

CHAPTER 8

SHI'ISM IN MUSLIM SPAIN

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"Al-Andalus" is the ancient Arabic name for Muslim Spain. Its etymology is unknown, since it has no Arabic etymology and the old theory that it derives from the Vandals is discredited, at least in academic circles. Personally, I believe that this name has a Celtic etymology, as we said earlier in this book.

The presence of Shi'ism and/or Shi'a influences in al-Andalus is a question of obvious interest and importance, yet remarkably little has been written about it. Partly this is because those knowledgeable on Muslim Spain do not tend to be experts on Shi'ism, while experts on Shi'ism tend to have only a very superficial knowledge of Muslim Spain. This last is somewhat ironic, since the great Hispano-Muslim or Andalusian, Ibn Arabi al-Mursi, had such a profound influence on Shi'ite Kalam, Hikmat and philosophy in general; without Ibn Arabi of Murcia (*al-Mursi*) it is difficult to imagine Haidar Amoli or Mullah Sadra Shirazi. Yet another example of the self-defeating nature of over-specialization. However, the principal reason for the paucity of research and writing on this question is the sheer lack of source material, a lack which is most unlikely ever to be remedied by discoveries of manuscripts, since in all probability very little was ever written on this topic. The reasons for this will be explained below. Evidently, unless

one is going to write a

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novel or indulge in flights of pure fantasy, any treatment of the

question of Shi'ism in Muslim Spain will be necessarily brief.

For three centuries of its history al-Andalus was ruled by the Umayyas, and even later some taifa kings claimed remote Umayya ancestry. The intolerance towards Shi'ism on the part of the Umayyas of al-Andalus was based on purely political considerations.

The key role played by Shi'as in the overthrow of the Umayyas of Damascus is well known. Shi'as are implacable enemies of Beni Umayya, descendants of Muawiya, who by treachery usurped the Caliphate from Ali ibn Abi Talib, legitimate Caliph and first Shi'ite Imam. Perhaps even worse, the Umayyas were descendants of the Caliph Yezid I, under whose orders the Imam Hussein was martyred on the bloody plain of Karbala. Every year on the festival of Ashura all Shi'as excoriate the name of Yezid I. Many, perhaps most or even all Shi'as knew of the hadith by Muhammad al-Baqir ibn Ali Zain al-Abidin, the Fifth Shi'ite Imam:

"The Holy Prophet (Muhammad) called the people at Mina and said:

"Oh people! I am leaving among you Two precious things to which if you adhere, never shall you go astray: The Book of God (the Qur'an) and my Ahl al-Bait (literally, "People of the House", i.e., the House or Dynasty of Ali ibn Abi Talib and Fatima bint Muhammad), and, besides these Two, here is the Kaaba, the Sanctuary."

Continued Muhammad al-Baqir:, the Fifth Imam:

"The Book distorted, the Ahl al-Bait they (beni Umayya) have killed and the Kaaba they (beni Umayya) have destroyed and all God's deposits with it they
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threw away and detached themselves from it."(1)

Also, all Shi'as knew the following hadith of Ali ibn

Abi Talib, First Shi'a Imam, prophesying the downfall of Beni Umayya:

"The Beni Umayya have a fixed period wherein they are having their way. But when differences arise among them even if a hyena attacks them it will overpower them."(2)

This prophecy had obviously been fulfilled in relation to the Umayyas of Damascus, and certainly to a Shi'ite there would be no reason to believe that it did not also apply to the Umayyas of Cordoba.

It is true that Abd ar-Rahman I was indeed "the white sheep of Beni Umayya" as well as "the eagle of Beni Ummaya" and that the Umayyas of Cordoba were, in general, very competent and benevolent rulers. This, however, could in no way alter the fact that in Shi'ite eyes they were usurpers and descendants of the treacherous Muawiya and the murderous, impious Yazid I. In summary, no Shi'ite could ever recognize the legitimacy of Beni Umayya, and every Shi'ite had to be implacably hostile to this dynasty.

To some people with no sense of history, the above attitude may seem strange, perhaps incomprehensible. This is not the place to go into a long discussion of the relative merits of the dynastic or monarchic system of succession and legitimacy (except for this, there is no one monarchic political system; indeed,

monarchic systems of government vary enormously, and there is very

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considerable variation even in laws of succession) compared with others would lead us too far from our main topic. Suffice it to say that until very recently this dynastic principle predominated in Europe, and is far from dead today, being particularly prevalent in the Celtic Countries (including Brittany and La Vendee as well as Ireland, Scotland and Wales) and in very large parts of Spain, from which fact one may suppose that there was a very strong tendency toward it in al-Andalus. To great many Scotsmen - probably the majority - nearly all Irishmen, a large number of Welshmen and some Englishmen, particularly in the North and West - the Stuarts were the only legitimate sovereigns while the Hanovers would ever be usurpers. The fictional Hudson is an example.

The heroic struggle of the *Chouans*, "Legitimists" or Royalists of Brittany and La Vendee, Celtic regions of France, against the French Revolution we will only mention in passing.

Monsieur de Guerry de Claudy, head of the anti-revolutionary insurgents in the Vendean town of Tiffauges and its district, wrote in his diary:

"I order a low Mass to be said in the church of Notre Dame which was attended by five to six thousand peasants.

They presented a strange sight; some were armed with guns, others with scythe blades, bayonets, sabers, cudgels and pitchforks. I held in my hand a pitchfork, whose shaft was at least six feet long; just before the *ite Missa est* (Latin: it is right and just), I handed it to its owner, proclaiming in a loud voice:

"*Tenez vrais defenseurs de la foi, allez et poursuivez les demons jusqu'a l'enfer!*" (Remain true

defenders of the Faith, go and pursue the demons right
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back to Hell.) On leaving Mass, the peasants cut down the Tree of Liberty to shouts of *Vive le roi!* (Long live the king!)

Said a Vendean priest, the Abbe Etienne Alexandre
Jean Baptiste Bernier:

"Heaven has declared for the holiest and most just of causes. Ours is the sacred sign of the Cross of Jesus Christ. We know the true wish of France, it is our own, namely to recover and preserve for ever our Holy Apostolic and Roman Catholic Religion. It is to have a king who will serve as father and protector without.

Patriots, our enemies, you accuse us of overturning our *patrie* by rebellion, but it is you, who, subverting all the principles of the religious and political order, were the first to proclaim that insurrection is the most sacred of duties. You have introduced atheism in place of religion, anarchy in place of laws, men who are tyrants in place of the king who was our father. You reproach us with religious fanaticism, you whose pretensions to liberty have led to the most extreme penalties."

With even more eloquence, Monsieur Francois Athanase de Charette de la Contrie, one of the leaders of the Vendee insurrection against the French Revolution said:

"Our country is ourselves. It is our villages, our altars, our graves, all that our fathers loved before us. Our country is our faith, our land, our king. But their (the revolutionaries') country: what is it? Do you understand? Do you? They have it in their brains (*Charette is being very charitable in assuming that such loathsome creatures as that bloody-handed fop Robespierre and that poxed gargloyle Marat had brains*); we have it under our feet. It is as old as the Devil, the world that they call new and that they wish to found in the absence of God. They say that we are slaves of ancient superstitions; it makes us laugh!

But in the face of these demons who rise up again century after century, we are youth, gentlemen! We are the youth of God, the youth of fidelity! And this youth will preserve, for its own and for its children, true humanity and liberty of the soul!"

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Suffice it to say that the Jacobites of Ireland and Scotland and the Carlists of Spain considered the Chouans of Brittany and La Vendee be their kindred spirits. The partisans of the Stuarts are called "Jacobites". More than parallel, indeed indentical to the Jacobites of Ireland and Scotland and the Chouans of Brittany and La Vendee are the Carlists of Spain. I once wrote an essay whose title in English would be "Charlie, Don Carlos and the Tradition", which deals with the affinity, indeed the identity, between the Carlists on the one hand and the Jacobites on the other. Said essay was published in the Newspaper EL CORREO GALLEGO of Santiago de Compostela, Spain, and today is found in Carlist headquarters all over Spain. Besides the dynastic or "legitimist" aspect, Carlism has a potent religious dimension (as do the Chouans of Brittany and La Vendee), as anyone who has lived in Spain and been in close contact with Carlists well knows. To give only a few examples, the official name of the Carlist Party is the "Traditionalist Communion". During the Carlist Wars of the 19th Century and the Spanish Civil War, every Carlist company had a "Cristero" who carried a large crucifix mounted on a flag staff. Before going into battle Carlist troops would confess in a loud voice and take communion. Every Carlist soldier wore an embroidered patch which said, in Spanish, Catalan or Basque:

"Detenga bala, porque el Sagrado Corazon esta conmigo."
(Stop, bullet, because the Sacred Heart [of Jesus Christ] is with me.)

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Interestingly, during the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39 the Muslim troops from Morocco asked the Carlists what those patches were. After the Carlists explained to the Muslims what the patches, were, the Muslims wanted them also, and thousands of devoutly Catholic Spanish women were put to work embroidering Sacred Heart patches for Muslim Troops.

The anthem of the Catalan Carlists, the "Virolai", is a hymn to the Virgin of Montserrat, patroness of Catalunya. The anthem of the Spanish-speaking Carlists, the "Oriamendi", reflects this religious tone:

We will fight altogether
We will fight in union
Defending the banner
Of the Sacred Tradition. and

Carlist, Carlist, Carlist, to win or die for the Faith
Carlist, Carlist, Carlist, to win or die for the king.

Carlos de Borbon y Austria-Este, known to the Varlists as "Carlos VII", was the Carlist pretender in the Third Carlist War (or Second Carlist War if one includes the *Guerra dels Matiners*, which was confined to Catalunya), and was known as "the king of gentlemen and gentleman of kings".

The Nobel Prize winning Provençal poet Frederic Mistral, though not a Spaniard, was a Carlist by ideology. Perhaps it would seem that a French Carlist would be called a Chouan, but Mistral, as we said before, being a Provençal, identified more with Catalunya than with Brittany and La Vendee, since the Catalan

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and Provençal languages are so similar. Mistral made a pilgrimage to Montserrat, sanctuary of Catalunya, donned a red beret, and proclaimed himself to be a Carlist. Mistral's lengthy tribute to the Carlists of Catalunya in many places expresses the religious aspect of Carlism:

Of silence I am weary and my heart burns with shame
From Provence to Catalunya must go my song ...
Domna Blanca, young queen who on her forehead wears the Fleur
de Lis ...
In the sun and under the snow vibrate your heroisms
While, jaded and sated
Those of Gomorrah and Nineveh feast in their supreme
carnality
Domna Blanca, holy woman, that against the perverted people
Who blaspheme and lie
You go to fight for your God
Domna Blanca, paladin of the suffering Church
Trample, galloping over the threshing floor
The horrible pollution of the Antichrist ("Dajjal" in
Islamic terms)
Domna Blanca, Lily of Spain, fortunate he who with you
Full of respect, fights
Fortunate he who at your feet goes to die
Your valor shames me; I burn with desire to follow you
To the brave ones of Catalunya, fly, fly, song!
On the tree branch sing, nightingale in love
Sing for Domna Blanca de Borbon"

(Note: "Borbon" is the Provençal, Catalan and Spanish form of the dynastic name "Bourbon").

The "Domna Blanca de Borbon" of Mistral's poem is Maria de las Nieves de Braganza, wife of Alfonso Carlos de Borbon y Austria Este. Alfonso Carlos, brother of Carlos, led the Carlist forces in Catalunya during the Third Carlist War, while the Carlist pretender to the throne of Spain, Carlos de Borbon y Austria Este, known in Carlist circles as "Carlos VII", or simply "don Carlos", led the Carlist forces in Navarra and the Basque Country.

Alfonso Carlos de Borbon, husband of Mistral's "Domna Blanca de Borbon", lived until the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39. A Carlist song from said war says:

The fiestas are joyous
And the girls are pretty
But I must go because I am called by
Alfonso Carlos de Borbón

The elder brother of Alfonso Carlos de Borbon, Carlos de Borbon y Austria Este, or Carlos VII, was known as "the King of Gentlemen and the Gentleman of Kings". As the name *Austria Este* indicates, Carlos de Borbon y Austria Este was a Hapsburg on his mother's side. Jaime del Burgo, the Carlist militant from Pamplona (Navarra, Spain), known as the *Carloactivista* or "Carlist activist" because of his militance, titles the first chapter of his biography of Carlos de Borbon y Austria Este "More Hapsburg than Bourbon" (as we said before, "Borbon" is the Spanish form of "Bourbon"). The Hapsburg Imperial march "Under the Double Eagle" is virtually the official march of the Carlists, and is heard at rually all their rallies and demonstrations. Otto von Hapsburg, the Hapsburg heir, is popular in Spain, and is extremely popular among the Carlists.

The Jacobite cause also has its religious aspects. There is indeed a Carlist religiosity, though well within the ample Spanish Catholic Tradition. In large part the Jacobite wars were risings of the oppressed and persecuted Catholics of Ireland and Scotland. The Irish Jacobite song "Danny Boy" reflects this

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aspect:

But if you fall
As all the flowers are dying
And you are dead
As dead you well may be

I'll come and find
The spot where you are lying
And kneel, and pray
An Ave (Maria) there for you

In these Scottish Jacobite songs one detects something more than
dynastic issues:

... If I had twenty thousand lives
I would die as often for (Bonnie Prince) Charlie (Prince
Charles Edward Stuart) ...

A bonnie lass of Clan Gordon sings:

... Oh to see that princely one (Bonnie Prince Charlie)
Seated on his royal throne
Disasters all will disappear
Then begins the jubilee year ...

In an album of Jacobite songs, the Scottish balladeer Alastair
McDonald says:

"We sing these (Jacobite) songs, for though the
cause was ill-fated and hopeless, the sentiment is
noble, chivalrous and self-sacrificing." (3)

Note that Alastair McDonald does NOT say that the Jacobite
cause was wrong. In the long view, perhaps Bonnie Prince Charlie
was the winner after all. Many people still shed tears for Bonnie
Prince Charlie, who is still celebrated in verse and song. How
many people shed tears for "German George", as he was called by
the English, or "Geordie Welks" and "The wee bit German Lairdie" as
he was called by the Scots and Irish?
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The contemporary poet Charles A. Coulombe expresses the
Jacobite spirit very well:

The news came in from Glenfinnan Crag
That Bonnie Prince Charlie had raised up his flag.
Son Jamie came in with temper red hot
And fed me my dinner from an old iron pot,

"Your Grandsire marched with Bonnie Dundee (John Grahame,
Viscount Dundee),
His sire with Montrose, (James Grahame, Marquis of Montrose)
to die by the sea.
I was at Sherrifmuir, back in (Seventeen) Fifteen,
All the drawn claymore's silvery sheen.
Had not I been your namesake's great pride
Your ma would never have sat by my side."

"Oh *da* (father)", he said, with trembling voice,
"Why must I make this terrible choice
To leave yourself and the maiden I love,
Go fight for James Edward (Stuart)'s right to his glove?"

"Those that God loves to keep in his sight
Are men who will dare to struggle for right."
Jamie agreed, said he would go,
Was off to the army with morning's first glow.

Jamie alone was brought back again,
To rest in the yard with our holy slain.
Our hope once bloomed, now it has fled.
At Culloden it lies with the bones of the dead.

Dora will not have him to keep as her lord,
Never his bairns (children) will play by my board.
Withered alike are love and good deeds
While I lie here telling my (rosary, "tasbih" in Islamic
terms) beads.

The Pope heads the Church, James Edward (Stuart) is King!
May all the cursed Whigs from the gallows soon swing!
If I pass Brig O' Doom, Purgatory Fire,
Arrive at the place where the saints play the lyre,
Gladly will I bow to James, seventh King
Unto great God Hosannas will sing.
Catch Jamie's blue eye with my sad one of red,
Kiss the fair hair on Jamie's young head.(4)

The Russian Slavophile thinker Alexei Stepanovich Khomyakov
defined Toryism, which in this context (though not in some

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others) includes the Jacobites (after all, "Tory" has a Gaelic
etymology, from the Gaelic *torai* or *toraich*, meaning "hunter" or

"pursuer") (5) as "The elemental force of history, a vital, organic and historical force nourished by local tradition, religion and custom, all the joy of life." (6)

As Khomyakov said:

"In England Toryism is very ancient with its long branches, every old belfry looming on the horizon." (7)

Whiggery, on the other hand, was the rational force of individuals divorced from social energy, an analytical force that does not believe in the past. Its distinguishing marks are inner aridity and creative barrenness. (8) Says Khomyakov:

"At its (Whiggery's) roots there is skepticism, a rationalism that neither loves nor believes in history, an individualistic egoism that does not recognize the validity of natural simple feelings when they are without logical foundations, and which finally leads to disintegration." (9)

If I ever go to Rome and visit St. Peter's Basilica, I will lay a white rose on the tomb of Bonnie Prince Charlie. Someone once asked me what was my political ideology, and I replied:

"Jacobite". On another, similar occasion, I replied: "Carlist". For many years, until it literally wore out, I wore a Chouan ring. One of my most prized possessions is a Carlist uniform, complete with red beret and gold tassel, which I wore with the Royal Stuart plaid sash of the Jacobites. Many years ago I boycotted "La Marseillaise". When someone asked me my view on the

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200th anniversary of the French Revolution, I balled my right hand into a fist, extended the middle finger of my right hand, grasped

my right biceps with my left hand and jerked my right forearm sharply upward. I then began to whistle the Chouan song "O Richard mon roi".

There is also a Chouan song to the tune of "La Marseillaise" called "La Vendeenne", which begins thusly:

*Aux armes, poitevins! Formez vos bataillons!
La sangue des bleus rougera vos sillons!*

To arms, Poitevins! Form your battalions!
The blood of the blues (revolutionaries) will redden your furrows!

There is indeed a particular Jacobite spirituality or Jacobite mysticism among the Catholics of the Scottish Highlands. (10)

To those whose souls are not yet so deadened by Modernity that the above does does bring a rush of adrenaline, a lump in the throat and tears to the eye, let us remember the Carlist saying:

"Por Dios no hay heroe anonimo",
"To God, there is no unknown hero".

To all the brave ones, Jacobites, Chouans and Carlists, let us say:

"Though our tears be thin and poor compared to the blood that you, the brave, the noble, the chivalrous, the self-sacrificing have so generously shed, yet we must swear that you are not forgotten, that like Imam Hussein (On Whom Be Peace), you have not died in vain. Your memory will be honored and people will shed tears for you long after the memory of your craven enemies is a subject only for contempt and execration. **TO GOD THERE IS NO UNKNOWN HERO.**"

Obviously one CANNOT affirm that the Jacobites,

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Vendeeans and Carlists on the one hand are identical to the Shi'ites on the other.

Nota bene: the Latin *Mater Dei* simply and literally means "Mother of God", while the Greek *Theotokos* means, literally, "She who gave birth to God". In Church Slavonic, *Bozhii Mater*, like the Latin *Mater Dei*, simply and literally means "Mother of God", while *Bogoroditsa*, like the Greek *Theotokos*, literally means "She who gave birth to God". Both expressions are used, though *Bozhii Mater* is the more common of the two.

There are obvious differences, differences which CANNOT be reduced to the merely nominal or semantic. For example, the expression "Mother of God" (Latin: *Mater Dei*: Greek: *Theotokos*: Church Slavonic: *Bozhii Mater* or *Bogoroditsa*) is simply unthinkable in an Islamic context. Yet, the parallels are obvious and close, and it is obvious that a great affinity exists between the three movements (four, if one includes the Chouans). No one doubts that Carlism and the Jacobite Cause are identical.

I myself wrote an essay on this, whose title in English would be Charlie, don Carlos and the Tradition, which essay is now found in Carlist archives and headquarters all over Spain. Many Spaniards have told me that during the Spanish Civil War many Irishmen and Highland Scots of Jacobite ideology came to Spain to fight under the Carlist banner in recognition of this identity. I have seen a Highland Scot of Jacobite ideology and a Spanish Carlist shed tears together for Charles Edward Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie) and Carlos de Borbon y Austria Este.

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After studying the Jacobite Cause and Carlism on the one hand and Shi'ism on the other, it is difficult or impossible to avoid

the conclusion that the same spirit animates all three. that they are all manifestations of the same spiritual archetype. It is most appropriate that perhaps the most renowned contemporary theorist of Carlism is Juan Landalusi. The surname "Landalusi" indicates Hispano-Muslim ancestry, being derived from the Arabic "al-Andalusi", meaning "the Andalusian", "the Spaniard" or "the Hispano-Muslim".

Before we proceed, let one thing be made clear. Some will find it paradoxical that I utterly hate, loathe and detest Communism, yet have a great love for Holy Mother Russia; to some people, Russia and Communism are synonymous, that Russia itself is inherently evil. This is totally false.

Karl Marx was a German of Jewish ancestry; Friedrich Engels was a north German Protestant. In 1917 the Germans conspired with the Bolsheviks to overthrow the Tsar and thus cause Russia to withdraw from World War I, arranging for Lenin to be brought to St. Petersburg from his exile in Switzerland. Foolishly, the Germans believed that they could "play with the devil and win".

Of the six men who made the Russian Revolution, four, Trotski (real surname: *Bronstein*), Zinoviev (real surname: *Apfelbaum*), Kamenev (real surname: *Rosenfeldt*) and Sverdlov (real surname: *Yankel*) were Jews. Lenin's real surname was *Ulyanov*, absolutely non-Russian and very common among the Chuvash Tartars. Hence,

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during the Russian Civil War the Whites often referred to Lenin as "the Tartar Lenin". In fact, Lenin's ancestry was Chuvash Tartar,

Swedish and Jewish. Lenin's wife was Jewish, and Yiddish was spoken in their household. Thus, the saying of the Whites: "Where there is Lenin, there is Israel." Stalin, of course, was Georgian. However, Stalin's third wife was Jewish, and Stalin's Jewish brother-in-law, Lazar Kaganovich, was known as "The Wolf of the Kremlin" and "The Butcher of Ukraine". It is no surprise that the Whites told the following joke: "What do you call six Bolsheviks sitting around a table?" Answer: "The twelve legs of Israel". If the Germans conspired to bring about the Russian Revolution, it was financed by Jewish bankers in New York, most notably Jacob Schiff. Apparently, these bankers' hatred of Russia overcame any qualms they might have had about giving aid and comfort to the Germans, not to mention exposing themselves to charges of high treason, as they were U.S. citizens. Many thousands of American soldiers died because of the activities of these Jewish bankers in New York. Lenin was the author of "the mother of all hate crime laws", because under his rule anti-Semitism was punishable by death. Much later, after Lenin was long dead, when Jews did indeed suffer persecution in the Soviet Union, many people could not avoid thoughts such as "hubris", "poetic justice", "chickens coming home to roost, "you made your bed, now sleep in it", and "the Jews played with the devil and lost" (as did the Germans).

This is not to say that all the Jews of the vast Russian

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Empire, or even the majority, were Communists. In 1914 the Russian Communist Party was very small; even if said party had been

entirely Jewish (which it was not), it would still have been a small minority among the Jews of the Russian Empire. The Ukrainian Jewish novelist Scholem Aleichem (Isaac Rabinowitz), whose novels and short stories form the basis of the play and later film "Fiddler on the Roof", was firmly anti-communist; the very few communists that appear in his works are treated with disdain. Ayn Rand and the fanatical Zionist Vladimir Jabotinsky were both Russian Jews, and both were strongly anti-communist. I detest both Ayn Rand and Vladimir Jabotinsky, but in all honesty I must admit that they were firmly, indeed militantly anti-communist. However, there is no possible way to deny that in 1914 in the Russian Empire the Jews were grossly over-represented in the communist party, and especially in its leadership.

Notes Frere Michel de la Sainte Trinite on pp. 445-446 of part 2 of his comprehensive trilogy The Whole Truth about (Our Lady of) Fatima:

"One of the first important truths which must be established, under pain of dangerously deceiving ourselves concerning Russia and Communism, and consequently the words of Our Lady of Fatima as well, is that the Bolshevik Revolution is not Russian. It is fundamentally, essentially anti-Russian, as Solzhenitsyn has never tired of demonstrating to the West, which has voluntarily blinded itself on this point."

Noted Frere Michel's spiritual father, the Abbe de Nantes in the May, 1976 edition of his newsletter "La Contre-Reforme Catholique":

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"The Bolshevik phenomenon developed like a cancer on the body of "Holy Russia". It remains totally foreign to it. Neither the (Russian) Orthodox Religion nor Slavic tradition have the least affinity with its inhuman dialectic."

The fact that During World War II Stalin called said war "the Great Patriotic War" is the most revolting example of mendacity and the crudest cynicism that I have ever heard of.

Those who insist on trying to give a national or ethnic aspect to Communism are grossly mistaken when they label it a Russian phenomenon; as we have seen above, if Communism has an ethnic aspect, said aspect is German and Jewish. When asked why he had become anti-communist, considering the many and close resemblances between Communism and his own National Socialism, Hitler replied: "Because Bolshevism is Jewish"; in this case, Hitler was half right.

So, there is no contradiction whatever between my hatred and loathing of that murderous, utterly evil, criminal red scourge known as Communism and my love of Holy Mother Russia; indeed, he who loves Holy Mother Russia must hate Communism.

In the Nineteenth century, the Russian *staretz* (holy man, roughly analogous to a sufi *shaykh* or *pir*), St. Seraphim of Sarov, said:

"The people have forgotten God. If they do not repent and return to God, then the world will suffer a war such as it has never seen and cannot even imagine, and Russia will be taken over by a gang of godless murderers and criminals."

The above is a chilling and terrifyingly accurate prophecy of

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World War I and the Russian Revolution.

To demonstrate the above in an Eastern Orthodox Christian context, here are some quotations from veterans of the "White"

or anti-Bolshevik, anti-Communist side in the Russian Civil War. We begin with a quotation from General Anton Ivanovich Denikin himself:

"We left. Madness followed in our footsteps. It forced its way into the cities we left behind with shameless abandon, hatred, robbery and murder. We began the campaign in extraordinary circumstances: a handful of people, lost in the wide steppe of the (river) Don, amidst the raging sea which had engulfed our native land. We walked out of the dark night and spiritual bondage and wandered into the unknown - searching for the blue bird." (11)

Here is a quotation by General Alexeev:

"We are leaving *Rostov-na-Donu* (Rostov-on-Don) for the steppes. Perhaps we shall return, if God in His mercy allows. But we must light a beacon, so that there be at least one point of light in the mides of the darkness which has engulfed Russia." (12)

Above we have dealt with the heroic resistance of the region of La Vendee to the Satanic forces of the French Revolution. During the Russian Revolution and Civil War, the Cossack country was known as "The Russsian Vendee", as is shown by the White Russian songs "The Brave Don Cossacks" as well as "And You, Kuban Cossack". Perhaps because they were the most numerous, it is the Don Cossacks who have gained the most fame. This is not meant to belittle the Kuban, Orenburg, Terek, Ural and Siberian Cossacks, who were no less brave than the Cossacks of the Don. Indeed, some historians say that the first act of rebellion

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against the Bolsheviks was that of the Siberian Cossacks. The White Russian poetess Marina Tsvetaeva wrote in her long poem "*Lebedinyi Stan*" (Desmesne of the Swans):

TO THE TSAR - AT EASTER

Wider, wider
The Holy Gates!
Snuffed out, swirling, the blackness fades.
The altar blazes
With chastened fire.
-Christ is Risen,
O yester Tsar!

Feckless, feeble
Two-headed eagle!
-Tsar! - You were wrong to leave all.

Your descendants - they will
Recall ofttimes
The Byzantine betrayal
Of your limpid eyes.

Wind and ocean
Shall judge you then!
Tsar! You were chosen
Of God - not men.

But now is Easter
In all the land.
Then sleep in peace too
In Tsarskoye - and
May red flags cease to
Torment your mind.

Tsar! - Descendants
And forebears - all
Dreams! - There's a beggar's
Scrip when thrones fall. (13)

Comments Robin Kemball:

"Writing exactly one month after the Tsar's abdication, Tsvetaeva makes clear her conviction that this was a grave mistake (line 10), the Tsar in any case deriving his authority from "God, not men" (lines 17-18).

Holy Gates: In the Eastern Orthodox Church, the doors in the center of the iconostasis, which separates
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the sanctuary from the main body of the church. These doors are opened and closed at specific stages of the Orthodox service, according to a strictly prescribed ritual.

Christ is Risen!: The phrase (*Khristos voskrese!*) repeated many times over during the Russian Orthodox Easter service - and followed by the response "Truly He is Risen!" (*Voistinu voskrese!*).

Two-headed eagle: The emblem of Tsarist Russia, originally taken over from Byzantium - and added to his

own family's [Cross of] St. George - by Tsar Ivan III, on the occasion of his marriage (1472) to the Byzantine princess Sophia Paleologue.

In Tsarskoye: The Russian text has simply: "V Sele" (in Selo). The reference in both cases is to Tsarskoye Selo (literally Tsar's Village), and more specifically here to the palace outside St. Petersburg which was the home of the Russian Imperial family. In 1918 the name was officially changed to Pushkino (the young Pushkin attended the lycee in Tsarskoye Selo and the place figures in several of his poems, as in those of other Russian poets, e.g., Annensky and Anna Akhmatova). (14)

Marina Tsvetaeva continues:

Pray for the Son - the Dove - the Adolescent,
For the young Tsarevich, for the young Alexis -
Russia, pray, who the true faith confesses!

Wipe those angel eyes now, ponder deeply
Him that fell upon the stones - think meetly
On the dove of Uglich, on Dmitri.

Gentle mother, Russia, kind, caressing!
Is thy heart so hard as not to grace him
With thy loving-kindness, with thy blessing?

Visit not upon the son the father's trespass.
Russia of the country folk - be his protectress:
Spare the lamb of Tsarskoye Selo, Alexis! (15)

Comments Robin Kemball:

"The metre of this poem is reminiscent of the *bylina* of Russian folk poetry, being (with the exception of the opening - iambic - line) in trochaics varying from four to six feet: unlike the *bylina*, however, Tsvetaeva's poem has rhyme (albeit sometimes very approximate) in the form of triplets (aaa bbb, etc.).

(2664)

The Adolescent: The only son of Nicholas II (and hence heir, or Tsarevich): born July 30, 1904, died (murdered with his parents and four sisters) in Ekaterinburg on July 16, 1918 (New Style). Alexis suffered from hemophilia, a fact which largely explains the disproportionate influence acquired at the Russian Court by the "monk" Rasputin, reputedly capable of arresting the boy's hemorrhages. Nicholas was originally to have abdicated in favor of Alexis, with the former's brother, the Grand Duke Mikhail, as Regent: however, pleading his inability to part with his only son, he eventually appointed his brother as his direct successor. The latter in his turn declined the Crown - unless it be

proffered to him by the Constituent Assembly (March 3-16, 1917). This gesture effectively marked the end of the monarchy in Russia.

On the dove of Uglich, on Dmitri: A reference to the youngest son of Ivan IV: in 1591, the nine-and-half-year-old Dmitri, exiled with his mother to the town of Uglich after Ivan's death, was found dead, in the courtyard of his residence, with his throat cut. The official commission of inquiry declared that the boy, who suffered from epileptic seizures [I have heard that this is a lie invented by Boris Gudunov - M.Mc.], had fatlly injured himself while playing with a knife [when pigs fly - M.Mc.]. Many contemporaries and later historians believed that Dmitri had been murdered at the instigation of Boris Gudunov, who was virtually Regent of Russia during the reign of the weak Tsar Feodor. Among these historians was Karamzin, whose version of events was subsequently taken over by Pushkin for his tragedy Boris Gudunov (of which, indeed, it forms the central theme) and in turn by Mussorgsky in his opera of the same name." (16)

KORNILOV

...Cossack, a Cossack's son ...
That's how the speech began.
-Fatherland. - Foe. -Gloom.
Ready to die, each man.
Sound the tocsin, you priests.
-Foodstocks drained. -There remains:
Each man must groom his own mount... (17)

TO MOSCOW

Felon Grishka could not Polonize you,
And Tsar Peter could not Germanize you.
What are you about, my fairest? - Weeping.
Moscow, where's that ancient pride? - Far sleeping.

(2665)

Where are all your doves? -No food to save them.
Who made off with it? -The coal-black raven.
And your holy crosses? -Ripped asunder.
Moscow, and your sons? -Slain in their hundreds.(18)

Robin Kemball comments:

...*Tsar Peter could not Germanize you:* The Russian term (*onemechil*) originally had much wide connotations (in the sense of "foreignizing" generally): in fact, Peter's reforms were inspired by models from various countries, including England, Holland, and Sweden.

And your holy crosses?: Quite apart from Peter's

abolition of the Moscow Patroarchate and its replacement by a Holy Synod intended to be more subservient to the temporal power (1721), his general anti-religious bent led him to ridicule the old Muscovite piety, to persecute the Old Believers (or Old Ritualists), and even to organize a mock Church Council with a mock Patriarch. (Nicholas) Berdiaev described the methods Peter adopted in dealing with the Church as "reminiscent of the methods of the Bolsheviks", and drew a striking comparison between Peter and Lenin (The Origin of Russian Communism, London, 1955, pp. 13-14) (19)

Harness your thoroughbreds to the sledges!
Drink the counts' wines while the gutter rolls!
Rulers of bayonets and of souls!
Sell off your chapels - by weight - your churches,
Monasteries - auction them all - for scrap.

Burst in the Lord's house on horse-back!
Lap up the red trough for all you're able!

Stables - in churches! Churches - to stables!
Calendar - devil's own dozen too far!
Ours is the grave for the one word: tsar!

Rulers of currency and time-keeping!
Vent on the cupolas all your spite!
When they start selling our flesh for eating,
Menial slaves will discover - Breeding:
Black bones descry - bones that are white. (20)

THE DON

White Guard, your path is set noble and high:
Black muzzles - your breast and temple defy.

