

CHAPTER ELEVEN

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The New Testament and Christ's View of Religion

The New Testament includes the three **synoptic** (a Greek word, meaning with one eye, because of their similarity in content and style) gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Included also is the fourth gospel, John's, different in its greater detail, in its emphasis upon the meaning of the historical events and the presence of the divine nature through the human nature of one person, **Jesus Christ**, Hebrew meaning literally, anointed one, and **Immanuel**, literally, God with us.

I will baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

Christianity and Communism have one common misunderstanding as to their origins. Occidental popular opinion thinks Communism to be eastern and Christianity to be western, but the contrary is true. Communism was born in the Libraries of London, developed in the coffee houses lining London's streets by Marx and Engles, the former educated in German and British schools, the latter in British schools. Then, Communism traveled to Berlin where Kaiser William ordered Lenin (also a western educated product) to be sealed in a boxcar and sent to Moscow - so Czar Nicolai's Russia would be destabilized and the Prussian Kaiser might pursue a World War without worry about defending his eastern front!

So, also Christianity is an eastern religion, born in Palestine from which Christianity penetrated into Syria through its two original languages, eastern Aramaic (the language of the local people and Christ) and Alexandrian Greek (the language of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles). Indeed, Judaism itself, Christianity's religion of origin and the Old Testament are also eastern, spreading from the Pillars of Hercules to the ancient eastern boundaries of what had once been the empire of Alexander the Great which then became occupied by the Roman legions. [The historical development of and factual support of these statements may be found within the celebrated *The History of the Primitive Church*, by Jules Lebreton, S.J., and Jacques Zeiller (Macmillan, New York, 1944, particularly Volume 1, p. 1-80)] This Christianity, oriental in origin, moved into and spread through the cities of the Roman Empire during the first part of the second Century A.D. by means of the Latin language, Rome's language of commerce.

"Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind see again, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear..."

As a matter of fact, three characteristics of the New Testament parallel eastern thinking: first, the use of stories, or parables; secondly, the emphasis upon

the indwelling of the divine as taught through biological and organic examples; thirdly, the basic and extensive use of water as a medium through which the divine, or sacred presence unites with people. Recent scholarship, for instance, proves that the so-called Greek origin Aesop's fables are Indian in origin, as characteristic of eastern thought and were transplanted to Greece, translated into Greek and published in the occidental world. Oriental peoples used story and myth as analogies to make the imperceptible and the invisible, or spiritual reality understandable to the average person, that is, to teach the unknowable and the unnameable. Secondly, Christ repeatedly uses biological and botanical models as He compares His

relationship to His followers - as head to bodily members; as vine to branches and so forth.

Christ's New Testament use of parables attests to its oriental origin and serves the same purpose Okakura posits for the use of parables or stories in his Book of Tea:

It is to be regretted that as yet there appears to be no adequate presentation of the Taoists and Zen doctrines in any foreign language, though we have had several laudable attempts. Translation is always a treason, and as a Ming author observes, can at its best be only the reverse side of a brocade - all the threads are there, but not the subtlety of color or design. But, after all, what great doctrine is there which is easy to expound? The ancient sages never put their teachings in systematic form. They spoke in paradoxes, for they were afraid of uttering half-truths. They began by talking like fools and ended by making their hearers wise. Lao-tzu himself, with his quaint humor, says, "If people of inferior intelligence hear of the *Tao*, they laugh immensely. It would not be the *Tao* unless they laughed at it".

Indeed, when Christ's disciples asked him why he spoke in parables, after He told the parable of the sower, he stated:

Then the disciples went up to him and asked, 'Why do you talk to them in parables?' 'Because,' he replied 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed to you, but they are not revealed to them, for anyone who has will be given more and he will have more than enough; but from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. The reason I talk to them in parables is that they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding. So in their case this prophesy of Isaiah is being fulfilled:

You will listen and listen again, but not understand, see and see again, but not perceive, for the heart of this nation has grown course; their ears are full of hearing and they have shut their eyes for fear they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart and be converted and be healed by me.

