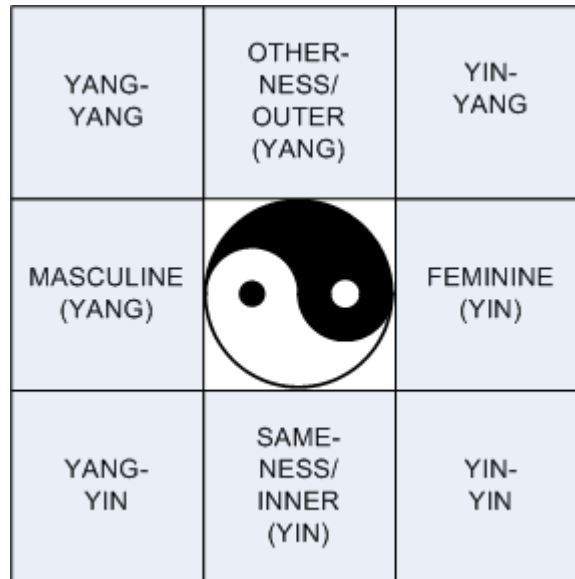
So far we have only been talking about gayness and straightness. Keep in mind also that the qualities considered gay and straight (or queer, bisexual, two spirited, active/passive, top/bottom, butch/femme, and so forth) vary in different times and places, according to historical, cultural, and social conventions. There are actually an infinite variety of ways of loving, and we have been talking about just gayness and straightness as a convenience.

Homosexuality is a particular form of sexual expression in which the soul seeks reunion with God by merging with a similar soul. The true value of homosexuality is that through

homosexual forms, souls are seeking reunion with God by embracing through Love that which is a reflection of the self. Gay people teach us about the principle of sameness. It is through all patterns of gay or same-directed forms that humankind can come to know about the unitary patterns of God.

Heterosexuality is a particular form of sexual expression in which the soul seeks reunion with God by merging with a different soul. The true value of heterosexuality is that the soul is seeking reunion with God by manifesting in forms that are embracing through Love that which goes beyond the self. Straight people teach us about the principle of otherness, for it is through duality that humankind can come to know about the dualistic patterns of God.

Some people have repressed the truth that gayness is a valuable and essential way of seeking God, because they have also denied the truth about God's gayness and the soul's gayness. It is impossible to properly understand God without properly understanding gayness.



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3

T.I.O.B.G. 4 of 6: The Four Prime Patterns

All things are manifestations of the principles of unity (God or Spirit) and duality (yin and yang). Yang describes masculine, outer-directed, and other-directed things. Yin describes feminine, inner-directed, and same-directed things. The natural order of human beings reflects these divine

principles in an infinite variety of combinations. However, it is useful to start talking about the natural order of things by talking about just four prime patterns.

There are four archetypal patterns manifest in all human beings and other forms of reality. Although this belief is not widely recognized or understood, people talk about manifestations of these patterns all the time as if they knew what they were talking about. And it is common for people to say that only two of these patterns are proper (that is, the forms that correspond to heterosexuality) and the others are defective or distorted (that is, the patterns that correspond to homosexuality). This is an inaccurate belief, because it misunderstands that these are the four universal patterns underlying all of reality, and it is impossible to properly imagine reality without seeing all four patterns in harmony.

The natural order of things includes a great diversity of combinations of yin and yang. Many people intuit through a variety of philosophies the conviction that yin and yang are fundamental principles of reality. However, these same people have often failed to recognize that yin and yang actually appear as both qualities and directions in precisely four archetypal patterns (see figure 1):

- Yang-Yang. Masculine and other directed (straight men uniquely teach us about this pattern).
- Yin-Yin. Feminine and same directed (lesbians uniquely teach us about this pattern).
- Yang-Yin. Masculine and same directed (gay men uniquely teach us about this pattern).
- Yin-Yang. Feminine and other directed (straight women uniquely teach us about this pattern).

A common mistaken belief is that the natural order of human beings includes only yang-yang and yin-yang combinations (straight men and straight women) and that all other combinations are, to borrow a phrase commonly applied to homosexuality by Roman Catholic theologians, “intrinsically disordered.” This belief’s most common manifestation is heterosexism. Heterosexism is usually defined as a belief in the superiority of heterosexuality over homosexuality, or a belief about the immorality of sexual behavior among gays. All formulations of heterosexism share a common insistence that heterosexuality is natural, ordered, and righteous while homosexuality is unnatural, disordered, and/or sinful. Although

heterosexism is posited as a belief about sexuality, it is also implicitly a belief about the natural order of all things in the universe.