(2666)

Godly and white is the cause you fight for:
White is your body - in sands to lie.

That is no flock of swans in the sky there:
Saintly the White Guard host sails by there,
White, asa a vision, to fade and die there...

One last glimpse of a world that's gone:
Manliness - Daring - Vendee - The Don. (21)

Those spared - will die, those fallen - rise from under.
Then come the sons, remembering days far gone:
-And where were you? - The words will roll like thunder,
The answer roll like thunder: - On the Don!

-What did you do? - We bore with grief and cruelty,
Then laid us down to sleep, our last strength gone.
And in the dictionary: *Duty*,
The grandsons, looking back, will write: the *Don*. (22)

Breakers and manliness - laws burst asunder!
Breach on the Don. We are lost. - Going under.
Winds of time! -to our sons' own sons
Pass the sad tidings on:

Aye! For the wall on the Don is shattered!
Aye! For the White Guard is lost and scattered.
But, as we cross the Don,

Flying - a white flock, doomed to perish,
Dying - we died for the huts we cherished!
Sign of the Cross by the last church passed,
Unto the ages - the White Guard host. (23)

Across the fields the litany proceeds.
The secret book of Russia's genesis
-Wherein the world's high destinies lie hidden-
Is read, sealed fast - all that the years have bidden.

The wind rides through the steppe, rides on apace:
-Thou, Russia! - Hapless Martyr! -Sleep-in peace! (24)

Robin Kemball comments:

*That is no flock of swans. ...: An example, on a very modest scale, of the device of negation and antithesis by affirmation characteristic of Russian folk poetry: examples occur in the Lay of Igor's Campaign (***Slovo o polku Igoreve***) and are frequently encountered in the *Russia bylina*.*

Vendee: A reference to the rising of French Royalists in the district off La Vendee (1793), in response to the
(2667)

introduction by the Republican Government of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and of conscription. For a time, the rising appeared seriously to threaten the existence of the Republic, but it was finally subdued, following defeats at Le Mans and at Savenay towards the end of the year. It is worth noting that, in its report of Kornilov's death, the organ of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, in its issue of April 21, 1918 (New Style), referred to him as a "Vendee-ist" (*Vandeets*).

*And in the dictionary, over Duty: The original text here reads: "After the word duty..." - due to the fact that in Russian the word "duty" (*dolg*) comes alphabetically just before the word *Don*. In English, of course, the reverse applies, hence the substitution in our translation of "over"*

for "after".

Flying - a white flock. ...: The "flock" (or "flight") is already mentioned. The term "white flock" (*belaiia stiaia*) is also the title of a cycle of poems by Anna Akhmatova, whom Tsvetaeva deeply admired. Since Akhmatova's book was first published in Petrograd in 1917, some association in Tsvetaeva's mind - conscious or subconscious - cannot be excluded. Strangely enough, however, the text printed in RM here provides one of the rare variants : in place of "*Beloiu staei ...*" we find: *Beloiu burei ...*" ("[in] a white storm"...").

The litany proceeds.: The Russian word *litiia* is defined in the dictionary as "a prayer said on the parvis" (church porch), alternatively "a requiem", i.e., a prayer for the repose of the souls of the dead. We have retained the English word "litany", not only for its morphological likeness to the Russian original, but also, and chiefly, because of the frequent association of the litany with a procession outside the bounds of the church, as here. (25)

It is simple, as blood and sweat:
Tsar and people - in destiny wed.

It is clear, as a secret shared
Between two, and the Spirit - the third.

Heaven summoned the Tsar to his throne:
It is spotless, as sleep and snow.

And the Tsar shall regain his throne yet:
It is sacred, as blood and sweat. (26)

(2668)

On Moscow's arms: the hero slays the serpent.
It lies in blood. He - swathed in light. - Well purposed!

So, in the name of God and of the living Word,
Come down from yonder gates, thou watchman of the Lord!

Give us our freedom back, bold knight, their life - to them.
Appointed guard of Moscow - from yon gates descend!

And show - both to the people and the dragon -
That when men sleep - icons take up the battle. (27)

Robin Kemball comments:

Icons take up the battle: This allusion to the active *strength* believed to be embodied in the icon calls to mind

the beautiful profession of faith made by the Slavophil Ivan Kireevsky, as recorded by Alexander Herzen in his *Memoirs*: "I once stood in a chapel, looking at the miraculous *icon* pf the Mother of God and reflecting on the child-like faith of the people praying in front of it: a group of women, invalids, elderly folk, on their knees, making the sign of the cross and bowing (their heads) to the ground. Afterwards, with fervent hope in my heart, I looked at those holy features and, little by little, the secret of their miraculous force became clear to me. Yes, it was something more than a mere board bearing an image. ... For whole centuries that icon had been taking in streams of impassioned offerings, the prayers of sorrowing, hapless people: it must have become filled with strength - that same strength that was now emanating from it and flowing back to those pious souls. It had become a living organ, a meeting-point between man and his Creator. Thus reflecting, I looked once more at those old men, those women and children, prostrating themselves in the dust, I looked at the holy icon - then I myself saw the features of the Mother of God come to life, looking down with love and compassion upon those simple people. ... And in my turn I fell upon my knees and humbly prayed before Her." (28)

Seven swords, they pierced the Holy
Virgin's heart then, when the Son died.
Seven swords, they pierced her heart then,
But with mine - it is seven times seven.

Whether he's alive, I know not,
He who's dearer than the heart, who's
Dearer than the Son, so help me...

With this song - I seek my solace.
Should you meet him - send me word. (29)
(2669)

Comments Robin Kemball:

The Holy Virgin's heart ...: In Russian Orthodoxy, with its marked Mariological leanings, the Virgin Mary is usually referred to as the Mother of God: either *Bogoroditsa*, as here, or *Bogomater* [Church Slavonic: *Bozhii Mater*]. (30)

Where are the swans? - They went away, the swans.
The ravens too? - They stayed behind, the ravens.
Where did they go? - There where the cranes have gone.
Why did they go? - For fear their wings be taken.

And where's Papa? - Sleep, sleep, the Sandman on
His steppe-steed will be here now very shortly.
Where will he take us? - To the swanly Don.
There - fancy! -I've a white swan waiting for me... (31)

Gallant White Legions! Gordian knot of
Prowess named Russian!
Gallant White Legions! White mushrooms out of
Songs that are Russian!

Gallant White Legions! White stars that, steep,
Indefaceable, span the skies!
Gallant White Legions! Black nails thrust deep in the
Ribs of the Antichrist (Dajjal) (32)

Cradle, swathed in red, arrayed in crimson:
Cradle which the rabble rock between them!
Soldiers brawl - outside the church - a even...
But she will be beautiful - this infant.

From her wet-nurse, with her milk, she drank them:
All the blessings old Ryazan could muster -
The Thrinity of God - the Russian
Flag - the Russian space - the Russian anthem.

And one day, in God's good time, she'll think on
Her high filial duties - will redeem them -
Cradle which the rabble rock between them!
Cradle, swathed in red, arrayed in crimson! (33)

Above the waters, black and bottomless,
The last chimes sound.
In one vast avalanche, the populace
Casts the throne down.

(2670)

The Tsars' proud purple trampled, spat upon,
And steeped in blood.
Ye last of Russian church-bells, battle on!
Ring out! Ringout!

Lament them, tearful pearls, weep over them:
Altar and throne.
Defend your Church and Tsar, keep troth with them,
Ye loyal sons!

Though Tsars of this world fall, yet uttering:
Thy Kingdom! - Come!
So the last chimes set all hearts shuddering
And all the town. (34)

Wild wind, whirlwind, snow-wind rocked you in your cradle,
But your name lives on - white swans - in song and fable!

Stitched with crosses, faded to a shroud, your colors
Will commemorate - white knights - your deeds of valor.

And for you, dear sons! -there'll be - no returning.
But to lead your host you've the - Holy Virgin! (35)

Tsar and God! Grant those your pardon -
Foolish - sinful - weak - foolhardy,
Those swept into some dire maelstrom,
Those seduced and those prevailed on.

Tsar and God! For all his past sins,
Ease the lot of Stenka Razin!

Tsar! The Lord will yet reward you!
We've wept tears enough, we orphans!
Seen, O, seen too many stricken!
So, Tsarevich - spare the Brigand!

In God's house are many mansions.
Spare, then, spare him - Stenka Razin!

Razin! Razin! Years go passing!
Now the red beast's tamed and fastened.
His once fearful teeth are blunted.
Still, for that dark life he flaunted,

For the fell deeds he took part in -
Loose the chains of Stenka Razin!

(2671)

Homeland! Source and estuary!
Breath of *Rus'* once more! Make merry!
Shine now, eyes long dimmed with sadness!

Tsar and God! Set Stenka Razin
Free - on this day of rejoicing! (36)

Comments Robin Kemball:

Tsar and God!: The Russian expression *Tsar' I Bog!* is perfectly normal in the simple sense of "Lord God!" or "Almighty God!": in this poem, however, as in some of the preceding ones there is an element of ambiguity in Tsvetaeva's use of the word "Tsar". Here, at any rate, it seems clear that, in line 7, "Tsar" and "The Lord" refer to separate persons, and this in its turn suggests that the "Tsar's Son" (*Tsarskii Syn*) in line 10, notwithstanding the majuscule, refers to the Tsarevich. (It should be noted that the "Brigand" is also accorded a capital letter here.)

Stenka Razin: Stenka (or Stepan) Razin, a Don Cossack chieftain, first attracted attention as a daring freebooter who carried out raids in Persia and other lands along the Caspian Sea and the lower Volga. In 1670, he moved up the Volga, proclaiming freedom from officials and landlords and murdering members of the upper classes, while the soldiery and the common people flocked to his side. By the time he reached Simbirsk, his rebel army counted some 200,000 men. Razin and his army were ultimately defeated by regular Muscovite forces under the command of Prince Yuri Bariatinsky. Razin escaped to the Don, but in the spring of 1671 was arrested by the more conservative Cossack elements, handed over to the Russian authorities, and executed in public in Moscow. Brief as was his career, Razin became the central figure of a popular epic and his exploits, largely imaginary, figure frequently in tales and songs of the Muscovite period of Russian literature." (37)

Lush and passion-free, the roses
Of our summer fade and vanish.
Just the jacket drawn in closer:
We go hungry - looking Spanish.

Nothing is but one must count the
Cost - far sooner move a mountain!
To our old prides' goodly number
Life now adds a new pride - hunger.

Inside out, this cloak we're wearing
Of the Enemies of the People -
We proclaim with our whole bearing:
We're for onion-dome - and freedom.
(2672)

Still the hunter's pride - unbroken
On the shaft of life's dull dray-cart.
Yet beware, lest it betoken:
-Onion-dome - and then the graveyard.

We shall answer, when we stand at
Heaven's gates, beneath the almonds:
-Tsar! Throughout the people's banquet
We went hungry - like hidalgos! (38)

Your whole life long you spent reciting:
-Down, fathers! -Up, the sons!
Not so, Good Sire, All-High-and-Mighty,
All-Dream-Dispensing One!

Not for your sons you toiled - you set up
The Devils' shining hour!-
Tsar-Carpenter, who never let up
Though sweat poured from your brow.

Without you - peasants would be hauling
Their snow-bound sleds today.
But your last scion would not have fallen
At some halt far away.

If you, head bent, had never levied
Those toy boats - you'd have saved
Your holy *Rus'* from being buried
Without a decent grave.

It's you set up this seething cauldron -
You, stacked and stoked the coals!
Sire of the Soviets - you - upholder
Of Ceremonial Balls!

Sire of the rubble - it's your doing -
These monasteries in flames!
Your legendary city's ruin -
It's your hand that is to blame!

You squandered free, high-handed, careless -
You, handicraftsman-Sire!
Your last descendant's blood lies squarely
On your head, mutineer!

No more your crackpot ventures! Spare them!
The - sister - waits her hour...
-Down, Internationale! -*Up terem!*
-Down, Peter (the Great)! -*Vive Sophia!* (39)

(2673)

Robin Kemball comments:

Despite her occasionally ambivalent attitude towards Peter that Great, Tsveteava's position was generally one of outright hostility (as was also true of Dostoyevsky): of all the poems in the present cycle, this one represents the ultimate in condemnation of this Russian autocrat.

And your last scion would not have fallen...: considering that the ex-Tsar Nicholas II, together with the Empress (*Tsarina*) and all their children, had been assassinated in Ekaterinburg more than two years earlier, Tsvetaeva's footnote at first sight makes surprising reading. It certainly says much for the state of utter confusion, of rumor and counter-rumor, sustained by the Civil War.

Your toy boats...: One of Peter's first important undertakings, on assuming the real reins of power in 1694, was to build up a Russian fleet in Voronezh, on the Don. This enabled him, in July, 1696, to drive the Turks from the fortress of Azov, at the mouth of the Don.

...upholder of Ceremonial Balls!: Tsvetaeva uses a Russianized form of the French word *Assemblée(s)*. The

reference is indeed to the French-style Court Assemblies with their balls and ceremonial dances, and attended by numerous foreign guests, which were one of Peter's characteristic innovations.

-Down, Internationale! - Up, terem! At the time Tsvetaeva was writing, the "Internationale" represented the official Soviet anthem: on the significance of the *terem*, see below *From her bower, grievous she Sobs....*

Down, Peter! - Vive, Sophia!: Sophia was Peter's half-sister, the daughter of Tsar Alexis by his first wife, Maria Miloslavskaya (who died in 1669). Peter was the son of Alexis' second wife, Natalya Naryshkina. Alexis was at first succeeded by Theodore (or *Feodor*), also a child of his first marriage., who died in 1682, leaving no heir. In the absence of any explicit law of succession, the rival boyar families, the Miloslavskys and the Naryshkins, competed for the throne. In May, 1682, the first, successful revolt of the Streltsy effectively placed Peter (a mere ten years old) as "co-Tsar", together with his half-brother Ivan. In fact, for the next seven years, both Peter and his family were kept safely away from all state affairs. With the failure of a second Streltsy revolt in August, 1689, Sophia capitulated and Peter was acknowledged as *de facto* ruler: even then, the real reins of power remained with his mother, and it was only after her death in 1694 that Peter, by then 22 years old, finally assumed direction of the State. ... By and large, the Miloslavskys represented the traditionalist, Muscovite, party: the Naryshkins, the more outward looking, Westernizing faction. If we consider Tsvetaeva's assessment of the results of the latter policy at Peter's hands, her championing of

(2674)

Sophia becomes more understandable. It could, of course, be explained in more simplified fashion on the basis of the theory that "my enemies' enemies are my friends".(40)

To ALYA

Smock with silver stitched embroidery,
Breast - star-studded, shining galaxy! -
Head - set off by silver embroidery,
Slender as a flower's calyx is.

Eyes - two lakes amid the wilderness,
Two God-given revelations,
In a face whose misty rosiness
Springs from War and Inspiration.

Angel - knowing - nothing - everything!
Blade of grass - your hunger's comforted!
Father's child - how you resemble him! -
Angel likewise, he, and Combatant.

It may well be - all my excellence

Lies in strolling hand in hand with you.
-Pray tomorrow for our Regiments,
To Our lady, named Kazanskaya!(41)

Robin Kemball comments:

To ALYA: The poem is dedicated to Tsvetaeva's elder daughter, Ariadna. Born in early 1913, a precocious child, Alya was, by the age of six, already something of a literary and intellectual prodigy. Some of her verse is appended to Tsvetaeva's collection *Craft (Remeslo)*. The unusually close relationship between mother and daughter, frequently reflected in Tsvetaeva's verse, is described by Karlinsky as "a mixture of an amazing equality and a studied, old-fashioned courtliness". Alya returned to the USSR, settling in Moscow and working for a time as an illustrator. On August 27, 1939, only a few weeks after her mother's return to Moscow, Alya was arrested, then sent to a labor camp, then arrested once more. According to P. Vostokov, P.N. Savitsky later reported having met her in 1948 in a camp somewhere in the Mordva Republic. Released in the early 1950s, Alya, - by then, with Tsvetaeva's sister Anastasia, the only surviving member of Tsvetaeva's immediate family circle - played an important part in editing her mother's works.

To Our Lady, named Kazanskaya!: The reference is to one of the most revered of Russian icons, that of Our Lady of Kazan (*Kazanskaya* being the feminine derivative adjective). There appears to be a slight confusion of dates. Tsvetaeva's poem being written on July 5, "tomorrow" would be July 6.

(2675)

In the Russian Church, the "Apparition of the Icon of the Most sacred Mother of God in the City of Kazan" (1579) is celebrated on July 8. (42)

I will inquire of the Don, of the sweeping wide waters,
I will inquire of the sea, of the thundering breakers,
Of the swart sun that beat down in the heat of each battle,
Of the shrill heights where the raven, full sated, now slumbers.

Then shall the Don say: - I never knew soldiers so burnished!
Then shall the sea say: - My tears are too few for your weeping!

Then shall the sun hide its face, and the raven come croaking:

Three hundred years - and I never saw bones that were whiter!

Crane on the wing, I will circle the Cossacks' far townships:
Weeping, they go! - I will question the dust that enswirls them!

Waving farewell, see, the steppe-grass, its feathers fair downy.

Crimson, ah, crimson, the cornel on Perekop's foreland!

All, I will ask: those that peacefully passed through those
fell days,
Rocked in their cradles.
Skulls in the rocks - even they shall be summoned to answer:
Gallant White Guard - lo, your chronicler's found that shall
serve you. (43)

Robin Kemball comments:

This stately poem, with its slow, solemn movement, is written in 5-foot dactyls (line 14 has two feet only) with non-rhyming feminine endings throughout. The style and content serve as an introduction to the Plaint of Yaroslavna (see below, after the part dealing with the Kievan epic The Lay of Igor's Campaign), for which Tsvetaeva goes back to an earlier campaign on the Don which took place at the dawn of Russian history (The Lay of Igor's Campaign).

...*the cornel on Perekop's foreland!*: The wild *cornel* or dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*): as the Latin form indicates, the shrub is noted for the dark-red hue of its berries and, in winter, its stems (the Russian term [*kizil* or *kizil'*] is in fact derived from a Turkic word meaning "red"): *Perekop* is the name of the isthmus which joins the Crimean peninsula to the Russian mainland: as the scene of the last White resistance in that area, it is also the name Tsvetaeva gave to a further set of poems, another "diary in verse",
(2676)

dealing with the aftermath of the events covered by the present cycle. (44)

A life for the Tsar
Is the life for the brave

No other life, no finer life
Than a life for the Tsar.

Ride Cossack ride
Ride Cossack ride
Ride, ride Cossack ride

Cossack Song

Not by the plow is our famous land furrowed ...
It is furrowed by horses' hooves,
And sown is our famous land with Cossack heads.
Adorned is our quiet Don with young widows,
Beflowered is our father, the quiet Don, with orphans,
Full are the waves of the quiet Don with fathers' and
mothers' tears.

Cossack Song

Through the trees, swords glinting, goes
A squadron all with fine moustaches.
An officer young rides at their head,
By him are a hundred Cossacks led.
"Fear not, brothers, follow me!
Gallop to the ramparts!
Whoever gets there first should have honor
And fame and a medal!"
On the ramparts we stood our ground
While bullets buzzed like bees all 'round.
Than Cossacks of the Don none braver
When they charge with bayonet or sabre!

Cossack Song

Someone who know me very well, Sra. Elvira Amado de Crespo, mother of thw man who is arguably the best friend I ever had and who calls herself, in an untranslatable expression my "*madre postiza*", said that I am an "incurable romantic and idealist", and that my mentality is "medieval and not modern, rural and not

(2677)

urban". Though Sra. Amado de Crespo meant it as a compliment, I plead guilty on all counts, and, as we say in Spanish: "*a mucha honra*" (with great pride and honor).

Church Slavonic, which may be defined as "the liturgical language of those Slavs who are of Eastern Orthodox Faith", is closer to Old Bulgarian than to any other known language. *Church Slavonic* was developed by two brothers from Salonika (Or, in Greek "*Thessaloniki*"), Sts. Cyril and Methodius, known as "the Apostles to the Slavs", from the Slavic dialect spoken in Macedonia in the 9th century, to which they added Greek words and neologisms to adapt said language for liturgical use.

In the late 14th century, the grammar and orthography of *Church Slavonic* was codified and standardized by Patriarch Evtimij

(also known by the Greek form of his name, which is "Euthimios" or "Evthimios") of Trnovo, who was Patriarch of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church from 1375 to 1393, Patriarch Evtimij (to use the Bulgarian form of his title and name) of Bulgaria also extended to the flexibility and expressiveness of *Church Slavonic*, though without basically altering the language, which continued to be, essentially, the Slavic dialect of 9th century Macedonia, with Greek words and neologisms added by Sts. Cyril and Methodius, "the Apostles to the Slavs".(45)

It should be noted that Sts. Cyril and Methodius introduced Greek terms and neologisms into *Church Slavonic* only when the Slavonic language had no adequate word to express a given idea or concept. Thus, it cannot be said that Sts. Cyril and Methodius

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were "agents of Byzantine Imperialism" nor that they "attempted to Hellenize the Slavs and their language". On the contrary, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, by developing the *Church Slavonic* language and keeping Hellenisms or Greek words to a minimum, enabled the Slavs to have their liturgy in a Slavic language rather than being forced to adopt Byzantine Greek as their liturgical language. Thus, those Slavs who became Eastern Orthodox (many, such as Poles, Croats, Slovenes, Czechs and Slovaks, became Catholics) adopted Byzantine Christianity without becoming Hellenized or Byzantinized, though, of course, Byzantine culture was very influential among them.

Something which probably dates to World War I, there exists a certain anti-Bulgar bias in many places. In World War I, the Serbs

and Greeks said that only "innate wickedness" could have possessed Bulgaria to enter the war on the side of the hated Germans and Turks. The British, French and Italians made jokes based on a play on words between "Bulgar" and "vulgar", though the words are totally unrelated. The Russians were so angered that Slavic and Eastern Orthodox Bulgaria would side with Germans and Turks that she sent an elite force between a brigade and a division in size to join the Allied Salonika Army, whose first objective was to crush Bulgaria. This was not easy, for the Russians to accomplish, with German control of the Baltic Sea and Turkish control of the Dardanelles. Said Russian force fought excellently well.

One Bulgarian I once met praised his homeland to the skies,

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saying it has the best wines and most beautiful women in the world. I have never had the pleasure of sampling Bulgarian wines, but can testify to the beauty of the women of the Balkan Slavs, whether Croat, Serb, Bosnian, Macedonian or Bulgarian; the strong Slavic admixture, with perhaps a touch of Celtic, Sarmatian and Alanic, added to the Illyrian and Thracian bedrock, does indeed produce women of extraordinary beauty. *Nota bene* that the names "Croat" and "Serb" are remotely of Iranian origin, apparently indicating that at least the ruling caste of the early Croats and Serbs was Sarmatian or Alanic, and therefore Iranian. The Bulgarian actress Nina Dobrev is one of the most incredibly beautiful women that I have ever seen. My Bulgarian friend forgot one of Bulgaria's many virtues. I am a great lover of cheese, and am something of an expert on the cheeses of France, Spain and

Italy, but Bulgarian Kashkaval goat cheese is the most extravagantly delicious cheese that I have ever eaten. So, the time to forgive Bulgaria for taking the side of Germans and Turks in World War I arrived many years ago.

For reasons which will become evident - if it they have not already been made so - if one is to study Kievan Rus', one has no alternative but to acquire at least a bit of knowledge of Bulgaria. We have already spoken of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, "the apostles to the Slavs". The most important Bulgarian disciple of Sts. Cyril and Methodius was St. Clement of Ohrid. Dimitri Obolensky gives a brief study of St. Clement of Ohrid. Why Obolensky insist on sometimes referring to St. Cyril as

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"Constantine" I have no idea, since this can only confuse the reader.'

"On a winter's day, late in 867 or early 868, a group of Roman citizens, carrying lighted candles, went out to meet a company of foreigners on the last stage of their journey to Rome. At the head of the reception party was the pope. The strangers had travelled. Via Venice, from Moravia, a Slav principality which lay on both banks of the middle Danube, in the heart of central Europe. They were of mixed nationality: some were Greeks, others Slavs. Their leaders were two brothers, both distinguished citizens of the Byzantine Empire, Constantine (later known as Cyril), and Methodius.

Their names, and reputation, were well known in Rome. For the past four years, as envoys of the Byzantine emperor to Moravia, Constantine (Cyril) and Methodius had been translating the Byzantine liturgy and Christian scriptures from Greek into (Church) Slavonic, and training native clergy capable of building a Slav-speaking Church in central Europe. Moravia, the center of their activity from 863 to 867, belonged to western Christendom and came under papal jurisdiction. The Moravians had already been converted, earlier in the century, to Latin Christianity by Frankish missionaries from Salzburg and Passau. Understandably these Frankish clerics regarded the envoys from Byzantium as

trespassers on their own missionary domain. In the tense situation that followed the arrival in the autumn of 863 of Constantine (St. Cyril) and (St.) Methodius in Moravia, only the pope was in a position to encourage and support their work. The insubordinate tendencies of the Frankish bishops were causing anxiety and irritation in Rome. Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius, because of their Byzantine affiliations, their conflict with the Franks, and the strong support given them by the Slav princes of central Europe - Rastislav of Moravia and Kotsel of Pannonia - had involved themselves in some of the principal concerns of the ninth-century papacy. It is not surprising that the progress of Slav vernacular Christianity in central Europe was monitored with some care in Rome. In 867 an invitation reached Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius from Pope Nicholas I to visit him. By the time they reached Rome Nicholas was dead; and it was his successor, Hadrian II, who welcomed them and their companions on the outskirts of the city.

One of these companions is the subject of the present biographical sketch. A Bulgarian Slav called
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Clement - this was perhaps his clerical, not his original name - he came to occupy in the history and immediate aftermath of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission a position second only to that of the two leaders. His early life is virtually unknown: it is not until the death of Methodius in 885 that the limelight in the sources begins to fall on him. So for his early years we are forced to rely on circumstantial evidence, and on the statement by his medieval biographer that he was a disciple and companion of Methodius 'since his tender youth'.

The history of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission to the Slavs is thus a necessary prelude to Clement's early career; and we may be reasonably sure that he was in his masters' retinue as it entered Rome in the winter of 867-868.

The signal honor paid to the visitors by the presence of the pope in the reception party was not due to his personal deserts, nor even to the missionary achievements, of its two leaders. The excitement provoked in Rome by their arrival was caused not by them, but by what they carried. In the place of honor in their baggage were the relics believed to be those of St. Clement, bishop of Rome, one of the early successors of St. Peter.

The circumstances in which these relics were discovered are described in several contemporary, or near-contemporary, sources. Chief among them are the Old Church Slavonic Life of Constantine, the Vití Constantini, and a Latin document, variously known as the Legenda Italica or Vita Cum Translatione Sancti

Clementis, and based on the evidence of Constantine's Roman friend Anastasius the Librarian, the pope's secretary. The relics were found in the town of Cherson in the Crimea during the winter of 860-861, when Constantine (St. Cyril) was on a diplomatic mission to the court of the Khazar ruler, in the foothills of the Caucasus. Brought to Constantinople, they were carried by Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius to Moravia, and from there to their final resting place in Rome.

We know today that these relics were not genuine. In its written form, the tradition that St. Clement was banished to the Crimea in the reign of the Emperor Trajan and thrown into the Black Sea tied to an anchor, goes back no further than the fourth century, and is now generally regarded as apocryphal. Yet it was firmly believed in the Middle Ages: and Constantine (St. Cyril) was certainly convinced that the discovery was genuine, and due to divine intervention. The Romans shared this belief. Their sense of history as well as their local pride were rekindled by the posthumous

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return of St. Clement, pope and martyr, to the city of which he had been one of the first bishops. Since the seventh century the custom of 'translating' the relics of Christian martyrs to sanctuaries within the city of Rome had been growing. This revival of the cult of Roman martyrs was encouraged by the great popes of the late eighth and early ninth centuries. Hadrian I, Leo III, and Paschal I, who restored their churches and lavishly adorned their shrines. By the mid-ninth century, though, through this combination of saintly antiquarianism and architectural display, Rome had come to be seen, as perhaps never before, in the threefold guise of the city of martyrs, a goal of pilgrims, and the patrimony of St. Peter. No pope worked harder to implant this image in western Christendom than Nicholas I; and it is hard to imagine an event which provided more striking endorsement for his policy than the arrival in Rome, shortly after his death, of the relics of St. Clement.

The pope, we have seen, had several reasons for showing a friendly interest in the bearers of these relics. Constantine's (St. Cyril's) friendship with Photius, the former patriarch of Constantinople who was then regarded in Rome as a sworn enemy of the papacy, was no doubt a liability. But the prestige he enjoyed in the Greek monasteries in Rome was a point in his favor. In February, 868 Hadrian II gave a banquet in honor of the local Greek monks. It is likely that Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius, and perhaps their disciples, attended this feast. By early March at the latest the pope had decided to authorize the use of the Slavonic language in the liturgy. It cannot have been an easy decision, for it meant departing from the well-

established tradition which had secured for Latin an almost total liturgical monopoly throughout the Western Church; and, by actively supporting the work of Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius, the pope was risking a major conflict with the Frankish clergy. But the fruits of Slavonic vernacular Christianity now being offered him were clearly too valuable to be declined, and the popularity of Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius enjoyed in the Slavonic courts of central Europe was a strong additional argument. Solemn liturgical celebrations, in three successive stages, followed in the principal churches of Rome. The Slavonic liturgical books were deposited in Ste. Maria Maggiore and a mass was then sung. Next the Slav disciples of Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius were ordained to the priesthood by two Roman bishops; and finally with the help of these newly ordained disciples the liturgy was celebrated in (Old Church)

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Slavonic on successive days in St. Peter's, in the churches of Ste. Petronilla and St. Abdrew, and in St. Paul's *fuori le mura*. In St. Paul's and all-night vigil in (Old Church) Slavonic was followed by a liturgy in the same language sung over the apostle's tomb, with the assistance of two high-placed clerical officials of the Roman Church; one of them was Constantine's (St. Cyril's) friend, Anastasius the Librarian. The importance which the *Vita Constantini* attaches to the celebrations in the church of St. Paul is significant: for the Apostle of the Gentiles could be regarded in a special sense, together with St. Clement, as the patron saint of the Slavonic mission.

The ordination in Rome of several of its members was an important event. It was, indeed, for the very purpose of having his disciple ordained that Constantine (St. Cyril) had travelled south from Moravia. According to the *Vita Methodii*, the pope himself ordained Methodius to the priesthood soon after the mission's arrival in Rome; while the disciples of the two brothers were ordained by two Roman bishops, Formosus of Porto and Gauderic of Velletri.

None of the contemporary sources mention the names of these newly ordained disciples. A late medieval document, however, tells us that one of them was called Clement.

Our knowledge of him comes mainly from two medieval Greek documents. The earliest and much more detailed, known as the *Long Life*, is generally, and rightly, ascribed to Theophylact, archbishop of Ohrid in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. The second, the *Brief Life*, written in the first half of the thirteenth century, is attributed on equally solid grounds to another archbishop of Ohrid, Demetrios Chomatianos.

The Brief Life is the only one to mention Clement's nationality. 'He drew his origin', its author tells us, 'from the European Moesians, who are also known to most people as Bulgarians.' This, in the thirteenth century, could mean only one thing: that Clement was a Slav inhabitant of the Kingdom of Bulgaria. The precise region of this kingdom from which his family stemmed is unknown, but it was probably Macedonia. It was there, we shall see, that Clement was sent by the Bulgarian ruler, with the task of setting up a Slav vernacular Church: a mission in which a native could be expected to succeed better than a foreigner. Moreover, Clement's command of Greek, apparent in the quality and range of his translations, suggests that he acquired a knowledge of that language early in life: this again points to Macedonia, some of

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whose Greek-speaking towns and villages had been incorporated into the Bulgarian kingdom in the middle of the ninth century. Clement is more likely to have grown up in a bilingual milieu in Macedonia than in any other province of that kingdom.

The earliest recorded fact of Clement's biography connects him closely with Methodius. The author of the Long Life tells us that he 'set the great Methodius as the model of his own life. ... for he knew his [Methodius'] life as no one else did, as he had followed him since his tender youth, and saw with his own eyes all the things that his master did.' How literally we are entitled to take this imprecise statement is a matter of opinion. Clement is generally believed to have been born around 840: according to the Long Life he died in old age in 916. If we accept the date 840, and take his words 'tender youth' to refer to an age between sixteen and eighteen, we may tentatively date his association with Methodius from the years 856-858.

This was a decisive period in the life of Methodius. About 856, his biographer tells us, he gave up a promising career in the Byzantine provincial administration and entered a monastery on the Bithynian Mount Olympus, in north-western Asia Minor. This mountainous region, which lay immediately south of the Sea of Marmara, known in antiquity and the Middle Ages as the Mysian Olympus - today the Turks call it Kesis (or Ulu) Dag - was in the ninth century a leading monastic center. We do not know for certain in which of its many monasteries Methodius was tonsured: most probably it was one of which he later became abbot several years later, and which his Slavonic biographer called Polikhron.

If we can accept the view that Clement's association with Methodius began in 856-858, we may conclude that he became his disciple in one of the

monasteries of Mount Olympus. Methodius remained a member of its community, continuously we may suppose, from about 856 to 860. Soon after his arrival he was joined there by his brother Constantine (later St. Cyril), who had recently given up a chair of philosophy in Constantinople. However, unlike his elder brother, Constantine (St. Cyril) did not at this stage become a monk. If Clement was then living with Methodius, his first encounter with Constantine (St. Cyril), who already then enjoyed a formidable reputation as a scholar and diplomat, must have made a powerful impression on the young man who was probably still in his teens. Clement was later to write an encomium of Constantine (St. Cyril), praising him for his work for
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the Slavs, and saluting him as his teacher.