But happy are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear! I tell you solemnly, many prophets and holy men longed to see what you see and never saw it; to hear what you hear and never heard it. (Matthew:13:10-17; Mark: 4:1-2; Luke: 8: 4)

Notice that the Iraqi people of Gilgamesh's time wrote a myth and even the late nineteenth century AD Okakura provided the myth of Pia's harp. Even Plato provides us with his myth of Poros and Penia to explain the beauty of love and wisdom! Our twentieth and twenty-first century problems radiate from the worship and application of Bacon's Novum Organon and its rigorous requirement that the only true knowledge is applied knowledge which is productive of steam, nuclear energy and all the other "profitable" and useable items with which contemporary humans gorge themselves and to which they enslave themselves!

The use of water as an analogy for humility to illustrate wisdom and as a cleansing and nourishing agent illustrative of nature and as an instrument to confer holiness is essentially oriental in origin. Lao-tzu states that the "best man is like water". (Tone poem #8; see #78 and #34) Even the Old Testament mythical story of Noah and the flood signifies the cleansing of the earth (Genesis, 6:13-8:14). John the Baptist reiterates this same purpose within the New Testament as he calls his fellow Jews to be baptized in the Jordan. (Mark, 1:1-8, Matt. 3:1-12; Luke 3:1-17) Then Christ himself offers the Samaritan woman "living water" as they discuss life at the town's well. (John 4:1-42) In addition, Christ refers to Himself as "...the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:4-5) and, of course, His birth was announced by a

**The Word (*logos*) was made flesh
and he lived among us.**

star, or light rising in the East. Now, both "way" and "light" are traditional Oriental symbols of the divine or sacred. (See **Lao-tzu's** poems 30, 38, 52, 67, 73, 77).

In addition, a comparison of John's *Gospel* of about 90 A. D. with Heraclitus' *Fragments* of sixth century B.C., shows a remarkable similarity with the Greek view of the difference between brute animal and human animal emphasizing that the human animal's difference is found in speech, literally, **logos**. Heraclitus, for instance, describes God as the eternal **Logos**, then determines that likeness to God for the human animal means to live according to reason. Finally, Heraclitus compares reason to fire and, thus light so that living according to reason means living in the light which illuminates the shadows of sense perceptions so that we humans might achieve knowledge and thereby, participate in that light which is God.

In the beginning was the Word:
the Word was with God
and the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things came to be,
not one thing had its being but through him.
All that came to be had life in him
and that life was the light of men,
a light that shines in the dark,
a light that darkness could not overpower.
A man came, sent by God.
His name was John.
He came as a witness,
as a witness to speak for the light,
so that everyone might believe through him.
He was not the light,
only a witness to speak for the light.
The Word was the true light,
that enlightens all men;
and he was coming into the world.
He was in the world
that had its being through him.
and the world did not know him.
He came to his own domain
and his own people did not accept him.
But to all who did accept him
he gave the power to become children of God,
to all who believe in the name of him
who was born not out of human stock,
or urge of the flesh
or will of man

but of God himself.
 The Word was made flesh,
 he lived among us,
 and we saw his glory,
 the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father,
 full of grace and truth. (*John, 1:1-14*,

(All quotations are taken from and all references relate to The Jerusalem Bible, 1966 edition.)

This "prologue" of John is unique, particularly when compared to the **Tao** of Lao-tzu, specifically, tone poem # 1:

The **Tao** that can be told of is not the eternal **Tao**.
 The name that can be named is not the eternal name;
 The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth;

and tone poem #23:

Nature says few words.
 For the same reason a whirlwind does not last a whole morning;
 Nor does a rainstorm last a whole day...

And tone poem # 32:

Tao is absolute and has no name.
 Though the uncarved wood is small,
 It cannot be employed (used as a vessel) by anyone....
 Then human civilization arose and there were names,
 Since there were names,
 It were well one knew where to stop.
 He who knows where to stop
 May be exempt from danger...

