

Cult and Place of cult

During the past centuries, from paganism to Judaism, to Christianity and to the Islam, men have invented cults and places of cult - pagodas, temples, churches, and mosques - to worship the multitude of gods or the One Unique God. The monotheists have adopted pagan cults in their veneration of the Unique God: the Jews in the Temple of Jerusalem with sacrificial cults of different animals, incense, etc...and in the synagogues with ritual gestures; the Christians, in the churches and the Muslims in the mosques have done the same. Buddhists, Hindus etc... practise their cults in their different pagodas etc...

When God revealed Himself to men, He repeated several times by the prophets that the only cult He wants is love, the site of which is man's heart. This cancels all the materialistic cults, as well as the places where they are still practised. Men couldn't yet detach themselves from the materialistic cults offered in materialistic buildings. This is due to many reasons, the most important of which are the prestige and money offered to the religious leaders who keep their "faithful followers" in a state of submission, ignorance and immaturity in order to be dependant upon the different religious hierarchies.

Here are some divine interventions by which the Creator rejects the places and the offerings of the material cults and specifies that the unique place of cult is man's heart and the only offering agreeable to Him is love:

When David wanted to build a temple, God sent him the prophet Nathan: "Go and tell my servant David: 'Yahweh says this: Are you to build me a temple to live in? ...Did I ever say to any of the judges of Israel,...Why do you not build me a cedar-wood temple?..." (2 Samuel 7,4-13). In spite of that, Salomon built the first temple, which was subsequently destroyed twice.

2- When Jesus came, He foretold the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, in order to build up the Spiritual Temple : "Destroy this temple (the temple of Jerusalem) ; and in three days I will raise it up...He was speaking of the Temple that was His Body", risen up after three days (John 2,19-22).

3- The Samaritan, speaking to Jesus, told Him: " Our fathers worshipped on this mountain (the Garizim mountain in Samaria) though you say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship". Jesus responded: "Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem...But the hour is coming, indeed is already here, when **true worshippers** will worship the Father in spirit and truth; that is the **kind of worshippers the Father seeks**. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth" (John 4,20-24).

These words deserve a meditation: "Believe me woman", Jesus says. It is difficult, in fact, to believe in the spiritual cult, that is practised neither in Jerusalem, nor in Rome, nor in Mecca etc.... The "**true worshippers**" offer this cult in their hearts, because "that is the kind of worshippers the Father seeks", not the kind men want. Jesus revealed this fact 2000 years ago. His disciples have not yet understood the depth of this revelation. Instead, they keep on worshipping God dressing themselves up in purple. They practise such a material cult ignoring and disregarding the Holy Scriptures and the biblical prophecies therein. Yet, the heart of the cult, which God agrees, is a cult in spirit, a cult through knowledge and love for what God has revealed. Those who seek this knowledge and pass it over to others (their sons, neighbours, the ones who desire to listen) offer a real cult in spirit and truth to the Almighty.

4- The prophet Micah (VIIIth century A.C.) had already revealed the nature of the only cult which pleases God, the spiritual one: love. In fact he says: "With what shall I enter Lord's presence, ...with burnt offerings, with calves one year old? Will he be pleased with rams by the thousand, with ten thousand streams of oil? Shall I offer my eldest son for my wrongdoing? ...You have already beentold what is right, and what God wants of you. **Only this** to do what is right, **to love** (God) tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6,6-8). God also revealed to the prophet Hosea : "for faithful **love** is what pleases me, not sacrifice ; **knowledge** of God, not burnt offerings" (Hosea 6,6).

The Creator spoke again through the prophet Amos: "I hate, I scorn your festivals, I take no pleasure in your solemn assemblies. When you bring me burnt offerings and your oblations, I do not accept them and I do not look at your communion sacrifices of fat cattle. Spare me the din of your chanting, let me hear none of your strumming on lyres, but let justice flow like water and uprightness like a never-failing stream" (Amos 5,21-24).