The years which Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius spent together on Mount Olympus (*circa* 865-860) are described by their biographers with tantalizing brevity. Each biographer, however, seems to drop the same significant hint. The *Vita Constantini* tells us that during his stay in the monastery Constantine (St. Cyril) spent his time 'conversing with books' in the company of his brother. The *Vita Methodii*, using an almost identical phrase, states that on Mount Olympus Methodius 'devoted himself to books'. What was the nature of this joint literary activity? It can hardly have been the mere reading of Scripture: had that been the case the biographers who seldom miss an opportunity of praising their heroes' piety, would surely have said so. Nor is it likely that the two brothers spent the whole of their leisure time studying works of theology: Constantine (St. Cyril) would hardly have chosen a provincial monastery as a place for scholarly retreat, when he had all the books he needed in the libraries of Constantinople. It is hard to resist the impression that the brothers' 'conversation with books' on Mount Olympus had another, more specific, purpose; and it is tempting to speculate that this purpose had to do with the invention of the Slavonic alphabet and with early attempts to translate Greek texts into Slavonic. The arguments in favor of this hypothesis are tentative, and largely based on chronology. We know that the Slavonic alphabet was in existence by 863 at the latest. Its invention, however, must have required years of labor. We can confidently discount the claim of Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius' biographers that it was invented in Constantinople during the weeks or months of 862 which followed the arrival of the embassy from Prince Rastislav of Moravia, requesting from the Byzantine government a teacher capable of giving Christian instruction to his subjects in their own Slavonic

tongue. Both biographers tell us that Constantine (St. Cyril) was assisted in the task of inventing the Slavonic alphabet. One of his collaborators was surely Methodius. And it is worth noting that between *circa* 843, when Constantine (St. Cyril), a boy of sixteen, arrived in the imperial capital from his native Thessalonica [Greek: *Thessaloniki*; the *Salonika* of World War I fame], and 862, when the Moravian envoys came to Constantinople, the only period during which the two brothers were together for any length of time (except for the Khazar mission of 860-861, when they were on active diplomatic service) were the years they spent on Mount Olympus.

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Are we entitled to conclude that Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius invented the Slavonic alphabet in the late 850s in one of the monasteries of Mount Olympus, and then essayed with the help of this alphabet the first translations from Greek into (Old Church) Slavonic? We cannot state this with any confidence, given the tentative nature of the evidence. But the view that at least the first experiments leading to the new alphabet were made in this period on Mount Olympus by a group of scholars and translators under Constantine's (St. Cyril's) direction may be put forward as a plausible hypothesis.

If Clement, probably still a layman, was then living as Methodius' disciple in the same monastery, he would naturally have joined this group. His knowledge of the Slav and Greek languages - both, we have seen, probably acquired in childhood in his native Macedonia - would have made him a useful member of Constantine's (St. Cyril's) linguistic seminar.

Then, for the next few years, we lose sight of him. It has been supposed that in 860-861 he accompanied Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius on their mission to the land of the Khazars, and that he took part in, or at least witnessed, the discovery of the relics of the pseudo-Clement in the Crimea. But no convincing evidence has been found to support this view.

The next piece of evidence, pointing to Clement's presence in Constantine's (St. Cyril's) linguistic circle, comes from Constantinople. The *Vita Constantini* tells us that, after the arrival of the Moravian mission, the Emperor Michael III asked Constantine (St. Cyril) to invent a Slavonic alphabet: whereupon 'he gave himself over to prayer together with his other collaborators'. The *Vita Methodii* recording the same event, calls these assistants of Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius 'others, who were of the same spirit as they'. This same group is mentioned also by Theophlact, in the *Long Life of Clement*, who tells us that after inventing the Slavonic letters Constantine (St. Cyril)

and Methodius 'took pains to impart divine knowledge [of these letters] to the sharper-witted of their disciples'. He mentions five of them by name: Gorazd, Clement, Naum, Angelarius, and Sava. What we know of Clement's later activity as a teacher, writer, and translator certainly suggests that he belonged to this chosen group. The statements in the Vita Constantini and the Vita Methodii that Constantine (St. Cyril) 'composed' or 'formed' the Slavonic letters in 862 could well, in that case, refer to the final stage in the development of the Glagolitic alphabet. To this
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final stage at least Clement can hardly have failed to make some contribution.

During the next five years (863-868) the sources make no mention of him. However, the fact that in 868 he was with his masters in Rome, where, as we have seen, he was ordained priest, makes it virtually certain that he had accompanied them to Moravia: and we may suppose that he supported their efforts to provide the Moravians with a complete cycle of liturgical offices in Slavonic translation, to train a local Slav-speaking clergy, and to repel the Frankish assaults on the Byzantine mission. These were the years of his apprenticeship in the service of Slav vernacular Christianity.

After spending some three and a half years in Moravia, it will be recalled, Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius travelled south to have their disciples ordained. It is a moot point whether they intended to go for this purpose to Rome or Constantinople. One of the prospective ordinands was certainly Clement. The different stages of their journey to Rome are recorded in the Vita Constantini. It included a break of several months in Mosaburg near Lake Balaton in present-day Hungary, whose Slav ruler, Kotsel, was persuaded to support the cause of the Slavonic vernacular liturgy; and a stopover in Venice, where Constantine (St. Cyril) made a spirited defence of the Slavonic liturgy against the local clergy, who argued that only in three languages - Hebrew, Greek and Latin - was it permissible to offer public worship to God. [the 'Hebrew' in this case must refer to Aramaic or Syriac, as there is not and never has been a Christian liturgy in Hebrew].

Clement's ordination to the priesthood in Rome has already been mentioned. We know nothing precise about his sojourn in the city, which probably lasted from the winter of 867-868 to the summer or autumn of 869. His contacts with influential circles of the Roman Church, Latin as well as Greek, may have been almost as wide as those of Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius. He was ordained by two leading Roman bishops, Gauderich of Velletri and Formosus of Porto, and must have personally known Constantine's (St. Cyril's) friend and admired,

Anastasius the Librarian. He surely had close links with Greek monasteries in Rome, and may well have lived in Santa Prassede, one of them.

Constantine (St. Cyril) died in Rome on 14 February 869, soon after becoming a monk under his now more familiar name of Cyril. Later in that year Hadrian II appointed Methodius archbishop of Pannonia, and sent him to Kotsel's court as papal legate to the Slavs of
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Central Europe. We can be fairly sure that Clement accompanied him.

In obedience to his brother's last wish, Methodius renounced the intention of returning to his monastery on Mount Olympus, and chose to continue their common work for the Slavs. It was a fateful decision. His old enemies, the Frankish clerics, enraged at the thought that their prerogatives in Pannonia and Moravia had been annulled by his new appointment, secured his arrest and trial by a synod of local bishops. Condemned as a usurper by episcopal rights, Methodius was imprisoned for two and a half years in Swabia, and it was not until 873 that Pope John VIII, having learned of his legate's fate, forced the Frankish bishops to release him.

The last years of Methodius' life were spent fighting to defend the Slavonic liturgy in his archdiocese. He had to contend simultaneously with the hostility of the Franks, the inconstancy of the new Moravian ruler Sviatopluk, and the growing indifference of Rome. Only in Byzantium, which he visited in 881, did he receive encouragement from the Emperor Basil I and the Patriarch Photius. He now devoted all the time he could spare to his work of translation. In times gone by he had helped his brother to render into Slavonic the Greek liturgical offices and some of the New Testament. In his last years he translated most of the Old Testament, selected writings of the great Christian theologians (the 'Fathers of the Church'), and a Byzantine manual of canon law. In this he was helped by two disciples, described by his biographer as priests 'experts in shorthand'. One of them may well have been Clement: we may suppose that he spent the last fifteen years of Methodius' life by his master's side.

The sources, however, are silent on Clement's activity during those years. It was only after Methodius' death on April 6, 885 that he grows to his full stature in the documents. Methodius had designated as his successor his pupil Gorazd, who enjoyed the double advantage of being a native Moravian and of knowing Latin. But he failed to secure the pope's approval of his appointment: and Methodius' old adversary, Wiching, the Frankish bishop of Nitra, now seemed set to obtain the suppression of the Slavonic liturgy in central Europe.

In addition to these vexatious problems, an important theological issue divided the disciples of Methodius from the Frankish clerics. The Frankish Church [though not the Latin Church as a whole] was now firmly committed to the doctrine of the *Filioque*,
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according to which the Holy Spirit 'proceeds' not from the Father alone, as is stated in the Nicene Creed, but from the Father and the Son. In Rome the *Filioque* was not formally accepted until the early 11th century (and in some places not even then): the popes held that, though the addition of the words 'and from the Son' was theologically justified, it was not desirable to tamper with the version of the (Nicene) Creed accepted by the whole of Christendom. The Byzantine Church strongly objected to the *Filioque*, partly on the grounds that any alteration to the (Nicene) Creed had been forbidden by the oecumenical councils, and partly because it regarded the clause as theologically erroneous. Methodius, who, despite his position as papal legate, remained in outlook a Byzantine, could not fail to regard the Frankish doctrine recently condemned by Patriarch Photius as heretical. The *Filioque* was to become the main doctrinal issue in the medieval disputes between the Greek and Latin Churches.

It is as a disputant in this theological debate that we gain our first clear picture of Clement. It was to him and to Gorazd that fell the rask of publicly arguing the case against the *Filioque*. The Orthodox, we are told in the Long Life, 'spoke through the mouth of Gorazd and Clement'. On two occasions they expounded the Greek doctrine of the Trinity: the first homily, a lengthy one, was addressed to the Frankish clergy, the second, much the shorter, to Prince Svatopluk.

The dispute soon turned into violence. At first, Theophylact tells us, Wiching's men almost came to blows with the followers of Gorazd and Clement. Svatopluk tries to arbitrate; but his ham-fisted methods only played into the hands of the Frankish party. Methodius' disciples, numbering some two hundred priests and deacons, now faced state persecution. The younger ones were sold by the Moravian authorities into slavery and taken to Venice; others were driven out of their homes and beaten up, while their leaders were cast into prison.

Theophylact cites the names of five of these imprisoned champions of the Slavonic liturgy: Gorazd, Clement, Naum, Laurence, and Amgelarius. Except for one, Laurence, the list is identical with that of the 'sharp-witted' students of Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius mentioned earlier. In both lists, Clement occupies the second place, immediately after Gorazd. The latte's subsequent fate is unknown. Laurence and

Angelarius are also shadowy figures, though we know that the second went with Clement to Bulgaria, and died there soon afterwards. At this point all but two of the disciples of (Sts.) Cyril and Methodius fade into a
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hazy background, and the main focus in the sources is now brought to bear on Clement, and to a lesser degree on his friend and companion Naum.

The Long Life is distressingly vague on geography. Some historians believe that Clement and his companions were imprisoned in Nitra, one of Svatopluk's residences, in present-day Slovakia. Their period of detention, however, was brief: sentenced to perpetual exile, they were escorted, probably to the borders of the Moravian state, by what seems to have been a detachment of Svatopluk's German soldiers. Three of them, Clement, Naum and Angelarius, came to the Danube, crossed the river on a makeshift raft made of the trunks of three lime-trees tied together with ropes of bark, and during the winter of 885-886 reached Belgrade. Which was then on Bulgarian territory.

The expulsion of Clement and his companions from Moravia signaled the final collapse of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission in that country. It took, however, two centuries more to wipe out the last traces of Slavonic liturgy from central Europe. In neighboring Bohemia, where some of Methodius' disciples must have taken refuge, it survived until the late 11th century, when the Roman policy of linguistic uniformity finally enforced the liturgical use of Latin. But the future of Slavonic vernacular Christianity lay elsewhere. The Cyrilo-Methodian linguistic and cultural tradition, banned from Moravia after Methodius' death, was saved for Europe and the Slavs by the Bulgarians. Their achievement was to enrich this tradition on their own soil and, in the fullness of time, to transmit it to other nations which formed part of the Byzantine cultural commonwealth - the Russians, the Serbs, and the Rumanians. In the initial stages of this work Clement played the leading role.

On their release from their Moravian prison Clement and his companions longed to go to Bulgaria, hoping to find 'solace' there. It is unlikely that, in attributing these expectations to them, the hagiographer is simply being wise after the event. Clement was a Bulgarian by birth: after the torments he had endured in Moravia, it was natural enough that he should seek 'solace' in his native land. But there may well have been other reasons as well for his choice of Bulgaria: indeed, the author of the Long Life seems to hint, even then, at a meeting of minds between Clement and the Bulgarian ruler Boris.

Boris had been baptized into the Byzantine Church in 864; by 870 his newly converted country, after a

brief flirtation with Rome, seemed firmly set on a pro-Byzantine course. One obstacle, however, remained
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before Bulgaria could be peacefully absorbed into the Byzantine cultural commonwealth. Its church was still mostly staffed, at least in the higher echelons, by Greeks, few of whom could have had an adequate command of the Slavonic language spoken by their flocks. They conducted the services in Greek, of which the native parish priests were largely ignorant. The problem posed by the linguistic gap between the higher clergy and the people was aggravated by a cultural and political dilemma which faced the ruling classes of every East European nation converted to the Empire's Christian faith. It arose from the need to reconcile the demands of local independence with Byzantine universalist claims. These claims required the ruler of every country which adopted the religion of Byzantium to accept not only the spiritual jurisdiction of the patriarchate of Constantinople but also, if only theoretically, the paramount authority of the emperor. By the late 9th century it must have been apparent to more than one East European ruler that the rigor of these Byzantine hegemonistic claims could be tempered by adopting the Cyrillo-Methodian vernacular tradition. Certainly (Tsar) Boris was not slow to realize that by acquiring a native clergy and a Slav-speaking church the Bulgarians could continue to borrow and adapt the values and products of Byzantium without the risk of losing their cultural autonomy. He was presumably well informed from neighboring Moravia about the achievements of (Sts.) Cyril and Methodius, several of whose leading disciples were now at hand to help him resolve his cultural and political dilemma. No wonder that, in the words of the Long Life, (Tsar) Boris 'thirsted after such men'.

The military governor of Belgrade was doubtless aware of his sovereign's preoccupation: when Clement, Naum, and Angelarius had rested from their exertions and sufferings, he sent them on to Pliska, the Bulgarian capital.

The last chapter in Clement's life - he must have been then in his middle or late forties - was about to begin. It is by far the best-documented, for both Theophylact and Chomatianos provide valuable information on this period.

(Tsar) Boris was delighted at the arrival of the Slavonic missionaries in Pliska, and received them warmly. They were billeted on local grandees, and had regular consultations with the sovereign and his advisers. Theophylact hints at a certain secrecy surrounding these meetings. It seems that Boris wished to discuss the main lines of his future policy with

Clement and his companions without the risk of
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antagonizing the opposition. The identity of these potential adversaries of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition is not clear. They could have been members of the old proto-Bulgar aristocracy, still loyal in the main to their Turkic ancestry and pagan traditions, who only twenty years earlier had led a powerful if abortive revolt against Boris' decision to impose Christianity on his country; or they might have belonged to the Greek clergy in Bulgaria, jealous of their prerogatives and resentful of the sudden appearance of a distinguished group of rival missionaries. Whatever the truth, we may be sure that Boris and his collaborators recognized that their plan to expand the work of (Sts.) Cyril and Methodius in Bulgaria required cautious handling and careful preparation.

Before long the three Slavonic missionaries went their separate ways. Angelarius died in the months following their arrival in Bulgaria. Naum remained in Pliska, while Clement, probably in 886, was sent as a missionary to Macedonia.

The reasons why (St.) Clement, now the undisputed leader of the disciples of (Sts.) Cyril and Methodius, was dispatched to this remote south-western province of the Bulgarian kingdom have been much debated. It has rightly been argued that, by contrast with north-eastern Bulgaria - the country's political center, which seems to have still retained at that time a sizeable minority of Turkic 'Proto-Bulgars' - the population of Macedonia was predominantly Slavonic: the region had only recently been incorporated into the Bulgarian realm. An experienced pupil of (Sts.) Cyril and Methodius, who was in addition probably a Macedonian by birth, could be expected to minister effectively to the spiritual needs of the people of this province and to hasten their cultural assimilation into Boris' kingdom.

There has been much discussion, too, about the whereabouts of the centers of Clement's new activity. On this point the Long Life is not very helpful. Boris, we are told, 'detached [the territory of] Koutmitsinitza from [that of] Kotokios', and appointed Dometas governor and Clement 'teacher', *didaskalos*, of this territory. Kotokios (or Kotokion) has so far eluded all attempts at identification. Koutmitsinitza, on the other hand, can be located, at least approximately. The pointers are provided by the Long Life, which tells us that Boris bestowed on Clement three comfortable houses in Diabolis, as well as 'places of rest' near Ohrid and Glavinitsa. It is clear from the context that these three towns - Ohrid,

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Diabolis, and Glavinitsa - were situated on the territory of Koutmitsinitsa. Ohrid, on the north-eastern shore of the lake of that name, in the heart of western Macedonia, was Clement's favorite residence; and, in large measure thanks to him, it now became one of the principal centers of the new Byzantine-Slav culture in the Balkans. Diabolis, the second center of Clement's teaching, has been plausibly located in the upper valley of the Devolli river, not far from the southern shore of Lake Ohrid, in what is today southeastern Albania. As for Glavinitsa (*Kefalonia* in Greek), the Brief Life tells us that Clement often resided there, and that he left behind some 'monuments'. These 'monuments' were probably the stone columns which, according to the Brief Life, could still be seen in Glavinitsa in the early 13th century: on one of them was carved an inscription mentioning the conversion of the Bulgarians to Christianity. By a striking coincidence, a votive stone was discovered in 1918 by the Austrian Army in the town of Ballsh, southwest of Berat, in southern Albania, inscribed with a text which refers to the baptism of Tsar Boris and his subjects. The location of Glavinitsa between Berat and Valona, close to the Adriatic, is confirmed in two passages of Anna Comnena's *Alexiad*. Ballsh, situated in that very area, is hence identified with Glavinitsa by most modern scholars.

We may thus conclude that Koutmitsinitsa, over which Boris gave Clement license to teach, covered a large area between Lake Ohrid and the Adriatic Sea. It encompassed the region of the west Macedonian lakes and much of central and southern Albania. The indigenous Albanians, in the western and southern parts of Koutmitsinitsa, probably lived in close proximity to Slavs, the more recent invaders of this area. There can be little doubt that Clement's pupils included Albanians as well as Macedonian Slavs, and that the brighter alumni from both these groups later played their part in fostering the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition in the heart of the Balkan peninsula.

When Clement was appointed *didaskalos* of Koutmitsinitsa he was still only a priest. He held this post for seven years, until he was consecrated bishop. The title *didaskalos*, later held by some prominent members of the Byzantine clergy, apparently designated priests or deacons specifically entrusted with teaching and preaching. It was only in the late 11th century that the status of the *didaskaloi* was formally recognized within the patriarchate of Constantinople; and by an imperial edict of 1107 it was made to correspond to a particular ecclesiastical rank. In the 12th century the

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didaskaloi became a privileged clerical order with

administrative as well as teaching duties, and also the right of reporting directly to the patriarch. There is no proof that this function, thus formally defined, existed in the 9th century: and Theophylact, in asserting that Clement belonged to the 'order (*taxis*) of teachers, may have been anachronistically reading back to the 9th century the existence of an institution which became widespread and important in his own time. Yet the nature of Clement's commission, and the close relations he enjoyed with the provincial governor, show that the powers he was given by Boris in 886 were far wider than those of a mere schoolmaster or preacher.

However, it is as a preacher and teacher that Clement is depicted in the sources during the years (886-893) of his ministry in Koutmitsinitza. He seems to have moved frequently between his three residences of Ogrid, Diabolis, and Glavinitsa. Part of his time was spent preaching the Gospel to the pagans, of whom there must have been many among the Slav and Albanian peasants of this region. The area had only recently been annexed to the Bulgarian kingdom; and the influence from neighboring Byzantine missionary centers, such as Thessalonica (Greek: *Thessaloniki*, the "Salonika" of World War I fame) and Dyrrachium, had probably been slow in penetrating to the interior. The author of the Brief Life writes of the 'spell' (*iugx*) which Clement's words cast on those who heard them; this may well be more than a mere hagiographical cliché.

In a particularly arresting passage, the Long Life describes Clement's teaching methods. We can hardly doubt that this vivid account was borrowed by Theophylact from one of his principal sources - an early biography of Clement, written in Old Church Slavonic by one of his personal disciples. The children were taught to write in three stages. First Clement would make them draw the shape of individual letters; then he would explain the 'meaning' of what they had written; and finally he would guide their hands in a motion of consecutive writing. The alphabet he used was almost certainly Glagoliticm the creation of Constantine-Cyril. The dialect of southern Macedonia, to which its inventor adapted his alphabet, must have been close to, and perhaps identical with, the spoken vernacular of Clement's Slavonic pupils in Koutmitsinitza.

Onlookers were struck by Clement's ability to do more than one thing at a time: thus, while he was teaching children, he would simultaneously read and 'write books'. By 'writing books' his biographer

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probably meant copying manuscripts, an occupation in which - especially if we accept that he had been one of Methodius' shorthand secretaries - he was no doubt highly proficient.

The more promising of Clement's pupils went on to join the ranks of his chosen disciples, who were given more advanced theological training and no doubt singled out for ordination. To them, 'he unveiled the more profound scriptures'. According to the Long Life, they numbered 3,500. Measured against the fact that the Slavonic literary tradition was still in its infancy, this represents a remarkable achievement. 'By any standards', a distinguished authority on Byzantine education has written, Clement's teaching results 'represented an educational undertaking almost without parallel in the Middle Ages'. After seven years in Koutmitsinitza, Clement had done much to further Boris' plans to replace the Greek clergy by native Slavs.

Both biographers tell us that Clement was strongly drawn to the monastic life. We do not know when he received the tonsure, but his close association with Methodius suggests that it was early in life. During the years he taught in Koutmitsinitza he founded a monastery in Ohrid, dedicated to St. Panteleimon. He cared for his foundation with deepening love; and in his later years, burdened episcopal duties, he retired to it whenever he could for rest and prayer. St. Clement's monastery, not far from the shores of Lake Ohrid, became a major center for the training of a native clergy. It contributed to Ohrid's fame as the cradle of Slavonic Christianity in the Balkans.

Three years after Clement's arrival in Koutmitsinitza, an event occurred in Pliska which was to have a profound effect on his life and work. In 889 (Tsar) Boris abdicated and entered a monastery, appointing as his successor his eldest son Vladimir. There followed a complete reversal of Boris' policy. Doubtless in agreement with the "proto-Bulgar" aristocratic party, Vladimir renounced his father's special relationship with Byzantium, encouraged a revival of paganism, and began a persecution of the Christian clergy. One of his targets was probably the Slavonic literary and liturgical center founded in Pliska by Naum, Clement's friend and companion. For four years Bulgaria remained in the throes of this pagan and anti-Byzantine movement. In 893, seeing his life-work threatened, (Tsar) Boris emerged from his monastery, and appeared in the capital. He rallied the faithful, resumed power, and had Vladimir blinded and imprisoned. He then summoned an assembly of the land, which ratified the following decisions: Boris' third

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son Symeon became the new ruler, Slavonic replaced Greek as the official language of the Bulgarian state and Church and the capital of the realm was transferred from Pliska (where paganism, as recent events had shown, was still a powerful force) to the neighboring city of

Preslav.

We do not know whether the pagan revival directly affected Clement's work in distant Koutmitsinitza. The outbreaks of violence were probably confined in the main to the country's north-eastern provinces. We may be sure, however, that the years of Vladimir's reign were a period of tension and uncertainty for Clement, and that he welcomed the decisions of the assembly of 893. It is not impossible that he secretly inspired them: and it is tempting to speculate on the links that may have existed between Clement and Boris in his monastic retreat. On several matters, we have seen, they tended to think alike; and on one at least of the decrees of the 893 assembly - the proclamation of Slavonic as the official language of the Bulgarian Church - they must have been in total agreement.

With Boris back in his monastery, there seemed to be every prospect of the same understanding between Clement and the new Bulgarian ruler. Symeon had been educated in Constantinople, where he earned the qualified approval of his Greek mentors. He had not yet succumbed to his fateful ambition to usurp the throne of Byzantium. He shared, moreover, his father's enthusiasm for Slavonic letters, and proved eager to foster them by royal patronage. His reign (893-927) has been described by some modern scholars as 'the golden age of Bulgarian literature'. One of his first acts was to summon Clement to Preslav, and to appoint him bishop. He is generally portrayed in iconography with the episcopal *omophorion*.

The name and whereabouts of the diocese to which Clement was appointed in 893 have been endlessly debated by scholars. The Long Life calls it 'Dragvista or Vellitsa'. None of the attempts to identify these two place-names has met with general acceptance. Most modern historians have tended to favor for both names one of three locations: central Macedonia (in or around the Vardar valley); southern Macedonia (north of a line drawn between Thessalonica (Greek: *Thessaloniki*, the "Salonika" of World War I fame) and Verrooia); and the western slopes of the Rhodope Mountains. Their views rest largely on divergent interpretations of 'Dragvista' and 'Velitsa'. Some scholars have connected 'Velitsa' with the name of the bishopric of *Velikeia*, probably situated on the northern slopes of the Rhodope Mountains, mentioned in a list of sees within the

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patriarchate of Constantinople dating from the reign of Leo VI (886-912). It is far from clear, however, whether in 893 this area was part of the Bulgarian realm. As for 'Dragvista', it has been identified with *Drgovitia*, a name thought to be derived from the Slavonic tribe of the *Drougouvitae*. A bishop of *Drougouvitia*, in southern

Macedonia, appears in Leo VI's list of dioceses. The Drougouvitae, however, are known to have lived in the Middle Ages not only in Macedonia, but also in the Rhodopes region of Thrace. These arguments may support the view that Clement's diocese was somewhere in the vicinity of the Rhodopes; but the question remains an open one.

Whatever the exact location and extent of Clement's diocese, it was presumably at some distance from Ohrid. His new flock is described in the Long Life as 'thick witted' and 'wholly ignorant of the divine Word and Scriptures'. Even if we allow for a measure of exaggeration on the part of the hagiographer - whose purpose, no doubt, was to extol Clement's achievements in evangelizing his diocese - it is hard to reconcile this picture of brutishness with the success of his pedagogic and apostolic work in Koutmitsinitza. It seems likely, therefore, that his bishopric was situated in a more remote and primitive area. Nevertheless, his personal links with his monastery in Ohrid remained strong: he loved the natural beauty of the place, and visited it repeatedly.

Clement remained bishop of Dragvista or Velitsa for twenty-three years (893-916). Both his biographers describe the last period of his life rather sketchily. The picture that emerges is of a man alive to the practical duties of his new office, yet mindful too of his earlier teaching vocation. As a bishop - the first one, as Theophylact puts it, in the Bulgarian (i.e., Slavonic) language - he could now continue with new authority the work of his masters, (Sts.) Cyril and Methodius. The most urgent need remained the training of a native clergy, capable of celebrating the offices in Slavonic, and he now ordained priests, deacons, subdeacons, and lay readers. His practical concerns were not confined to the spiritual needs of his flock. We can be grateful to Theophylact for telling us that 'since in the whole land of the Bulgarians the trees grew wild and there was a lack of cultivated fruits, he ... brought from the land of the Greeks all manner of cultivated [fruit] trees, and made fruitful the wild trees by grafting'. It is a gracious picture of a provincial pastor cast in the traditional mold.

An enigmatic and much discussed sentence of the Brief Life states that Clement 'skillfully devised
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other shapes of letters with a view to making [them] clearer than those which the wise (St.) Cyril invented.' With the help of these new letters he 'wrote down all the scriptures, panegyrics, and lives of martyrs and holy men, as well as sacred hymns.' How is this passage to be understood? Did Clement invent a new alphabet, or merely simplify an existing one? The question acquires

special interest in the light of the fact that the earliest Old Church Slavonic manuscripts are written in two different scripts, the Glagolitic and the Cyrillic. Glagolitic, the more complex, is a highly distinct and original creation. Cyrillic, except for half a dozen letters, is little more than an adaptation of the Greek alphabet. It is widely accepted today that Glagolitic was invented by St. Cyril, while Cyrillic, which bears his monastic name, was the result of an attempt by Methodius' disciples, probably in Bulgaria, to adapt Greek uncial writing of the ninth century to the phonetic peculiarities of the Slavonic tongue. The comparative simplicity of Cyrillic, and its close resemblance to the Greek script, whose range and prestige were unrivalled in Eastern Europe, account for its greater historical importance. To the present day, the church books of the [Eastern] Orthodox Slavs - the Bulgarians, the Serbs, and the Russians (as well as Ukrainians and Belarussians) - are printed in a slightly simplified form of Cyrillic, and the modern alphabets of these three (actually five) peoples are based upon it. The Rumanians too (though Rumanian is not a Slavic language), adopted this alphabet in the Middle Ages, and their liturgical books were written and printed in Cyrillic until the late seventeenth century.

Can one conclude from the passage of the Brief Life cited above that the inventor of Cyrillic was Clement? It will be recalled that he took some part, quite possible an active one, in the invention of Glagolitic. Can the authorship of the second Slavonic alphabet be ascribed to him? A number of acholars believe that it can.

These scholars, however, face several difficulties. For one thing, Macedonia, one of the principal areas of Clement's activity, remained in the early Middle Ages the main center of Glagolitic scriptoria in the Balkans. Cyrillic, on the other hand, became the standard alphabet of the Preslav school in eastern Bulgaria. Furthermore, no reliable tradition connects Clement's name with the Cyrillic alphabet. Finally, several blatant historical errors have been detected in the Brief Life; they counsel caution in accepting all of its statements. These observations

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have led most present-day scholars to reject the view that Clement invented the Cyrillic alphabet. The prevalent opinion is that he consistently used the Glagolitic script which he and his companions had brought from Moravia, and that the 'other shapes of letters' which he is said to have devised in Bulgaria (probably already in Koutmitsinitza) were a refinement, perhaps a simplification, of St. Cyril's Glagolitic, and not a new alphabet. This complex and technical

question, however, may still be regarded as an open one.

Theophlact, in his account of Clement's episcopacy, records his literary activity. He ascribes to him three types of writing: hymns, lives of saints, and sermons. Clement's major contribution to hymnography was the translation of the Greek *Pentekostarion*, a collection of hymns sung in the Orthodox Church between Easter and Whitsun. His hagiographical writings included panegyrics of saints, a number of which are extant. But his favorite literary form was the sermon. A recent edition of his writings includes fifty-nine sermons and eighteen panegyrics.

Not all these works can be ascribed to him with assurance; but he was almost certainly the author of at least fifteen.

Theophlact writes of Clement's sermons with a touch of condescension. 'Knowing', he declares, 'the thick-wittedness of the people and their complete obtuseness in comprehending the Scriptures, and aware that many Bulgarian priests, understanding with difficulty what was written in Greek, were trained only to read by spelling out [the words] and were hence beast-like, and because there existed no festive sermons in the Bulgarian language ... he composed sermons for all the feast-days, simple and clear and containing nothing profound or elaborate, and not beyond the grasp of the most stupid Bulgarian.'

The origin of this superscilious attitude to the Bulgarians will be discussed in the next chapter. But we must record here that, as an overall judgement on Clement's sermons, Theophylact's words are unjust. It is true that many of these sermons contain little more than a paraphrase of some Gospel (*Injil*) text, accompanied by moral exhortations. Yet they also reveal an extensive and pertinent knowledge of the scriptures, and an acquaintance with masterpieces of Greek liturgical art, such as the *Akathistos* (Church Slavonic: *Akafist*) Hymn; some of them can still attract by their verbal sophistication and their command of poetic rhythm. These qualities are particularly apparent in the panegyrical sermon devoted to the Archangels Michael and Gabriel - one of Clement's most

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popular writings, to judge from the large number of manuscripts in which it has survived.

To the modern reader the most interesting of Clement's works are those in which personal undertones can be detected. Thus his panegyric of St. Demetrius, which eulogizes the heavenly protector of Thessalonica (Greek: *Thessaloniki*, the "Salonika" of World War I fame), echoes the devotion so movingly paid to this martyr-saint by a distinguished native of the city, Clement's teacher Methodius. Similarly, his encomium of

his namesake, St. Clement of Rome, despite a somewhat florid style and conventional content, recalls an important moment in his life when, still a young man, he probably accompanied his masters carrying the saint's relics from Moravia to Rome.

But perhaps the most remarkable of Clement's writings is his encomium of St. Cyril. Of all his extant works it is the warmest and most personal. The intensity of his devotion to his master's memory repeatedly breaks through the sober etiquette of conventional hagiography. Based in part on the Viti Constantini, it illustrates, with the help of techniques borrowed from medieval Greek rhetoric, the underlying features of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition: an awareness of its Byzantine origins: veneration for the apostolic city of Rome: recognition of the immense debt owed by the Slavs to St. Cyril, who, by giving them a liturgy and scriptures in their own language, placed them among the chosen peoples of the earth: and a Christian universalism seeking to unite Byzantium and the Slavs within a single religious and cultural community. Fittingly enough, St. Cyril's achievement of teaching 'all nations' is likened by Clement to that of St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, whose work was brought to fulfillment by 'St. Cyril the philosopher, the teacher of the Slavs', who 'overflowed all countries, from east to west, and from north to south'.