John's "Prologue" specifies that the "The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth". If a person accepts John's Gospel, then two consequences follow: first, that person can never again think about words pronounced by human speech in the same way for two reasons. First, any words a follower of Christ utters must be put into practice, that is, become flesh, so no Catholic or Protestant Christian can ever accept being a Christian in name or merely "talk" about Christ, but must always make Christ flesh, that is, do the works of Christ, perform the corporal works of mercy, feed the hungry, cloth the naked, shelter the homeless and so forth. This 1st Century A.D. New Testament requirement finds an echo in the 6th Century B.C. Fragment 10 of Heraclitus:

To be temperate is the greatest virtue. Wisdom consists in speaking and acting the truth, giving heed to the nature of things.

Indeed, Christ Himself specifies such to be the case and a condition of "salvation" or, absent these, "damnation" within the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 25, verses 31-46 within the so-called "Last Judgment" parable. Christ provides a parable of a king presiding at the Last Judgment whereat the king responds to the "virtuous" or "vicious" people who question why they are where they are: "For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me". But, each group insists that neither knows this king and the king answers: "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did (or did not do) this to one of the least

of these brothers of mine, you did it to me". - so much for the claim of some Christians that unless one "knows" Jesus Christ, one can not be "saved"!

The second reason is that any Catholic or Protestant Christian must look upon human speech as a sacred activity, so that one's human speech can never be profane, but must always be spoken in such a way that the sacred manifests itself through that speech. Of course, the sixth century B.C. Heraclitus, as we have read, would seem to insist on the same sacred presence within a human being and the same sacred purpose for human speech:

Although this **Logos** is eternally valid, yet men are unable to understand it - not only before hearing it, but even after they have heard it for the first time. That is to say, although all things come to pass in accordance with this **Logos**, men seem to be quite without any experience of it - at least if they are judged in the light of the words and deeds as I am here setting forth.
(**Frag. 1**)

We should let ourselves be guided by what is common to all. Yet, although the **Logos** is common to all, most men live as if each of them had a private intelligence of his own. (**Frag. 2**)

The second consequence of this "Word was made flesh" is the relevance of the oriental viewpoint in two ways. First, as "The Word was made flesh..." this diametrically seems opposed to the oriental Tao because as "absolute" "(it) has no name". Indeed, Lao-tzu is adamant that the **Tao** is nameless and unknowable and even "(Mother) Nature says few words", so this "Word was made flesh" would seem incomprehensible to Lao-tzu, as such certainly is contradictory and a "come down" for the divine to any Buddhist.

Yet, upon reflection, this "Word...made flesh" is surprisingly oriental and understandable within the context of the **Tao**. The reasons for this is Latin based. The English word obedience, for instance, is a virtue and is a **sine qua non** for a vital relationship to God through Christ in the New Testament - as Christ Himself says within Matt 7:21-27: "But everyone who listens to these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a stupid man who built his house on sand". Matthew also records Christ citing Isaiah (Matt.13: 10-17) to explain why He speaks in parables:

You will listen and listen again, but not understand, see and see again, but not perceive. For the heart of this nation has grown coarse, their ears are dull of hearing and they have shut their eyes, for fear they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart and be converted and be healed by me. (Is. 6:9-15)

Now, the English word obedience comes from the Latin **ob-audire**, meaning, to give ear, or to hear, literally, for hearing and, thus, any so-called Christian must listen to, or, rather be obedient to and, therefore, live according to Christ's words. (Psalms 119, verses 17-18 and 1 Samuel 4:10-14 offer Old Testament corroboration of the connection of listening and obeying.) The New Testament emphasizes the obedience of Christ, from Luke's episode of His parents finding Christ in the temple teaching at age twelve, "Did you know not what I must be busy with my Father's affairs?" (Luke: 2: 41-50) to Luke's Agony in the Garden, "...let your will be done, not mine" (Luke 22: 41-46) and the last words John records from the cross, "It is consummated" (John 19: 29-30). Indeed, Matthew presents Christ saying that neither knowledge of Him nor calling His name will be effective when death comes:

It is not those who say to me, 'Lord, Lord' who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven. When the day comes many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in your name, cast out demons in your name, work many miracles in your name?' Then I shall tell them to their faces: I have never known you; away from me, you evil men!

