

THE FIVE ELEMENTS AND THE PERFECTED HUMAN

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The Holy Eucharist as it is celebrated in The Liberal Catholic Church is a shining jewel. The symbolism used is ancient, the rubrics almost perfectly handed down through the ages and to those who open themselves to it and meditate upon it, ever more insights into its beauty and profundity gradually seep through into their awareness. Using the Hermetic principle - as above, so below- one is able to perceive that that which is expressed in symbol is the complete process of creation; whether brought in regard to a human being, humanity, this earth, this solar system or the universe. In this article an attempt is made to understand the relationship between the elements forming the nucleus of the act of consecration in the Holy Eucharist and the development of the perfected human.

These instruments, elements might be a better word, are the chalice, paten, host, water and wine and the pertinent phrase of the Orate Fratres is "...here we offer and present unto thee ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a holy and continual sacrifice unto thee". The whole process of creation is one of sacrifice -sacrifice in terms of proffering in joy and gladness, and not the offer loaded by pain and suffering- and the elements playing a role in its symbolisation are the keys to gaining insight into this sacrifice.

Leading up to the moment that the offerings are presented is a period of preparation. In the Holy Eucharist the elements remain covered, veiled. The mysteries are not yet visible to the individual who has not yet prepared himself or herself for these mysteries. The veil is not to hide something, but more to protect the unprepared from that for which it is not yet ready.

The preparation may be seen as the service up to the offertorium and is the purification -by our own action within the ritual- of our physical bodies, our energies, our emotions and our thoughts -this is known as the personality or lower self- to subsequently open the channel using the intellect, intuition and will to the individuality - sometimes referred to as the soul or the higher self. It is only possible to make the sacrifice at that moment in time when that which is to be offered is present. On saying "*here do we offer and present unto thee ourselves, our souls and bodies*" we actually mean that we offer our complete being. "*Ourselves*" in this context does not refer to the little I of the personality, but to the highest self, Spirit, the Monad or Spark of God we truly are, transcending even our individualities. We consciously make our complete being available as an instrument to be used in the Great Plan of God.

Just as the complete human being, Spirit, individuality (soul) and personality (bodies) is a reflection of the divine Trinity, the individuality of the human being may be seen as a trinity made up of Atma-Buddhi-Manas. These terms from the eastern traditions may

be loosely translated as: Manas - the knowing, the intellectual aspect of the human being, in contradistinction to rational knowledge which belongs to the realm of the personality; Buddhi - the intuition, the realm of connection between all beings; and Atma - the awareness of being, the realm of connection with Life itself. These aspects of the individuality may also be seen as a reflection of the divine Trinity, expressing Itself as divine Will, divine Wisdom and divine Activity. So too these three aspects reflect themselves in the personality of the human being, the personality that is temporal and has as primary purpose the feeding of the individuality. Atma is reflected in the physical body, Buddhi in the astral body (the body of emotions) and Manas in the lower mental body, which is the realm of rational thought.

One could imagine the development of the human individuality using imagery as a glass, in first instance filled with crystal clear water, which after each incarnation receives a tint of colour, a droplet that is the sweet result of that incarnation. After repeating the process of incarnation many, many times, all possible colours are present, shining in full splendour, symbolising the fact that all life experience has been gained. It is the glass that one can imagine as being the container of the individuality -do not take this too literally, however- a vessel that is empty in its original state and is gradually filled with virtues as they are developed. In a similar manner one might view the chalice. Her form is receiving, gilded on the inside to guarantee the purity of its contents.

The wine that is poured into the chalice may be viewed as the sweet essence of the virtues built up through many incarnations of experience. To this is added a few drops of water, symbolising the personality, which drops blend into the wine. It is not possible for one to offer one's self other than via the personality. This points to the immense privilege of being in incarnation. It is only during one's earthly life that one is able to develop one's instruments and therefore it is only within the limitation of the physical that one is able to make the sacrifice, in any case until such time as one has reached perfection.

