

## **EPISODE 4**

# **WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH THE VIRGIN MARY?**

Hello everyone. Whether or not you are still on the path that you may or may not have ever been on. This is the fourth episode of my podcast, ManWomanSexGod. And my name is Michael Folz.

Okay. So far in the first three episodes I've already presented a variety of ideas, at least some of which you might well have found to be distinctive and/or new and different. For instance, I've shared with you that there actually is a point of existence, in more than one sense of the word. I've told you that social scientists have been coming around to the conclusion that for some reason a need for religion seems to be hard wired in our brains. I've then suggested that maybe this need for religion is a reflection of our unconscious desire for what I have been calling the religious experience. I've then added that the religious experience itself isn't necessarily a function of organized religion. Rather that it's actually the other way around.

Most importantly, I've stated repeatedly that accepting the reality of the phenomenon of the religious experience is a totally separate issue as to whether or not one wants to believe in God or the afterlife. Now that doesn't mean that this isn't an important and interesting question. And in the future I might well devote an episode or more to the arguments, philosophical and scientific, for and against the existence of God. For now, though, all that I am asking is for you to accept the reality that the phenomenon exists. If you want to attribute it all to the functioning or malfunctioning of the brain, or to some strange psycho-chemical manifestation, for the purposes of this podcast that's a completely valid stance to take.

Now those are a lot of ideas to absorb, especially if your usual purpose for listening to a podcast is mild diversion. And especially if you've always believed that religion was just some sort of hoo-hah. But those ideas which I've presented were just, as it were, the first, primary, foundational ones. And when we really start the journey in our next episode, I think that you are going to find, in quick succession, that there are soon going to be a lot more ideas, some of which you might even find revolutionary.

Therefore I thought that in this episode it might be best if we take a slight pause. And just go over this, that, and some other thing or two.

So the first 'this' is that I'd like to mention that this isn't my first podcast. In fact, I just finished doing 72 episodes of another one, which is called Dial It Back Or Die. Now that one, all 72 episodes, is conveniently already up on all of the various streaming services. And it can also be found at its own website, which is, naturally enough, [www.dialitbackordie.com](http://www.dialitbackordie.com) . At its website you have the option of reading the episodes as well as listening to them.

Now that podcast, like this one, is in serial form. Which means that each episode is built upon the last one, so that it is best understood if you start with Episode 1. And in that one I tried to, in a college course sort of way, unpack the rather complex mystery as to, to put it simply, How the West went Wrong. It's kind of a long and complicated answer, thus requiring 72 episodes. And, it having ended up being sort of like a college course, I was very careful to, so to speak, paint within the academic lines. I deliberately stayed away from woolly questions of spirituality or religious experiences. Instead I stuck strictly to academic subjects such as history, philosophy, and science.

And one issue which I raised right towards the beginning of that podcast was that I pointed out that students in the Soviet Union, for instance, weren't taught fake history per se. Rather they were taught mostly true historical facts which were then slanted so as to support the mainstream of Marxist thought and ideology. And that this wasn't done necessarily malevolently, and not because the leaders knew that they were wrong, but were lying anyway, but rather because the leaders (and the teachers) themselves fully believed in Marxism. I then added that the history that we in the West were taught, and even some of the science, was also slanted so as to support the ideology that governs our system.

What ideology am I talking about, you may ask? Well, explaining how that came about was pretty much the central reason for the Dial It Back Or Die podcast. And the difficulty of any of us realizing that the ideology which governs us is in fact an ideology explains at least a few of those 72 episodes. Especially since, given that I was carefully painting between the academic lines, I wanted to be able to ever so precisely prove my thesis, even to the most skeptical of listeners. And so one of the most important aspects of that podcast was that history and science had to be presented as they really are. That is, as trained academics understand them to be. And not the grade school version, or the high school version, or most certainly the pop culture version of them, which is what, since most of us are non-specialists, many of our brains might currently hold.

Anyway, the reason I'm bringing this up right now is not just to lay another podcast on you. Especially since there are all of those 72 episodes. (Although, if you do have the time and interest, I would certainly be pleased if you did check it out.) No, the reason that I'm telling you about it is that, as we go along with this one, I will sometimes refer you to specific history or science episodes of the last one. And in that way, if you want a deeper and fuller discussion of some particular issue, you can go there and find it. Which means that on this podcast I can concentrate on the decidedly non-academic religious and psychic and 'spiritual'. And only briefly discuss whatever history and science and philosophy which are relevant.