Therefore, everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock.
(Matt. 7:21-27)

Thus, Christ-like actions, motivated by unconditional love not conditioned words are the essential characteristic of any New Testament Christian. Yet, actions motivated by unconditional love according to nature are likewise the essential characteristic of any follower of **Tao** as tone poem # 67 clearly states:

All the world says: my teaching (**Tao**) greatly resembles folly.
Because it is great; therefore it resembles folly.
If it did not resemble folly, it would have long ago become petty indeed!

I have Three Treasures; guard them and keep them safe:
The first is the maternal heart of love.
The second is, Never too much.
The third is, Never be the first in the world.
Through the maternal heart of love, one has no fear;
Through not doing too much, one has amplitude (of reserve power);
Through not presuming to be first in the world, one develops one's talent and lets it mature.
If one forsakes love and fearlessness, forsakes restraint and reserve power, forsakes following behind and rushes in front, He is doomed!
For love is victorious in attack and invulnerable in defense.
Heaven arms with the maternal heart of love those it would not see destroyed.

New Testament validity is the same as that presumed for the Old Testament and includes the recorded testament method with which **Yhwh** deals with the chosen people, namely, through mediators, called prophets, literally, those who speak before the people. In recent years, a Sonoma, California based group, called The Jesus Seminar have debated and published articles and a book classifying the statements within the New Testament as definitely, probably or not possibly spoken by Jesus. Independently of their presumed sincerity, this is ludicrous for two reasons.

First, none of us, in our right minds could definitively classify our statements in such a manner, given the passage of time and independent of electronic recording devices. Secondly, who cares? As a matter of fact, few of the influential philosophic and religious works, not even the works of Aristotle (except, perhaps his Nichomachean Ethics), certainly not the **Analects** of Confucius, the **Tao** of Lao-tzu, the **Gita**, even the works of Buddha were written by any of them and some were not actually spoken by others of them - scholarly doubt even exists as to the very existence of a Lao-tzu and we know that the present works of Aristotle and Confucius were the direct result of their students not of these masters. The issue is not which are the actual words or statements but first, whether or not they are true and secondly, in the case of the Old and New Testaments, whether or not these texts are what scriptural scholars classify as "inspired"? Recall in this context that even the pagan Greek Socrates stated unequivocally that his search for the meaning of human wisdom was inspired, both by the Delphic Oracle and thus, as his inside "conscious" guide. (Apology, 20: b;40:a 1-3)

Earlier, even Heraclitus stated that only "awake" humans perceived and listened to the presence of **Logos**.

I will baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament tells the story of **Yhwh** using human beings as instruments through which **Yhwh** informs the chosen people of the divine intentions. Abraham was the first such prophet, followed by Moses as well as others down to the establishment of kings, beginning with Saul, as **Yhwh**'s concession to the Jewish people's demand for a king - so they would be like other nations! (1 Samuel, 8-10; 12:12-15) The New Testament picks up this story with John the Baptist as the last of these prophets, saying

Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. (Mark. 1:4-8)

The validity of these testaments rests on this Judaic tradition. The testaments themselves, therefore, become the **biblos**, literally, *the book of Yhwh's* dealings with human beings through the instrumentality of other human beings. This so-called "salvation history" underscores the fact that **Yhwh**, God as the "first cause" deals with human beings through messengers, so-called secondary causes. (Even Mother nature's sun uses the air as a secondary cause, a medium through which its light and heat are mitigated so as not to destroy planet earth!) These human messengers or instruments carry out **Yhwh**'s intentions within their own human limitations, either willingly,

as in the case of a reluctant Isaiah or unwillingly, as in the case of a resistant Jonah (Jonah: 1:1-16).

"The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me".