Clement's panegyric of his master shares two further traits with the early works of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition, composed in Bulgaria in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. The first is a sense of triumph springing from the knowledge that the Slavs, by acquiring the scriptures and the liturgy in their own language, have gained direct access to the knowledge of God. The heritage is seen as an outpouring of divine bounty, which Clement, together with other ariters of the Cyrillo-Methodian school, makes concrete through the image of rain: thanks to St. Cyril, he writes, 'the rain of divine understanding came down upon my people.' The idea of ethnic self-determination implicit in these words provides the second ideological

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link between Clement's encomium and other works of the Cyrillo-Methodian school. All of these, in one form or another, echo the joyful assurance of the Viti Constantini that the Slavs, by acquiring the vernacular liturgy and scriptures, have 'been numbered among the great nations which praise God in their own languages'. By entering this community the Slavs underwent a spiritual rebirth, became 'a new people'. The author of the Long Life was aware of the role played by Clement in this spiritual renaissance. This awareness is evident in his description of Clement as 'the first bishop in the

Bulgarian language', and in the composite quotation from the Psalms with which he begins the biography of his hero: 'Come, ye children, hearken unto me, come and hear, all ye that fear God, that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.'

In old age Clement, exhausted, tried to resign his bishopric. King Symeon, however, who admired him greatly, would not hear of it. After visiting his sovereign in Preslav, Clement returned to his diocese, which he now governed, no doubt largely nominally, from his monastery in Ohrid. He died there, aged almost eighty, on 27 July 916. The city of Ohrid, which he had made into a leading center of Slavonic Christianity, became permanently associated with his name. The Bulgarians, who profited most from his labors, still hold him in special regard. Next to his masters, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, he was one of the chief architects of the Byzantine cultural commonwealth." (46)

Theophylact of Ohrid has already been mentioned above. He also is of great importance for the topic of which we are speaking.

"... A year or two later, in the Macedonian town of Ohrid, Theophylact was enthroned archbishop of Bulgaria. The exact date of his nomination is unknown, and has been much debated. Paul Gautier, the most recent editor of Theophylact's writings, dates it to between 6 January 1088 - the day of his address to the (Byzantine) Emperor Alexius - and the spring of 1092; the most likely dates are 1098 or 1090.

There has been much otiose speculation about why Theophylact was chosen for this post. It has been argued that his appointment by the emperor to the distant archbishopric was a punishment for his friendship with the *Basilissa* (Empress) Maria,

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allegedly out of favor with Alexius at the time; or that he was chosen as a promising instrument for the Hellenizing of the Bulgarians. These theories, in my view, are wholly without foundation. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries appointment to high ecclesiastical posts in the provinces was often a reward for distinguished service on the patriarchal staff in Constantinople. The Byzantine authorities looked on the see of Ohrid as a key post. (The Byzantine Emperor) Basil II (known as *Boulgaroktonos*, i.e., "the Bulgar Slayer") had annexed Bulgaria to the (Byzantine) Empire in 1018, and in an attempt to appease the Bulgarians had

allowed them to keep several of their cherished national institutions. Chief among these was their Church. In three charters, between 1019 and 1025, the emperor declared the archbishopric of Ohrid (which replaced the Bulgarian patriarchate of the years of independence) to be autocephalous - independent, that is, of the patriarch of Constantinople; and he placed under its authority all the bishoprics which, in the tenth century, had

belonged to the Bulgarian state. These covered a huge area in Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, and northern Greece, as well as central and northern Bulgaria. The archbishop was to be appointed by the emperor, and consecrated by his suffragan bishops: this was both a sure sign of the hold the Byzantine government had now gained over the Bulgarian Church, and a concession to local susceptibilities. Ohrid's autocephalous status was meant as a safeguard against direct interference by the patriarch of Constantinople. Its incumbent ranked high in the hierarchy of the Eastern Church. He won, and held for several centuries, a commanding position in the central and northern Balkans. Theophylact's intellectual gifts and his reputation, enhanced no doubt by his recent address to the Emperor Alexius, fully explain his rapid promotion and appointment to this important see.

Between 1025, the year of Basil II's death, and 1089-1090, when Theophylact took up his appointment in Ohrid, many changes had occurred in Bulgaria. Though it retained many of its suffragan dioceses in Macedonia, Albania, Greece, and central Bulgaria, and on the Danube, the territory of the archdiocese had shrunk. More ominously, Basil II's moderation towards the conquered lands of Bulgaria was abandoned by his successors. Ruthless taxation was launched; and this precipitated a Bulgarian military revolt in 1040, followed in 1072 by another, a more dangerous one, which was supported by the Serbs. This, too, was forcibly suppressed by the Byzantines, and by the time

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Theophylact arrived in Ohrid the growing disaffection of the Slavs of the Balkan peninsula must have been only too apparent.

Next to the military governor of the province or *theme*, of Bulgaria, who mostly resided in Skoplje, the archbishop was the principal representative of Byzantine authority in the newly annexed land. Though the first incumbent, placed there by Basil II, had been a native Bulgarian, his successors were all Greeks. The first of these, Leo, was appointed about 1037 by Michael IV from among the deacons of Hagia Sophia. ...

Theophylact's rhetorical and theological writings can teach us something about their author, and it is perhaps not too fanciful to detect traces of two

distinct tendencies which can also be seen in his life and in his literary works: a natural conservatism and outlook, on the one hand, reinforced no doubt by his career as a rising star in the court and the patriarchal chancery of Byzantium; and, on the other, an ability to achieve a sympathetic understanding of societies and theologies which were alien to him. The conservative tendency is apparent in the two *logoi basilikoi* addressed to (Emperors) Constantine Doukas and Alexius Comnenus: they follow the conventions of imperial panegyrics traced by his Byzantine predecessors, and not least by his teacher (Michael) Psellos. The other characteristic which inspired him with considerable fellow-feeling for western Christians, was far less common in Byzantine society: we might describe it today as a remarkable gift of empathy. Both these tendencies are amply shown in Theophylact's letters.

We possess some 130 published letters of Theophylact written during his tenure of the see of Ohrid. Scholars have combed them for information on a wide variety of subjects: the Byzantine command structure in Bulgaria; the Empire's fiscal policy in the provinces; medieval heresies; and the *Who's Who*, as it were, of Byzantine officials. Relatively little attention has been paid to a more personal kind of evidence: few have scrutinized Theophylact's letters for the light they shed on his personality, and on the ways he faced his personal and professional duties. The following pages, without claiming to be exhaustive, may help to fill this gap.

The reader of these letters faces several difficulties. In the first place Theophylact's Atticizing Greek is not made easier to understand by the deliberate obscurity of his style. Relying heavily at times on riddles and enigmas, it owes much to the elliptic manner of contemporary Byzantine letter-

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writers, and something at least to the 'parabolic-figurative style' prevalent at the time in several European literary genres. Theophylact referred to this manner of writing on several occasions, somewhat unconvincingly disclaiming any intention of following it. The technique 'weaves riddles', 'recounts puzzles', 'speaks in obscure words' and leads his correspondent into the labyrinth where he would need Ariadne's thread to find his way out. The effect of this style is well described by Margaret Mullett:

'Reading one of Theophylact's letters often seems like touching on the edge of a great historical scandal, or like being told a joke so strange that it does not seem funny, or

trying to crack a code where the cipher is composed in an alphabet of which only a few characters are familiar.'

Secondly, this 'deconcretization' of the literary material, as a modern scholar has called it, coupled with the fact that we do not possess the other side of Theophylact's correspondence, make the dating of many of his letters exceedingly difficult. In keeping with this abstract convention, he passes over the sometimes earth-shaking historic events of his archdiocese in almost total silence. He barely mentions, and only fleetingly in a single letter the passage through Ohrid, in the spring of 1097, of the largest army of the First Crusade. His allusions to the appearance in the autumn of 1107, between Lake Ohrid and the Adriatic Sea, of Bohemond, the Norman prince of Antioch, who was preparing to besiege Dyrrachium, are even more opaque. His references to both these western invasions are highly uncomplimentary.

Sometimes his letters shake off abstract literary convention. Personal feeling, intense and articulate, bursts through both the fashionable rhetoric and the cares of his archdiocese, most strikingly, once, soon after his arrival on Ohrid, in a letter to an anonymous friend in Constantinople, recording his first impressions. Ohrid, on the north-eastern shore of the large mountain-lake of the same name, was not exactly a backwater: for the ancient Lychnidus had a distinguished Roman past, and under Bulgarian rule, in the late ninth century -largely thanks to St. Clement - it became an important center of Slavonic Christianity. At the end of the tenth century Ohrid was the capital of Samuel, tsar of the Bulgarians. Under Byzantium, one of Theophylact's predecessors set the crown on its many churches and monasteries by reconstructing the

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monumental church of Ste. Sophia, which became the cathedral of the archdiocese. Moreover, the Via Egnatia, the Roman road, linked Constantinople, through Thessalonica, Ohrid, and the Macedonian interior, to Byzantium's Adriatic outposts at Apollonia and Dyrrachium, and laid his bishopric open to international traffic.

Yet Theophylact was not impressed by his new home, or by its inhabitants. He had not set foot inside the town, he wrote to his friend, when he was assailed by 'a deathly stench'. Worse still, the people of Ohrid greeted their new archbishop with jeers and insults, and evidently to spite him, sang a 'victory song' in the streets of the city, pointedly hymning the past glories of independent Bulgaria.

Understandably this unfriendly reception turned

Theophylact's thought back to the imperial city he had so recently left, and in the same letter - one of the very first he wrote from Macedonia - he yielded to an onslaught of homesickness: 'I have hardly set foot in Ohrid, but I already long for the city that holds you, like an infatuated lover'.

Throughout his sojourn in Ohrid this homesickness never left him. The longing for Constantinople - 'the city of the world's desire' for so many of its exiled or expatriate citizens - runs through Theophylact's correspondence like a constant theme. Occasionally he begged exalted friends, or acquaintances at court, to release him from the burden of his office. His visits to Constantinople seem to have been few and short: only two are recorded in his letters.

Rather than desert his post, Theophylact tried valiantly to exorcise his agonizing homesickness by sublimation. As an educated Byzantine, he was heir to a long and rich literary tradition; and he drew on it in his searching for models to give form and expression to his nostalgia. Two themes in this tradition were particularly relevant to his predicament: the yearning for Constantinople, a feeling shared by all Byzantine provincial officials; and recourse to letter writing as a spiritual kind of expression of friendship. The first theme was in high favor in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries; the second remained popular in medieval Byzantium ever since its heyday in the patristic age. A letter to a friend was seen as a spiritual gift, an 'icon of the soul'; it brought with it 'the illusion of presence', and, in a striking and oft-recurring metaphor from Plato, was styled 'the second voyage', the best alternative to actual physical presence. St. John Chrysostom gave wide currency to the metaphor; (Michael) Psellos, too, shared this idealized
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'concept of friendship' with his disciple Theophylact. ... What we have so far learned of Theophylact may help us to approach the central problem of the present inquiry: how did he reconcile the mission to further Byzantine interests in Bulgaria, with which he was entrusted by the emperor, with his pastoral duties towards his Bulgarian flock? How, in other words, was he able to inhabit two such widely different worlds - Constantinople, the focus of his memories and longings and the home of his friends, and Ohrid, that remote Macedonian frontier town where, for reasons of duty, he may well have been virtually banished for half his life?

We know that he did not find this easy. His first impressions of Ohrid, we have seen, were depressing. They did not change very much with the passing of time. He may have preferred the mountain air of Ohrid, and the wine and the food, to the dismal resources of his Vardar

village; but the poverty and remoteness of the Ohrid region continued to torment him: 'small and wholly destitute' is how he describes it, 'of all provinces of the (Byzantine) Empire the most pitiable'. In size it cannot hold a candle to the wide Pelagonian plain in central Macedonia; and can only be compared to the proverbially puny and boorish isle of Mykonos. Books are hard to get, and at best they reach him only once a year. Even the beauty of Lake Ohrid leaves him cold: he describes it as a 'lake of ill fortune'. But Theophylact's complaints about Ohrid and its inhabitants are mostly abstract and literary. He compared them, for instance, to frogs among which, like Zeus' eagle, he is condemned to live. In this barbarous land, he wails, reason is worse hated than myrrh by dung-beetles. The people of Ohrid, he declares, adapting an ancient proverb, listen to his song like asses to the lyre. He likens Bulgaria to the barbarian tents of Kedar, mentioned so dismissively in the Psalms. Worst of all, as he admits to his friend Anemas, probably about 1105, through contact with his environment he is becoming a barbarian himself. 'Now that we have lived for years in the land of the Bulgarians', he writes in the same letter, 'the bumpkin way of life has become our daily companion.'

This seeming contempt for his surroundings comes out in Theophylact's attitude to the local names. With overt snobbery, he makes a show of despising all place names of Slavonic origin. He writes of the chief river of Macedonia, 'the ancient Greeks called it the Axios, and in the new barbarian language it is the Vardar.' His fastidious request to a correspondent not to mock his use of the Slavonic name of a Macedonian town is

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more disagreeable still. These local names are 'an unpleasantness which one has to put up with; one cannot always rejoice in the delightful sound of the Greek. This literary game becomes all the more obvious in the light of Theophylact's readiness to use a 'barbarous name' whenever he feels a professional need to do so.

Not surprisingly, the textbook image of Theophylact as an inveterate Bulgar hater became solidly entrenched. The strongest champion of this view was the leading Bulgarian medievalist V.N. Zlatarski. He went so far as to argue that the main task laid upon Theophylact by his imperial master was the extirpation of the Bulgarian language and literature from the archdiocese, and the Hellenization of the Bulgarian people.

Our verdict on this matter must be postponed until the concluding pages of this chapter. But a few preliminary remarks will perhaps not come amiss. First, those who emphasize Theophylact's hostility to the Bulgarians base their arguments almost exclusively on

the evidence of his letters; they do not always realize that the 'anti-Bulgarian' ones (about ten out of a total of 130) are a small minority in the collection. Secondly, these 'xenophobic' letters should be interpreted with Theophylact's idiosyncrasy in mind, and also the general tradition of Byzantine letter writing.

In denouncing the vices of Ohrid Theophylact often seeks literary, classical, or biblical parallels. Generally speaking, when ruing his plight as a foreign exile in Bulgaria, he draws heavily on classical mythology. In this world of semi-make-believe, where by force of association the imagery acquires an almost autonomous existence, Theophylact's enemies appear in the guise of mythological monsters, while he himself becomes one of the heroic monster slayers of ancient times. He hazardously steers between Scylla and Charybdis, battles with Odysseus' fearsome enemies, the Laestrygones and the Cyclopes, and slashes away at the evr-multiplying heads of the Lernaean Hydra; he becomes Tantalus, condemned to thirst and hunger forever, and Herakles, toiling as a slave for Omphale, the Lydian queen.

It has been observed that these classical allusions and reminiscences are generally reserved for the inner circle of his correspondents: his intellectual equals and companions, that is, and pupils, colleagues, and intimate friends. In writing to them in this vein, consciously or not, he probably had several aims in view. The ancient world and its intimations of a golden age were a means of escape from

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the drabness of everyday; the classical imagery made manifest the links between Theophylact and his Constantinopolitan friends by pointing to their common education and to the 'old boy network' that still bound them together; and dangling before them, with a virtuosity that would not have disgraced his teacher (Michael) Psellos, these well-worn fragments of the ancient world, he could show his friends that in exile he had not forgotten the intricate rules of the game, and at the same time reassure himself that he was not really about to become a barbarian. The psychological value of mythological fantasies is not a proper subject for the present study; but we can conclude that Theophylact indulged in them freely, and that they helped him bridge the chasm between the worlds of Constantinople and Ohrid. His outlook is unlikely to have differed very much from that of countless others who served their empires abroad.

Another tradition, as well as classical mythology, gave form and substance to Theophylact's feeling of estrangement from his Slav surroundings. The disdain for his Bulgarian flock that a few of his letters express

stemmed in no small measure from the literary conventions of the time. Many a Byzantine mandarin serving in outlying regions felt driven by the rigors of provincial life to contrast his rude surroundings with the distant delights of Constantinople. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries this attitude was widespread among provincial bishops. One of them, John Mauropous, the metropolitan of Euchaita in northern Asia Minor, wrote repeatedly to his pupil Michael Psellos of his longing to return to the capital. Another, Michael Choniates, the learned metropolitan of Athens, was so cast down by the discovery of how far short his demotic-speaking peasant flock fell from his shining vision of the ancient Greeks, that he wrote these remarkable words: 'I am becoming a barbarian by living a long time in Athens.' When these men dwelt among non-Greek populations, their feelings of loneliness were all the greater. Isolation and longing made them take up their pens, and their letters to colleagues and friends who had the good fortune to live in Constantinople tended to echo the tradition of idealized friendship which has been noted above. Theophylact was no exception; and when we consider the unflattering references to the Bulgarians in a few of his letters, it is well to remember this.

We have seen that these anti-Bulgarian outbursts cannot merely be due to a simple dislike of the Slav society he lived in. Some at least were due to administrative exasperation, cultural snobbery, or

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literary fashion. They do not take us very deep into his thought-world. We can hope to penetrate further, and perhaps move towards a clearer understanding of the relationship between his two worlds, by considering two other works, both of them hagiographical, which he wrote during his episcopate.

The first is the Long Life of St. Clement of Ohrid, frequently referred to in the first chapter of this book. It is the chief source of our knowledge of Clement's life between the death of Methodius in 885 and his own in 916. Theophylact's authorship of this work has sometimes been disputed; so it seems fitting briefly to rehearse the main arguments which, in my view, establish beyond reasonable doubt that the Long Life of St. Clement was indeed written by Theophylact.

These arguments are three: they relate to the manuscript tradition: the textual parallels between the Long Life and the other writings of which Theophylact is indubitably the author; and chronological evidence, which points to his lifetime as the period when the work was written.

Of the nine manuscripts of the Long Life which we know, only three contain the full text; they are

independent of each other, and in all three Theophylact is cited in the superscription as the author. Of the six remaining manuscripts, all of them fragmentary, five are anonymous, and the sixth cites Theophylact as the author. More compelling still is the argument from textual parallels: close similarities exist, in the passages dealing with the *Filioque*, between the life of St. Clement on the one hand, and Theophylact's treatise on the errors of the Latins and his commentary on St. John's Gospel, on the other. Moreover, in the Life, St. Clement and his companion Gorazd used the same key argument in their disputation with the Franks in Moravia - that the Latins confuse 'procession' and 'mission' - as the one Theophylact put forward in his writings. These textual parallels and similarities of content are too close and numerous to be fortuitous: they clearly point to Theophylact as the author of St. Clement's biography. Finally, several references to historical events in this work settle the time of writing as the late eleventh or early twelfth century.

However, several passages of the Long Life must have been written long before Theophylact's time, and they betray the hand of an early Bulgarian disciple of St. Clement. It is generally accepted that the existing Greek text has incorporated these and possibly other passages from this earlier biography composed in Old Church Slavonic or indeed vernacular Bulgarian. If he did not, he could have had the text of the earlier Life
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of Clement translated for him by one of his staff in Ohid; there must have been many such translators in the administration of the archbishopric.

Theophylact's Long Life of Clement opens with a panegyric of St. Clement's teachers Sts. Cyril and Methodius. These Byzantine missionaries to the Slavs are exalted as 'blessed fathers and teachers', and 'saints'. Hadrian II is said to have felt towards them as Moses felt towards God. Methodius, no doubt because he was St. Clement's personal teacher, is given pride of place, and he is dignified several times with the epithet 'great'. It is possible, though not certain, that Theophylact used the ninth century Old Church Slavonic biographies of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, but he certainly had other sources at his disposal, for he relates a number of facts which are not to be found in the Vita Constantini or the Viti Methodii.

One of these sources at least must have been of local Bulgarian origin. When describing St. Methodius' efforts to teach Christianity to Rastislav of Moravia and Kotsel of Pannonia, Theophylact states that St. Methodius 'had previously made Tsar Boris of the Bulgarians, who lived in the reign of Michael III, emperor of Byzantium, his [spiritual] child ... and

continually lavished upon him the bounty of his words.' Neither the ninth century biographers of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, nor any other early medieval source, so much as mention any personal contact between them and (Tsar) Boris (of Bulgaria). St. Clement himself, in his encomium of St. Cyril, written in Bulgaria from first-hand knowledge, says nothing about it. Surely, had such a connection existed, he would have mentioned it.

Theophylact is the first known author to have claimed that St. Methodius baptized and instructed Tsar Boris. He implies that this occurred before the Moravian mission, that is, before 863. This claim, which is at variance with the earliest authentic evidence on the lives of the two brothers, should be seen as an unhistorical attempt to annex the work of Sts. Cyril and Methodius to the Bulgarian national tradition. Similar claims were to be made with growing frequency by Bulgarian writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In an official document of the Bulgarian Church, the Synodicon of the Tsar Boris, drafted in 1211, St. Cyril is said to have translated the Christian scriptures 'from the Greek into the Bulgarian language' and to have 'enlightened the Bulgarian people'. From here there was only a step to claiming that Sts. Cyril and Methodius were Bulgarians by birth. It was taken circa 1300 by the anonymous Bulgarian author of the abbreviated biography known as

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The Dormition of St. Cyril.

Theophylact does not go as far as to describe Sts. Cyril and Methodius as Bulgarians. However, by designating Old Church Slavonic, the language of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, as 'the Bulgarian language', he took a further step towards meeting the growing nationalism of his Bulgarian flock. The earliest works of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition not least the Bita Constantini and the Vita Methodii, are remarkable for their cosmopolitan outlook: the mission of the two brothers is seen to be directed to all the Slav peoples. In this ideological shift from the broad horizons of the ninth century Cyrillo-Methodian writings to the more confined, nationalistic position of the fourteenth century Bulgarian authors Theophylact's biography of St. Clement represents an intermediate stage. The sources of the 'Bulgarophile' elements he inserted into his biography are unknown. They were almost certainly literary; and, because of the nascent nationalism they reveal, they must have arisen considerably later than the putative Old Church Slavonic biography of St. Clement, which, as we have seen, was probably written in the first half of the tenth century.

There is no reason to doubt that Theophylact's

assertion that (Tsar) Boris was baptized by St. Methodius was made in good faith. His opinion of Tsar Boris, St. Clement's patron, was understandably high. He describes him as 'holy' and 'of sound judgement, and receptive to the good', and terms him 'God's true lieutenant-commander'. He praises him for building seven cathedral churches in his realm, a statement he repeats in a letter to John Comnenus, the military governor Bulgaria. What is more surprising is his positive, though more restrained, assessment of Tsar Boris' son Symeon, Byzantium's deadly enemy. It is true that he confines himself to the rather perfunctory opinion that Symeon inherited his father's 'goodness of heart', and to an account of his friendly relations with St. Clement. Most probably Theophylact found these value judgements on Tsars Boris and Symeon in one of his Bulgarian sources, perhaps in St. Clement's Old Church Slavonic biography. What is significant is that he incorporated them into his own work.

Yet not everything in the *Vita Clementis* shows the Bulgarians in a favorable light. In describing the testamentary dispositions made by St. Clement shortly before his death (he left half his belongings to his diocese and the other half to his monastery in Ohrid), Theophylact tells us that he had acquired his property from local princes and tsars. St. Clement, he says, had
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accepted these gifts for fear of discouraging the royal donors by a show of indifference, 'especially as they were by nature comparatively barbarian'. Here, for a brief moment, we recognize the Theophylact we have come to know from some of his letters: the scholar from the capital, proud of his superior Byzantine culture, and whose very admiration of the ancient Christian rulers of Bulgaria was tinged with condescension. Condescension turns into contempt in his references to the Bulgarian subjects of Tsars Boris and Symeon: 'wholly ignorant and beast like' is his verdict; and he also applies the second of these epithets to many Bulgarian priests of their time, who were scarcely able to read Greek.

The reader who has absorbed the evidence and followed the argument presented so far in this chapter will probably have concluded that Theophylact's attitude towards his Macedonian environment and the Bulgarians in his spiritual care was ambiguous to a marked degree. For all his distaste for their rustic manners - some of it genuine, the rest a concession to literary fashion - he defended them with vigor when roused by administrative cruelty or injustice. He pined for Constantinople, his *alma mater*; perhaps he regarded his Ohrid appointment as a perpetual exile; yet he seems to have been highly conscientious in his pastoral duties. In his Life of St. Clement, despite signs of a

squeamish attitude towards the unsophisticated Bulgarians, he does not hide his admiration for the founders of their vernacular Christian culture.

How are we to explain this ambiguity? Did its causes lie in Theophylact's personal attitudes: in his intelligence, perhaps which made him understand the need to conciliate the Bulgarians by concessions to their national susceptibilities? In his sense of natural justice, which led him to sympathize with the victims of an inhuman fiscal policy? Or in his strong and energetic character, which made him prefer the role of a conscientious and efficient administrator to that of a *eveque fainéant*? There may be an element of truth in each of these suggestions. Yet none of them seems sufficient to account for the apparent ease with which a man of Theophylact's background and prejudices could accept and identify himself with certain essential features of their alien culture. What was the secret of his strange adaptability?

It seems likely that a crucial event in Theophylact's intellectual and spiritual development was his encounter, while *en poste* in Ohrid, with the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition. Several features of this tradition have been described in the first chapter of
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this book. It will be recalled that Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the founders of the tradition, by inventing a Slavonic alphabet and translating the Greek liturgy and scriptures, created a new literary language modeled on Greek and, at this period, intelligible to all Slavs. This language, Old Church Slavonic, a common patrimony of those peoples who gained entry into the Byzantine cultural commonwealth, became a channel which ensured a regular flow of influence from the Greek-speaking world; it was a potent cultural bond between Byzantium and the Slavs. It provided the Orthodox Slavs (and later the Rumanians as well) with an international medium for worship, writing, and literature; and through the work of Sts. Cyril and Methodius and Clement and their disciples, it became the foundation of a cultural tradition in which (Byzantine) Greek and Slav elements were in some measure blended.

From its beginnings in the ninth century the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition acquired a coherent ideology. This ideology, which Roman Jakobson did so much to describe and analyse, was founded on the belief that all languages are equal in the sight of God, and on the cognate notion that a language which serves as a medium for the Christian liturgy becomes thereby a sacred one. Hence every people which acquires a sacred tongue is raised to the status of a nation consecrated to the service of God, with its own legitimate place and particular mission within the family of Christendom.

This ideology was eloquently proclaimed in the early works of Cyrillo-Methodian literature. The masterpiece of the literature - the ninth century lives of St. Cyril and Methodius, St. Cyril's Prologue to his translation of the Gospels, and the Russian Primary Chronicle - seem to have been widely read by educated Slavs in the early Middle Ages. After Methodius' death in 885 and the collapse of his work in Moravia, the Bulgarians salvaged this heritage and, in the following century, made the major contribution to the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition. The Ohrid scriptorium, founded by St. Clement, became the direct heir to the Moravian Old Church Slavonic school. At the other end of the country, in northeastern Bulgaria, the same literary tradition was cultivated at the capital, Preslav. The leading writers of the Preslav school were Constantine the Priest (later bishop, whose acrostic Alphabetic Prayer, together with St. Cyril's Prologue, is the outstanding example of the earliest Old Church Slavonic poetry), and the monk Khrabr, author of a remarkable apologia for the Slavonic alphabet. These authors, who wrote in the late ninth and early tenth centuries, were
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fervent exponents of the Cyrillo-Methodian ideology and devoted disciples of this tradition's founders. Two centuries later, writing in the style of St. Clement, whose distant successor he was, Theophylact could draw on a rich tradition of Cyrillo-Methodian literature. To gain access to it he did not need to know Church Slavonic; all he required was the services of a competent translator.

The Life of St. Clement contains several clues which suggest that Theophylact admired the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition and was willing in some measure to identify himself with it. A few examples will illustrate this gift of empathy.

The word - *logos, slovo* - conceived as the 'source of man's rationality and of his communion with God' is a central concept in this tradition. Cyrillo-Methodian writers applied this notion to divine truth apprehended through the use of vernacular languages, and they held that the Slavs, by acquiring the liturgy and the scriptures in their mother tongue, received the 'word', the gift that enabled them to understand and proclaim the true faith. Nowhere is the sacred value of the *logos*, thus understood, proclaimed with more eloquence and force than in St. Cyril's poetic Prologue to his translation of the Gospels. One of its passages reads: 'Then hear now with your own mind, listen, all you Slavs: hear the Word, for it came from God, the Word which nourishes human souls, the Word which strengthens heart and mind, the Word which prepares all men to know God.' The semantic and mystical link between the 'Word',

signifying the sacred vernacular tongue, and the Incarnate Word or *Logos* - that is Christ himself - is revealed several times in the *Vita Clementis*. In evoking the solemn moment when the pope, having given his blessing to the translations of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, offers up the Slavonic books on the altar of one of the churches in Rome, Theophylact comments: 'What is more pleasing to the Word than the word which releases intelligent beings from unintelligibility, since like rejoices in like?' And he makes the same point in another passage of alliterative verbal play, suggesting - in common with the author of the *Vita Constantini* - that St. Clement of Rome, whose putative relics the two brothers had brought back from the Crimea, was the supernatural patron of their mission to the Slavs: 'The philosopher [St. Clement] receives the philosopher [St. Cyril], the great teacher takes to himself the voice of the Word, the tutor of nations receives in his dwelling him who enlightened the nations with the light of knowledge.'

This is a far cry from the notion we find in other
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passages of the *Vita Clementis* that the principal beneficiaries of the work of Sts. Cyril and Methodius were the Bulgarians. In common with the earliest and most authentic spokesmen of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition, Theophylact is aware of the universal dimension of the work of the apostles to the Slavs. The same cosmopolitan spirit breathes in other judgements by Theophylact. The two brothers are represented in the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition as the heirs of St. Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. According to the *Vita*, St. Cyril, when defending in Venice the fundamental equality of all languages, quoted from St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, and the text was used as an ideological manifesto by the champions of the Slav vernacular tradition. Theophylact repeatedly states that Sts. Cyril and Methodius imitated St. Paul. This, he shows, was also true of St. Clement; he became 'a new Paul to the new Corinthians, the Bulgarians',

Another feature of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition, which we find in works written by its followers in the early Middle Ages, was the belief that the late entry of the Slavs into the Christian community was no sign of inferiority; rather it was to be seen in the light of the parable in St. Matthew's Gospel (XX: 1-16) of the householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers to work in his vineyard: those who were hired at the eleventh hour received the same wages as those who from the beginning had 'borne the burden and heat of the day'. In like manner Theophylact, in his account of the Bulgarians' conversion to Christianity, stated that they came to know Christ, 'although they

entered the divine vineyard late in the day, around the eleventh or twelfth hour.'

A final example of Theophylact's sensitive awareness of the basic themes of Cyrillo-Methodian apologetics takes us into the field of scriptural exegesis. An idea that runs through Cyrillo-Methodian literature is that the invention of the Slav letters was an extension of the miracle of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended in tongues of fire upon Christ's apostles, and they all 'began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts II:4). Theophylact used the same Pentecostal image: he tells us that Sts. Cyril and Methodius, before inventing the Slavonic alphabet, 'turned to the Comforter, whose first gifts are the tongues and the help of the Word'.

The Cyrillo-Methodian legacy, both in its original 'pan-Slav' form and in its later 'Bulgarophile' version, provided Theophylact with an ideological basis and justification for his attempt, through his

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writings, to bridge the gulf between the worlds of Constantinople and Ohrid. Slavonic in form, and much of it Greek in content, this legacy proved to be the most lasting of bonds between Byzantium and the Slavs. It is within the context of this bicultural, graeco-Slav literary tradition that Theophylact's Life of St. Clement can best be understood.

The same eagerness to embrace the status of his archdiocese by uncovering its early Christian roots and by painting the history of the Bulgarian Church on a wide historical canvas is apparent in Theophylact's second hagiographical work. It is entitled, in the superscription to the sole surviving medieval manuscript, The Martyrdom of the Holy and Glorious Fifteen Martyrs of Tiberiopolis, Called Strumitsa in Bulgarian, Martyred in the Reign of the Impious Julian the Apostate. It was published in the last century by Migne. In 1968 Paul Gautier prepared a critical edition, which is still unpublished.

This comparatively little known work is of considerable interest. To the ancient historian to the student of the medieval Balkans, and even (as we shall see) to the art historian it can still offer new material: it is no less important to the student of Theophylact. Its ideological similarities to the Life of St. Clement are striking. We have seen that in the Life of Clement Theophylact attempted to place the history of Christian Bulgaria within the context of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition. In the Martyrion (or Passio) his aim was similar, but more ambitious: it was to graft the history of his archdiocese, personified by the cult of its local saints, on to some of the earliest Christian traditions of the Roman Empire. A brief summary of the

contents of this work should make his intentions clear.

The Martyrion opens with a lengthy historical preamble based on several ancient authors, chiefly the fifth-century church historian Socrates, and covers the reigns of Constantius I, Constantine the Great, and Constantius II. Then we come to Julian: we are told of his youth, his education, his pagan sympathies, his accession to the imperial throne (AD 361), and his persecutions of the Christians. At this point Theophylact takes leave of ancient guides and begins to draw on unknown sources. He describes a grisly, and apparently quite apocryphal, persecution in Nicaea: a group of local Christians fled from there to Thessalonika and thence, for greater security, to the hinterland of Macedonia. One of them, Theodore, is alleged by Theophylact to have been present at the Council of Nicaea in 325. Theophylact called

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Tiberiopolis, which was 'situated in the region to the north of Thessalonika, and marched with the land of the Illyrians'. There they formed a Christian community which gained great influence in the neighborhood. Their fame soon reached Thessalonika: two officials, zealous instruments of the emperor's policies, went to Tiberiopolis to investigate. Fifteen local Christians with their leaders Timothy, Comasius, Eusebius, and Theodore, were arrested, tried, and, by order of the two Thessalonikan officials, put to the sword. They were buried by the local Christians, each in his own sarcophagus, and before long miracles were reported over their graves. Their cult spread far and wide, and many pagans were converted. "Tiberiopolis became a renowned beacon, illumining the cities of the west" - that is the Balkans - "with the light of the faith".