At a later stage the wine is consecrated into the Blood of Christ. Again, one should not think of physical blood, but that for which blood is a symbol. The blood that pulsates through our arteries can be seen as the life that ensouls us. The Blood of Christ can therefore be seen as the Christ life that lives within us, and has as primary residence our "chalice", or holder of the individuality. The grape juice needs to be consecrated before it can truly be considered as life. This indicates the fact that all the capabilities we develop within ourselves are only sublimated to real life on consecrating them: Permanently placing them in the service of the higher life. It is our choice as personality, whilst in incarnation, to apply these capabilities for the benefit of the (temporal) personality or in service of the world, thereby serving humanity that is immortal.

On considering the host, we are able to view it from different angles. Let us begin with an ancient anecdote: When humanity on this earth was still very young, in fact, the earth itself was also rather young, the time was ripe to strengthen the Inner

Government of the world. An advanced being from another world -the story tells that it was Venus- would take up the position of King of the World, this function being one of representing the Logos in the day-to-day running of the world. With Him travelled three apprentices, also very advanced beings, especially in relation to our level of development, together referred to as the four Kumaras. Sanat Kumara, the new King of the World, brought gifts with him, amongst which were the bees and the wheat. Through this gesture, he gave the infant humanity -placed in his care- honey and bread. Whether the story is true or not, the symbolism of the wafer, made of the purest wheat flour and water, brought in relation to a gift from the (inner) King of the World, is surely a beautiful image.

Once consecrated it becomes the Body of Christ, the blessing of the Logos pouring through it; hence the monstrance containing the Holiest of Holies appears -from an inner and an outer viewpoint- as a brightly shining sun. The round shape of the host brings to mind the fiery disc in the sky, the physical sun, which may be seen as the physical expression of the Spirit of our Solar System, in whom we live and move and have our being.

At a later stage during the Holy Eucharist, the celebrant holds the consecrated host in his right hand over the chalice containing the consecrated wine, which is held elevated by his left hand, truly expressing in cosmic sense "*the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*". Even more potent as far as imagery is concerned in the context of this article is the image of the divine Spark or Monad (loosely translatable as the Unity) overshadowing the individuality. At this sublime moment in the Holy Eucharist we have in one stance the image of the perfected human: Spirit, soul and bodies, or in other terminology: Spirit, individuality and personality (the personality, symbolised by the water, can be symbolically seen as a partial expression of the soul). A good time to remember the words, also from Genesis: "*let us make man in our own image, after our likeness*" (note the use of the plural...).

The question arises as to the meaning of the paten in this story. Perhaps its usage might cast some light on its meaning. The paten is brought into play at the stage when the wafer is offered; the wafer lies thereon whilst the celebrant confirms that we are offering a token of Gods own life giving gifts that He has bestowed upon us. The wafer is thereafter placed on the corporal and the paten is hidden under the corporal¹ and

¹ The corporal, or holder of the body, is a linen cloth that is divided into nine blocks by the manner in which it is folded. Thrice three may be interpreted in several different ways, for example: Dedicating Spirit, soul and bodies to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; the nine orders of Angels invoked in the Preface, etc. It is noteworthy that the corporal lies beneath the oblations for the entire duration of the service up to the Ablutions, when it is folded up and put away. In a certain sense it could be seen as a symbol for *mulaprakriti*, which is an eastern term for root-matter, or the substance underlying all creation. The Assumption of Our Lady is a symbol for the drawing in of the Life vivifying this underlying substance as all is drawn into the All-One, to be breathed out again at a new "Day of Brahma", or period of manifestation. Seen from this angle the Holy Eucharist also enacts the macrocosmical process of creation.

covered with the purificator². The paten remains hidden until it appears again during the Commemoration of the Saints: Whilst uttering the words "*Here do we give unto thee, O Lord, most high praise and heartfelt thanks for the wonderful grace and virtue declared in the Holy Lady Mary, our heavenly Mother...*" the celebrant holds the paten vertically, with its side on the altar stone. Subsequently he makes the sign of the cross over himself with the paten saying "*And we join with them in worship before thy great white throne*". Then, holding the paten in front of his heart he says, "*whence flow all love and light and blessing*", slides it between the corporal and the consecrated host with the words "*through all the worlds which thou hast made*".