The issue is not whether or not **Yhwh** could have acted differently, or can act differently, the issue is that **Yhwh** chose this manner of dealing with human beings and the natural world as is recorded within both Old and New Testaments. The interesting thing about this traditional Judaic/Christian "salvation history" is that the analysis and writings of Joseph Campbell about the "masks of God" restate the very same manner of God dealing with human beings in all primitive religious myths, that is, as the **sacred** manifesting itself through the **profane**. Mark's Gospel cites the total text from Isaiah, thus, reminding his readers of the continuity between the Old and New Testaments:

Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way. A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord: make his paths straight. (Mark 1:1-3; Is. 40:3)

Yet, a **caveat**, or warning is necessary here relative to the relationship between a natural virtue of religion, through the **homo religiosus** described by Eliade within The Sacred and the Profane and denominational religion found in various "denominations" within the human, civilized world we call "christian". Seemingly forgotten are two clear facts to most such "denominational" believers: first, both the Old and New Testaments contain statements or parables which describe what to all intents and purposes is what is called the "natural virtue of religion". David's Psalms 31, for instance, specifies that the law of God is written in the hearts of all virtuous men:

The mouth of the virtuous man murmurs wisdom, and his tongue speaks what is right; with the Law of God in his heart, his steps can never falter. (30-31)

In addition, as we saw, Jeremiah specifies that **Yhwh** has written in the hearts of men, thus, reiterating what the Pentateuch's **Deuteronomy** already specified:

Jeremiah and Christ seem to specify a “natural virtue of religion”, included within a person’s relationship to self, others and God.

...**Yhwh** our God is the one **Yhwh**. You shall love **Yhwh** your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. Let these words I urge on you today be written on your heart...(Dt. 6:4-7)

It is **Yhwh** who speaks. No, this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel when those days arrive - it is **Yhwh** who speaks. Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people. There will be no further need for neighbor to try to teach neighbor, or brother to say to brother, 'Learn to know **Yhwh**!' No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest - it is **Yhwh** who speaks ... (Jer.31:31-34)

“The mouth of the virtuous man murmurs wisdom...with the Law of his God in his heart...”

Finally, the New Testament also provides at least two examples of “catholicity”, or the universality manifested by Christ.

First, both the Gospels of Luke (9:49-50) and Mark (9:38-40) record Christ telling his disciples not to stop anyone “who works a miracle in my name”, even though they are not “in our company”, or denominational group because “anyone who is not against us is for us”. Secondly, Christ Himself provides us with the **Abba**, or Our Daddy prayer which manifests a biological relationship of human being to God, omitting any denominational characteristics. This reference to **Yhwh** as **Abba**, Daddy is the primary reason the Orthodox Jews, Rabbi, Sadducee and Pharisee sought the death of this Jesus Christ. However, Christ becomes much more specific as John’s Gospel documents:

It is true that I am testifying on my own behalf,, but my testimony is still valid because I know where I come from and where I am going. But you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards. I judge no one but if I judge, my judgment will be sound because I am not alone; the one who sent me is with me and in your Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. I may be testifying on my own behalf, but the Father who sent me is my witness too. (John 8:13-19)

This Christ, therefore, states unequivocally that the Orthodox Jewish **Yhwh** is His Father and is present within Him! The Jews were infuriated. One final example, which Chapter Twelve discusses, is Matthew’s Gospel parable, *The Last Judgment*. This parable offers no other criteria for holiness and “salvation” than “...in so far as you did this (or neglected to do this) to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me”:

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from

another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand, 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.' Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?' And the king will answer, 'I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.' Next he will say to those on his left hand, 'Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me.' Then it will be their turn to ask, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or naked, sick or in prison and did not come to your help?' Then he will answer, 'I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me.' And they will go away to eternal punishment and the virtuous to eternal life. (Matthew: 25:31-46).

John's gospel follows his "prologue" with the event wherein Jewish Pharisees sent "priests and Levites from Jerusalem" to ask John the Baptist: "Who are you?...Are you Elijah?...Are you the Prophet?"

