

 37. Cultism 

Religious and spiritual cultism is a tendency that has always been present in the traditions of mankind. Anciently, and in the present time, both true Spiritual Teachers and ordinary Wisdom-Teachers have been "cultified", and (thereby) made the merely fascinating Object of a self-contained popular movement that worships the Spiritual Teacher Parent-like Savior, while embracing very little of the significant Wisdom-Teaching of the Spiritual Teacher.

The error of conventional cultism is precisely this childish, and (otherwise) adolescent, and (altogether) ego-based orientation to fascination with Spiritual Teachers, Wisdom-Teachers, God-Ideas, myths, sacred lore, inherited beliefs, traditional propaganda, and psycho-physical (or merely body-mind-based) mysticism. And the cultic tendency in religion and Spirituality is the essence of what is wrong with conventional religion and Spirituality.

The "problem" is not that there Is no Real God, or that there are no true Wisdom Teachings, or that there are no true Spiritual Teachers, or that there should be no devotion to any true Spiritual Teacher. The "problem" with conventional religion and Spirituality is the same as the "problem" of all ordinary life. The problem is the childish, and (otherwise) rather adolescent, egoism that is the basis of all forms of ordinary existence.

Yet un-Enlightened (or, otherwise, not yet Most Perfectly Enlightened) people are ego-possessed. Therefore, egoity is the "disease" that all the true Spiritual Teachers of religion come here to cure. Unfortunately, those who are merely fascinated by Spiritual Teachers are, typically, those who make (or, at least, transform) the institutions of the religion and the Spirituality of their Spiritual Teachers. And true practitioners of religion and Spirituality are very hard to find, or develop. Therefore, religious and Spiritual institutions tend to develop along lines that serve, accommodate, and represent the common egoity, and this is why the esoteric true Teachings of true Spiritual Teachers tend to be bypassed, and even suppressed, in the drive to develop the exoteric cult of any particular Spiritual Teacher.

The common religious or Spiritual cult is based on the tendency to resist the disciplines of real (and really counter-egoic) practice, and to opt for mere fascination with extraordinary (or even imaginary) phenomena (which are, invariably, not understood in Truth and in Reality). Apart from the often petty demand for the observation of conventional roles (generally, relative to social morality, or merely social religion), the cult of religious and Spiritual fascination tends to become righteously associated with no practice that is, with the even official expectation that there be no real (or truly right, and full) practice of religious and Spiritual disciplines (especially of religious, Spiritual, and meditative disciplines of an esoteric kind). Just so, the cult of religious and Spiritual fascination tends to be equally righteous about maintaining fascinated faith (or indiscriminate, and even aggressive, belief) in the merely Parent-like "Divine" Status of one or another historical individual, God-Idea, religious or Spiritual doctrine, inherited tradition, or force of cosmic Nature.

Religious and Spiritual cultism is, thus, a kind of infantile collective madness. (And such madness is equally shared by secular cultists, in every area of popular culture, including politics, the sciences, the arts, the communications media, and even all the agencies and institutions of conventional "officialdom" relative to human knowledge, belief, and behavior). Religious and Spiritual cults (and, likewise, all secular cults) breed "pharisaism" (or the petty righteousness of conventional thinking). Religious and Spiritual cults breed

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"Substitution" myths (or the belief that personal ego-transcendence is both generally and ultimately, impossible, but also unnecessary, because of what "God", or some "Master", or even some "priest" has already done). Indeed, religious and Spiritual cults (and likewise, all secular cults) breed even every kind of intolerance, and the chronic aggressive search for exclusive social dominance and secular power. Religious and Spiritual cults are, characteristically, populated by those who are, generally, neither inclined toward nor prepared for the real right practice of religious and Spiritual discipline, but who are (and always seek to be) glamorized and consoled by mere association with the "holy" things and beliefs of the cult itself.

This error of religious and Spiritual cultism, and of ego-based culture in general, must be examined very seriously such that the error is truly rooted out, from within the cult and the culture itself (and not merely, and with equally cultic cultural righteousness, criticized from without). Cultism of every kind (both sacred and secular) must be understood to be a kind of ritualized infantilism bound to egocentric behavior, and to the embrace of "insiders" only, and to intolerance relative to all "outsiders". The cultic tendency, both sacred and secular, causes (and has always caused) great social, cultural, and political trouble, as can even now be seen in the development of worldwide conflicts based on the exclusive (or collectively egocentric) orientation of the many grossly competitive religious traditions, political idealisms, and national identities.

All cults, whether sacred or secular, thrive on indulgence in the psychology (and the emotional rituals) of hope, rather than on actual demonstration of counter-egoic and really ego-transcending action. Therefore, when all egos meet, they strive and compete for the ultimate fulfillment of searches and desires, rather than cooperate with, Reality, or Real God, and in a culturally valued and rewarded mood of fearless tolerance and sane equanimity.

Clearly, this cultic tendency in religion and Spirituality, and the egoic (anti cultic) tendency in life in general, must become the constant subject of fundamental human understanding and all of mankind must constantly be put to "school", to unlearn the method of egocentrism, non-cooperation, intolerance, and disease.