

The Heartbeat of the Universe

Markus van Alphen

One of the pillars upon which the Holy Eucharist is built is the co-operation between humans and Angels. It is noteworthy that the Christian tradition does not exist in isolation. It is steeped in the Jewish tradition, which in its turn has largely been derived from the Egyptian tradition. In this article an attempt is made to make a connection between these three traditions via one of the great prophets known in the English language as Isaiah.

What would the child have experienced in the time that it was still in the womb? Would it have been able to hear the heartbeat of its mother? Lying on the breast of his mother, with his ear pressed against her heart, he feels and hears her heartbeat: "Kadosh... Kadosh..." one might almost imagine it. The rhythm of the heartbeat gives a sense of protection, a feeling of belonging and connection: For the child with its mother and for us, but then in symbolical sense, with the heart of the universe.

In the Hebrew scripture Isaiah tells us: "Kadosh Kadosh Kadosh Adonai Tziva'ot..." (Is 6:3), which has been translated into English as: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory". When we speak of Isaiah there are two passages in the Holy Eucharist that immediately come to mind: the *Munda cor Meum* and the *Sanctus and Benedictus qui Venit*. Let us commence with the latter. This passage is sung directly after the *Preface*, in which we call on all the angelic orders to assist us in the great work of transformation. The *Sanctus* is then the invocation, once all the hierarchies of Angels are present, of what we call the Angel of the Presence. The *Benedictus qui Venit* that follows this invocation is a kind of psalm of praise, in which this shining Helper is welcomed.

The word *Adonai* may be translated as Lord, or God, but is meant neither in the sense of the Absolute, nor that of the Holy Trinity. It is used more in the sense of an immense creative power, in a similar fashion as is referred to in the first chapter of Genesis.

The word *Tziva'ot* (sometimes spelled *Zeba'oth*) can best be translated as Almighty or as Lord of Hosts.

When one searches the Internet for the word Kadosh, one finds several references to web sites about Jewish tradition and Freemasonry. It is generally assumed that Freemasonry originates from Egyptian times and that their present rituals mirror the original Egyptian temple rites, albeit coloured by Jewish and Christian practices throughout the ages. The word Kadosh in Freemasonry is connected to the so-called 30th degree, one of its highest degrees, that of Knight Kadosh. It is also generally

known that the current Masonic rituals have something to do with the building of the Temple of King Solomon, the first Jewish Temple of Initiation.

The salient point lies in the word Kadosh. We may then have simply translated this as Holy in English, but the word has a far wider interpretation. The concepts of Holy, offering, sacrifice, Love and setting apart have a lot to do with one another. Returning to the Jewish tradition, one sees that the first time the word Kadosh is used in the Torah, is in the description of the seventh day of creation in Genesis. Even though the six days preceding this seventh were regarded as good, only the seventh day is regarded as Kadosh. In this sense Kadosh then also means to set apart. In the Jewish tradition this is reflected by the lighting of a candle at the start of the Sabbath, by which the Holy is set apart from the profane. We have a similar practice in the lighting of the candles on the altar before we commence a service. Another conclusion that is often drawn from this first mention in Genesis is that time is the first concept that is declared Holy by God.

From a numerological point of view the word Kadosh has the value 410, the same as the word *Shema*, which means to listen. Apparently both these words have a common root. These similarities in value and root are often interpreted that study (listening) and ceremony (Kadosh) need to be brought into balance with one another. Mishkan, the Tabernacle, also has the value 410. So the Tabernacle isn't just a holy place, it is Holy. As the place where the Shekinah rests, it couldn't be anything else.

Back to Isaiah. Isaiah's vision has several similarities with Ezekiel's. In both cases it is about Angels, burning coals, and clouds of smoke that hide certain matters from sight. A veil of smoke also has another very practical application. It creates a border between two areas and, like a veil, can make visible something that is invisible.

In Isaiah's vision it is the Angels who sing the Sanctus. The thrice Holy is then especially connected to Jewish mysticism and the temple rites. That it why, at every performance of the temple rites, it is prescribed that at least a partial Hallel (Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh, etc.) be sung. A similar practice has also been adopted in the Christian Holy Eucharist: also in our liturgy at every celebration of the Holy Eucharist the Sanctus and Benedictus qui Venit are sung.

Seeing as many of the temple practices of the Jews had their origin in their Egyptian counterparts, it would also not amaze me if this part also originates from them. What is in any case known is that during one of the Egyptian temple rites the initiates participated in a form of communion. A specially cut bread, representing the sun, the symbol of Osiris, was consecrated and consumed. After receiving this "communion", the communicant would be addressed: "thou art Osiris". It is quite possible that it was exactly this secret that Jesus divulged, whereby the high priests sentenced him to death. The communion became a public sacrament for the first time in the Christian tradition. Prior to this it was restricted to the initiates.

One may catch another a glimpse about the word Kadosh in a reference to a passage in Exodus. In Isaiah's passage there is a peculiar phrase, "Zeh El Zeh", which is only found at one other location in the Tanach (a Jewish scripture from which parts of the Old Testament were taken), to wit, Exodus chapter 14. This phrase refers to the place of the camps of the Egyptians and the Israelites, before the Red Sea separated them. In both cases "Zeh El Zeh" is translated as "the one came not near unto the other". In the symbolical language one recognises here in the separation of the soul (Israel) from the personality (Egypt). The latter is eventually drowned in the world of feelings (Red Sea).

So too the gradual, which means step, is the link that directs us into the area of the soul. Immediately thereafter the *Munda cor Meum* follows, with its direct reference to Isaiah, who by the instrument of a burning coal from the altar purifies himself to such an extent that he is found worthy to proclaim the words of the Almighty. Again we may discover in this the theme "to set apart", that is the separation of the profane from the Holy.

So we see that after the gradual we take the step with which we transcend our personality and at the Sanctus, with the aid of the Angels, we place ourselves outside the realm of time and space and thereby set ourselves apart from the temporary.

The sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist, which was already celebrated amongst the Egyptian initiates, is therefore also Kadosh, Holy symbol of the Compassionate sacrifice by which humankind and the world are sustained. The invocation by means of the thrice Holy, whereby the angel of the Presence appears, is therefore an essential part of the work of transformation. It is this Angel who is the connection with the Heart of the Universe, which we refer to as the Christ in Christianity. It is via the presence of this Angel that bread and wine are transformed by the Christ into the highest expression of Life, thereby making communion possible.

One of the pillars of the temple upon which the Holy Eucharist rests is thus the collaboration between humans and Angels. It is of course not coincidental that in our church the melody of the Preface is regarded inalterable. Angels are sensitive to a broad spectrum of stimuli and patterns, amongst others music, and the Preface is the invocation *par excellence* without which the Eucharist simply wouldn't work. Also the thrice Holy, which follows immediately afterward, is as in ancient times an essential part of the temple offer, a sacrifice we still repeat today in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

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