Anyway, while we're on the subject of websites, I should no doubt now mention that this podcast also has its own website, which is, strangely enough, [www.ManWomanSexGod.com](http://www.ManWomanSexGod.com) And there you will also find not only links to each audio episode, but also, if you prefer reading to listening, a PDF of each episode which you can download.

What's more, the next eight episodes or so especially are going to have certain concepts which at least some of you might find strange or hard to grasp, especially when just hearing them once on a podcast. And if that is the case, then I would suggest that you might want to go to the website and print out the PDF of whatever episode it is. And thus you will have a handy reference that you can later go back to and ponder.

Okay. Now that that's out of the way, I'm still kind of concerned. Because it is rather hard to absorb a whole bunch of new concepts. And I know from past experience that when I tell somebody some of these concepts, even though—especially after years of dealing with them—they appear simple and direct to me, often times I'll get just a blank expression in response.

So, if you'll indulge me a short digression, I'd like to make an analogy between what I am about to tell you and the Theory of Relativity.

Not that there is going to be any hard core math or physics in the rest of this podcast. But I am somewhat of a science nerd myself, and it occurs to me that there are certain parallels which one can draw.

So here goes:

And let's start with the speed of light. Which is really fast. And, if you don't remember this from science class, it is 186,000 miles per second. That's per second. And if you're fully

contemplating that fact for the first time, your reaction might well be, 'How can anyone even measure such a speed'?

Well, with great difficulty. Which is why it wasn't totally nailed down until towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. When it was, though, scientists found something very peculiar about it. Because it didn't seem to obey the laws of Newtonian physics. (And when I say Newtonian physics I mean all of the physics known up until then.)

Let me explain. Say that you fire a gun, and the bullet travels at speed  $x$ . But you're also on a moving train that is traveling forward at speed  $y$ . Newtonian physics says that the bullet will now be traveling at a speed of  $x + y$ .

Now logic dictates that if you were standing on a train and shining a flashlight, the total speed of the light emitted should therefore be 186,000 miles per second, plus the speed of the train. But very careful experiments showed that you just couldn't do that. The speed of light stayed totally constant no matter what. There was no way that you could get it to go any faster.

A total stumper. Not to mention that around the same time there were other experimental findings which did not line up with Newtonian physics, either.

So along comes Einstein. And in 1905 he showed that matter and energy have this intimate connection with one another: one can turn into the other. And, curiously, that connection involves the speed of light, which is called 'c'. Which is where the  $E=mc^2$  comes from. And you might notice that  $c^2$  is therefore a truly humongous number. Which means, among other things, that however you define the oomph of matter, it is therefore a teeny, teeny, tiny fraction of the oomph of energy.

Then, ten years later, in 1915, Einstein came out with his Theory of General Relativity. And that theory has conclusions which would appear to the educated mind of, say, 1900, as totally insane.

For example, there is the idea that light, which is weightless and therefore seemingly immune from gravity, nonetheless can be bent, if ever so slightly, by the gravity of a massive object, such as a star. Even weirder is the concept of time dilation. That is to say, once you start traveling at a significant fraction of the speed of light, time literally slows down for you relative to the rest of us who are whizzing around at 'normal' speeds. And you might already know of this one, since it is a common plot device in science fiction, where an astronaut comes back from some long mission, and everyone else has aged much more than he has.

But time dilation is most definitely not science fiction, since it, along with Relativity's other strange predictions, has been proven experimentally. Repeatedly. What's more, time dilation even has

real world effects. For instance, time on a satellite going around the Earth at 18,000 miles per hour has a time dilation of only millionths of a second. Nonetheless, our GPS system relies on very precisely triangulating the signals from several different satellites. And if the clocks on those satellites weren't being constantly updated to correct for that Einsteinian time dilation, GPS would be hopelessly thrown off in only a few days' time.

Okay. I don't want to go too far down a physics rabbit hole. But my main point here is that, on the face of it, you wouldn't think that the speed of light—which, by the way, is also the speed of all electromagnetic energy, from x-rays to radio waves—you wouldn't think that this speed is any more significant than, say, the speed of sound, or the size of a proton. But as it turns out the speed of light is almost *the* defining characteristic of the Universe. It's what, more or less, holds the Universe together. In a certain sense the entire Universe is a function of the speed of light.

And the fact that the speed of light is an absolute—you can't make it go any faster—means that so much else, even gravity or time, then necessarily turns out to be relative. (Hence Theory of Relativity.) For instance, if you had been on a beam of light at the moment of the Big Bang some 14 billion years ago, you'd still be there right now some 14 billion light years away from me. And not a single moment would have passed. Time only begins when you're traveling at less than the speed of light.