The hagiological source, or sources, used by Theophylact for his account of the persecutions in Nicaea and Tiberiopolis are unknown. The martyrdom itself, and the names of fifteen martyrs, are not inventions of the author, for, as we shall see, there is evidence of their cult in Strumitsa in the late ninth or early tenth century, and the names of some of them are mentioned in a Slavonic *menologion* of the late tenth or early eleventh century. Strumitsa, a town in the valley of the river of the same name (a tributary of the Srema or Strymon), lies in eastern Macedonia. The fact that its former name was Tiberiopolis is reliably attested by several mid-fourteenth century sources.

We cannot be sure how far back this place-name goes. There is no record of any Balkan town called Tiberopolis, but a city of that name, called after the Emperor Tiberius, is mentioned in Phrygia in the early centuries of the Christian era, and was renowned for the vigor of its Christianity. It may be, as Zlatarski and

others have surmised, that populations removed from this region of Asia Minor brought the name of their native or metropolitan city with them to Macedonia. The most likely time for this toponymic transfer would have been the early ninth century: for we are told by the chronicler that in 809 the Emperor Nicephorus I ordered Christian communities 'from every province' to be uprooted and resettled in Slavonic regions of the Empire. The aim of this population-shift was to reassert Byzantine control over the areas occupied by the Slavs during the previous two centuries. Macedonia had been densely colonized by the Slavs: and Theophanes tells us that some of the communities transferred by Nicephorus I were settled on the banks of the Struma. Strumitsa is no more than fifty miles from that river:

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and it is not impossible that the town was then renamed Tiberiopolis by some transplanted communities from Asia Minor.

Recent archaeological evidence has lent powerful support to the view that Tiberiopolis was identified with Strumitsa as early as the ninth century. Excavations carried out in Strumitsa in 1973 by Yugoslav archaeologists have uncovered a complex of buildings with evidence of several periods: at the lowest level was an early Christian basilica, with three naves and three crypts: these are thought to date from a somewhat later period, the sixth to the eighth centuries. Over it was discovered a cruciform and probably five-domed church, built in the late ninth or early tenth century and dedicated to the Fifteen martyrs of Tiberiopolis: in the same period the central crypt was painted with frescoes representing the Fifteen Martyrs, which, though only partially preserved, show evidence of a technique said to be

reminiscent of the Byzantine metropolitan style of the period. Finally fragments of frescoes were found, dating from the late eleventh or early twelfth centuries and showing that the cruciform church was reconstructed in this period, that is in Theophylact's time.

These archaeological finds in Strumitsa, we shall see, strikingly confirm Theophylact's evidence on the cult of the Fifteen Martyrs in the reign of (Khan) Boris; the discovery of the frescoes is particularly important for our purpose, being the only known medieval depiction of the Martyrs of Tiberiopolis.

Back to Theophylact's narrative. After the account of the martyrdom, we leave the ancient world and, after the sack of "Tiberiopolis", probably in the 580s, by the Avars - an event not mentioned in any other source - the coming of the [proto-] Bulgars a century later gave Theophylact his point of transition between the first and the second part of the Martyrion. For the second

part he must have used one or more Slavonic sources which seem to have been both accurate and reliable, and he adds to our knowledge of early Bulgarian history on several points. E records the conversion to Christianity of a member of the royal family called Enravotas, a son of the Khan Omurtag. Paganism was still the religion of Bulgari's ruling classes; and Enravotas, after publicly professing Christianity, was martyred by order of his brother, the Khan Malamir (831-836).

The subject of martyrdom brings Theophylact back to his central theme. He describes in glowing terms the baptism of the Khan Boris in 864 by Byzantine priests
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and the subsequent spread of Christianity in his realm, and thus prepares the ground for the posthumous history of the Fifteen Martyrs. Their graves, he tells us, had remained abandoned and unknown since the Avars sacked Tiberiopolis. In Boris' reign (852-889) the saints began to manifest themselves by miraculous apparitions and by healings; whereupon Boris, "ever ardent for divine things", decided to exhume their bodies and give them solemn burial in a church. Theophylact's account of the discovery and translation of the Strumitsa relics is very curious; it bears out once again the precision of the source. The exhumation took place amid a concourse of clergy, nobles, and people, and after digging to some depth "they chanced upon the saints' sarcophagi: each was covered with a slab of cut marble, inscribed with (the occupants') name and the outline of his body, his profession, his rank, and the expression on his face."

Instead of burying the relics in Strumitsa, Boris had them removed to a new church which he had built in honor of the Fifteen Martyrs in nearby Bregalnitsa. Theophylact gives no reason for this decision: no doubt it was done because Bregalnitsa was the seat of a bishopric. In readiness for the translation, the saints' bodies were wrapped in shrouds and laid in wooden chests; and marble slabs from the sarcophagi were removed to an unspecified sanctuary in the diocese. The exact location of Bregalnitsa is uncertain: recent archaeological work places it in the valley of the eponymous river, probably on or near the site of ancient Bargala, some thirty miles north-west of Strumitsa.

The citizens of Strumitsa, meanwhile, seeing that they were about to lose the relics of their supernatural protectors, rose in revolt. A major riot was averted only by the presence of mind of the governor: a compromise was reached, by the terms of which the relics of only the three senior martyrs who head the list - Timothy, Comasius, and Eusebius - were removed to Bregalnitsa. The people of Strumitsa were allowed to keep the remaining twelve for the time being, and they

were presumably buried in the cruciform church there, now recently excavated.

The final scene took place in the new church at Bregalnitsa. It follows farly closely the standard pattern of the translation-tales which abound in Byzantine hagiography. Amid the usual concourse of clergy and people, the coffined relics of the three martyrs were solemnly deposited on the right-hand side of the nave. Native clergy were appointed to minister to the needs of the church, and 'the Bulgarian
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language', that is, Old Church Slavonic, was to be used in the liturgy.

Despite the conventional mold of Theophylact's story - a classic Roman *martyrion*, followed by an equally standard translation tale - his account as a whole shows two strikingly original features. Firstly, the precision and vividness are proof that he used a written Slavonic source which, directly or indirectly, went back to an eyewitness account of the discovery in Strumitsa of the relics of the Fifteen Martyrs, and of their subsequent transfer to Bregalnitsa. The second, and no less remarkable, feature is his success in giving a local flavor to an earlier and broader hagiological theme. His story makes it clear that by Boris' reign the cult of the Fifteen Martyrs of Tiberiopolis was solidly entrenched in Macedonia. The recent excavations have tellingly confirmed the accuracy of his account, at least with regard to Strumitsa. It may be supposed that the main reason for writing the Martyrion was Theophylact's desire to promote this cult. As the excavations have shown, a major reconstruction of the cruciform Strumitsa church was carried out in his lifetime, probably during his Ohrid episcopate. Strumitsa and Bregalnitsa were part of his archdiocese, and not very far from Ohrid. They are likely to have been part of St. Clement's diocese in the late ninth and early tenth century; and it is hard to avoid the suspicion that St. Clement as well as Boris had a hand in fostering the cult of the Fifteen Martyrs in Macedonia.

Perhaps this mention of St. Clement may prove of further relevance in the light of Theophylact's aims and methods as a hagiographer. In the Martyrion he tred to connect a local Macedonian cult, centred in the Vardar valley, with the history of Christian martyrs in the Roman Empire and, by claiming that one of the saints of Tiberiopolis had attended the Council of Nicaea, with the most venerable traditions of Eastern Christianity. This could hardly fail to enhance the prestige of Ohrid and the whole Bulgarian Church. In the Vita Clementis he made the same attempt to make a local theme universal, by grafting the cultural attainments of Christian

Macedonia, at the end of the ninth century, on to the wider accomplishments of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. The result, in both works, has been the same: a panegyric to Bulgarian Christianity and to Boris, its p[ri]ncipal architect. The Martyrion describes the conversion of the Bulgarians in plainly Biblical terms: "What was previously not a people but a barbarian nation became and was called a people of God, and the inheritance of the Bulgarians, which had not

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been an object of mercy, was called an object of mercy by God who calls those things which are not as though they were. ... THE Bulgarian people have become, as it is written, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people."

In using a Pauline quotation to express his belief that through baptism the Bulgarian nation was called from non-existence into being, Theophylact was applying a classic theme of Christian apologetics: conversion of a pagan people to Christianity endowed it with a distinct collective identity. Through its Pauline antecedents, we have seen that this concept of national self-determination formed part of the Cyrillo-Methodian ideology. There is no explicit mention of this ideology in the Martyrion; but we must remember Theophylact's manifest approval of the clergy at the church of the Fifteen Martyrs in the late ninth century celebrating the office in Old Church Slavonic.

Perhaps Theophylact's two hagiographic works reveal different aspects of his remarkable capacity for empathy. He looked on St. Clement, whom he described as "the first bishop in the Bulgarian language", as his direct predecessor; and the concluding section of his Martyrion calls the Fifteen Martyrs of Tiberiopolis "those saints of ours".

It is hard to gauge exactly the aims and results of Theophylact's activity in Bulgaria. The view, unpopular in recent years, that he detested his Slavonic flock and that he was committed to the uprooting of their culture and the Hellenization of their Church, is, in my opinion, seriously misleading. We may assume, however, that according to his lights and his resources, both spiritual and material, he loyally performed the task entrusted to him by his imperial master: that of holding the inhabitants of his mainly Slav-speaking archdiocese in subjection to Byzantium. He was certainly a firm believer in the principle of order and the duty of obedience to the emperor - "the earthly god, so to speak:", as one of his letters describes him.

Another letter stipulates that his suffragan bishops should be experienced in secular as well as ecclesiastical affairs. Though in political matters the archbishop was subordinate to the local military

governor, his duties were not confined to the spiritual domain. His was with the imperial tax-collectors provides ample evidence of this. He realized how damaging they were to his own efforts at conciliating the Bulgarians; and it was with these officials in mind that he quoted the words of the Gospel: "A man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matthew X:36).

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Like all intelligent colonial administrators, Theophylact knew that gentle methods are usually more effective than violence; so he urged that the people of "barbarian lands" be treated with kindness rather than the power of the sword. Only by tempering firmness with humanity, he repeatedly stressed, could the Bulgarians be kept from turning disloyal and rebellious; and he exhorted the imperial authorities to treat them with caution and restraint, "lest the patience of the poor be finally exhausted".

How successful Theophylact was in applying these principles is hard to say. Except when he wished to invoke the sanction of the law, he probably underplayed, especially in his letters to Constantinople, the degree of disaffection he encountered in Bulgaria. The various monsters that haunt his letters are nearly always tax-collectors. The only well-documented example of something approaching a popular revolt against him was a murky affair, stirred up by a Bulgarian peasant named Lazarus; he gathered a group of malcontents and lodged a complaint about "the tyranny of the archbishop" with the imperial authorities; but even he, Theophylact maintained, was a creature of the chief tax-collector Iasites. We do not know whether the citizens of Ohrid went on singing provocative patriotic songs, like the oen that so enraged Theophylact on his first arrival.

We are better informed on Theophylact's ecclesiastical activity in Bulgaria. Towards his suffragan bishops - presumably all Greeks - he showed real qualities of leadership, exhorting them to stand firm when times were difficult, and stay in their sees and look after their flocks. We have no direct knowledge of his relations with his parish clergy, most of whom must have been Slav-speaking Bulgarians. Some, we may suppose, after nearly a century of Byzantine rule, had more knowledge of Greek than their predecessors in St. Clement's day. To this Theophylact may have contributed: one of his letters has the superscription "To Bulgarians taught by him". The addressees have sometimes been taken to be the whole of his Bulgarian flock. But the fact that the letter is in Greek, refers to its recipients as "you who are mine", and requests them to convey his greeting to a wider group of "those who are mine and not mine", suggests that it was written to a

select group of Bulgarians who were pupils of Theophylact. He was probably training them for the priesthood, and it is hard to believe that he taught them in any other language but Greek.

Greek, the official language of the archdiocese of Bulgaria in Theophylact's time, was undoubtedly used
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for the liturgy in the diocesan cathedrals. But nearly all the parish clergy must have continued to use Church Slavonic, and there is no evidence that this liturgical situation displeased Theophylact. So fervent an admirer of St. Clement and his masters Sts. Cyril and Methodius could hardly have objected to the use of their Slavonic liturgy. Indeed he seems to imply that hymns translated by St. Clement were still sung in churches of Bulgaria, and he adds, admittedly from hearsay, the St. Clement's works in Old Church Slavonic are still "preserved by industrious folk". Many other writings in that language must have circulated in Bulgaria in Theophylact's time, and philologists have shown that a fair number of well known Old Church Slavonic manuscripts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were copied in Macedonian or East Bulgarian scriptoria. Nor is this surprising: for the role played by Ohrid and its scriptorium in transmitting Byzantine culture to the Balkan Slavs could not have been so great had not both literary traditions continued to exist side by side, interacting in a bilingual milieu in the schools and monasteries of Macedonia.

It is in this bilingual and bicultural world of the Balkans at the beginning of the twelfth century that Theophylact, during his Ohrid incumbency, properly belonged. Whether he encouraged or simply tolerated the Slavonic liturgy in his archdiocese is a matter of opinion. Some historians, reacting against the distorted picture painted by some scholars, of Theophylact as a malevolent Hellenizer, have argued that he actively promoted a Bulgarian national consciousness; others have maintained that he was moved above all by an enlightened and humane concern for his flock. This is surely to give him too high marks for good behavior. Not all his verbal sallies against the Bulgarians were prompted by literary convention; at times, in reacting to his "barbarian" surroundings, he allowed himself a snobbery and fastidiousness unbecoming in a bishop; and his war with the tax collectors was not stoked only by altruism.

Geographically and culturally, the two worlds of Theophylact were surely too far from each other for any bridge between them to be solid and enduring. Yet he endeavored to be such a bridge-builder, and if he failed, it was not for want of trying. In the end the disaffection of the local population proved too great. The comparative ease with which the Bulgarians regained

their independence in 1187 demonstrated the bankruptcy of the (Byzantine) Empire's efforts to hold down and absorb the Slavs of the northern Balkans.

A modern Greek historian, desc, describing the
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problems of adaptation encountered by Byzantine provincial bishops in the twelfth century, perceptively described them as "double-natured and bilingual": they longed for the amenities of civilized life, yet they remained at their uncongenial posts; they came to terms with their provincial surroundings, yet their eyes were forever turned towards Constantinople. Theophylact suffered from the same mental split. There is more than a trace of irony in these words he wrote to his friend and patroness, the *basilissa* (empress) Maria: "So I return to the Bulgarians, I who am a true Constantinopolitan and, strange though it is, a Bulgarian."

We do not know how long Theophylact remained at his post. The last firm data we can glean from his Ohrid letters is 1108. If we can trust the date on a manuscript of one of his poems, he was still alive in 1125, but whether he was still archbishop of Ohrid at that time is not clear.

Theophylact's posthumous fame was plagued by misunderstanding and error. We have seen that Erasmus, who made much use of his commentaries believed for a time that his name was Vulgarius. An even more egregious mistake was made by a Bulgarian monk Paisy, of the monastery of Hilander on Mount Athos. In his Slavo-Bulgarian History, that manifesto of modern Bulgarian nationalism written in 1762, he asserted that Theophylact was patriarch of Trnovo (the see of the primate of Bulgaria after 1235) and in the same breath promoted him to the rank of a saint [on whose authority?]. We may doubt whether Theophylact had deserved this [long] posthumous mystification.

His long and difficult career as archbishop of Ohrid can best perhaps be summed up by two terse quotations from his letters. The first, the epigram to one of the very first letters he wrote after his arrival in Ohrid, expresses his misgivings and his fear at the aspect of his new abode. The quotation is from his beloved Euripides, and the mouth-piece for these feelings is Teiresias in The Phoenician Woman: observing Creon's horror at the news that his son must die if Thebes is to be saved, the blind prophet exclaims: "This is no longer the same man, he starts back." The second quotation conveys something of the indomitable character of the scholarly bishop, for whom his long provincial episcopate must have seemed a never-ending exile. It is taken from the Odyssey, and records its hero's resolution, despite his sorrow on seeing his ships,

within sight at last of Ithaca his home, driven back by
the winds blowing from Aeolus' bag, to resist the wish
to drown himself in the sea

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from despair. Like Odysseus, who in the face of calamity
remained steadfast on board his ship, Theophylact could
say: "But I endured, and stayed." (47)

Much has been written concerning the Byzantine heritage of
Kievan Rus'. However, as we have seen, without Bulgaria acting as
intermediary between Byzantium and Kiev, Orthodox Slavdom either
would not have existed (it is likely that the whole Slavic world
would have converted to Western or Latin Christianity), or else,
in Eastern Slavdom at least, would have taken a form difficult to
imagine. Therefore, in order to have any understanding of Kievan
Rus', and, for that matter, of the whole history and culture of
Russia and Ukraine, some knowledge of the early history and
culture of Bulgaria and its role as intermediary between Byzantium
and the East Slavic world is essential. Old Church Slavonic, the
basis of the liturgical language, is a South Slavic language,
closer to Old Bulgarian than to any other language, and Bulgaria
was the source of Slavic-speaking churchmen for early Kievan Rus'.
So, in order to understand the history and culture of Kievan Rus',
at least a superficial knowledge of the history and culture of
early Christian Bulgaria is essential.

Due to the successes of missionaries of the Western or Latin
Church in Poland, Moravia, Bohemia, Pannonia, Slovenia, and
Croatia, it briefly appeared as though the whole Slavic world was
to be a fief of Latin Christianity: it should be noted that at
this time there were no theological differences between Byzantine
and Latin Christianity; each recognized the other as "indubitably

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Christian", and at times the line between them was blurry; the differences were of another indole, which we will not deal with here. Many centuries later, Hitler would contemptuously refer to the Catholic Church as "Latin-Slav".

However, this was not to be. Though numerous individual Slavs, such as the great 6th century Byzantine general Belisarius (Slavic: *Beli Tsar*, i.e., "White Prince") and, probably, the *droungarios* (high Byzantine military rank) Leo and his wife Maria, parents of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Bulgaria was the first Slavic nation to embrace Byzantine Christianity, to be followed shortly by Serbia and considerably later by Kievan Rus'. Thus, the conversion of Bulgaria to Byzantine Christianity is of enormous importance; without it, certainly Rumania (Rumanian is a Romance language, NOT Slavic), possibly Serbia and most probably Kievan Rus' would have embraced Latin Christianity, in which case Rumania, Serbia, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus would today be Catholic rather than Eastern Orthodox.

Due to its crucial importance to our present topic, it is important that we give at least an overview of Bulgaria and its history.

Ironically, the name "Bulgar" is not Slavic, in fact it is not even Indo-European, but rather is Turko-Mongol; how this alien name came to be attached to an Indo-European, Slavic people is something we shall deal with below.

Says Robert Browning (NOT to be confused with the well-known poet):

"The speakers of Slavonic had been settled in the area of the upper Vistula and middle Dnieper since the fourth millennium BC. In this region, where forest and steppe mix, they slowly developed their peculiar culture. ...

...From the beginning of the first millennium BC, the Slavs were in contact with Iranian-speaking peoples of the steppe zone, who may have exercised some kind of overlordship over them, first the Cimmerians [who were not Iranians; some say that they were Thracians, but others - who have many more facts to support their case - say that the Cimmerians were Celts (the Celtic tradition affirms this, and to this day the Welsh call themselves *Cymru*) Celts; in any case, the Cimmerians were Indo-Europeans], and later the Scythians, who were indeed Iranians). They (the Slavs) are probably to be identified with the 'Scythian plowmen' of whom Herodotus speaks. After this long period of contact with Scythians, to which are to be attributed a number of Iranian loanwords in common Slavonic, there followed a period during which the Slavs were subject to penetration and displacement by invaders.

First came the Iranian-speaking Sarmatians, who unlike their Scythian predecessors left the steppe (at least some of them did) and entered the forest and steppe zone, where they exchanged their pastoral way of life for agriculture, which they probably learned from their Slav subjects. There was probably a good deal of intermingling of Slavs and Sarmatians. ... The existence of both cremation and inhumation all over the area suggests some mingling of religious beliefs. By about 200 AD new invaders appeared on the scene, the Germanic-speaking Goths. They probably subjected at least some of the Slavs to their dominion. Their influence is attested by a stratum of very old Germanic loanwords in common Slavonic. The disturbance caused in the peaceful and rather static life of the Slav peasants by these successive penetrations and by their close symbiosis with Sarmatian and Goth may have led to the beginning of an eastward and southward spread of the Slavonic tribes.

... The advent of the Huns [whom the Goths and Alans believed to have been born of witches expelled by the Goths and Alans who mated with the evil spirits of the steppe] towards the end of the fourth century AD shattered the uniform Slavo-Gothic culture of the forest-steppe zone and drove the Goths towards the Danube. The breakup of Gothic power led to a slow spread of Slavonic farmers and stock-breeders outwards from their original area of settlement towards the east, the south and the west. The dense forest zone, to

which the Slavs' way of life was ill-adapted, was left to the Baltic (or Lithuanian) and Finno-Ugrian (or Ural- Altaic) tribes who had lived there for millennia. The penetration of the forest by the eastern Slavs belongs to a later period. The reasons for this Salvonic expansion are obscure. ... The Slavs were not swiftly-moving armed horsemen like the nomads of the steppes or the Goths. They formed no large political units, had no kings. They spread by walking, or by sailing on the great rivers, for they were superb boatmen. They must have taken over much land which had been left untilled after the devastations of the Huns. Where they evicted the previous cultivators, it was after hostilities on a small scale - scuffles rather than battles.

By the end of the fifth century AD Byzantine sources report the presence of this new people, whom they call *Sklavenoi*, all along the Danube frontier. ... They (the Slavs) wore no body-armor, but carried shields and spears, or bows with which they shot poisoned arrows. In warfare they avoided open plains and stuck to hilly wooded land, in which they ambushed their enemies with great skill. They were specialists in night attacks. Their pale complexion and reddish-blond hair [some Byzantine commented that the Slavs had curiously European features for so wild a race] attracted the attention of Mediterranean observers, Greek and Arab alike. They were of course pagans, and more will be said about the religion of the Slavs later. What struck the Byzantines who first came into contact with them - and who saw non-Christian religions in the light of Hellenic paganism - was the existence of one god among others who was lord of the thunder and to whom animal sacrifices were offered at special shrines; the worship of a number of female deities connected with vegetation and the countryside; and the absence of any belief in destiny.

...
...We may now return to our narrative of events in the Balkans in the sixth century. Two new peoples are recorded by our sources north of the lower Danube, the Kotrigurs and the Utigurs. They appear to be Turkic speakers, part of the debris left by the dissolution of the Hun empire. Whether, as seems probable, they are to be identified with the Bulgars who a little later appear north of the Danube delta and in Pannonia, and with whose fortunes this book will largely be concerned. It is well to bear in mind that the the pastoralists of the steppe moved quickly over long distances; that in the absence of a powerful state like that of the Huns, the Khazars or the Mongols, clans and tribes are continually making alliances and subjecting

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their neighbors, thus forming ephemeral quasi-states

often known by the name of the tribe in a position of leadership at the time, and that (Byzantine) Greek writers are generally extremely vague in their identification of the steppe peoples, often calling them them by the name of their distant predecessors, which had become part of the literary tradition. Be that as it may, the first half of the sixth century is marked by raids of growing severity made into Byzantine territory by these peoples, and we hear of Slavs both accompanying them - perhaps providing supporting infantry to the steppe people's cavalry - and fighting against them.

...

...In 528 the Bulgars raided Thrace, in 529 we hear of Slav invaders. The probability is that in both cases the two peoples were acting in concert. Such invasions continued in succeeding years. In 533 the Byzantine commander-in-chief in Thrace, Chilbudius, himself allegedly a Slav, was killed by a Slav raiding force. Once again the Byzantine forces took strong action. There was a major defeat of the Bulgars somewhere between the Balkan chain and the Danube. At the same time Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovaca) was recaptured from the Ostrogoths. ...

...From 540 on there was little peace in the northern Balkans, despite the extensive program of military works to protect the main Byzantine lines of communication, the strengthening of the huge military bases on the Danube itself, the reinforcement of the Danube flotillas, for which all invaders had a healthy respect, and the efforts of the diplomatists of Constantinople to persuade more distant peoples of the steppe zone to fall on the rear of the Bulgars (or Kotrigurs) and Slavs. ...

...Only small numbers from beyond the Danube were allowed to settle, and then under strict Byzantine control. So long as the Byzantines hold the fortified cities and the strong points which guard the main roads, the invaders cannot take over the land, even if it is lying uncultivated as a result of devastation. And they cannot take fortified cities and strong points; their technology is not up to the task. This was the situation of stalemate which existed in the closing years of the reign of Justinian. ...

...In general, even after the great Slav invasions of the late sixth and early seventh century the Balkans must have been an ethnic mosaic. Eastern Thrace and the Black Sea coast, as well as Thessaloniki and parts of peninsular Greece remained solidly Greek, their population strengthened by refugees. Elsewhere survived pockets of Greeks, Latins, and no doubt unromanized

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Thracians, Illyrians, Daco-Moesians and Dalmatinas. The Slavs learned in time how to take cities, but they were

not interested in living in them.

...The Bulgars have appeared already in our survey of the fortunes of south-eastern Europe in the Dark Ages. They were a Turkic people, who first emerge as an identifiable group after the collapse of the Hun empire. They were probably related to the Kutrigurs and Utigurs who occupied much of the steppe zone north of the Danube delta and Black Sea in the sixth century, and indeed may have been their descendants. ... The main body of the Bulgars probably spent some time living as pastoralists in the steppe north of the Caspian Sea. Some of them appear on the left bank of the lower Danube in the last decades of the fifth century, either as raiders or as mercenaries in the Byzantine service. The sixth century seems to have been one of relative calm for the Bulgars - unless they are to be identified with the Kutrigurs and Utigurs, who

were engaged in one another's mutual destruction at this time. ... There were apparently Bulgar contingents along with the Avars and Slavs at the sieges of Thessaloniki and Constantinople. One of their leaders, Kubrat, seems to have broken with the Avars and formed an alliance with the local Slavs. ...Asparukh [a name which appears to be Iranian] a son of Kubrat, ruled over the main body of Bulgars just north of the Danube delta, and were able to break out of the Delta and establish themselves in eastern Moesia. There they subjected the Slav tribes of the area, obliging them to pay tribute and settling them on the frontiers of the territory which they controlled. ...The army was the whole Bulgar male population, presumably organized in tribal contingents, and supported by the forces of the Slav tribes which the Bulgars controlled and with whom they were closely linked from the start. ...

...The Bulgars established their capital at Pliska, between the Danube and the Balkan chain, where the ruins of a late Roman city provided building material. There they built a complex of public buildings for the Khan and his court, surrounded by an earthworks perimeter wall. ...

...By the middle of the ninth century, then, the Slavs of peninsular Greece and southern Macedonia had formed no political society of their own, and were well on the way to absorption into the life of the Byzantine world, which soon led to the loss of their national identity and their language, except for a small pocket in the mountains of the southern Peloponnese. In the northern Balkans the situation was very different. There the Slav settlers had been under the power of the

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Bulgar state in which from the beginnings the Slavs had played a major role, and in which by the middle of the ninth century the fusion of the Bulgar and the Slav

ruling groups had made considerable progress; the Bulgars had partly forgotten their original Turkic language and had adopted that of their (far more numerous) Slav fellow citizens. It is probably more than accidental that the line dividing the two regions of the Balkan Peninsula (Slav and non-Slav) coincides closely with that marking the northern limit of the cultivation of the olive. It is a line which separates two very different styles of life, the Mediterranean and the central European. ..."

It is to be noted that the Slavs were far more numerous than the Bulgars (or, to avoid confusion, the "proto-Bulgars"), and that the remnants of the Thracians, which modern day Bulgarians say are the "bedrock" of the Bulgarian people, who were absorbed by the Slavs, guaranteed a large majority who were Indo-European by speech and heritage and Caucasoid by race. The "proto-Bulgars" were Turkic in speech and at least partly Mongoloid by race, though the name of their king "Asparukh" is certainly Iranian, which would seem to indicate that the Proto-Bulgars, though Turko-Mongol by speech, were at least partly Indo-European and Caucasoid by blood. Today it is virtually impossible to find the faintest trace of Mongoloid features among the population of Bulgaria, who are obviously a mix of Slavs and Thracians, while the present day Slavic language of Bulgaria betrays no influence of the Turkic language of the proto-Bulgars; only the names "Bulgar", "Bulgaria" and "Bulgarian" still exist to demonstrate that the proto-Bulgars ever existed.

Robert Browning continues:

"...When (Tsar) Boris succeeded to the throne of
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Bulgaria in 852 he found on his southern frontier a Byzantine empire which was rapidly recovering from the long eclipse following on the Arab conquests and the Slav occupation of the Balkans. ...

The unexpected Russian (actually Viking) attack on Constantinople itself in 860 directed Byzantine attention to the danger from this new state (Kievan Rus') emerging far away in the heart of north-eastern Europe, and made friendly relations with Bulgaria all the more desirable. Nevertheless when (Tsar) Boris, anxious to build up Bulgaria into a great power, formed a military alliance with the Franks, the Byzantine reaction was swift and sharp. A byzantine army invaded Bulgaria, supported by the fleet in the Black Sea, and no doubt the Danube delta. (Tsar) Boris was caught at a disadvantage. In any case he wanted at all costs to avoid a full-scale military confrontation with the empire, particularly since a series of striking victories by the general Petronas on the eastern frontier had enabled troops to be transferred from there to Thrace. Boris at once accepted Byzantine terms. These were not onerous from the military point of view. But they required that Boris and his people should accept the Christian faith and that the Bulgarian church be subordinate to that of Constantinople. For some years before, the Byzantine authorities had been deeply interested in conversion as a means of extending Byzantine influence. The concept arose naturally out of the Byzantine idea of the empire as a unique instrument of God's plan for the salvation of mankind, destined to last until the Second Coming (of Jesus Christ). Acceptance of the spiritual authority of the church implied in principle acceptance of the temporal authority of the *Basileus* (Emperor) and vice versa. It may have been brought to the forefront by recent Byzantine experience in the east, where mass conversion of Muslims, Paulicians (Manichaeans) and Monophysites often followed on Byzantine conquest. Missions had recently been sent to the Khazars, to Kievan Rus' and to Moravia. As it turned out, none of these produced lasting results. But in 864 this was not evident. Bulgaria could not be allowed to remain in pagan independence. So Byzantine insistence on its conversion as a condition of withdrawal of its invading army was only to be expected. It is a neat example of the intimate collaboration of Church and state in the Byzantine Empire. As a counterpart to the conversion the Bulgarians probably received some territory in Thrace. And the frontier was left vague in the west, where Bulgarian expansion continued unchecked.

The ensuing rebellion of boyars hostile to a
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rapprochement with Byzantium nearly cost (Tsar) Boris his life. But it was suppressed, and the opportunity taken of replacing many of the traditionalist proto-Bulgar and Slav clan leaders by men sympathetic to (Tsar) Boris' plans and dependent on his patronage.

Boris himself realized the danger of becoming a Byzantine satellite, and for a time flirted with the Church of Rome, which was at that moment anxious to assert its power in the Balkans. The Byzantine clergy were expelled from Bulgaria for some years. But in the end the realities of power told. Bulgaria returned in 870 to the Byzantine obedience but with a degree of internal autonomy in church affairs which was the price paid by the Byzantines for the abandonment by Bulgaria of its connection with the Church of Rome and its search for allies in western Europe.

A new spirit of cooperation prevailed between Bulgaria and Byzantium. Young Bulgarians were sent to Constantinople for education. Byzantine craftsmen were sent to Bulgaria to build churches and palaces. But Boris and his colleagues were well aware that Byzantine ideas could be as dangerous as Byzantine arms. A Greek-speaking church whose clergy in the last resort owed allegiance to the emperor in Constantinople could in a short time sap the self-confidence of the Bulgarian people and alienate those very groups in Bulgarian society whose support was essential. When in 885-886 a group of pupils of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, who had been sent by the Byzantine Church to evangelize Moravia, arrived in Bulgaria with liturgical books in Old Church Slavonic, Boris welcomed the opportunity to form in his kingdom a Slavonic Church, whose clergy would be native Bulgarians, who would preach in the language of the people, and who would neither fell in themselves nor inspire in others an overriding loyalty to the Byzantine Empire. Slavonic clergy were trained by Naum in north-eastern Bulgaria and above all by St. Clement in Macedonia, and liturgical and other works were translated into Old Church Slavonic under Boris' patronage.

Meanwhile the death of Basil I in 886 and the consequent deposition of Photius and the restoration of Ignatius to the Patriarchate reduced the immediate likelihood of direct Byzantine intervention in Bulgaria. In 889 Boris, who must by now have been in his sixties, abdicated in favor of his eldest son Vladimir or Rasate and entered a monastery. Vladimir, who had probably been kept too long in the background, was closely linked with those backward-looking elements in the Bulgarian ruling class who had revolted against Boris in 864. There was a violent swing against Boris'

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policy of building up an independent church without provoking the Byzantines and against the austerity which he had imposed upon the Bulgarian court. Some sort of steps seem to have been taken towards the formal restoration of paganism. There may also have been overtures made to the Pope. The whole policy which had

avoided open war with Byzantium for nearly sixty years, while Bulgaria transformed itself from a federation of tribes and clans into a centralized feudal state was in danger of being frustrated. The Byzantines could not have stood by while an anti-Christian and anti-imperial regime was installed at Pliska. Boris, who may have tried to exercise some kind of control over Vladimir from his monastery, emerged from his (monastic) cell in 893, rallied his old guard and, making the most of his immense personal moral authority ousted his son from power and had him blinded. In the delicate situation in which he found himself he convened a council of boyars, attended by provincial governors and high officers of state as well

as proto-Bulgar and Slav tribal leaders. He justified his action to them and obtained their agreement to accept his younger son Symeon as ruler. Symeon had received a Greek literary education in Constantinople and was at the time of his accession a monk in Bulgaria. He had probably been destined by his father for high

ecclesiastical office. His education had given him an intimate knowledge of Byzantine life and a deep hatred of the Byzantine aristocracy who had treated him contemptuously as *amiargos* - 'half-Greek'. And his years of contemplation in a monastery had given him a taste for action. Two other matters settled at the council of boyars in 893 represented the ruination of much of Boris' work. The capital was transferred from Pliska, which had many pagan and proto-Bulgar associations, to the new royal residence of Preslav. And Greek was replaced by Old Church Slavonic as the language of liturgy and teaching of the church and the language of internal administration of the state. At the same time a Slav archbishop was probably appointed.

