



The Sacred Heart and the Uncreated Logos

Nigel Jackson

"The Divine Heart was presented to me in a throne of flames, more resplendent than a sun, transparent as crystal, with this adorable wound."

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, 1674.

The visions of the Sacred Heart experienced by the 17th century nun which inaugurated the divine cultus at Paray-Le-Monial present all the iconological elements which effectively transmit the esoteric symbolism, concerning which Louis Charbonneau-Lassay was justified in speaking of the 'pre-history of the Sacred Heart', for undoubtedly the manifestation of this emblem was more precisely a rediscovery or renewal of a primordial symbol of universal provenance. The revival of this symbol at Paray-le-Monial was a hierophany which fulfilled the prophecy of the medieval mystic St Gertrude of Helfta who in the 13th century had foretold the coming revelation of the mysteries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The heart as the vital centre of man's integral being and locus of the Divine Principle, the eternal Word, is synonymous with the Logos existent at the Centre which is the Divine Intellect, the Atmanic Self – the uncreated and transcendent essence existent at the immutable centre-point of the swastika, the 'polar cross', is to be envisaged as depicting the irresistible spiritual influence extended from the Principle to the circumference. Thus the heart contains 'all the treasures of wisdom (sophia) and knowledge (gnosis)' which are inscribed within the luminous substance of the uncreated Intellect. The 'adorable wound' is, as René Guénon has stated, the opened 'eye of the heart' (*ayn al-qalb*) the 'oculus cordis', the heart as the theophanic organ of noetic vision and intra-kardial illumination, realised via the initiatory quest and attainment of the Centre. The opening of the 'eye of the heart' is alluded to in the gospel text: 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God' (Matthew 5:8).

The Sacred Heart and the Uncreated Logos

The symbolic connections which prevail between the nativity of Christ in the cavern of the sacred polar mountain as recounted in certain Syriac apocrypha and which form a motif in oriental Christian iconography and some medieval sacred art, indicates the realisation of the Logos at the Centre – the cavern in this esoteric context is nothing less than the occulted and interiorized summit of the sacred mountain, the shining apex from whence in former cycles (during the Satya-Yuga) irradiated the light of the Supreme Centre.

Just so the Logos is born or realised within the cavern of the heart-space. Meister Eckhart in his sermon 5b, 'In hoc apparuit charitas dei in nobis', says: '*As truly as the Father in his simple nature gives his Son birth naturally, so truly does he give him birth in the most inward parts of the spirit, and that is the inner world. Here God's ground is my ground and my ground is God's ground.*' As Meister Eckhart reiterates concerning the Johannine text 'God has sent his Only-Begotten Son into the world' – '*You must not by this understand the external world in which the Son ate and drank with us, but understand it to apply to the inner world.*' This 'innermost ground' of the spirit is the heart-centre, the kardial point, for the 'kingdom of heaven is within.' The Mystery of the Incarnation is transcendent and supra-temporal for the Son, the Logos, is eternally being born and is ever coming into the world.

The metaphysic of Meister Eckhart's Christology is founded upon the realisation of the uncreated transcendent Intellect at the Centre when he states (in his sermon 6: 'Justi vivent in aeternum') that '*The Father gives birth to his Son in eternity... He has given birth to him in my soul... The Father gives his Son birth in the soul in the same way as he gives him birth in eternity... The Father gives birth to His Son without ceasing, and I say more: He gives me birth, me, his Son and the same Son.*' The uncreated Light of the Divine Logos is the eternal Intellect, the Self, in 'whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'. The Incarnation of the Logos, the 'Word made Flesh' in the Christ-child within the cavern of the Nativity upon the polar 'Mons Victorialis' is paralleled within Islam in the mystery of the Inlibration, the 'Word made Book' which took place within the Cave of Hira on the Mountain of Light (Jabal Al-Noor) upon the 'Night of Power'.

Louis Charbonneau-Lassay, in his researches into the pre-history of the sacred heart in its most universal context examines the symbolism of the *Ab* in ancient Egyptian symbolism, represented in the hieroglyphic ideograms as a vase, and thus cognate with the medieval iconography of the holy grail; he specifically describes the divinity Horus (identified by early Egyptian Christians with the Messiah) in 'The Bestiary of Christ' as '*the comprehensive and affective Heart of the divinity, the spirit that animates all life.*' The ritual placement of the green scarab upon the heart of the deceased during funereal ceremonies in ancient Egypt also indicates the esoteric themes centred within the kardial centre and the symbolism of the seat of life, eternity and the Word. In Mesoamerica we also encounter the symbolism of the 'deified heart' (*volteotl*) in the tradition of the Toltecs and this co-equivalence of the kardial symbolism of the Heart with the 'holy land' imaging the sacred Centre is resumed in the numinous locus, the ancestral 'place of the sun' called *Tula* or *Tollan*, mentioned as *Tulan Zuyua* in the Mayan 'Popol Vuh' as the mysterious place of origins which is identical with the Hyperborean centre known as Thule (and as the station of the 'Great Peace' Arabic *As-Sakinah*, Hebrew *Shekinah*, Egyptian *htp*, exemplifying perfect equilibrium, balance and resolution of antinomies at

The Sacred Heart and the Uncreated Logos

the centre-point, we might recall that the Indian Sanskrit name for the zodiacal sign of Libra is *Tula* for as René Guénon reminds us the symbolism of the scales was originally assigned to the Boreal or Hyperboreal region which Chinese cosmology identifies with the 'Jade Pivot' of the Pole-Star, the celestial ridgepole *Tai Chi*.)