Of course it does take a lot of complicated math (which I can't do) to prove all of this. But trust me (and Einstein).

Most importantly, though, once your mind can successfully discard the assumptions of the previously held Newtonian physics, and then fully grasps the reality that the speed of light is an absolute, and if you are also as smart as Einstein, then the whole Theory of Relativity thing naturally follows.

Now what I'm about to tell you in the following episodes isn't nearly as complicated as all that. But it could well strike you as entirely different from that which you presently understand to be true. And it most definitely flies against certain bedrock beliefs of the present postmodern ideology which surrounds us. Once you do grasp the fundamental ideas behind what I will be saying, though, if you then carefully think it through, then—just as Relativity forced us to rethink much of Physics—these ideas which I will be sharing might well lead you to a somewhat different understanding of how life should be lived. Both individually and in terms of the larger society.

Anyway, I don't want to oversell what I am about to unleash on you. And I certainly hope that my little physics lecture didn't confuse the issue further.

So let's assume for the moment that my upcoming presentation is actually going to come across as logically obvious and/or immediately intuitive. And now let's change the topic completely.

Because I'd like to tell you a personal story from my youth. After all, personal stories do make it seem as if you're getting to know the speaker. And then maybe you'll believe said speaker all the more when they start telling you strange things. As I am about to do.

Okay. I'm not really being all that cynical here. I really do have a point, however elliptical it might seem right now, in telling you the following. So here goes:

Many, many years ago I grew up in a working class area of a small city in Pennsylvania. My neighborhood consisted of block after block of claustrophobic small, poorly built row houses with pretend brick siding, which was really tar paper.

I also grew up as a Protestant. And for some reason, when I was eight, on my own, for some reason I chose to go to what now would be called a Fundamentalist church. Although back then in the Fifties it would have been regarded as only slightly right of center, since back then nearly everyone was a believer. Back then hymns and carols were sung in public schools. Nativity scenes were placed in front of city hall. In 1955 a song with the refrain 'How do I know? The Bible tells me so!' made it up to #7 on the Billboard Hot 100.

My best friend back then, though, was a Catholic. And he went to Catholic school. So sometimes we would go and play at his school's playground. But I always felt a little uneasy when I did that. Now back in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century religions didn't mix well. For example, the main reason people really disliked Irish or Italian immigrants back then was because they were...Catholic. By the Fifties, of course, it was no longer like that. Still, even though the kid was my best friend, I really couldn't understand how anyone could fall for Catholicism. It felt creepy. First, everyone mindlessly did exactly what the Pope told them to do. They were also superstitious and had idolatrous statues in their churches. They couldn't eat meat on Friday. And they had to go to confession.

Strangest of all, they worshiped the Virgin Mary.

Now as a good Protestant I knew that everything anyone ever wanted to know about how to be a good Christian was right there in the Holy Scripture. I mean, didn't everybody know that? Which is why it was so important to go to Sunday School and Bible School. Which is why (and this does seem

extremely odd in retrospect) I actually read the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, when I was nine years old.

But although Mary had been prominently mentioned at the beginning of the books of Luke and Matthew, that was about it for the rest of the New Testament. Jesus never said, 'Honor my particular mother'. The apostle Paul didn't write, 'Mary is really important'. In fact, Paul never even mentioned Mary. So why was she so central to this Catholic religion? Why did they worship her? Why were they supposed to say 'Hail Mary, full of grace' a hundred times a day?

It just seemed really, really weird. And my conclusion about the strangeness of Mary fit in well with the rest of what I knew of history, too. After all, nobody cared about George Washington's mother. Nobody cared about Thomas Edison's mother. From what I knew of mothers most of what they did was to make sandwiches and to make you come in when it got dark. Worse, they were always telling you all the things that you couldn't do. So why would anyone want to worship that?

Whereas men did important and heroic things, like winning wars and climbing mountains. Even though Jesus's teachings were to be humble and to turn the other cheek, he was still a remarkably active guy. He went out and preached and gained disciples. He did impressive things like walking on water and creating loaves and fishes out of thin air. He aggressively kicked the moneychangers out of the temple. But Mary hadn't even gone to the trouble of seeking out the angel of the Lord. He had come to her and told her what she was going to do. Where was the heroism in that?

In fact, women in general didn't seem to do all that much. They just *were*. And the nine year old girls around me, they weren't all that interesting, either. They didn't like to play real games like baseball, where you kept score and always knew at the end of the competition who had won or lost. And the strange, pointless games that they did take part in: How in the world could anyone possibly *win* when playing 'Nurse' or 'House'? The whole idea was pretty unsettling.