The paten can be seen as a symbol of the world; as mother earth, the World Mother and the Heavenly Mother, being one with the Godhead, without which the creation could not be brought into expression. At the Offertorium the paten, on which the not yet consecrated wafer is offered, is the earth mother - on it is offered the fruit of the earth. This fruit is also the expression of the same life that ensouls us, as is so beautifully said in the liturgy: "*...as a token of thine own life giving gifts bestowed upon us, O thou who art the giver of all.*"

At the Communion of the Saints, the paten signifies the World Mother. The results are not symbolically visible on the paten, but the paten, pointing towards the chalice with its consecrated contents, can be seen as "holding" the results of the World Mother's being: "*... and all thy glorious saints, who from the beginning of the world have been the choice vessels of thy grace...*" The World Mother's main aim is to see her humanity brought to perfection, thereby also bringing her to perfection.

Finally, when the paten is placed under the consecrated host, it becomes a symbol of the Heavenly Mother, the Mother of All. The host lies on Her, symbolising the expression of the Divine "*through all the worlds, which thou hast made*".

This completes the image of divinity in manifestation: Father - host; Son - wine and Holy Ghost - water. In other terminology Will, Wisdom and Activity. Their field of activity is the ring-pass-not symbolised in first instance by the paten and later limited further into the cup of consecration - the chalice. The paten as symbol of the mother aspect of Divinity assists us in understanding that there is a purpose to creation. It is for us to help humanity to reach the perfection She expects of us.

At the same time we also see that we truly are made in His image and likeness, as the five elements are simultaneously the symbol of the perfected human being: Monad, or Spark of God - host; Soul, or Individuality, the seat of the Christ Principle within us - paten and chalice with consecrated wine; and bodies, or personality - water.

Bishop Leadbeater, in his book "The Science of the Sacraments", puts it in a slightly different way: As regards Divinity in manifestation he regards the host as symbolical for God the Father; the wine for God the Son and the water for God the Holy Ghost.

² The purificator is a small linen cloth used to clean the instruments after usage.

The chalice and paten then symbolise matter in its vivified state and in its root state respectively. So also as regards the symbolisation of the human being, he regards the host as symbolising the Monad; the wine as the individuality; the water as the personality; the chalice as the causal body and the paten as the triple spirit resident on the atmic plane. The symbolisation he chooses for the chalice and paten is especially enlightening, as it views them in a slightly different light. Both the paten and the chalice are "holders" of sacred things -for lack of a better way of putting it- hence are gilded. The chalice as vessel -therefore the causal body- of the life experience of the soul is consistent with the chalice and consecrated wine symbolising the vessel of the individuality and the individuality respectively. The paten, symbolising the triple spirit, is the holder of the consecrated host, symbolising the monad. So one understands that the Monad is only able to express itself in the individuality via the triple spirit, just as the individuality -resident in the causal body- is only able to express itself in a temporary personality by periodically "dropping" a part of itself and coming into incarnation.

The Holy Eucharist is the enactment of the mysteries - magical movements combined with words of intent and clear use of emotional and thought power. We attempt thereby to let our small will blend with the great divine Will, to connect ourselves with our fellowman and together to bring the Great Plan of God into manifestation on earth.

Just as at the beginning, at the completion of the Eucharist the mysteries are again veiled. The participants are asked to take the gifts they have received and apply them in their daily lives, to humanity in their neighbourhood. As much as one may have received by attending the Eucharist, so much grander is its effect on the environment around one. By enacting the mystery of creation, of which human perfection is both a part, a purpose and a reflection, we have contributed to its progress. So much grander is the effect when we understand, experience and turn this understanding and experience into right action by participating consciously in it. Then can we truly sing the words of the *Communio* - *Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might (seven!) be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.*