The Byzantine government might have reacted sharply. But Leo VI and his advisers were probably glad to see the unpredictable Vladimir replaced by a brother whom they regarded as a Byzantine protégé. In any case Leo, though a learned man, prolific legislator and active reformer of Byzantine administration, had no taste for military matters, and worse still, no foreign policy. And he was under the influence of his father-in-law the *basileopator* Stylianos Zaoutzes, an able man who shared his lack of interest in foreign affairs and

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who was too ready to reward his supporters.

Symeon seems from the outset of his reign to have decided to reverse his father's policy of avoiding a confrontation with the Byzantine empire. He was aware of the opposition in many quarters in Bulgaria to what looked like weakness. And he calculated that unless the balance of power was changed, Bulgaria was bound to be

brought into the political orbit of Constantinople and to lose her freedom of action, whether or not she succeeded in maintaining an independent Slavonic Church. ...

...After Symeon's death a striking change takes place in Bulgaro-Byzantine relations. Thirty-three years of almost unbroken war are succeeded by forty years of peace. From challenging Byzantine power in the Balkans and seeking to take over the empire's role as the one fully legitimate Christian state, Bulgaria becomes a docile dependent of Byzantium. At the same time the Slavonic Christian culture initiated under Boris and encouraged by Symeon in spite of his overriding military preoccupations continues to develop and flourish. Bulgaria does not become a political province of Byzantium. ...

... In summer 867 Nicephorus accused (Tsar) Peter of having let the Magyars (Hungarians) pass through his country to attack the Empire - a transparent attempt to find a *casus belli* - and Sviatoslav (of Kiev) crossed the Danube into Bulgaria with 16,000 men. Bulgarian resistance was crushed and the Russians swept through the country between the Danube and the Balkan mountains. During the winter (Tsar) Peter - or his boyars, since the old King had suffered a stroke at the news of the Russian invasion - made the only move open to them and called on the Pechenegs, traditionally allies of Byzantium, to attack the Russians in the rear. This they did to such effect that Sviatoslav had to return in haste to save Kiev from capture. Then a dramatic change took place. Sviatoslav, incited by the treacherous patrician Kalokyras, conceived the project of attacking the empire itself through Bulgaria. He talked of establishing his capital at Little Preslav, the Bulgarian market town on the Danube, and extending his power as far south as he could. Much of this was idle dreaming. But Sviatoslav had immense resources of man-power and was a formidable enemy. Nicephorus realized at once that things were not going as he had planned. He hastily sent a high officer of state to Preslav to sign an alliance with Bulgaria against Kievan Rus' and to make arrangements for the common defense of the Balkans. While these negotiations were taking place, Tsar Peter died, on January 30, 969.

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was succeeded by his elder son Boris. ...

...War began again in 970 with the defeat at Arcadiopolis of a Russian invading force by Bardas Sclerus, the new emperor's brother-in-law, and its withdrawal into eastern Bulgaria. Tzimisces did not venture to pursue it, but waited until 971. ... A further series of battles and sieges, in which the fire-shooting ships of the (Byzantine) fleet played a large

part, forced the Russians to capitulate. Sviatoslav handed over all his prisoners, promised to leave Bulgaria forever, and asked for the former treaties between Kiev and Constantinople to be brought into force again. Tzimisces, who had lost many men in the hard-fought battles, agreed to the terms proposed. The Bulgarian Tsar Boris II was in the Byzantine camp. But neither he nor any other Bulgarian was consulted on the peace terms. The Bulgarian state was no longer recognized, and its former lands were treated as imperial territory. The Bulgarian royal treasure, including Symeon's crown, was taken to Constantinople, where Boris II formally abdicated. ...

...The western Bulgarian kingdom resisted Byzantine pressure for another half century.. The organization and administration of the country followed the pattern established by Boris and Symeon. But everything seems to have been on a smaller, more provincial scale. And though many churches and other buildings were constructed, Tsar Samuel's court at Sofia, Voden, Prespa or Ohrid was not a center of Slavonic culture comparable to Preslav. For a time Samuel was able even to extend his territory at the expense of Byzantium. John Tzimisces made no further moves against Bulgaria before his death in 976. The army was probably too busy establishing and maintaining law and order in the newly conquered provinces. His successor, the young emperor Basil II, now of age, was occupied for the first few years of his independent reign in dealing with the dangerous rebellion of Bardas Sclerus in Asia Minor. Samuel profited by making raids in all directions, and from 980 onwards drove southwards into the plain of Thessaly and besieged Larissa. In the end he captured it, helped by sympathisers within the city.

The shock produced by the fall of Larissa roused Basil II to action. For the rest of his life he dedicated himself with almost paranoid single-mindedness to the conquest of the Bulgarian successor state and the re-establishment of Byzantine power - and his own personal power - throughout the Balkan peninsula. There may have been deep psychological reasons for his sudden abandonment of the pleasures of

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Byzantine life to become a warrior-monk wholly devoted to the pursuit of power, but they were not the determining factor in the outcome. The Byzantine empire, prosperous and expanding, could not after all that had happened tolerate a Bulgarian state on its frontier. And a Bulgarian state based on the mountainous west of the country, far from the populous and fertile eastern provinces, a state which could only attack Constantinople and its neighborhood by dangerously lengthening its lines of communication, could not hold

out indefinitely against the full concentration of Byzantine military strength.

The war need not be recounted in all its picturesque detail. In any case gaps in our sources make it impossible to reconstruct all the campaigns. The Bulgarians had their victories. They caught Basil's army in a defile in 986 and nearly destroyed it. They even recaptured the old capitals of Preslav and Pliska during the following years. They took Dyrrhachium on the Adriatic coast and gained an outlet to the west.

These were the result of skilful use of the formidable peasant army which the Bulgarians could put in the field, and of the sympathy which they enjoyed from the Slavonic inhabitants of many of the regions which they conquered. They were also attributable to Basil's preoccupation first with the rebellion in the east, then with a threatened Russian attack. The former was crushed on the field of battle, the last evaded by diplomatic means, when Prince Vladimir of Kiev was baptized and received as bride the emperor's sister Anna. By 990 Basil was ready to deal with Bulgaria. Slowly but surely during the years the Bulgarians were driven back towards the center of their power in the high mountains of western Macedonia. Basil struck now from this direction, now from that. And he was successful in detaching from their allegiance several of the Bulgarian commanders opposing him. These he rewarded with high office and rich estates. Among them was the eunuch governor of Skopje, Romanus, son of Tsar Peter, the last living descendant of the dynasty of Khan Krum and Tsar Boris. He ended his days as a Byzantine patrician in command of the fortress of Abydos on the Dardanelles. These desertions became more and more frequent as Tsar Samuel lost control of strong point after strong point. Even his own daughter Miroslava went over to the Byzantines with her Armenian husband Ashot of Taron.

Side by side with this welcome for high-born deserters went increasing Byzantine brutality towards rank and file prisoners, military or civilian. In 1014 some 15,000 Bulgarian soldiers were captured after a

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desperate engagement in the upper Struma valley. Basil blinded 99 out of every 100 captured Bulgarians and left the hundredth man with one eye to guide his companions back to their master.

[This act earned Basil II the title *Boulgaroktonos*, which means "**Bulgar slayer**".]

When this ghastly cortege reached Ohrid the shock killed Tsar Samuel. In 1016 during a campaign in Macedonia Basil put out the eyes of every Bulgarian he found,

soldier or civilian. Medieval warfare was a bloody business (but no more so than modern warfare). But Byzantine rulers could take the long view and generally conducted their wars with an eye to the peace which would follow, when their erstwhile foes might become friends. The 'frightfulness' of the last years of the Bulgarian war is an indication that no settlement was hoped for nor wanted. Unconditional submission to the empire was to be the only outcome.

After Tsar Samuel's death the Bulgarian Kingdom began to disintegrate as its parts were cut off from one another by Byzantine advance and as various members of the royal family set themselves up as ephemeral local rulers. One after another they surrendered to Basil, to be rewarded with high office and grants of land. The last effective Tsar of Bulgaria, John Vladislav, who proudly entitled himself 'Emperor of the Bulgarians', fought desperately until he was murdered by an unknown assailant before the walls of Dyrrachium early in 1018. By later in the same year all was over. Basil received the surrender of Ohrid from the dowager queen Maria, widow of Tsar Samuel, and the last Bulgarian fortress of Pernik, west of Mount Vitosha, was delivered over by its courageous defender, the Bulgarian general Krakra. Isolated pockets of resistance probably held out in the mountains, necessitating operations by Basil in northern Greece, but the Bulgarian state no longer existed. Its territories had become Byzantine provinces, its citizens subjects of the emperor in Constantinople. ...

...In Bulgaria during the existence of the Bulgarian state a common nationality was evolved out of semi-pastoral a semi-tribal Turkic Bulgar horde, the various tribal principalities and ephemeral unions of the Slavs, the Romanised or Hellenised Thracians and Daco-Moesians and doubtless other elements too. The leaders of the revolt which led to the revival of an independent Bulgarian state were probably of Vlach (i.e., Romanised or Hellenised Thracian) origin. Once
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formed, Bulgarian nationality was immensely tougher and more durable than the pre-existing communities. It is significant that John Vladislav, the last ruler of independent Bulgaria before the Byzantine conquest, emphasizes in an inscription that he is 'Bulgarian by birth'. It was resistant to Byzantine absorption and later to Turkish conquest, and in the nineteenth century formed the foundation upon which the modern Bulgarian nation-state was built." (48)

The Bulgarians were the first Slavic people to accept Byzantine Christianity as their national religion. Though Sts.

Cyril and Methodius may or may not have been of Slavic origin, they were certainly Byzantine subjects. As we have said in another place, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, "the apostles to the Slavs", developed the Old Church Slavonic language, based on a language similar to Old Bulgarian but containing words from Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac as well as calques from the above languages along with neologisms. In general Sts. Cyril and Methodius attempted to use Slavonic words whenever possible. Seeing that Slavonic contained many sounds for which the Greek and Latin alphabets had no letters to represent, they developed the *Glagolitic* alphabet in order to write Slavonic, and later, most likely, the alphabet which still bears the name of St. Cyril, known as the *Cyrillic*, which is simpler than the Glagolitic and contains letters taken directly from the Greek and Roman alphabets, though at times given a distinct sound value. The Cyrillic alphabet also contains two Hebrew letters, i.e., *shin* and *tzadik*, used to represent sounds which do not exist in either Latin nor Greek. Interestingly, some scholars attribute the use of Hebrew letters in the Cyrillic alphabet to the influence of the

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Khazars. The Khazars were Jewish by religion (see The Thirteenth Tribe by Arthur Koestler), used Hebrew as their liturgical language, and wrote their own Turkic language using Hebrew letters. However, taking into account the South Slav origin of Church Slavonic and the fact that Sts. Cyril and Methodius, as priests, must have had some familiarity with the Hebrew language - and certainly the Hebrew alphabet - it seems unlikely to me that

the use of the Hebrew letters *shin* and *tzadik* in the Cyrillic alphabet can be attributed to the influence of the Khazars, who were in contact with the East Slavs, but not with the South Slavs. No doubt Sts. Cyril and Methodius, where this was possible, found it simpler to borrow Hebrew letters to represent sounds not found in Latin nor Greek than to invent new letters. Today the Cyrillic alphabet is used to write Bulgarian, Russian, Serbian, Ukrainian and Belarussian.

The Bulgarians were the first Slavic people to adopt Byzantine Christianity as their national religion (some Serbs dispute this), certainly the first to adopt Old Church Slavonic as their liturgical language and language of religion in general. It was Bulgaria which spread the use of the Cyrillic alphabet and the Old Church Slavonic language. It was from Bulgaria, and not directly from Byzantium, the Kievan Rus' received the Cyrillic alphabet and the Old Church Slavonic language. The mother of Sts. Boris and Gleb was Bulgarian. At various places we shall go into more detail concerning all this.

Says Robert Browning:

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"Through the conversion of Prince Vladimir of Kiev ("The Russian Viking") was a stroke of Byzantine diplomacy whose immediate purpose may have been strategic, the Christianizing of (Kievan) Russia and the drawing of that great country into the orbit of Mediterranean and European civilization was largely the work, either directly or through their writings, of men from Bulgaria. And the whole pattern of (Kievan) Russian public life was strongly influenced by Bulgarian models. The Princes of Kiev, and later the Princes of Muscovy, belonged to the Byzantine Commonwealth, to use Obolensky's phrase. But politically, in their literary cultures, and in the details of their everyday life, the Russians maintained a distance and independence which

had been foreshadowed by the Bulgaria of (Tsars) Boris and Symeon, whose literature and ideas they took over and made their own." (49)

Note Francis Dvornik:

"As concerns the ecclesiastical organization of the Kievan Church, it seems that a compromise was reached by establishing the (Byzantine) Archbishop of Cherson (Crimea) as a kind of supervisor of the young (Kievan) Russian Church. This state of affairs lasted until the reign of Yaroslav the Wise (1036-1054), on whose initiative Kiev was raised to metropolitan status. As Dimitri Obolensky suggested, it is possible that, according to an agreement concluded by the (Kievan) Russians with the Byzantines - probably under Yaroslav the Wise - the metropolitan see of Kiev was to be held alternately by (Byzantine) Greek and (Kievan) Russian prelates. Should a native be elected, he must be consecrated by the Patriarch of Constantinople.

Although the methods adopted by Vladimir ("The Russian Viking") to implant Christianity were forceful, he encountered serious opposition only in Novgorod. It seems that the introduction of the Slavonic liturgy helped considerably in spreading the new faith across the (Kievan) Russian lands. It is not yet quite clear how and by whom Slavonic liturgy and Slavic letters were brought to Kievan Russia. In any case, Bulgarian priests were probably the most zealous propagators of Slavic letters, but we do not know when the first Slavic priests reached Kiev from Bulgaria. It was probably before the destruction of the First Bulgarian Empire by Basil II [known as *Boulgaroktonos*, i.e., "The Bulgar Slayer"] (1018). It is possible that priests from Bulgaria accompanied Sviatoslav's army on its return to Kiev from Bulgaria in 972, after its
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defeat by the Byzantines.

Following the destruction of the First Bulgarian Empire, the exodus to Kiev of Slavic priests from their cultural centers must have increased considerably. The refugees brought with them not only Slavic liturgical books, but all the literary achievements of Slavic schools under Tsar Symeon (893-927), and Tsar Peter (927-989). It was a great contribution to the cultural development of the Kievan state. The Byzantines appear to have favored this exodus because, in this way, they were rid of a discontented element liable to threaten their rule in the Bulgarian provinces. The Patriarchs of Constantinople, though trying to reintroduce the Greek liturgy into Bulgaria, permitted the spread of Slavonic liturgy in Kiev, which was such a great distance from Byzantium.

These works brought by Bulgarian refugees were written in a language based on a Macedonian dialect which, however, thanks to the philological genius of St. Cyril and also of St. Methodius, became the official language of the Bulgarian Church and of the Bulgarian intellectual elite. This language imported from the Balkans also became the language of the Russian Church, and the literary language of the Russian intellectuals.”
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Both because of its geographical position and because it had been the first Slavic nation to embrace Byzantine Christianity and the Byzantine liturgy in its Old Church Slavonic recension, Bulgaria served as a half-way house between Byzantium and Kievan Rus'. Thus, some knowledge of Bulgaria is a must for anyone who wishes to study Kievan Rus'. The Byzantine heritage of Kievan Rus' and later of Russia and Ukraine is universally accepted, but not so well-known is the fact that said Byzantine heritage very largely reached Kievan Rus' by way of Bulgaria, which served as geographic half-way house, and also as a transmitter of the culture of Greek Byzantium to Slavic Kievan Rus'; thus, by way of Bulgaria, Kievan Rus' was able to receive the heritage of

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Byzantium in a form which it could much more easily assimilate and adapt to its own culture. Remember, Old Church Slavonic is closer to Old Bulgarian than to any other language.

As was said above, *Church Slavonic* is used as the liturgical language of the Russian Orthodox Church, The Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Serbian Orthodox Church. Obviously, *Church Slavonic* has had a considerable influence on the development of Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian as literary languages.

Says Riccardo Picchio concerning Church Slavonic:

"The term "Church Slavonic" or "Church Slavic" defines the supranational linguistic medium used for centuries in a large portion of the Slavic world to produce texts connected mostly, though not exclusively, with religious life and traditions of the Orthodox Slavs. ...

..."Church Slavonic/Church Slavic" or simply "Slavonic/Slavic" together serve with "Old Slavonic/Old Slavic" and "Old Bulgarian" (which is more controversial) are terms whose equivalent in various languages are frequently used by contemporary Slavists. "Old Church Slavonic/Old Church Slavic (OCS)" usually refers to an archaic and relatively unified type of language, documented by an early corpus of texts, to distinguish it from later and more differentiated forms of Church Slavonic (CS). Terms patterned after Latin formulae such as *lingua slovenica*, *slavonica*, *slavica*, *slavica antiqua*, *slavica ecclesiastica*, *paleoslavica* or *paleoslovenica* are also in use in various modern languages. ...

...One of the first conspicuous products of the new philological school among the Slavs was the Latin work by the Czech scholar Josef Dobrovsky, *Institutiones linguae slavica dialecti veteris* (Vienna 1822). Dobrovsky's great authority in Slavic studies was unanimously recognized. Subsequent generations of Slavists revered him as the "father of Slavic philology". His *Institutiones* represent an important point of departure for discussions concerning such crucial questions as (1) the individuality and historical continuity of CS as a supranational language; (2) the individuality of OCS as an early stage of CS; (3) OCS as an early koine; (4) OCS as the expression of

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particular linguistic traditions; (5) the relation of either CS or OCS, or both, to the modern Slavic languages.

Dobrovsky's main concern was the description of the oldest type, or "dialect" (*dialectus vetus*), of CS. His definition of CS itself, however, was less precise.

The title of his book refers to a general *lingua slavica*. This term appears to be synonymous with *lingua slavonica* and *lingua slavica ecclesiastica*. At the beginning of *Institutiones*, on the other hand, we find a terminological formula which also refers to a general interpretation of literary Slavic: "*Sermo slavenicus, retius slavonicus aut slovenicus, sensu latissimo sumptus*". The subtitle explains that the oldest type of *lingua slavica* is still preserved in the sacred books of the Slavs of "the Greek rite" as well as among the users of the "Glagolitic liturgy in Latin (id est, Catholic) Dalmatia: "... uae quum apud Russos, Serbos aliosque ritus graeci, tum apud Dalmatas Glagolitas

Ritus latini Slavos in ibris sacris obtinet". Thus, what we call CS today was seen by Dobrovsky mainly as a surviving documentation of what we call OCS. This can be explained by the fact that *Institutiones* was intended more as a study on the origin of Slavic "sared books" than as a description of its historical development. According to Dobrovsky, the main characterizing feature of *lingua slavica's* first codification derived from its Bulgaro-Serbo-Macedonian basis. ...

...From the very beginning of the modern discussion on the old language of the Orthodox Slavs, the majority of scholars were more directly interested in its origin and early codification than in its later development. Various reasons may explain this attitude. Certainly the desire of the national philological schools to prove the antiquity of their national linguistic traditions played an important role. In addition to this, one should consider the impact on Slavic studies of historical and comparative linguistics, particularly in light of the recently discovered Indo-European common heritage. Many Slavists until now have tried either to trace the origin of Slavic literature back to a period prior to the formation of other European literatures or to get as close as possible to an archaic linguistic stage that would place Slavic among the "mother languages" of the Western tradition.

As a result of this prevailing interest, the linguistic patrimony of CS has been identified in practice with that of OCS alone. Furthermore, doubts
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have been expressed about the very existence of CS as an autonomous medium during the centuries that followed the decline of an allegedly united system of OCS norms. Whereas the study of OCS has acquired a prestige comparable to that of the classical languages, attempts have been made to reduce the later history of CS to that of relics gradually incorporated into the national languages.

OCS can be described as a religious language the functional individuality of which is defined on the basis of a selected "Corpus" of written documents according to the principles of comparative and historical linguistics. The documents currently used as the most authoritative source of information date from the tenth to the eleventh century. It is assumed, however, that the textual material of the Corpus was originally produced during or shortly after the activity of the holy brothers Constantine (St. Cyril) and Methodius who led the first Byzantine mission among Central European Slavs in the ninth century. Linguistic investigation has shown that at that time the

differentiation of Slavic dialects from each other had not yet produced communications barriers within the entire European Slavic-speaking community. This has convinced modern scholar that the "Cyrillo-Methodian language" was taken as a point of departure for the investigation of even older phases in the common history of Early Slavic. In fact, the assumption that the language used by the "Apostles to the Slavs" was understood by Slavic speakers throughout the Slavic world can be substantiated with historical evidence.

(Sts.) Constantine and Methodius were sent to preach among the Moravian Slavs in 862-863 at the request of Prince Rastislav (or *Rostislav* of Great Moravia. Like other Slavic leaders in central Europe, this prince was under the political and spiritual influence of both the Roman Church and the German-dominated Western Empire. By accepting his invitation, the Eastern administration engaged in a delicate action aimed at the creation of a Byzantine bridgehead in Central Europe. Even if it is not clear whether the Cyrillo-Methodian mission was meant as an openly hostile act, it appears that Constantine's concern was to counterbalance Western attempts to extend Latin influence to the Balkans. In the ninth century the Christianization of the Slavs was seen as a far-reaching operation aimed at the annexation of East European territories that had never been included in the Roman Empire and the possessions of its Christian heirs. The two Christian empires were preparing for a new type of eastward expansion beyond a line that

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stretched from the Baltic and North Sea to the Black Sea and the Danube. Considering this political background it is reasonable to believe that, before sending missionaries to Moravia, Constantinople had carried out a thorough linguistic inquiry. The selection of agents familiar with the Slavic dialects of Macedonia indicates that the Slavic tongue was believed to be sufficiently uniform to allow direct communication between Balkan Slavs and Slavic-speaking Central Europeans. To what extent, however, can we identify the linguistic medium used by Constantine and Methodius with the type of written Slavic which is documented in codices produced more than one hundred years after the Moravian mission?

To answer that question, we must take into account the possibility of substantial changes not only in the linguistic environment reflected by these texts but also in the writing techniques of their authors, scribes and compilers. If we believe that our oldest Slavic documents preserve the basic linguistic features of texts originally composed at the time of Constantine and Methodius, we can use these documents to

reconstruct the history of OCS from its very beginning. Otherwise we must consider the possibility that the so-called Old Church Slavonic Corpus reflects nothing but a stage in the historical development of a medium the actual origin of which would remain undescribed.

It is important to ascertain whether the language used in the oldest Slavic texts reflected any particular spoken usage and, on the other hand, whether it represented a kind of cultural koine patterned after the models of authoritative standards such as Christian Latin and Greek.

What is known about the Cyrillo-Methodian mission justifies hypotheses concerning the impact of church and state policies on the status of Slavic. According to the *Life of Constantine* (preserved in about fifty codices, the oldest of which dates from the fifteenth century), the *Life of Methodius* (fifteen codices, the oldest dating from the twelfth-thirteenth century) and other sources, both the holy brothers translated sacred texts and wrote works in Slavic. Following their example, the members of a steadily growing Cyrillo-Methodian community established a written tradition in what became eventually the official language of a large portion of Eastern Christianity. It was Byzantium that organized the first Slavic mission to Great Moravia. This fact alone, however, should not make us believe that the early formation of a Slavic religious language was due only to the Byzantine language policy. Most of the missionary activity in the Slavic language that
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developed from the work of Constantine and Methodius was actually conducted under the guidance of the Roman Church.

After encountering some difficulties in their relations with previously established Latin missions at the beginning of their activity in Moravia, and shortly after in Pannonia, Constantine and Methodius sought formal recognition from the Holy See. Constantine died in Rome in 869. Methodius then became a papal envoy and a Roman-appointed bishop. Until his death in 885, all the major disputes concerning the status of Slavic took place within the limits of Roman jurisdiction. Only after the final German onslaught against Methodius' successors and the ensuing Magyar invasion of Pannonia and a part of Great Moravia did the supporters of Slavic as an official language of the Christian Church establish new centers outside the Roman-dominated territory.

The most successful of these centers flourished in Bulgaria. Their prestige spread among the Christian Slavs of the neighboring lands thanks to the continuators of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition such as Kliment of Ochrid and Naum, a central figure in the so-

called "librarian school of Preslav". The Bulgarian state had accepted baptism from Constantinople around 864 after several years of hesitation between Constantinople and the West. Remaining faithful to the political line of prince Boris, the first Christian ruler of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian princes tried consistently especially at the time of Simeon (Tsar 917-927) to secure their autonomy from Constantinople. To this end, they established a church organization which used Slavic as a liturgical language. The First Bulgarian Empire (ninth to early eleventh century) became then the cradle of a Slavic literature in the religious language whose prestige had been established by Constantine and Methodius.

In our study of the formation and early development of a Slavic religious language we should consider, therefore, the following major extralinguistic factors: (1) the ninth-century language policy of the Byzantine church and state; (2) the ninth-century language policy of the Roman Church; (3) The ninth-eleventh-century language policy of the Bulgarian state.

The first two of these factors refer to the years when OCS was created and first codified. The third, that is, "Old Bulgarian" factor refers to a later period. If we believe that an original "Byzantino-Roman" type of OCS established by Constantine and Methodius was preserved substantially unchanged by its
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propagators in Bulgaria, the concept of OCS might be identified, in a sense, with that of "Old Bulgarian". To support this identification one should emphasize the fact that the earliest codification of OCS was the work of missionaries whose direct experience with the Slavic tongue was based on Macedonian dialects and whose preparatory work (establishment of a writing system, basic translations, etc.) was carried out before their departure from Moravia. If the Macedonian dialects known to Constantine and Methodius are considered a part of "Old Bulgarian", OCS should be seen as a cultural standard originally established on the basis of ninth-century "Old Bulgarian" and brought to higher perfection during the First Bulgarian Empire. The Roman influence would be considered no more than a parenthesis.

Serious objections can be raised against such a characterization of OCS. The "Old Bulgarian" thesis can be counterbalanced by an "Old Macedonian" one, especially if one considers the texts produced in Ochrid and the surrounding Macedonian territories to be included in the First Bulgarian Empire. Furthermoe, neither the "Old Bulgarian" nor the "Old Macedonian" thesis would prove correct if the period until the

diaspora that followed Methodius' death in 885 represented more than a simple parenthesis in the process of the codification of OCS.

In the early "Byzantino-Roman", "pre-Bulgarian" period, Constantine and Methodius began their activity in Great Moravia, which included Czech, Moravian, Sorbian and Slovak territories and was ruled by Rastislav and his successor Svatopluk of the Mojmir dynasty. They were also active in Pannonia, which included Slovene territories, at the invitation of Kocel (Kochel), the son of Pribina, a former ruler of Nitra (in Slovak territory) and a feudal vassal of King Louis the German. Since native speakers of these regions are believed to have participated in the activity of the mission, their contribution to the production of Slavonic texts must be considered. This consideration justifies other "national" theses in addition to the "Old Bulgarian" and "Old Macedonian" ones. Besides the Pannonian thesis, which we have mentioned in connection with Kopitar's response to Dobrovsky's *Institutiones*, there is room in such an ideological framework for "Old Moravian", general "West Slavic", and "Latino-Slavic" theses. The essence of the question seems to lie in the relationship between genetic and broader descriptive approaches. If one views the functional characteristics of the Cyrillo-Methodian language as an early standard

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and considers them more important than the identification of the single components of the standard-producing process, then the image of OCS as a supradialectical koine might supersede that of a nationally marked proto-language.

The study of the first codified cultural language of the Slavs has been hampered by a widespread tendency to use, for the ninth century, concepts which actually developed in a later period. This applies in particular to (1) the use of national or nationalistic criteria in the evaluation of events that took place prior to the formation of national traditions, and (2) the interpretation of ninth-century Roman-Byzantine rivalry as if it resulted from the same political and dogmatic controversies which divided Western Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy in a later age.

In the spirit of later Orthodox Slavic polemics against the Latin Church it has been assumed that, while Constantinople supported "national" tongues including Slavic, the Roman Church's policy was to insist on the exclusive use of Latin. This assumption, however, cannot be substantiated. In fact, both the Roman and the Byzantine churches accepted the use of vernacular for *apostolic* purposes, that is for the explanation of Christian doctrine to the illiterate and

in general to those who did not understand Latin, Greek or another language already established in the church tradition (as for example Syriac or Armenian).

This has been a traditional practice ever since the first centuries of Christianity. As far as the Latin church was concerned, its validity had been confirmed in the ninth century, with special reference to both Romance and German vernaculars (*rustica romana lingua vel thiotisca*"), since the Episcopal Council of Tours in 813. According to the decisions approved at Tours, it was the Latin bishops' duty to have homilies translated into the simple people's language so that everyone might understand a Christian preacher ("*... quo facilius cuncti possint intellegere quae dicentur*"). What was not accepted was the use of the vernacular *the liturgy*. This basic distinction between *apostolic* and *liturgical* use of a medium other than a sacred language is emphasized in the popes' letters to Methodius.

Unfortunately we cannot reconstruct all aspects of the discussions between the Holy See and the "the surviving documents that the popes' attitude was not against the use of the Slavonic language as represented by the texts composed by Constantine and his school. In his epistle *Industria tua* of June, 880, Pope John VIII wrote: "*... Litteras denique sclaviniscas a Constantino*
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quondam philosopho repertas, quibus Deo laudes debite resonant, iure laudemus. The fact that only Hebrew Practically reduced to a few words in citations), Latin and Greek were used in the celebration of the liturgical mysteries should not have prevented anyone - as Pope John VIII wrote in the same document - from using other languages in the Christian religious practice: "*... neque enim tribus tantum, sed omnibus linguis Dominum laudare auctoritate sacra monemur. ...*" As we read in a *Communitorium* to papal envoys to the Slavic lands, the basic principle was to use Slavic so that anyone, including those who did not understand Latin, could understand the preaching: "*... ad edificationem eorum qui non intelligent. ...*" The similarity of this formula with the words used at the Council of Tours in 813 ("*... quo facilius cuncti possim intellegere...*") should not escape the Slavist's attention.

Only a few exceptions were raised to the generally accepted use of the vernacular. The recourse to Slavic was recommended to help the simple people understand the Christian rite. The Gospel could be explained in the vernacular. Only the celebration of the mysteries was to be performed in Latin or Greek. It is difficult to establish whether Methodius intentionally violated this rule or whether his decision to celebrate the Mass

in Slavic was due to some obscurity in the Holy See's instructions or to misinterpretation by the Roman authorities because of partisan reports from the local Latino-German clergy. The Roman church's last message to Methodius' community was, in any case, clearly phrased: "... *Missas et sacratissima illa ministerial, quae Sclavorum lingua idem Methodius celebrare praesumsit...ne aliquot modo praesumatur penitusse interdicat. ...*"

...The first controversy on the status and function of Church Slavonic reflected a complex political situation. The "Roman" language policy was not dictated from the Curia only. In ninth-century Central Europe, "Roman" Christian communities included both Germans and Slavs. The geographic range of settlements was still changing. The Magyar raids added uncertainty to the situation. Because of this, general principles had to be adapted to particular circumstances. Methodius' language policy was probably the result of a compromise between adherence to general principles and a pragmatic response to changing political trends. ...

...Concerning the language of the texts it should be
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noted that, while the majority of OCS forms reflect a South Slavic usage of the Balkan area, certain documents contain also West Slavic and non-Balkan South Slavic forms. ...

...A major external characteristic of the OCS) Corpus' documents regards their script. Constantine (St. Cyril of Salonika) is credited with creating the first Slavic alphabet. Unfortunately there is no direct documentation of this achievement. In spite of many ingenious hypotheses we do not really know what alphabet he might have used. The Corpus does not provide an unambiguous answer. Some codices are in a script which is called "Cyrillic" in honor of St. Cyril. This name is certainly of a late origin. Other codices are written in the so-called *glagolica* or "Glagolitic script". This is a relatively recent term connected with the verb *glagolati* = "to speak", or "to say". It was used in some sixteenth-century Latin documents (*scriptura glagolitica, litterae glagoliticae, alphabetum glagoliticum*) to define the script employed by the so-called *Glagolitae* (in later Croatian *glagoljasje*) on the Dalmatian Coast in their Church Slavonic religious texts. In Slavic studies, the term "Glagolitic" became current only in the nineteenth century.

It is generally assumed that Constantine "invented" the *glagolitica*, or at least its prototype, by combining graphs taken from the Byzantine minuscule, the Samaritan and Gothic scripts, and possibly other

models. But what are the historical relations between Glagolitic and Cyrillic? Was Glagolitic created before or after Cyrillic? Or did the two scripts develop simultaneously? And what conclusions can be drawn from the fact that the oldest Church Slavonic documents are written in two alphabets?

Probably a prototype of Cyrillic (alphabet) existed even before the Moravian mission and consisted of combinations of Greek letters (in order) to render Slavic terms in the context of Greek bureaucratic documents. This empirical system was apparently replaced by a special alphabet, the *glagolitica*, in connection with the apostolic activity in Moravia. When the refugees from Moravia settled in Bulgaria they most likely felt the need to use a graphic system closer to Greek in order to make the training of new scribes easier and to comply with the rules of Byzantine Slavic scriptoria. Such a new system was probably developed by Kliment and his school by adapting special signs to the letters of the Greek uncial. To this transformed Greek alphabet, which was to remain a feature of Slavic religious literature within the Byzantine Commonwealth, (2752)

the members of the Cyrillic-Methodian Church subsequently gave the name "Cyrillic" to underline its orthodoxy and to honor the holy founder of their Church.