John the Baptist stated that he was not Elijah, Moses, or Christ. "I am, as Isaiah prophesied: 'a voice that cries in the wilderness: Make a straight way for the Lord'", that is a profane human voice through which the sacred is heard! (John 1:19-23) Later, Luke records Christ's reply to John the Baptist's disciples' question to him: "John the Baptist "has sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come or have we to wait for someone else?'"

Of course, even the rules of Logic, as well as the practice of poetry include literal and figurative uses of language, as well as the use of analogy. Indeed, few human language words are univocal in meaning, and most are limited to mathematics.

Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind see again, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, the Good news is proclaimed to the poor and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me. (Luke 7:18-30)

Christ, on the contrary, states that it is the actions which accomplish healing and show compassion which show forth the presence of the sacred in the profane world! This reply of Christ is unique in two respects: first, the Old Testament prophets recorded few direct physical ailment cures, the most notable being that of Elijah laying down upon the body of the widow's son who subsequently returned to life. (1Kings 17:17-24) Old Testament prophets typically told sick people what **Yhwh** told the prophet to say, so the cure came through the ill person "believing" as shown by his or her doing what the prophet told him or her to do. A classic example is that of Naaman, army commander to the oriental King of Aram. Naaman's cure resulted from doing what the prophet Elisha told him to do. (2Kings 5:1-14) Christ, on the contrary, used both means of curing: He frequently effected cures by physical touch as well as by verbal command. The second unique difference between

Christ and the traditional prophets is that He tells John the Baptist's disciples that He is not a typical prophet, or prophetic mouthpiece, rather, He directs changes, whether these changes be from illness to health or from being a messenger to being the message itself - "I am the way, the truth and the life".

As if this were not enough, the very beginning of Christ's public life occurs with His reading of a scripture text, disrupting the synagogue at Nazara: "...where he had been brought up". "He (Christ) came to Nazara...went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day...(and)...stood up to read:

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the down-trodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favor. (Luke 4:16-30)

Luke continues his description of the event:

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them: 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen'.

Christ's statements occasion panic in the synagogue:

They spring to their feet and hustled him out of the town; they took him up to the brow of the hill their town was built on, intending to throw him down the cliff, but he slipped through the crowd and walked away.

At least two other instances further alienate the Jewish leaders, including the Pharisees and Scribes, the established priesthood among the Orthodox Jews and following in the line of Aaron from the Tribe of Levites, the designated Old Testament priests. (Exodus 39:1) The first was Christ's recorded answer to the question: "how do we pray?"; the second is the recorded response of Christ to the money changers and sellers of sacrificial offerings positioned within the temple precincts, placed there by the Scribes and Pharisees who collected fees from these religious article entrepreneurs.

Christ's disciples asked: "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples":

"Daddy, may your name be held holy, your kingdom come..."

He said to them, 'Say this when you pray: 'Say **Abba** (Hebrew, meaning literally daddy, but translated as father in most English translations, the familial way of referring to a biological father by a Hebrew child, similar to the personal **tu** rather than impersonal **vos** in French) may your name be held holy, your kingdom come; give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us. And do not put us to the test.' (Luke 1:11-14)

Matthew, 6:9-13) repeats this form of the response with minor variations. This Hebrew word is explosive because Christ states that an analogous biological relationship exists between a person praying to **Yhwh**, the very suggestion of which constitutes violations of the first three Commandments which Moses gave to the Hebrew people!

Two important similarities exist between this New Testament, Jesus Christ and the myths which Eliade analyzed within the Sacred and the Profane.

The literal and figurative meanings clearly are available to Christ and He chooses the literal, repeating His statement and adding emphasis to it - notwithstanding Joseph Campbell's objection to the contrary.

First, Christ states that His relationship with the "Father" and with his followers is biological. Myths also abound in biological analogies. Secondly, this Christ tells stories, called parables, but just as possibly called myths, thereby placing in figurative images the practice of this New Testament religion.