Most disturbingly, they really, really liked to play with dolls. And, generally speaking, not 'Barbie' type dolls (which didn't even exist then), but *baby* dolls. They would pretend that they themselves had babies. As for me, I never wanted to even admit that I had once been a baby. Babies were really annoying and useless. What's more, it was pretty clear that the whole point of life was to keep going forward and to get bigger and older. To get as far away from babyhood as fast as possible. And to never look back.

But for girls, being with imaginary babies seemed to be incredibly entertaining. And if they had actual younger siblings they were even happier. They almost invariably just loved carrying them around and taking care of them.

Come to think of it, that seemed to be especially true if they came from Catholic families.

Well, by the sixth grade I had pretty much gotten over my fixation on being a good Bible reading Protestant. By the eighth grade I was looking down on people who still went to church. At some point in the tenth grade I was reading 'Atlas Shrugged' and thinking that Ayn Rand had all the answers. Then I forgot about all of that when I got a girlfriend.

Since I wasn't about to have a career anytime soon, and she wasn't about to have a baby, either, we didn't really spend much time thinking about what today would be called gender roles. And if we had thought about such things we might well have concluded that those roles had been created by an old regime that we were soon going to leave behind in the dust. After all, we thought that we shared the same political and intellectual goals. We listened to the same music. Being young with raging hormones, we certainly shared the same passion for making out. Therefore I had no reason to believe that her mind or state of being was in any way inherently different from mine.

And (if I had thought about it) that would have made the Catholic obsession with the Virgin Mary even more incomprehensible to me. In the state of mind I was in then the only plausible explanation for it would have been that the Church in its backward ignorance was trying to put its womenfolk into a humble, submissive straightjacket.

Then I went to college and the latter part of the Sixties happened. By the time my mind was blown and then put back together again, I (and many others) had probably gone through more firsthand at least quasi-spiritual experiences than virtually anyone else in the West had gone through for at least the past five hundred years. And whether those experiences had been 'real' or not wasn't the pertinent question. Rather it was: How do I re-create such an experience without wrecking my nervous system? This led me into a study of all of those woolly spiritual and quasi-spiritual questions, practices, and traditions. And that's how I ended up as a practitioner of yoga.

By then I was well aware of the 'feminine principle'. After all, those hippie Tarot decks showed occult/mystical visions of female figures such as The Empress and the High Priestess. Hinduism had its female gods such as Shakti and Kali, not to mention those buxom young ladies who followed

Krishna around, and who were enchanted with his flute playing. The I Ching was all about the interplay of yin and yang.

But although said principle made sense to me—after all, it did sound logical and mathematical that yin and yang should be exactly equal—it all felt rather theoretical. As a practical matter it still seemed that 'lady energy' was just a confused, emotional version of 'male energy'. Anyway, yoga taught one to reside at that Third Eye, and up there everyone seemed to agree that there was no male or female.

And that old puzzlement about the Virgin Mary? By now, at least in my own mind, I had realized that Jesus' teachings were very similar to what a guru from India would have said. Which meant, to me at least, that to a large extent Christianity had no doubt misinterpreted his message. Which meant that it really didn't matter what the particular beliefs of Catholicism were, since in the end so many of them must have been the result of misguided speculation.

Nonetheless...

The Tarot and the Kaballah reeked of Power, whether of occult forces or outright magic. The Shakti energy in Hinduism was supposed to be so powerful that no mere human could handle it. The goddess Kali is depicted as holding a dagger in one hand and the severed head of a man in another. Those certainly weren't 'traditional values'.

Moreover, as feminist thought gained more and more traction in the Seventies and Eighties, modern female energy was supposed to be Assertive. Strong. Determined. Independent. Able and willing to be the equal of a man. And any woman who did not aspire to that was seen as some sort of sad, put upon sucker. A patsy. A fool.

The Virgin Mary, though, continued to be the exact opposite of the feminist ideal. She was meek and modest. Quiet and humble. She prayed for sinners. She had an air of hopeful anticipation.

She just... was. She existed in a State of Grace.

So... What exactly was the deal with the Virgin Mary?

Okay. As I said, this episode was meant to be a short break in the action. A pause. And next episode we're going to start it all up again and plow right into the heavy stuff. The main presentation. The plant based meat and potatoes.

But that is for next time. Right now, though, let's just sit back and wait while my friend the engineer... cues the music.