Once the truth about the natural order of things is understood, it becomes clear that heterosexism reflects a biased overvaluation of yang (the masculine aspect of reality) and undervaluation of yin (the feminine aspect of reality). This belief is understandable in a culture that is heavily prejudiced against the feminine in all its forms, yet it is manifestly not a true reflection of the inherent, balanced nature of the universe.

Although it is useful to talk about these four archetypal patterns among human beings, it is important not to make unwarranted analogies. All persons contain within themselves, at their deepest levels, the two archetypal qualities and the two archetypal directions.

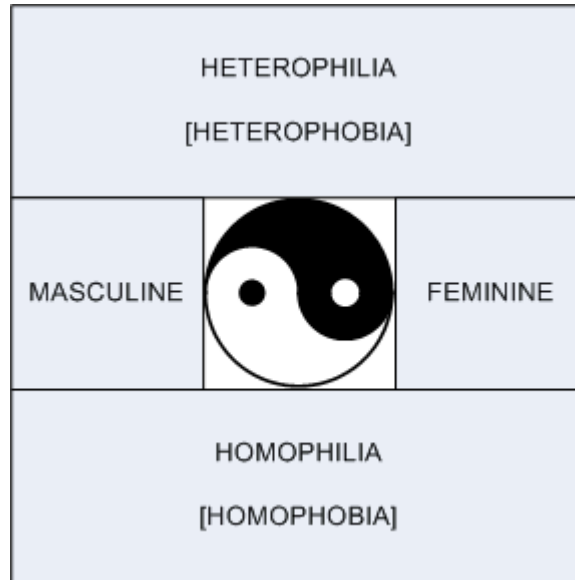
In sum, there is a connection, but no exact correlation, between these four deep patterns and the personal identities that today we call straight men, gay men, straight women, and lesbians. Gay and straight identities give visible surface expression to deep underlying structures of reality. Persons of all sexual and gender identities give rise to the exact same deep structures, but they do so in different ways.’

Thursday, December 4

T.I.O.B.G. 5 of 6: The Two Directions of Love

What is love? Love is not merely an emotion. Love is another name for the soul’s archetypal desire to be reunited with God, the Source of All, and the actions that are manifested as a result of that desire. In other words, love is another name for the two archetypal directions that describe all reality. Love describes the very process by which all reality is reunited in history with God. In this sense, it can be said that God is Love.

There are two archetypal ways of loving—yin and yang. Yin ways of loving seek to be reunited with God in inner-directed or same-directed ways. Yang ways of loving seek to be reunited with God in outer-directed or other-directed ways. There are actually an infinite variety of ways of loving, but it’s helpful to start by talking about just two (see figure 2).



Gayness and straightness are each, in their purest forms, expressions of the two archetypal ways of loving. Gayness is another name for the yin form of loving: the desire to love in inner-directed or same-directed ways, and the actions that spring from that desire. Another name for gayness is homophilia, or love of the same. Straightness is the yang form of loving: the desire to love in outer-directed or other-directed ways, and the actions that spring from that desire. Another name for straightness is heterophilia, or love of the other.

It is a common misconception that gayness and straightness are essentially about sex, but this is a mistaken belief held by those who have gotten hung up on sex. Heterophilia is the love of God in otherness, and homophilia is self-love, or receptivity to the love of God in sameness. All specific manifestations of love between two beings reveal a peculiar combination of both heterophilia and homophilia.

Some people have repressed the truth that homophilia is a valuable and essential way of loving, because they have also denied the true nature of love and the nature of gayness.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7

T.I.O.B.G. 6 of 6: The Two Directions of Fear

What is fear? When I speak of fear, I have in mind more than a feeling. Fear is another name for the soul's archetypal desire to be separate from God, the Source of All, and the actions that are manifested as a result of that desire. In this sense, there are two archetypal expressions of Fear—yin and yang. Yin ways of fearing are frightened by being reunited with God in inner-directed or

same-directed ways. Yang ways of fearing are frightened by being reunited with God in outer-directed or other-directed ways. There are actually an infinite variety of ways of fearing, but it's helpful to start by talking about just two.

Homophobia and heterophobia are, in their purest forms, the two archetypal forms of Fear. Homophobia is the yin form of Fear: the resistance to experiencing God in inner-directed or same-directed ways. Heterophobia is the yang form of Fear: the resistance to experiencing God in outer-directed or other-directed ways. It is a common error to think that homophobia and heterophobia are essentially about fear of gays or straights, but this is a mistaken belief held by those who have gotten hung up on sex.

Some people have repressed the truth that homophobia is a harmful and unnecessary way of being, because they have also denied the true nature of Fear and the nature of gayness. The truth has been revealed to those whose eyes are open.