Mark subsequently tells the story of Christ expelling the money-changers and upsetting the booths of pigeon and dove sellers within the confines of the Temple at Jerusalem:

So they reached Jerusalem and he went into the Temple and began driving out those who were selling pigeons. Nor would he allow anyone to carry anything through the Temple. And he taught them and said: Does not scripture say: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples'? But you have turned it into a robber's den. This came to the ears of the chief priests and scribes and they tried to find some way of doing away with him... (Mark 11:15-19); Matt. 21:12-17)

The New Testament Christ accompanies His actions with words which state His personal relationship to **Yhwh** even within the Temple. These personal references constitute blasphemy and even idolatry under the Judaic law. Yet, notwithstanding the reaction of the established and orthodox Jewish chief priests and leaders to these statements of Christ, their rejection of another statement, one which prefigured His institution of the priesthood and the Eucharist was especially bitter and vicious. John records a description of a talk which Christ gave at the Capernaum synagogue, during the feast commemorating the Passover of the angel of death in Egypt. Within that reported talk, Christ said:

I tell you most solemnly, it was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven, it is my father who gives you the bread from heaven, the factual bread; for the bread of God is that which comes from heaven and gives life to the world. (John 6:32-33)

The listeners, the chief priests, Scribes, Pharisees and leaders ask: "Sir, give us that bread always". John records the following response:

I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry. He who believes in me will never thirst.

Later, in a talk, John observes that the "Jews were complaining to each other about Him because H said: "I am the bread that came down from heaven". Then, John says that Christ told them: "Stop complaining to each other", following with this most forceful and descriptive statement:

I am the bread of life, Your fathers ate the manna in the desert and they are dead; but this is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that a man may eat it and not die. I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.

When the Jews started arguing with one another: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?", Christ pressed His statement, leaving no doubt as to its real meaning, as He even refers back to the Old Testament **manna** (**Exodus 16:1-36**) and specifies that the bread which Christ gives is animate, not inanimate, as was the **manna**, that is, *His bread is the sacred manifestation of the living God*:

I tell you most solemnly, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you will not have life in you. Anyone who does not eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life and I shall raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him. As I, who am sent by the living Father, myself draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will draw life from me. This is the bread come down from heaven, not like the bread our ancestors ate; they are dead but anyone who eats this bread will live forever. (John 6:32-58)

John simply comments:

After this, Jesus stayed in Galilee; he could not stay in Judaea because the Jews were out to kill him. (John 7:1)

Now, only an Orthodox Jew can feel and understand the revulsion which these statements of Jesus Christ occasioned. Three of the five books of the **Torah**, or **Law**, **Leviticus**, **Numbers** and **Deuteronomy** specify detailed, even minute dietary laws the Pharisees ordered the Jews to obey as a condition of keeping the covenant with **Yhwh**. Such include the specific exclusion of any practice such as cannibalism, as practiced by people surrounding the Orthodox Jews within their so-called "primitive" religions - indeed, Spanish Catholic Conquistadors reacted with similar resentment and revulsion at particular practices among the Incas, occasioning a Franciscan Friar to destroy the hieroglyphic tables recording their history and hopefully, in his mind, forcing them to forget such "paganism".

Indeed, Joseph Campbell documents many such instances of the use of specific foods as a way to participate in the presence and sometimes share in the life of the *Sacred*. As a matter of fact, even the contemporary science of biochemistry documents the fact that the human digestive system changes chemicals, such as Vitamins A, C, D, E and many others into our living bodies. Such is the factual manner in which nature changes non-living into living, whether plant, animal or human. Christ, on the contrary, tells His listeners that He, the Son of God will change those who eat His body and drink His blood into Him whom scripture states has both a Divine and Human nature. Yet, Christ did not just tell Jews about Him being food for them, he went much farther - however, one might argue, if this Christ is truly the Son of God, the same God as **Yhwh** of the Old Testament who created **human-kind**, from the dust by breathing into the earth, why could not He, Christ, change bread and wine into His Body and Blood?