...
...The morphology of OCS also shows features in the declension of nouns (preservation of the dual [number, along with singular and plural; in this respect, OCS agrees with Sanskrit]) and in the verb system (preservation of the aorist, imperfect and supine, and periphrastic forms for the future [once again, in this respect OCS agrees with Sanskrit]) which are generally interpreted as evidence of its closeness to Common Slavic (and also to the original Indo-European language).

The attempt of linguistic science to prove by means of descriptive generalization of the compactness of OCS as a system (and its dependence on Common Slavic patterns) becomes a more difficult task when syntax and vocabulary are considered. Some linguists insist on the conservative character of the OCS sentence - a fact which is implicitly intended to prove the language's united structure by identifying in it the same general features that characterized the Indo-European sentence. In particular, the following factors are taken into consideration: (1) OCS preserved the Indo-European type of grammatical coordination and government; (2) because of its synthetic structure, OCS was characterized by the use of prepositionless government; (3) its rich system of inflection resulted in a free, grammatically unmarked word-order; (4) in

OCS as in Indo-European the subject preceded the predicate and words elucidating the main parts of the sentence followed the sentence's key-word. It remains to be seen, however, to what extent these general features should be considered distinctive of OCS as an historically definable linguistic entity and not as features common to the Slavic linguistic community.

The syntax of OCS, as we know it from mostly translated texts, is clearly influenced by other languages which serve it as models, such as Greek (especially in its Biblical variant containing Hebrew [and in the Gospel, *Injil* or New Testament, Aramaic] calques) and to a much lesser extent Latin. Thus the use of the infinitive with *eko/jako* is modeled on *oste*. It should be noted furthermore that some syntactical patterns might have developed in OCS under the impact of stylistic clichés. This makes their classification difficult, especially if we were to separate their study from that of the extralinguistic factors which conditioned their use in the texts.

Similar considerations may apply to the vocabulary
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of OCS, which contains Slavic regionalisms, loan words and calques from (Aramaic and) Hebrew (through Greek), Greek, Latin, and also Germanic. These features are connected with the changing historical conditions in which OCS texts were produced.

The general picture of OCS as a uniform language becomes even less clear if we concentrate on some patterns and trends documented by texts of marked local origin. Even within the limits of the OCS Corpus (which is termed a "Canon" to underline its model-establishing authority) both linguists and philologists may perceive the unity of OCS as an over-generalization. It is worth noting that, to define the local variants of the "OCS standard", Slavic linguists have recourse to the term *redaction* (or *recension*), which does not express a linguistic concept and belongs actually to the tradition of philology. This formal "confusion" or "fusion" of terms and concepts confirms on the practical level the inevitable complementarity of the linguistic and philological approaches.

By "national" or "local" redactions (recensions) of OCS most Slavists mean certain linguistic features deviating from what is believed to be the "norm" of the OCS "Canon". These "deviations" represent from the philological viewpoint particular ways of writing, or composing texts (Latin *redactio* from *redigo* = "to reduce", to "bring together", to "assemble" [a text]). On the basis of the textual evidence provided by locally marked redactions it is possible to reconstruct linguistically certain general characteristics of what

might have been the linguistic habit of the writers and scribes. ...

...The history of Church Slavonic (CS) during the long "post-OCS period" is very complex. This is why neither a consistent methodology nor a systematic organization of the research has been agreed upon by Slavic scholars. There is no doubt that the basic structures of the Slavonic religious language first established in the ninth to eleventh centuries survived until the modern ages. What remains to be defined are the limits and the cultural significance of this survival.

CS can be described in two ways: (1) as an isolated entity artificially preserved by the Orthodox Church in a cultural environment dominated by the rise of the Slavic national languages; (2) as an authoritative supranational medium coexisting with these languages and affecting their formation. Convincing arguments can be used in support of both interpretations. This suggests that the term "Church

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Slavonic" requires further conceptual clarification.

It should always be remembered that "Church Slavonic" is a conventional term created by modern scholarship. One should not take it as proof that the language to which it refers served exclusively ecclesiastical purposes. Nor does the related concept of "church culture" necessarily apply to activities within the church organization alone. It may well refer to a much larger environment, namely an entire Christian society which - as it appears to be the case with the Orthodox Slavic world - accepted the church's guidance in almost every aspect of cultural life. It seems reasonable to believe, therefore, that the above mentioned interpretations of CS, as a "special" language of the church, and as an authoritative medium affecting the linguistic development of the surrounding society do not exclude one another.

Thus, a major source of confusion appears to lie in the ambiguity of the concept "church culture" contained in the term "Church Slavonic language". To eliminate the ambiguity we might use different terms for defining on the one hand the "ecclesiastic" or liturgical function of this language and its broader function within the various national communities of the South and East Slavic world on the other hand. We may use the terms "Church Slavonic" or "Liturgical Church Slavonic", narrowly to define the type of language used in the former function, and "Orthodox Slavonic" for the type of language which performed the latter function.

The term "Orthodox Slavonic" used for the supranational medium that became a component of the linguistic patrimony of various national traditions from

the Balkans to the Russian lands would emphasize the supranational unity of the Orthodox Slavic spiritual community. This community can be termed *Slavia Orthodoxa* or "Orthodox Slavdom". Its religious, political and sociolinguistic traditions were distinct from those of *Slavia Romana* or "Roman Slavdom", which included those Slavs who were in the cultural sphere of Latin and Germanic Europe dominated by the Roman (Catholic) Church.

It would be a mistake to consider the historical function of *Slavia Orthodoxa* in opposition to that of local national societies and their linguistic communities. Both national and supranational trends characterized the cultural life of the Orthodox Slavs in the medieval and pre-modern period until the consolidation of the Slavic national states. It was precisely the coexistence of national and supranational components in this part of the Slavic world that made
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possible the integration of local and "Orthodox Slavonic" linguistic elements. The symbiosis of these two elements should be studied together with the development of national languages and with that of Orthodox Slavonic in its function as a supranational medium.

The functional unity of liturgical CS was preserved for several centuries due to the authority of the Slavonic texts contained in the "church books". These texts were revered as signs of the revealed Christian truth. Any alteration of their established linguistic form implied the risk of distorting their true message. Linguistic correctness became therefore synonymous with Gospel (Injil) truth, or, in a slightly broader sense, truth according to the "church books". It should be remembered, furthermore, that the expression "church books" (*srkovnye knjigy*, and the corresponding forms in the "redactions" of CS) referred to both the *books (Biblia)* and the *letters (grammata, graphe)*. The conservation of the holy language was therefore equated with the conservation of the Holy *Writ*, or *Scripture*.

Apparently, the main inconvenience of this identification of liturgical CS with its written expression consisted in the merely textual, that is, external and empirical concern for the "sacred language" to the detriment of its intrinsic, or properly linguistic characteristics. This is probably one of the reasons why modern Slavists have not been able to define the linguistic individuality of CS, and why the methods of Slavic philology and Slavic linguistics have not been harmoniously combined in this particular field of research. It should be noted, however, that the urgency of the "linguistic problem" of

CS did not always escape the attention of medieval and early-modern Slavic theoreticians. We might reach a better understanding of this question if more studies were devoted to the history of pre-modern Slavic linguistic thought. Nevertheless, the relatively limited number of writings already examined in this connection can provide us with basic information concerning the linguistic conception of Orthodox Slavdom.

Two works of different character and scope are particularly important for our understanding of how the sacred language of the Slavic "books" was conceived of by the heirs of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition during the late Middle Ages. The oldest of them, a short (about eighty-five lines) "Apology" or "Defense" of *The Slavic Letters* by a certain "monk Hrabr", may have been originally composed during the First Bulgarian
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Empire, but the manuscript documentation of the text that we know goes back to the fourteenth century. The other work, by far the most important, is a large treatise (seventy-two folios = 144 pages) *On the Letters* written at the beginning of the fifteenth century in Serbia by Konstantin Kostenechki, a refugee from the Turkish occupied territories of the Second Bulgarian Empire.

These two documents bear witness to the continuous and widespread concern for the prestige and preservation of the Slavonic sacred language in medieval Bulgaria, Serbia, and, indirectly, the Russian lands. Hrabr's polemical defense of the Cyrillo-Methodian language, the liturgical adequacy of which was questioned by the Greek clergy, is reminiscent of similar controversies that had taken place in the late ninth century in the Slavic territories under Roman (Catholic ecclesiastical) jurisdiction. Kostenechki's treatise, on the contrary, centers on the motif of Greco-Slavic spiritual unity. It is based on a much more mature awareness of the function of CS as the sacred language of a large Orthodox Slavic community which included, besides the South Slavic Churches, the most authoritative ecclesiastical centers of the Russian lands. Kostenechki's linguistic theories are typical of the Byzantine-Slavic symbiosis which was proclaimed at that time as a spiritual ideal by the Hesychastic movement. Hesychasm, which represented a mystical interpretation of the relation between the human and the divine, had been the official doctrine of the Orthodox Church since 1351 AD. Its practical goal as a movement directed by well trained monk-scholars was the correction of errors and deviations.

Before the Turkish conquest the main center of Slavic Hesychasm was in Trnovo, the capital of the

Second Bulgarian Empire. In the Monastery of the Holy Trinity of Trnovo, Evtimij, the Bulgarian patriarch from 1375 to 1392, had started a renowned school whose philological activity is known as the "correction of the books" (in Russian *ispravlenie knig*). As a product of this school, Kostenechki engaged in similar activities in the Serbian despotate under the rule of Stefan Lazarevich. His treatise represents the most significant document of late medieval linguistic thought among the Orthodox Slavs.

The essence of this linguistic thought consisted in the identification of the linguistic sign with the graphic sign. Since the sacred language was seen as the instrument of divine revelation, no distinction was admitted between the physical and the spiritual aspects of the revealed signs. The most typical formulations of
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this thesis appear to derive from the general semiotic theory of Hesychastic theology. The Hesychastic viewpoint, which had been vigorously upheld by St. Gregory Palamas against Barlaam of Calabria in the middle of the fourteenth century, was based on the interpretation of the (Mount) Tabor light as belonging to the divine nature of Christ. The revelation of the divine through the supreme sign of the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor implied not only a knowledge (*gnosis*) of God but a union (*henosis*) with God. In a similar way all revealed signs, including the graphic signs of the Scripture, were not only symbols of the truth but components of the truth. Graphic signs, therefore, were not seen as carriers of the language, but rather as the language itself.

The crucial aspect of this theory consisted in the vision of language as a coherent system of signs whose general referent is placed above human comprehension. This implied a distinction between the perfect, or divine language of revelation and the imperfect, or human language. Consequently, the main concern of the "corrector of the books" was to purge the Slavonic scriptural language from the corruptions introduced in the use of its perfect graphic-grammatical system by imperfect, that is, human linguistic habits. The observance of a perfect way of writing, *id est*, the orthography, became in this way a vital instrument for the preservation of perfect doctrine, *id est*, Orthodoxy.

In the course of human history the divine nature of the scriptural language had expressed itself in different ways which were, by dogmatic definition, equally true. As far as the linguistic signs were concerned, the fact that the Scripture had been "translated" from Hebrew (and Aramaic) into Greek and from Greek into Slavonic implied a difference only from the limited human point of view. Beyond the seeming

diversity of these signs, the unity of the Divine Word remained unchanged. But how could the *historical* aspects of this equivalent of the Pentecostal miracle be repeated with full substantial identity? The answer to this question resided in the interpretation of the activity of the revealers of language, the discoverers of new signs, as inspired bearers of the Divine Word. As to the sacred language of the "Slavonic books", their inspired discoverers were identified with St. Cyril and the "wondrous men" of his school.

A practical conclusion had to be drawn from this historic-theological conception: to preserve the purity of the Slavonic sacred language one ought to restore its original form according to the teaching of the
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Slavic Apostles (Sts. Cyril and Methodius). This task required that this revealed language be concretely defined. Kostenechki's solution of this problem is very interesting not only because it seems to synthesize crucial Orthodox ideas concerning the nature and function of the sacred language but also because it was based on the observation of linguistic trends and conflicts at a time when the prestige of Russian (Orthodox) Christianity was overshadowing that of the Balkan Churches. In Kostenechki's view all local usages were corrupt. The "true language" was neither "Bulgarian" nor "Serbian", nor could it be identified with any other local tradition. Kostenechki was ready to accept the thesis according to which the "wondrous men" had originally based their codification on "the most beautiful Russian language", but he also warned that this did not imply identification of the "true language" with that of existing Russian books.

To restore the purity of the sacred language it was necessary to separate the "genuine" from the "corrupt" forms in each local tradition. The true language, in fact, could not depend on merely historical, that is, human models. It ought to be unchangeable. Therefore it could not reflect linguistic variants.

Although this outline of the fundamentals of the Orthodox Slavic linguistic theory may require several clarifications, its significance for the general history of CS is obvious. Hesychastic theology did not become a decisive factor in linguistic policy until the late fourteenth-early fifteenth century. The conception of the Slavonic sacred language as a revealed system of signs, however, as well as the identification of the language with its established written form ("letters" and "books": *pismene/bukvi* and *knigy*) are characteristic of the entire tradition of what can be defined as the "Church Slavonic linguistic community" from the OCS period to modern times. Because of this tradition, the history of liturgical CS can be described

as the history of its codifications.

Both the testimony of the "grammarians" and the documentation offered by the texts allow us to detect in the history of liturgical CS periods of increasing or decreasing observance of common norms. The expansion of the Church Slavonic community created very complex situations. In most of the Bulgaro-Macedonian area, after the fall of the First Bulgarian Empire (1018), the Byzantine administration combined a policy of religious Hellenization with the use of some of the surviving Slavonic writing centers for its own missionary activity. This seems to have been an
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important factor in the diffusion of the liturgical CS in the newly Christianized territories of Kievan Rus'. At the same time favorable conditions for the preservation of Orthodox Slavic culture in the Balkans were created by the rising power of Serbia under Stefan Nemanka (circa 1166-1196). In 1186 the anti-Byzantine uprising of Peter and Asen opened the way toward the formation of the Second Bulgarian Empire in the Trnovo lands. If we consider, in addition to these major events, that on the upper Adriatic coast small Slavic communities use Glagolitic church books, and the Orthodox Slavic influence continued in the Moldavian and Wallachian territories (id est, Rumania) Christianized under Boris, we can understand how political changes and administrative fragmentation might have affected the compactness of CS in such a vast area.

The political situation changed significantly in the fourteenth century. While Kievan Rus' was under Tatar domination, both Serbia under Stefan Dushan (1331-1355) and Bulgaria under Ivan Alexander (1331-1371) reached the height of their power. The strength of these states was also reflected in their church organizations. There is no doubt that the concern of rulers and ecclesiastical dignitaries for the Slavonic sacred language reflected their desire for independence from Constantinople. Yet at the same time they needed Byzantium to adequately carry out their cultural policy. This implied an even higher degree of Hellenization. No wonder therefore that the restoration of "pure" CS was conceived in terms of the imitation of Greek grammatical patterns and Greek philological techniques. To apply to Slavonic texts the same grammatical and textual-critical principles that were used to preserve the purity of Greek was the main goal of the Trnovo School of Patriarch Evtimij and its later offshoots outside Bulgaria. The correct spelling and grammatical use of CS forms was established in both Bulgaria and Serbia according to the techniques (*xirosti*) derived from such works as *The Eight parts of*

Speech (Osm chestii slova), which was translated from Greek at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and *Grammatical Questions ('Eroyemata Grammatika)* by Manuel Moschopoulos, which Kontenechki praised as the best model of Grammatical methodology.

To what extent these puristic trends succeeded in producing a commonly accepted CS standard is still an open question, one that could be answered only through the comparative evaluation of all surviving documents. Many factors appear to have thwarted the establishment of a Pan-Church Slavonic norm. In spite of the united

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effort of a supranational intellectual elite consisting mainly of Hesychasm-oriented monks, local traditions still played an important role in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. ...

...Thus, it appears that the philological concern of the grammarians and scribes throughout the Church Slavonic community in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries was not capable of producing a Pan-CS standard. Nevertheless, this intense activity - connected as it was with some crucial trends in early Humanistic philology - succeeded in preserving the prestige and the functional individuality of CS as the religious medium of Orthodox Slavs, and of significant Catholic minorities, from the Adriatic Sea to the Russian lands.

The political and religious authorities of Orthodox Slavdom played a decisive role in the Fourteenth-century "correction of the books". It was inevitable that the Turkish conquest would create a completely different situation in the Balkan area. The fate of Orthodox Slavic civilization was decided at the time of the Muscovite victory over the Tatars at Kulikovo (1380) and the South Slavic defeat at Kosovo (1389). As a consequence of these turning points in the history of Eastern (European) Christianity, the spiritual leadership of Orthodox Slavdom was gradually transferred from the Balkan peninsula to the Russian lands. This process lasted about a century and was enhanced by a series of momentous events such as the failure of the Orthodox-Catholic Union decided at the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1445), the creation of a Muscovite autocephalous Church (1448), the fall of Constantinople (1453), the establishment of Moscow's hegemony over the Russian lands, and the elimination of the last remnants of Tatar power by Ivan III (1480).

The transfer of cultural patterns from the South Slavic to the Russian lands has been referred to as the "Second South Slavic Influence" by Slavic scholars. This formula establishes a connection between the reception of South Slavic models by the East Slavic culture in the fifteenth century and the dissemination by Byzantines of

OCS works in Kievan Rus' in the eleventh century ("First South Slavic Influence"). More recent studies, however, have shown (1) that the fifteenth-century spreading of South Slavic conceptions and writing techniques in the Russian lands was part of a larger and more complex movement in Eastern Europe, and (2) that the term "influence" does not express the true nature of phenomena within the common culture of Orthodox Slavdom and which eventually affected the whole of the community.

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Furthermore, Slavists have debated the question (as to) whether the "Second South Slavic Influence" actually consisted in the export to the Russian lands, through the direct influence of South Slavic immigrants, of any particular method such as the philological method of the Trnovo school. There is no reason, however, to assume that the individual scholars, representing a well-defined school, played an exclusive role in this complex cultural interchange. In fact, manuscripts, ideas, fashions and technical innovations might have circulated more widely and more quickly than preachers and teachers. The Russian lands were part of a spiritual homeland common to all users of CS. Kostenechki's Russo-centric conception of the "original" Cyrillo-Methodian language is a valid example of this attitude. As to the refugees from the Balkan Slavic lands, they certainly did not act as foreigners when they participated in the codification of CS in the Russian lands. Their observance of linguistic rules established in Bulgaria or Serbia was not intended as a defense of Bulgarian or Serbian local usages. On the contrary, their conception of correct CS was opposed to any vernacular "corruption" in both the South- and East-Slavic territories of Orthodox Slavdom. Regardless of the popularity or unpopularity of these theses among the Eastern Slavs, who often reacted against this allegedly universal standard because of its South Slavic origin, the whole discussion did not express a conflict of languages. It was based on the competition among different normative trends of the same religious language.

These considerations should help us understand the role played for a certain period of time in the Russian lands by eminent "Southerners" such as the Bulgarian Metropolitan of Moscow Kiprian (appointed in 1390), the Bulgarian Metropolitan of Kiev Gregory Camblak (appointed in 1414) and the Serbian Paxomij "the logothete", or chancellor (active in Russia from 1440). These churchmen acted as experts in the common sacred language of the Orthodox Slavs in more than one country: from Mount Athos (northern Greece) to Bulgaria, Serbia and Moldavia (northern Rumania), to the

Russian lands.

It was mainly because of the prestige of South Slavic writing techniques that several South Slavic features such as non-*polnoglasie* forms, the clusters *sht*, *zhd*. Hellenizing spelling and syntax were preserved by the East-Slavic *usus* of CS. During the last decades of the sixteenth century, the need of more precise prescriptive rules was felt with particular intensity in the "Ruthenian lands" (corresponding to
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the modern Ukraine and Belarus). Where language discussions arose in connection with the Orthodox-catholic Church Union, which was eventually pronounced in 1596. The most authoritative Catholic representative of the anti-CS trend was the Polish Jesuit Piotr Skarga. In his treatise *O jedynoshci Koshciola Bozhego pod jedynym pasterzem* (*On the Unity of God's Church under One Shepherd*, 1577) he maintained that the "Slavonic language" (in Polish *jezyk slowiensi*) was inadequate to perform the sacred functions which, instead, were proper to Latin. In response to this challenge, the local Orthodox Slavs engaged in a number of cultural activities aimed at the assertion of CS's full dignity, in competition with and imitation of Latin Humanistic models. The Humanistic impact on the Orthodox revival of the Ruthenian lands is evident, in particular, in the movement's emphasis on education and school-teaching.

To meet the needs of newly created "Academies" and schools in Ostrog, Lvov, Vilna and Kiev, Church Slavic grammars and manuals were produced in unprecedented numbers. Printing, which was then introduced in the Ruthenian lands, contributed greatly to their diffusion and also affected the establishment of graphic norms. A traditional compilation under the title *Grammatyka sloven'ska jazyka* (*Grammar of the Slavonic Language*) was published in Vilna in 1586. It was followed in 1591 by *Adelphotes, Grammatika dobroglagolivago ellinoslovenskago jazyka, Sovershennagoi skustva osmi chastei slova* (*Adelphotes, A grammar for the correct Use of the Helleno-Slavonic Language and the Art of Mastering the Eight Parts of Speech*). This bilingual treatise, in Greek and Slavonic, represents a typical fusion of new, Humanistic conceptions and old Orthodox Slavic beliefs. The two languages, Greek and Church Slavonic, are described as expressions of one grammar, that is, of one universal principle that makes any system of revealed linguistic signs equally "true". The Greek model became in this way the "classical" model to be imitated to raise CS to a superior level of perfection. By imitating the grammar of Greek, CS was believed to acquire a Humanistic and Christian dignity which was equal, and even superior, to that of Catholic

Latin.

Among the theoretical and normative works written in this spirit, the Grammatiki slavenskija pravilnoe syntagma (A Body of Correct Rules of the Slavonic Grammar, first published in Vilna in 1619) by Meletij Smotrickij, was by far the most successful. During the
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seventeenth century it became the most authoritative textbook in the Russian lands. Two editions of it, with no mention of the author, were published in Moscow in 1648 and 1721. It was also used by those Ruthenians who accepted the Union with the Catholic Church. In the eighteenth century a new edition of the grammar was printed in Moldavia and from there its prestige spread among the Orthodox Slavs of Serbia and Bulgaria. Eventually its normative rules affected the writing habits of the Glagolites under Roman (Catholic) jurisdiction. Only some minorities in the vast community of users of liturgical CS were not affected by what has been defined as the "Meletian" norm. The most conspicuous of these minorities were the "Old Believers", id est, the conservative Russian Orthodox who rejected the church reforms introduced by Patriarch Nikon toward the end of the seventeenth century.

In spite of its normative innovations, the "Meletian" type of liturgical CS did not represent a substantive break in the tradition of the common religious language of Orthodox Slavdom. Its great merit consisted in its providing the entire Church Slavonic community, from Russia to the Adriatic Sea, with a formal unity never achieved before. Meletij Smotrickij was a typical product of the Humanistic Ruthenian culture. After studying in the Orthodox school at Ostrog, he became a pupil of the Jesuits in Vilna and, subsequently, a student of the German Protestant universities of Leipzig, Nuremberg and Wittenburg. He began his career as an anti-Catholic polemicist, but eventually embraced the Orthodox-Catholic Union. His complex religious experience and his Humanistic attitude were not an exception. The dignity of the Church Slavonic language and culture was affirmed by a number of other sophisticated scholars. Laventij Zizanja's Grannatika slovenska (Slavonic Grammar), Nauka ku chitanju i rozumenju pisma slovenskogo (Instruction for the Reading and Understanding of the Slavonic Writing) and Leksis ... iz slovenskago jazyka na prosty ruskiy dijalekt istol'kovany (A Dictionary ... Explained in the Ruthenian Vulgar Dialect from the Slavonic), were both published in Vilna in 1596. They had a great impact on that type of Ruthenian (Ukrainian) liturgical CS which acquired pan-Orthodox Slavic prestige thanks to Meletij Smotrickij's grammar. In 1627, the Kiev printer Pamva Berynda published a

Leksikon slavenorosskij (*Slavenorussian Dictionary*)
which was intended to serve the practical needs of text
interpretation and translation from one linguistic level
to the other, or "from language to dialect" according to
principles similar to those used in
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Zizanja's *Leksis*. The awareness of the role of different levels and linguistic habits within the same linguistic community was typical of the Humanistic conception of language and society. The relation between *slavenskij* and *ruskij diajalekt* (Zizanja) or between *slovenskij* and *rossijskij* (Berynda) was seen in terms similar to those established in the Romance world between Latin and the "vulgar tongue", and also between Classical common Greek (*koine*) and the Greek dialects. This may help us to understand why the linguistic theories that contributed to the most successful codification of CS at the same time created favorable conditions for its gradual replacement by new languages based on local dialects. The emergence of modern conceptions asserting the dignity of the language of the "people-nation" in opposition to the Language of Divine Revelation resulted in the fading of the spiritual community of Slavia Orthodoxa and of its supranational language. Liturgical CS survived as the official language of the Slavic Orthodox churches. Its codification was the object of further concern especially in eighteenth century Russia where a number of state-and-church regulations led to the establishment of a linguistic standard mandatory in the printing of liturgical books. This standard, which has been termed "Synodal Church Slavonic", is still in use. Nevertheless, CS lost its main prerogative as the supreme cultural medium of Orthodox Slavdom. Outside the ecclesiastical world, it became a "dead language".

To make this historical outline complete one should describe now the development of the other type of CS, defined earlier as "Orthodox Slavonic". A precise reconstruction of the history of this supranational medium which served both as a model and as a component of the developing Slavic languages, from the Balkans to the Russian lands, is badly needed. It remains, however, a task for the years to come.

In current Slavic studies the relation between "Church Slavonic" and "national" linguistic components is still viewed in terms of conflict and mutual rejection. Some Slavic scholars are so concerned with the description of the victorious "struggle" of Slavic national languages against the "foreign" structures of CS that they forget to describe the linguistic "enemy". However, "Orthodox Slavonic" was neither foreign nor opposed to the natural development of literary standards outside the domain of scriptural literature. Liturgical

CS represented a supreme model. The users of this sacred medium were concerned with the purity of the model, but they did not identify it with non-scriptural texts. Any new text produced by earthly
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writers could only imitate, not equate the language of Revelation. Thus, non-scriptural writing developed among Bulgarians, Macedonians, Serbs, Ruthenians and Russians both on the basis of their national languages and in accordance with patterns established by the sacred language. The main difference between the two types of written language, defined here as "Liturgical Church Slavonic" and as "Orthodox Slavonic" respectively, consisted in the perception of the former as a closed system whereas the latter was seen as an open system.

In each region of Orthodox Slavdom, "Orthodox Slavonic" was not used as "another language" but as a system of inter-Slavic norms, or "isonorms", thanks to which texts could freely circulate among readers of different linguistic backgrounds. While the unity of liturgical CS was based on dogmatic principles, the unity of Orthodox Slavonic depended exclusively on practical and functional considerations. The extent to which a writer could introduce local forms into a text depended on the audience he wanted to reach. The detailed study of the degree to which the local language or dialect was used by different writers in different areas and periods would coincide both with the history of the supranational function of Orthodox Slavonic and with the history of the formation of the Slavic national literary languages. The emergence of these languages may be seen as the progression from a maximum of Church Slavonic to a maximum of local usage. Certainly, it does not seem advisable to treat the linguistic components of a mixed historical process in isolation from one another." (51)

Alexander V. Issatschenko describes the influence of Church Slavonic on the formation of the Russian language.

"The Russian language is spoken today by some one hundred and thirty million individuals as their mother tongue is basically the continuation of the northeastern dialects of East Slavic. However, the modern national language of the Russians is the result of a complicated process now called Contemporary Standard Russian (CSR). During the whole preceding period (eleventh to seventeenth century) the vehicle of *literary* texts was neither East Slavic nor Russian, but a sacral language transplanted to Rus' from the Balkans, viz. Church Slavonic, written in the Cyrillic

alphabet. On the other hand, all texts concerning legal problems and administration (laws, contracts, (2766)

donations, testaments) were written in the same alphabet, but in a language which must have been very close to the spoken vernacular of the Eastern Slavs. The coexistence of two genetically related linguistic systems with marked social and cultural differences is called *diglossia*. It lasted in Russia until well into the eighteenth century.

The Kievan Period.

The Eastern Slavs (ancestors of today's Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians) were spread over a vast territory of Eastern Europe from the Great Northern Lakes (Ladoga, Onega) to the Carpathians and from Belarus to the basin of the river Oka and the Middle Volga. They settled in a forest zone which had already been inhabited by numerous Baltic and Finno-Ugric tribes.

About 860, Scandinavian tradesmen and warriors, the so-called Vikings started their expeditions through Eastern Europe in search of waterways to the Black Sea and Constantinople. According to a legend the Varangian leader Rurik (*Hroerekr*) became the first ruler of Novgorod on Lake Ilmen. His brother-in-law, Oleg (*Haelgi*) chose Kiev (*Kyi'iv* in Ukrainian) on the river Dniepr (or *Dniepro* in Ukrainian) as his capital and thus became the founder of the Kievan state.

The most outstanding event in the history of Kiev was the introduction of Christianity under Vladimir in 988. There can be little doubt that there were Christians in the Kievan state and even small Christian communities before the date of the official "Baptism of Rus'"; now, however, the Greek Orthodox faith became the state religion of the territories controlled by Kiev.

The new faith spread under Vladimir's son Yaroslav the Wise (1019-1054). He is reported to have created numerous scriptoria and encouraged translations "from Greek into the Slavonic script" Laurentian manuscript, 1037). In 1051 Jaroslav liberated himself from the political tutelage of the Greek ecclesiastic authorities and appointed the first East Slavic archbishop (*mitropolit*) of Kiev.

The Slavic language into which the Greek texts were translated in Bulgaria was Old Church Slavonic (OCS), an elaborate sacral language which imitated the rhetorics of Medieval Greek. OCS was used as the official ecclesiastic language in Bulgaria, and must have been brought to Kiev by members of the Bulgarian clergy. Strangely enough, our sources do not mention

Bulgaria or the Bulgarians and their role in the
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transmission of OCS from Southeastern Europe to Kiev. Only the Greeks are praised and explicitly credited for their missionary work.

(Old) Church Slavonic.

The sacral language of the Orthodox Church of Rus' was by no means "Old Russian", although many scholars use this term loosely to denote the language of any written document of the Kievan period. OCS (which was mainly Old Bulgarian and partly Old Macedonian) was an artificial language since it was not used as a vehicle of oral communication in any existing ethnic community. It was the result of an admirable creative effort of the first translators, Constantine (St. Cyril) and St. Methodius and their disciples; it rendered the syntactic and stylistic complexities of Greek in a Slavic idiom which until then had not been used in writing.

The function of OCS in the Orthodox Slavic world has sometimes been compared with the function of Latin in Western and Central Europe. Latin, however, was used in the West both in ecclesiastic matters and in law, administration and documentation, whereas OCS was restricted to literary texts, including liturgical, edifying and historical ones (such as the Chronicles). It was never used in administration. Educated people were aware of the qualitative difference between the sophisticated high language (OCS) and the vernacular. Archbishop Hilarion (eleventh century) wrote in one of his sermons: "*Ne k' nevedushchim bo pishem, no preizlixa sja sladosti knizhnyja.*" ("Not for the ignorant do we write, but for those who have abundantly imbibed the sweetness of books.")

The fundamental vocabularies were identical in OCS and in East Slavic (ES). ...

...The morphology of both languages (case system, genders, numbers, most tenses, nominal and verbal endings) hardly differed. The same is true with respect to what may be called the "macrosyntactic" rules (coordination and subordination of clauses, the use of conjunctions, infinitive and participle constructions, dative absolute, etc.). This is quite natural, since the Slavic vernacular languages (including ES) were never used in writing before and could not, therefore, develop elaborate syntactic patterns. In addition, OCS had to incorporate hundreds of neologisms (loan translations from Greek loanwords from Greek, Latin, Hebrew) needed for the translation of the theological, philosophical, and historical texts written in Greek, the most refined literary language of the

Mediterranean.

In spite of numerous coincidences in vocabulary, morphology and microsyntactic constructions, the macrosyntactic constructions patterned after Greek and innumerable abstract neologisms made OCS as much as unintelligible to the non-initiated. ...

...The phonological differences between the two languages were far less of a barrier. In fact, ES phonetics easily penetrated into Church Slavonic (CS) texts copied in Rus'. ...

...This variety of CS, influenced by ES features, is often called the Russian recension of CS. Linguistically and historically, however, it would be more appropriate to call it the "ES recension of CS", since the language spoken in Rus' in the eleventh-thirteenth centuries was by no means Russian, but the common ancestor of Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian, viz. ES.

Note that the influence of the vernacular upon the high language could not have been very far-reaching since the borderline between the two languages was always felt, their functions never mixed, and the CS and ES syntactic possibilities and stylistic models were always distinguished. Had this borderline become less strict, the two genetically related languages would have merged. Instead, CS has survived to the present as a distinctly separate language used in all Slavic Orthodox churches. The decisive criterion for the difference between CS and the Slavic vernaculars should not be sought in phonology or morphology but rather in syntax, vocabulary and style.

In contradistinction to the sophisticated structure of the high language, legal texts display simplicity, a frequently poor syntactic organization and, sometimes, an awkwardness in the wording of comparatively simple ideas. Apart from a few inscriptions, only two vernacular texts (partly influenced by CS) of the twelfth century have been preserved. Their number increases in the thirteenth century and includes a copy of the oldest legal code of Rus' called *Russkaja pravda* (1282). All legal documents which have been preserved were written in the north (Novgorod, Smolensk, Pskov). There is not a single legal text from the Kievan area. ...

