

Gifted Women: Identity and Expression

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This paper endeavors to present many images projected of the female since ages. The image as temptress, the waif, the matriarchal aggressor, earth mother, etc., but now that Sue, Gloria, Betty, and Germaine have become a common name or we can say, "household names", now that we have learned to express our outrage and define our hang-ups, are we any closer to having security and identity?—A very genuine question to be answered.

For generations women have been demanding a positive answer to the question presented. Infact Dorothy Sayers in her 1938 lecture, "Are Women Human?" has focused on the matter of concern and said, 'Both women and men have grappled with the struggle of women to be acknowledged as completely human as men.' Sigmund Freud wrote approximately twenty-six volumes trying to identify the problems of humanity. There are helpful analyses in his works, yet no identity emerges from all this effort.

"If you have any doubts that we live in a society controlled by men, try reading down the index of contributors to a volume of quotations, looking for women's names."— Elaine Gill.

In Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, written in 1879, Helmer says, "Before everything else you're a wife and a mother." Nora replies, "I don't believe that any longer. I believe that before everything else I am a human being just as much as you are. At any rate I shall try to become one." Then, leaving behind a baffled, confused, and perhaps chastened man, Nora pursues her search for identity. I second on the thought of Helmer. How readily we who are women identify with her frustration, but the drama ends as the question is posed. We are left without answers, without definitions, because in a self-focused context there are none. It is therefore with both compassion and misgivings that we trace the futility of her pursuit.

The purpose for our human existence has, appropriately, been assigned by creative fiat. God has chosen women, as well as men, to be the bearers of his image, vessels in whom his own life is resident, life that transcends death and brings grandeur to every dimension of our humanity, as we live for the praise of our Maker. This is the factor that determines whether we will use or abuse our sexuality.

Our case for identity rests on the fact of God as Creator, and the reason he created. Our concept of God governs our sense of identity and self worth and our identification with every other person. The crux of our humanity is, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind." Our Lord was quoting the Old Testament commandment in which the Hebrew word for love contains a sexual connotation. A love relationship with God is necessary to the completeness (wholeness) of our humanity. The sexual connotation not

only points to this truth, but also reveals the completeness and intimacy of the believer's relationship with the Lord God. God is concerned with our entire being. He created and defined every function of our humanity.

So, are women human? The question should never have to be raised! The incontrovertible proof is the biblical account of creation. Do women have equal value with men? The answer will be evident and affirming if we receive the biblical mandate for who we are and why we are here. We cannot think of the world without women. On the other hand, the question has no definitive answer when we detach ourselves from God's purpose for our mutual humanity, and rely upon a non-biblical assessment of our value/identity.

Much attention has been given to this identity crisis. Both women and men have grappled with our struggle to be equally human. Dorothy Sayers wrote an interesting little book entitled *Are Women Human?* A man named Freud wrote about 26 volumes trying to identify the problems of humanity. There are many intelligent definitions in his works, but no identity emerges from all these efforts and it is a matter of concern..

When women attempt to redefine their roles and expand their arena of choices, their perceptions and actions generate reverberations through the entire society necessitating a re-ordering of not only gender roles and arrangements but also of the social and political order affecting the culture and the collectivity and its self-definition and identity. Thus history's oldest oppression and cleavage is shaken at its very roots.

Women's education, employment, and family roles and the interrelations between them have attracted increasing attention during the last few years. Feminists have disbanded long held notions about 'women's place' and the accepted myths about their nature and function (Goldstien 1972). Over the last few decades there has been a tremendous change in laws, attitudes, and norms affecting women's status, roles and the development in society in India. As a result of which women have ventured beyond the traditional role of wife and mother, and have sought employment and careers outside the home, and have actively participated in the economic and social development of the nation. (Liddle & Joshi, 1986).

There is a need of restructuring and reorientation of women's roles in contemporary society. Rapid social changes in women's career and family roles are accompanied by a significant transition in their attitude towards career and family. Research in the last decade highlighted the complex relationships between a woman's objective roles and her subjective attitudes regarding these roles, which affect her overall life satisfaction and sense of identity in society (Phillips & Imhoff, 1997).

It would strengthen the statement that the days are gone when women had to search/beg for her identity. Contrary to popular customs of the East as well as the West, A Sikh woman is independent of identity of her male counterpart. At birth, each woman is given the name Kaur, meaning Prince and each man the name Singh, meaning Lion. Men and women are to preserve their spiritual, social independence and identity from birth until death. There is no mediator or priest between an individual and God. Each individual's relationship with God is personal and direct. So, situation has changed and it is high time to recognize the importance of women, their contribution to the society and the universe. We must acknowledge the importance of an individual may it be man or woman as every individual is giving a significant contribution to this world. Exploitation to any individual is an insult to humanity.

Works Cited

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Ibsen’s A Doll’s House

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An Overview of Issues

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