5- Jeremiah, after Micah, revealed that God had never prescribed sacrificial cults: "For when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, I said nothing to them, gave them no orders about burnt offerings or sacrifices. My one command to them was this: Listen to my voice, then I will be your God and you shall be my people...but they have not listened to me, have not paid attention; they have deliberately resisted, behaving worse than their ancestors..." (Jeremiah 7,21-28).

Then, where do all these practises of the Law (Torah) prescriptions come from? They are prescribed in the Books of Exodus, of Numbers, of Leviticus, of Deuteronomy? God answers through Jeremiah that they were not inspired by God, but had been added by the scribes: "How can you say, we are wise, since we have God's law? Look now it has been falsified by the **lying pen** of the scribes!" (Jeremiah 8,8). The biblical scribes of the past, then, as well as the different religious chiefs, imagined and imposed cults and prescriptions to satisfy, in the name of God, their own pride and their material interest. This sad situation is still going on today...

Jeremiah reveals also that God will make with **His true worshippers a New Covenant**, which is in man's heart: "Look, the days are coming, God declares, when I shall make a New Covenant...Within them I shall plant My law, writing it on **their hearts**...There will be no further need for them to teach each others, saying: Learn to know God, they will all know Me..." (Jeremiah 31,31-34).

This New Covenant has been instituted by Jesus' sacrifice: "This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood" Jesus said (Luke 22,20).

Thus, the only cult that pleases God is the one inspired by New Covenant. Today, the Independent Believers practise this cult freely in the intimacy of their houses, with simplicity, as the first disciples of Christ did (Acts 2,42-47).

It is for this reason that Jesus, in our apocalyptical times, chose a new "kingdom of priests" who are not like the traditional ones (Revelation 1,6 and 5,10). He chose the believers who listen to Him knocking at the door of their hearts, those who open to let Him in to share with them the Lord's Wedding Supper (Apocalypse 3,20 / Luke 12,35-37). This is the cult, which our Divine Father desires.

6- God, in the Gospel, invites us all to take conscience that the place of cult is not a building of bricks and stones in a precise geographic place, but it is within the heart of the believer himself:

"Do you not realise that you are a Temple of God with the Spirit of God living in you? ...God's Temple is Holy, and **you are that Temple**" (1 Corinthians 3,16-17).

"The Temple of God cannot compromise with false gods and that is what we are —the Temple of the living God-. We have God's word for it: 'I shall fix My home among them and live among them ; I will be their God and they will be My people" (2 Corinthians 6,16).

"You are fellow-citizens with the holy people of God and part of God's household. You are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets and Christ Jesus Himself is the corner stone. Every structure knit together in Him grows into a holy Temple...and you too, in Him, are being built up into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2,19-22).

7- Thus, the cult to be offered to God is a spiritual act. It is completely different from the material cults: sacrifices of animals, incense etc... Saint Paul offers God "a spiritual cult by preaching the Gospel of His Son" (Romans 1,9).

The Holy Scriptures reveal a new spiritual era defined as "a New Heaven and a New Earth, and the New Jerusalem, coming down from Heaven" in which, John said, "I could **not see any temple in the city**, since the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb **were themselves the Temple**" (Apocalypse 21,1 and 21,22).

The Holy Koran also invites the true worshippers to the spiritual cult and urges them to renounce to the animal sacrifices in favour of piety. Speaking of sacrifices we read: "Their flesh and their blood will never reach God, your piety, instead, will reach Him" (Koran XXII, The Pilgrimage, 38).

Concluding, the only cult God desires is **man's attitude**: to grow in knowledge and love of God and of men. The only place of this cult is man's heart, which expresses love around the divine Table of Jesus in the intimacy of the family. The Bible and the Koran invite us to this cult (Refer to the text "Jesus restores the priesthood").

"When you pray", Jesus said, "go to your private room shut yourself in, and so pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you" (Matthew 6,6).

The writer of this text and the readers who put its teachings in practise offer a spiritual cult to the Eternal Father in the Temple of their souls.

"These are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks" (John 4,23).