The Old Testament ordered the Jews to love **Yhwh** "...with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mine" and "...neighbor as yourself". (**Leviticus 19:18-19**; **Deut. 6:5**) Christ Himself told the Rabbinic lawyer that "...on these two commandments hang the whole law and the prophets also". (**Matt. 22:38-39**) So, in this context, the ten commandments had directed the Jews to give up those practices which were not acts of love, whether of Yhwh, such as worshiping strange gods, or of neighbor, such as

coveting the neighbor's wife, as well as adultery, or of self, such as keeping holy the Sabbath day. (*Exodus: 20:1-21; 34:1-28*) Christ, therefore, redirected the Jews from the literal meaning of the ten commandments to the spirit and purpose of those *Old Testament* commandments. Christ then announced the parable of the *Good Samaritan* which to the Jews was an oxymoron, since Samaritans were despicable both because they were uncouth and polytheists. His message of love as a condition for the very worship of *Yhwh* includes loving Samaritans and enemies notwithstanding the fact that the Jews considered them uncouth, dirty and untouchable, so bad, in fact that an Orthodox Jew would have to journey around Samaria in order to arrive at Jerusalem on their way to worship at the Temple or they would be unclean.

Christ, of course, went further in His aggravation of the Orthodox Jews by warning them "...if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven". (*Matt. 5:20-21*) He tells them not only that they cannot kill, but they cannot be angry with a brother; they not only cannot commit an act of adultery, but they commit adultery if they look with lust upon a woman. In addition, He said that although Moses permitted divorce merely by issuing a writ of divorce to one's wife and His followers commit adultery if they marry a divorced person, except in the case of adultery by one mate. Furthermore, they could exact an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, according to a provision within the oriental 1792 B.C. Egyptian code of Hammurabi - prior to this "code", any retaliatory punishment of the desert nomadic peoples (of whom the Jews were a group) included punishment of a person's whole family and any capital punishment included the killing of all living relatives of the person who was offensive, literally to whip them off the face of the earth! Christ's followers, on the contrary, must love their enemies and do good to those who hurt them. (*Matt. 5:20-48; Lk. 6:27-36*)

Two characteristics of the *New Testament* Jesus Christ stand out in relationship to all the prophets described within the *Old Testament*. First, His attacks on the Jewish priesthood and the Orthodox denominational practice of religion of that time, even to the point of condemning the Pharisees face to face as "whitened sepulchers", "hypocrites" and "blind guides leading the blind". Christ upbraided them for religious practices which had nothing to do with the worship of God, but only with their increased power and recognition, quoting Isaiah who stated that they only paid God "lip-service while their hearts are far from me" - Isaiah even states that such worship "is useless". (*Matt. 15:1-9*) Christ stated that the fear engendered fear into their followers by the minutia the Pharisees and Scribes required is useless and only faith is required. (*Mk. 5:35-43; Matt. 23:13-36*) Of course, this kind of ethno-centric condemnation is not unprecedented. Socrates upbraided his fellow Athenians for the lack of care of the soul and, before him, Heraclitus castigated his fellow Ephesians for exiling Hermadorus.

Secondly, Jesus Christ is unique both in His wisdom and His authority. (*Matt. 13:53-58; 2:41-49*) This uniqueness and authority have been argued throughout the last 200 years, but neither can be denied by the most avid enemy of Christianity. Many so-called Christians, such as James Jones and most recently, David Koresh have tried to imitate that authority, however, all of them lack the love of enemies, self and God which is the hallmark of Jesus Christ. They also are fearful and instill fear, rather than love, as Christ did, without fear and with a love so strong that one set of words credited to Him by the Gospel of Luke is: "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing":. (*Lk. 23:33-34*) Indeed, even the Hindu may preach tolerance and the Muslim may preach fidelity, the Buddhist may preach purification, yet, no traditional religious leader, certainly not Lao-tzu or

Confucius has ever practiced the personal love of self, God and enemy as the New Testament shows Jesus Christ to have done.

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