The Incarnation of the Word within the cavern of the nativity is mirrored within the Hesychastic method of the invocatory prayer of the Holy Name realised within the heart as preserved within the Orthodox Church (and which until the close of the Middle Ages was also transmitted within the initiatory esoterism of the Western Church with a possible link of transmission from the oriental tradition represented by John Cassian in the 5th century). As St Hesychios the Priest puts it: *'The sun rising over the earth creates the daylight; and the venerable and holy name of the Lord Jesus shining continually within the mind [i.e. the heart-intellect], gives birth to countless intellections as radiant as the sun.'* Likewise we might note Ilias the Presbyter employing the esoteric symbolism of flowers, as in the lotuses of yogic sadhana, to describe the prayer of the heart and its interior theophanic manifestation: *'...then the heart like good soil begins to produce by itself various flowers: roses, the vision of incorporeal realities; lilies, the luminosity of corporeal realities; and violets, the many judgements of God...'*

Nikiphoros the Monk in the treatise 'On Watchfulness and the Guarding of the Heart' teaches that *'...it is in the heart that God manifests himself to the intellect, first – according to St John Klimakos – as fire that purifies the lover and then as light that illumines the intellect and renders it godlike.'* St Philotheos of Sinai describes the initiatory method of intra-kardiac prayer as the way by which the spiritual worker may *'enshrine perfectly the remembrance of God in his heart like some pearl or precious stone.'* The 'remembrance of God' via the invocation of the Holy Name within the heart dispels the veils of nescience and forgetfulness that have darkened the Intellect as the consequence of the Fall and this is the path of *anamnesis*. St Maximos the Confessor taught, following the doctrine of St. Paul, that: *'If...Christ dwells in our hearts through faith, and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in him, then all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in our hearts. They are revealed to the heart in proportion to our purification by means of the commandments.'*

The remembrance of God through interior prayer of the Holy Name within the heart is reflected in Islamic esoterism in the practice of *dhikr* in Tasawwuf as expounded by Shaykh Abdul Qadir Al-Jilani in his 'Kitab Sirr al-Asrar wa Mazhar al-Anwar' (Book of the Secret of Secrets, the Manifestation of Lights): *'The place of the sultan-soul, where it reigns, is the centre of the heart, the heart of the heart. The business of this soul is divine wisdom. Its work is to know all of divine knowledge, which is the medium of true devotion recited in the language of the heart.'* Upon all planes the *qalb* corresponds with the eternal Centre – as the Shaykh teaches, the *'station where the holy spirit reigns is the secret place that Allah made for Himself in the centre of the heart where He deposited His Secret (sirr) for safekeeping.'* This alludes to the heart as the point of the Nur Muhammadi, the seat of the Logos as the uncreated light of the Muhammadan Reality – from this centre radiates the green light which is the spiritual ambience of the heaven of divine sovereignty.

The Sacred Heart and the Uncreated Logos

Shaykh Nasm Kobra, the eminent founder of the Kubrawiyah Order in the 13th century and master of the illuminationist science of the mystic lights, taught concerning the *qalb* as the inward heavenly station of the emerald radiance: *'Its atmosphere is a green light, whose greenness is that of a vital light through which flow waves eternally in movement towards one another. This green colour is so intense that human spirits are not strong enough to bear it, though it does not prevent them falling into mystic love with it. And on the surface of this heaven are to be seen points more intensely red than fire, ruby or cornelian... On seeing them the mystic experiences nostalgia and a burning desire; he aspires to unite with them.'* The green light of the heart in Kubrawiyah initiatory symbolism, the verdant hue of spiritual regeneration, is that of the holy grail conceived as a carven chalice of emerald which bears the holy blood of Christ. The paradisaical 'sacred kingdom' or 'heart of the world' is mirrored in the archetypal grail-kingdom ruled by Prester John with his emerald sceptre, personifying the office of the Pontiff-King wherein the functions of *sacerdotium* and *regnum*, contemplation and action, intelligence and love, light and fire, are conjoined in their original unity in the Principle. The grail-castle thus images the heart, the sacred Centre symbolised under the forms of the temple-sanctuary, palace or city. The Kabbalistic tradition terms the vital Centre, the 'Inward Palace' and the 'Holy of Holies' represented by the heart as the dwelling place of the Holy One just as the Divine Word, Jesus Christ, is 'king and centre of all hearts' according to the Catholic litany. Here in the 'inmost ground' or vital Centre of the being, as Meister Eckhart taught, dwells the *'light in the soul, a light that is uncreated and uncreatable'*.