...Until recently most Soviet scholars have failed to recognize the nature of the diglossia in Old Rus' and have tried to interpret the two linguistic systems (CS and ES) as merely two "styles" (Efimov) or two "types" (Vinogradov) of one and the same "Old Russian literary language". However, the striking differences between the two linguistic systems lead us to a

different conclusion. If we recognize the primacy of syntax and style in determining the language of texts written in Old Rus', it will be clear that CS was the only language used in literature until the end of the seventeenth century. One must remember, however, that the very term "literary language" is anachronistic with respect to the Middle Ages: "there was no literary language in Kievan Rus'" (Worth 1975).

The language of the Chronicles (*letopisi*) is basically CS in its syntax, in the general organization of the text, with its numerous dative absolute constructions, relative clauses, etc. The necessity to report on the events located in Rus' explains the presence in the language of the Chronicles of a large number of ES words (place names, personal names, titles, weapons, food, clothes, loanwords from the Turkic nomadic tribes with whom the Eastern Slavs were in constant contact, etc.). Furthermore, the chronicler frequently uses direct quotations in his narrative. Naturally, these quotations contain elements of the vernacular and even certain locally flavored colloquialisms.

The Kievan period came to an end as a result of the invasion of the Mongols (also called Tartars) in the first half of the thirteenth century. In 1242 Kiev was devastated by the horsemen of Khan Batu, a grandson of Genghis Khan. The Mongols, who had founded their capital (the Golden Horde) on the eastern banks of the lower Volga, were only initially bent on destruction and very soon concentrated on the collection of taxes. In this they had the cooperation of the local princes and the Orthodox Church. In spite of the Tartar rule, cultural life continued and even flourished. Architecture, icon painting (Andrej Rublev and his school) and literature developed successfully in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, *id est*, during the period referred to as the "Tartar Yoke".

After the destruction of Kiev, the political and spiritual center was transferred first to Vladimir, then to Suzdal', two small cities in the vicinity of Moscow. At the same time, substantial parts of the southern and western territories of Rus', inhabited by Ukrainians and Belorussians, became part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, with a predominantly Polish and Catholic population. The territory of Rus' was torn apart politically and, in addition, internal linguistic developments created differences between the Russian northeast and the Ukrainian southwest. From this period we are entitled to use the term "Russian" to denote the language of those East Slavic territories which found themselves in the political orbit of Moscow. The

city and principality of Moscow became the political and cultural center of the new state of the Russians, the seat of the grand prince (later the tsar) and of the chief authorities of the Orthodox Church. This was the beginning of the so-called "Muscovite" period of Russian history.

Re-Bulgarization.

The political growth of Moscow made it necessary to eliminate any provincialism in the life of the Muscovite court and in the rites and the language of the church. Since Byzantium remained the only authority and the only model in all matters of religion, culture and art, the Bulgarian scholar Kiprian was appointed "Metropolitan of all Russia". His task consisted in inculcating the Byzantine tradition in Moscow and in revising the "books", id est, in achieving the greatest possible conformity between the wording of the sacred books in Muscovy (written in the ES recension of CS) and the contemporary Bulgarian linguistic norm. We know of two other Southern Slavs who were appointed to Kiev, Galicia and eventually to Moscow and who also actively participated in what is called the "revision of the books". However, contrary to frequent claims, there was no mass emigration of Southern Slavs to Russia (taley 1973).

Kiprian's revision of the type of CS used in Muscovy is usually called the "Kiprianic reform" or the "Second South Slavic influence". We prefer to call it "Re-Bulgarization". Since South Slavic influence in the development of the ES recension of CS continued virtually uninterruptedly from the eleventh century.

Re-Bulgarization marked a high point in the development of medieval literature in Russia. The literature of this period is characterized by very strict standards in the artistic range of CS, which widened the already existing gap between the high language and the vernacular. As we shall see, the CS patrimony played an important role in the formation of the Russian standard language. ...

...In Pre-Revolutionary and Soviet historiography it has become a habit to refer to the eastern and southeastern parts of Poland inhabited by Ukrainians and Belorussians as "Southwestern Russia" (*Jugozapadnaja Rus'*). This term is utterly misleading since it does not take into consideration the existence of Ukrainian and Belorussian as separate East Slavic languages. The main link between the Russians in Muscovy and the descendants of the Eastern Slavs in Poland was not their spoken language, which was

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beginning to show marked regional differences. It was

rather CS, the liturgical language, used in Poland not only by the Orthodox Ukrainians and belorussians but also by a considerable number of Greek Catholics ("Eastern Rite Catholics" is a more exact term, since most of said rites do not use Greek as the liturgical language) or *Uniates*, who recognized the Pope. The centers of CS learning in Poland were Lwow (Ukrainian *L'viv*, Russian *L'vov*) in the southeast and Wilno in the northeast. The spread into Poland of Western culture and Humanistic ideas led to the establishment of schools of higher learning where classical Greek and Latin were taught. The humanistic, philological approach to the teaching of classical languages was applied to CS. At the end of the sixteenth century and during the seventeenth century several grammars of CS were published in Poland. In fact, the first East European CS Bible was printed by a private Ukrainian gentleman in Ostrog (Ukrainian *Ostrih*, Russian *Ostrog*) in Poland. The first CS primer appeared in Lwow.

The revision of the sacred books had by then become a permanent concern. The task of "correcting" translations of the Scriptures was predominantly carried out by Ukrainian and belorussian clergymen who knew Greek and Latin. Also, most clerks working in the Moscow Foreign Office (*Posol'skij prikaz*) were Ukrainians and Belorussians since a knowledge of Latin and Polish were indispensable in the diplomatic service. Due to the authority of the Ukrainian clergy, the Ukrainian pronunciation of CS became the norm. ...

...Lomonosov's *Russian Grammar* (*Rossijskaja grammatika*) is a solid scholarly work in which pronunciation, inflectional morphology and parts of speech are explained and codified in conformity with Latin grammatical tradition. Lomonosov, the son of a wealthy fisherman in the north, studied in Germany and belonged to the generation which was under strong German influence. Some of Lomonosov's grammatical rules and recommendations must have been outdated by the time his *Grammar* appeared in 1755. ...

...Lomonosov understood that it was impossible to develop and standardize the Russian literary language without profiting from the rich tradition of the prestigious CS texts. Adopting the Aristotelian doctrine of three "styles" elaborated by Quintilian and others, Lomonosov tried to correlate with it the interplay between CS and Russian elements. His approach consisted in linking language strata with the literary genres of Classical literature. In a short study, *On the Benefit of the Ecclesiastic Books for Russian* (1758, he recommended that the high style (tragedies,
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odes, epic) make predominant use of CS elements and the elements common to Russian and CS and that the middle

style (love poetry, speeches, epistles) combine Russian and CS elements. Only in satires did he admit Russian words not occurring in CS. (52)

George Y. Shevelov deals with the influence of Church Slavonic on the formation of the Ukrainian language:

"The question, "When did the Ukrainian language arise?" is often asked and often answered with great self-assurance. It is, however, both unanswerable and unscholarly, for it ignores the difficulty of defining historically the term "Ukrainian language". The further back we trace the Ukrainian language, the fewer of its present-day characteristics are found until, sometime around the seventh or eighth century, it dissolves in Common Slavic (or, go back yet further and it dissolves into Indo-European). In the interval the gradual formation and accumulation of specific characteristics which we now label Ukrainian occurred. But at what point a sufficient number of these characteristics is accumulated so that the language may be called Ukrainian remains open to various solutions. The decision can only be arbitrary and, more often than not, it is politically motivated. What is undeniable is that a continuum has existed from the earliest local changes within Common Slavic to the present.

The emergence of a literary language in Ukraine (and by the same token, of the literary language of Ukraine) can, however, be dated with a considerable degree of precision. It coincides with the date of the Christianization of that area, or, more precisely, of its official Christianization, which occurred around 988 as indicated by the Primary Chronicle. This literary language was Church Slavonic, the vehicle of the new religion promoted as such by the Church and by the state authority.

Old Church Slavonic, later Church Slavonic, was intended for all Christian Slavs. Although initially based on Macedonian, it was designed for and adapted to the idioms first of the Moravians, later of the Bulgarians and Serbs. Local variations in Church Slavonic inevitably appeared: admissible in principle, in practice they were due either to the excessive zeal of local preachers who wanted to influence their flock as much as possible, or to the ignorance of users. No one, however, wanted to break the unity of the literary supra-language and to cultivate the local tradition
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alone.

The Church Slavonic language came to Ukraine primarily in its Bulgarian adaptation. It is gratuitous

to speak in terms of "ifs", but there certainly existed the necessary prerequisites for the creation of a single eastern version of Church Slavonic in the area from Lake Ladoga to the Byzantine frontier. The loss of political independence by Bulgaria in 972 and the demise of the Macedonian state after 1018 severed the contacts of Rus' with the areas south of the Danube. The newly introduced literary language found itself in the hands of local clergy and scribes of rather recent vintage. It is no wonder that they were at first perplexed by the treasure to which they had become heirs. They could not cope with the great range of possibilities that Church Slavonic offered them in spelling, syntactic constructions and vocabulary. The copyist felt bewildered by the apparently excessive subtleties and either mixed them, helplessly losing control of the text he copied, or loyally and slavishly followed the original and betrayed his mother tongue only in occasional slips. The former attitude is represented, for example, by the text known under the Russian title *Trinadcat'slov Grigorija Bogoslova*, the latter largely by the *Izbornik* of 1073.

Yet, the *Izbornik* also attempts here and there to regulate the unwieldy imported language, at least in the inflection. This trend can be seen in a series of manuscripts, until in such texts as the *Vyg* and *Leksa sbornik* (late twelfth century), the *Hankenstein Manuscript* (thirteenth century) and others, a relative systematization was achieved.

In evaluating this evolution it should be kept in mind that it was not a result of any nationalistic attitude or of a desire to break with tradition and build the literary language on local foundations. The entire development proceeded inside the tradition and indeed strove to keep it alive and vigorous, while eliminating only those features which may have seemed "unnatural". What exactly was deemed unnatural depended on the social status and cultural level of the writer, and, in the choice of vocabulary, on the thematic key of the passage in question (not on the genre of the work!). The importance of thematic keys (which often influenced the language of the segments immediately following) can best be seen in various secular texts from the *Chronicles* or *Vladimir Monomax's Testament* to the charters.

Thus the evolution of the literary language of Ukraine from its introduction until the end of the fourteenth century was, broadly speaking, the result of
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its adaptation to local speech habits. This was achieved, however, not so much through the elimination of some Church Slavonic peculiarities as, more importantly, through a broadening of the range of

variations within the literary language. Every *knizhnik* tried to be as Church Slavonic in his language as his education, his ability and the thematic key of the text permitted: but the extent of actual fulfillment of this goal varied widely. By the end of the fourteenth century, the unity of Church Slavonic was more in the idea behind it than in actual usage. The ultimate perfection of this language lay in its unattainable Church Slavonic purity. In practice, however, (though not yet the diglossia of the mid-Ukrainian period), it consisted of innumerable personal and local variations.

The normal evolution of the literary language in Ukraine was arrested by the political and demographic events of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The Tatar invasion which resulted, among other things, in the fall and destruction of Kiev in 1240, caused a mass flight of population from the left-bank and middle-Dnieper regions. While the bulk of the population of these regions fled to the west and northwest, *id est*, to Galicia and Polissia, many intellectuals chose to move to the Russian lands. For several decades Galicia and Volhynia maintained the standards of literature and of the literary language. Soon, however, these principalities fell victim to their stronger neighbors, and the first partition of Ukraine among Lithuania (which absorbed the greater part of the Ukrainian lands), Poland (Galicia, Xolm, now Chelm), Moldavia (Bukovyna) and Hungary (Transcarpathia) had taken shape in 1387.

None of these powers was interested in supporting the literary language of Ukraine. Only the Church might have been concerned with this task, but the Church itself was in a deplorable situation. It may be regarded as symbolic that after Metropolitan Peter had left Kiev in 1299 and gone to the Russian lands, the Metropolitan See of Kiev remained vacant until 1411. In the conditions of general instability, the decline of towns and of church authority, and the lack of educational institutions, it became impossible to preserve the standards of the (to some extent artificial) literary language of the preceding period. Features of spoken, outright dialectical speech made inroads in the Church Slavonic writings (e.g., in the *Kamjanka-Buz'ka Gospel*, 1411, the second part of *Chet'ja* of 1489, etc.).

Beginning in the last decade of the fourteenth century and continuing through the entire period until
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the mid-sixteenth century, a new type of Church Slavonic, the so-called Euthymian recension, was brought to Kiev from where it slowly expanded northward. The new trend aimed at the purity of Church Slavonic and was hostile to any vernacularization of the church language. Without trying to restore the original Old

Church Slavonic, the new trend fostered artificiality (at least in some features) as a device for keeping the written language above the everyday idiom. This trend emanated from the circle of clergymen and scholars centered around Euthymius (*Evtimiji* in Bulgarian), the patriarch of Trnovo in Bulgaria, and reached Ukraine via Mount Athos (monastic center in northern Greece), Constantinople, the Moldavian monasteries and the Bulgarian refugees from the Turkish conquest of the Balkans

Euthymian Church Slavonic was characterized by striking mannerisms in spelling, syntax and vocabulary. In Ukraine, the most significant feature of the Euthymian language reforms was the reversal of the centuries-long evolution toward a synthesis of Church Slavonic with the vernacular. Such a synthesis was precluded now by the philosophical precepts of the trend: the literary language was considered the system of symbols reflecting the ultimate religious truth. Consequently, the "new" Church Slavonic could not admit elements of the vernacular, and the vernacular could not absorb its esoteric rules. The literary language reached a fork between the ecclesiastic and secular usage. The separation of the two led to diglossia.

This course of development was reinforced by the events which shaped the chancery language of the time. The Polish rule in Galicia put an end to the use of the local speech in court and administration records: in 1433 Wladyslaw Jagiello decreed the unification of the judiciary system (the Privilege of Cracow), which discontinued the use of *ius ruthenicale* and, by the same token, made Latin obligatory in court records. In the Lithuanian-occupied part of Ukraine a new administrative language was introduced from the political center of the country, Vilna (now Vilnius). This language, which was called *rus'kyj* (not to be confused with modern Russian, which was called Muscovite) will here be labeled Ruthenian (Ruth). If one disregards the very few early records which had a Ukrainian tinge, the language was belorussian based on the spoken language of the Vilna region.

When used by Ukrainians, Ruth, like Church Slavonic of the earlier period, occasionally manifested some Ukrainian features. However, in

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addition to these inadvertent Ukrainianisms, there arose a small set of almost obligatory substitutions reminiscent of the contemporary relationship between various branches of English like, for instance, British vs. American. ...

...In sum, the Ukrainians had to deal with two literary languages: a rather esoteric Church Slavonic

and Ruth, which was Belorussian-based although it tolerated a few Ukrainian features. The expansion and prestige of Ruth as the language of administration can be measured by such facts as its use in some charters issued in Moldavia (which in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were predominantly Ukrainian with some admixture of Bulgarian and Rumanian), in the diplomatic acts of the Cossacks, etc.

The philosophical premises of the Euthymian recension of Church Slavonic, if ever properly realized, did not have a lasting effect in Ukraine. While preserving the orthographic attire of Euthymian Church Slavonic, attempts were made to synthesize the two literary languages, the farthest reaching of them being the vernacularized *Peresopnycja Gospel* of 1556-1561 and the great many manuscripts of the Didactic Gospels of the following decades.

But the trend did not come to fruition. With the Union of Lublin of 1569 between Poland and Lithuania, the frontiers between the two countries were eliminated and the entire "Lithuanian" Ukraine, with the exception of Berestja (now Brest) region, became part of Poland. Under these new political conditions the synthesis of the two literary languages was no longer feasible.

In the first place, the severance of ties with Lithuania made the fostering of Belorussian-based Ruth in Ukraine pointless and it simply withered away. Secondly, the local prerequisites for such a synthesis were no longer there. Within the Polish state there did not and could not exist any Ukrainian court. The Polish system of taxes and restrictive duties and some of the Polish laws impeded the development and prosperity of the Ukrainian town dwellers and transformed the Ukrainian sections of towns into little more than ghettos. Some laws impeded the cultural development of the Ukrainian clergy. The greater part of the nobility, the clergy and the townspeople were lost to the (Ukrainian) nation or became second-class citizens. There were no national Ukrainian institutions at all, with the exception of the Church, and no social organizations capable of furnishing the intellectual traffic or contacts indispensable to the perfecting of

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the literary language. ...

...The expansion of Polish outside of the administration proceeded primarily at the expense of Church Slavonic, which was relegated more and more to the status of a dead language of the liturgy. As for Ruth, it gradually lost its Belorussian components and adapted to the local dialects. Under the new name of *prostaja mova* (literally, the language of commoners), with a small Church Slavonic and substantial Polish admixture, it was used in private letters, secular

songs, memoirs, fictional tales, some chronicles and also in the so-called Didactic Gospels. But its social status was low and its resistance to Polish intrusions feeble. The diglossia of former years was being replaced by a triglossia, with Polish playing the dominant role.

Under these conditions, the only viable intellectual force was the clergy. To oppose the Latin tradition championed by the Polish religious polemicists, the Orthodox clergy began turning to Church Slavonic and proclaimed it the legitimate heir to the glorious Greek tradition. An unprecedented revival of Church Slavonic began in the 1580s, initiated by the Ostrih (Russian *Ostrog*) circle gathered around Prince Constantine of Ostrih. It was taken up by the Lvov Fraternity after 1586, and brought to its acme in Kiev, first by the intellectuals of the Cave Monastery and later also by the Kiev Academy. The new trend appealed to the Greek tradition and to the tradition of all Orthodox Slavs without showing any interest in a search for a national Ukrainian foundation for the revived Church Slavonic. It is not fortuitous that the principal achievement of the Ostrih circle, the publication in 1581 of a Church Slavonic translation of the Bible, was based on a manuscript solicited from Russia in which very few adjustments were made. In turn, the grammars and dictionaries of Church Slavonic: Laventij Zizaniij (1596), Meletij Smotryc'kyj (1619), *Pamva Berynda* (1627), Jepyfaniij Slavy nec'kyj (1642) and Slavy nec'kyj and Arsenij Korec'kyj (1649), to mention only the most important.

Despite their "common Slavic" (excluding the Poles!) aspirations, the creators of the new version of Church Slavonic had no ambition and no desire to restore Old Church Slavonic or Euthymian Church Slavonic to its original purity. Their Church Slavonic had no developed philological, philosophical or even theological orientation. It was foremostly a practical tool in the struggle for the preservation of national and religious identity. The chief goal of their activity was to eliminate disorder in the church

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language by a rigid codification of language based mainly on the patterns available in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia, with some adaptation to the intricacies of Greek grammar and to the rules of Latin grammars current in Poland at the time.

The Meletian (from the name of Meletij Smotryc'kyj, one of the codifiers of the language) version of Church Slavonic was generally accepted in Ukraine, but adherence to it varied according to the training and zeal of the authors. Some managed to apply the prescriptions with amazing rigidity so that

Ukrainianisms in their writings are limited to the few accepted by Smotryc'kj. Such, for example, are many writings of Tarasij Zemka and some of the theatrical plays of the time (*Carstvo natury ljudskoj*, Kiev, 1698, and *Torzhestvo estestva chelovechskaho*, Kiev, 1706, among others). Others allowed more license so that in practice we find the whole gamut of shades and transitions between the Meletian Church Slavonic and the *prostaja mova* in the writings of the time, in perfect agreement with the requirements of the then predominant Baroque style.

The revival of Church Slavonic succeeded in eliminating Polish as the literary language of those Ukrainians who did not undergo complete Polonization. The new diglossia was accepted by the society: Church Slavonic (*jazyk slavenorosskyj*) s. the vernacular (*prostaja mova*). Besides in the liturgical books, the former was used in learned poetry, drama and theology, the latter in private documents, tales, etc., with a plethora of transitions."(53)

Below is a brief description of the liturgical system of the Eastern Orthodox Church:

A Troparion - *To Troparion* (Greek); *Tropari* (Church Slavonic), is a strophe in which the basic liturgical theme of a given day or worship service is summarized. The daily liturgical cycle of the Russian Orthodox Church is as follows:

- ❖ 1.) Vespers - *Esperinos* (Greek); *Vechernya* (Church Slavonic).
- ❖ 2.) Compline - *Apodeipnon* (Greek); *Povecherye*, *Pavechernitsa* (Church Slavonic).
- ❖ 3.) Nocturne - *Mesonuktikon* (Greek); *Polunoshchnitsa* (Church Slavonic).
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- ❖ 4.) Matins - *Orthos* (Greek); *Utrenii* (Church Slavonic).
- ❖ 5.) First Hour - *A' Ora* (Greek); *Pervwe Chas* (Church Slavonic).
- ❖ 6.) Third Hour - *G' Ora* (Greek); *Tretii Chas* (Church Slavonic).
- ❖ 7.) Sixth Hour - *Z' Ora* (Greek); *Shestoi Chas* (Church Slavonic).

- ❖ 8.) Divine Liturgy - *E' Theia* (Greek); *Bozhestvennay Liturgii, Obedny* (Church Slavonic).
- ❖ 9.) Ninth Hour - *E' Ora* (Greek); *Devitii Chas* (Church Slavonic).

The daily liturgical cycle of worship services is varied on Certain High Holy Days, such as Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday and Christmas. (54)

As a prologue to our study of the *Strastoterpty* or "Passion Bearers", here are some selections or *To Troparion* (Byzantine Greek or *Tropari* (Church Slavonic) from the Byzantine or Eastern Orthodox Paschal Liturgy or liturgy for Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The *To Troparion* or *Tropari* given below were translated from Byzantine Greek, but the Church Slavonic version is a direct, literal translation from the Byzantine Greek.

"Like sheep You (Jesus Christ) were led to slaughter; Oh Christ the King. Like an innocent Lamb You were nailed to the Cross for our sins by evil and lawless men."

To Troparion or *Tropari* from the Byzantine or Eastern Orthodox Paschal Liturgy for Good Friday.

"As the (Roman) soldiers mocked You (Jesus Christ) at Your Glorious Cross, the angels were amazed; You Who covered the firmament with clouds now are covered with the clothing of mockery. In this manner was Your
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compassion revealed, Oh merciful (Jesus) Christ, Glory be to You."

To Troparion or *Tropari* from the Byzantine or Eastern Orthodox Paschal Liturgy for Good Friday.

"Pharisees and lawmakers of Israel, the Apostles (of Jesus Christ) cry out to you, "Behold the temple, which you have destroyed; behold the Lamb (Jesus Christ) Whom you have crucified; you sent Him to the grave, but by his own Divine Power He Arose."

To Troparion or Tropari from the Byzantine or Eastern Orthodox Paschal Liturgy for Good Friday:

"Come all you Christ-bearing people, let us see how Judas, the traitor, conspired with the lawless men against our Savior (Jesus Christ). Today they sentenced to death the immortal Word (*Logos*) and gave Him to (Pontius) Pilate, and He was crucified. As our Savior was suffering, He cried out, saying: "Father forgive them this sin "

To Troparion or Tropari from the Byzantine or Eastern Orthodox Paschal Liturgy for Good Friday:

"Judas the slave and wily one, disciple and traitor, the friend and devilish person, was shown by his deeds; as he followed his Teacher, he secretly planned to betray Him. He said to himself, I will betray Him and profit from my betrayal. He delayed Jesus by treachery and gave Him up to be led as a sheep to slaughter. He who alone is full of grace and is merciful."

To Troparion or Tropari from the Byzantine or Eastern Orthodox Paschal Liturgy for Good Friday:

"The rulers of the people assembled against the Lord and His Anointed (Jesus)."

To Troparion or Tropari from the Byzantine or Eastern Orthodox Paschal Liturgy for Good Friday:

"They have falsely accused me, O Lord, O Lord, do not forsake me."

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To Troparion or Tropari from the Byzantine or Eastern Orthodox Paschal Liturgy for Good Friday:

"Today the curtain of the Temple is torn as a rebuke to the lawless; the sun hides its rays, as it witnesses the Lord crucified."

To Troparion or Tropari from the Byzantine or Eastern Orthodox Paschal Liturgy for Good Friday:

"As You were led to the Cross, Lord, You asked:
"For which of my acts do you wish to crucify me, my people? I gave sight to your blind; I have cleansed your lepers; I have raised the sick amn from his bed. My people, what have I no done for you and how have you repaid me? In place of manna, you gave me gall; instead of water, vinegar, and instead of love, you nailed me to a Cross. I can endure no more. I shall call the nations and be glorified by them."

To *Troparion* or *Tropari* from the Byzantine or Eastern Orthodox Paschal Liturgy for Good Friday:

"Rejoice oh Heavens, sound the trumpets; cry out with joy, oh foundations and mountains of earth. For behold, Emmanuel has nailed our sins to the Cross. He Who trampled death raised Adam again, as He is the friend of all mankind."

To *Troparion* or *Tropari* from the Byzantine or Eastern Orthodox Paschal Liturgy for Easter Sunday:

"For Him Who was crucified in the flesh for us, Who suffered, was buried and rose from the dead, let us offer a hymn saying:Keep the Orthodoxy of Your Church, oh Christ, and bring peace to our lives, You Who are good and the Friend of man."

To *Troparion* or *Tropari* from the Byzantine or Eastern Orthodox Paschal Liturgy for Eastern Sunday:

"Christ has risen from the dead, by (his) death He has trampled death and given life to those in the tombs."

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With the above as introduction, we now come to something called in Russian, Ukrainian and Church Slavonic *Strastoterpty*, generally translated into English as "Passion Bearers". *Strastoterpty* is a complex, multi-facted concept; though antecedents to it may be found in Byzantine asceticism, and echoes of it found among the Vendeeans and Chouans of France and the

Carlists of Spain, in its full significance *Strastoterptsy*, in the Christian tradition at least, is something unique to the Russian Orthodox Church. It should be noted that *Strastoterptsy* has no equivalent in Byzantine Greek, and that neither the word nor the concept is known in the Bulgarian Orthodox Church nor in the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The word *Strastoterptsy* is virtually untranslatable: the expression "Passion Bearers" is almost meaningless, as the two parts of which it is composed seem to be incompatible, not to fit together, and, on first encountering it, one's reaction is: "What in the world is that supposed to mean?". Not only is *Strastoterptsy* virtually untranslatable, as one might expect, it is also very difficult to define; a clear, crisp, concise and comprehensive definition being quite impossible, at least in English, Spanish, French, or Italian. *Strastoterptsy* did not develop gradually, complex and difficult though the concept may be; as we shall see, it appears fully fledged and full blown quite suddenly, only a short time after the conversion of Kievan Russia to Byzantine Christianity (11th century).

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Walter Havighurst, my professor of creative writing at the University of Miami of Ohio, constantly repeated: "Do not tell, show", his favorite advice to budding writers. When dealing with something so undefinable - at least in English, Spanish, French and Italian - as *Strastoterptsy*, one really has no choice but to follow the sage advice of Professor Havighurst to the letter.

Therefore, we will deal at length with *Strastoterptsy* as exemplified by Sts. Boris and Gleb, the martyred princes of Kievan Russia, and the Tsarevich Dmitri, son of Ivan IV (16th century), martyred by an usurper, these generally considered to be the classic manifestations of *Strastoterptsy*. However, first we will expound on something which clearly links *Strastoterptsy* with the Vendeeans and Chouans of France and the Carlists of Spain, and also with a few more general considerations.

Says Leonid Heretz concerning the "Whites" or anti-Bolsheviks Of The Russian Civil War which followed the Russian Revolution:

"Success was not seen (by the Whites) as an immediate and realistic possibility; rather, the exalted beauty of the ideal and the utter monstrosity of Bolshevism (Communism) made self-sacrifice a moral imperative, and the greater the hopelessness the greater the significance of the act. Here is a characteristic expression of how White youth understood the matter: at Easter the words of the Paschal (Easter) Canon (the *To Troparion* [Greek] or *Tropari* [Church Slavonic]), to be exact):

"(Jesus) Christ is risen from the dead, having trampled death by death" (55)

The above reached two mortally wounded (White) Volunteers in their hospital beds. One said to the other:

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"It won't be anything terrible if the two of us don't survive. We also trampled death, because the Bolsheviks (Communists) are death itself, and even more terrible than death. Death destroys the body, but they (the Bolsheviks) are killing not only Russia's body, but also her soul." (56)

Anyone who knows the stunning beauty of the Russian Orthodox Easter Liturgy will understand. It inspired the Composer Modest Moussorgski to compose the famous "Russian Easter Overture".

Heretz continues:

"... the Whites often depicted the state of Russia in terms of "defilement", "impurity; and "blasphemy". Their choice of words reflects religious categories that were imbedded in Russian culture. ... the Russian ideal of perfection derived from Christian and specifically Byzantine asceticism has always been one of purity and of the triumph of spirit over matter. The (Russian) Revolution involved an attack on the values of the culture as a whole as well as on countless individual people."(57)

"... Given the youth of many of the Whites, especially the combat forces, and the religious element of their mindset, it is natural that the White literature's treatment of the movement's fallen heroes would reveal elements of the uniquely (?) Russian cult of the martyr of "Passion' Bearers" (*Strastoterptsy*), the tradition of Sts. Boris and Gleb, the *Tsarevich* (son of the Tsar) Dmitrii, and others, the tearful consideration of youthful, noble innocence and purity cut down by the conspiratorial forces of evil. In this context, death in battle was seen as both a redemptive act and a release. Here is one picture of the idealized White view of death:

"Fortunate and pure, a hero without blemish, Vitia left this world which had been defiled by scoundrels and enveloped in falsehood and deceit."(58)

We allow Mr. Heretz to continue:

"The Whites' struggle was an attempt to cleanse and purify Russia by means of self-sacrifice. They conceived of this in terms of Christian civilization's archetype for redemptiv suffering - the crucification of (Jesus) Christ. During the Ice March the (White)
(2785)

Volunteers demonstrated their willingness "to walk the Way of the Cross."(59)

"And to die for their mythic vision of Russia. This self-perception was given symbolic representation each participant in the Kornilov campaign was awarded a St. George's Cross bearing a crown of thorns. Thus the (White) Volunteers associated their act with the central event of the Christian conception of history."(60)

I own an exact replica of the pocket watch carried by White officers during the Russian Civil War. On one side of said

watch is the double eagle of Imperial Russia, on the other side is St. George, patron of Moscow, slaying the dragon. St. George, the spotless knight, slaying the dragon of evil.

Of course, the majority of the White's rank-and-file and leadership were Russian Orthodox Christians, and this inevitably put its stamp on the White movement. However, the White movement also included Siberian Buddhists, and large numbers of Ukrainian, Polish and Lithuanian Catholics, as well as quite large numbers of Muslims from the Caucasus and Central Asia. In fact, it was among the Muslims of Central Asia that the White movement had its last stronghold.

Though we have cited it in other places in this book, I cannot resist citing the poem "For the White Rose", by Charles A. Coulombe:

The Jacobites for royal James
And Bonnie Charlie as well
And Carlists fought with Spanish names
While Chouans tasted Hell.

The brave emerged from old Vendee
And died at Quiberon
Or fought with great old Duke Conde
(2786)

Or fell at bold Toulon.

In far off Russia's blinding snows
The Whites fought for their Tsar
And though their country's sunk in woes
Their glory none can mar.

I beg the King Who reigns above
That to me may be shown
How to fight with savage love
For altar, and for throne.

Kurban Said was an Azeri and a Shi'a, as well as a veteran of the White armies in the Russian Civil War. In his fine novel Ali

& Nino, Kurban Said expressed the ideals and mentality of the many Muslims who joined the Whites. At the end of said novel, Ali Khan Shirvanshir, the hero of said novel, dies fighting the Bolsheviks in an act of self-sacrifice which any White Russian would understand perfectly. (61) GOD IS ONE. TO GOD THERE IS NO UNKNOWN HERO.

In the 20th century, tens of millions of Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians suffered martyrdom at the hands of Marxist atheists. Because no Protestants were martyred at the hands of the French Revolutionaries, and very few if any Protestants were suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Marxists, today many Protestants believe that the age of martyrs ended in the 4th century of the Christian era. A Polish Catholic who himself narrowly missed martyrdom, such as Pope John Paul II, cannot make such a crass error.

Pope John Paul II is neither Russian nor Ukrainian nor Eastern Orthodox of any sort. However, being Polish, he constantly

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referred to himself as "*this Slav*", and has a long and close connections with the Ukrainian or Slavonic Rite. So, it is no surprise to find in Pope John Paul II something of the spirit of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Adolf Hitler in his anti-Catholic diatribes said that Catholicism is not German but, rather, "Latin-Slav". Had Hitler not been an ignorant lout, he would have added "Celtic" to "Latin-Slav", thus giving "Latin-Slav-Celtic".

Veritatis Splendor (Splendor of the Truth), is defined as an

Encyclical Letter Addressed by the Supreme Pontiff Pope John Paul II to All the Bishops of the Catholic Church Regarding certain Fundamental Questions of the Church's Moral Teaching.

It is important to remember to whom Pope John Paul II addressed Veritatis Splendor, in which he gives a succinct definition of martyrdom:

"The unacceptability of "teleological", "consequentialist" and "proportionalist" ethical theories, which deny the existence of negative moral norms regarding specific kinds of behavior, norms which are valid without exception, is confirmed in a particularly by Christian martyrdom, which has always accompanied and continues to accompany the life of the (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) Church(es) even today.

"At the dawn of the New Testament (*Injil*), St. John the Baptist (Yahya), unable to refrain from speaking of the Law of the Lord and rejecting any compromise with evil, "gave his life in witness to truth and justice", (Gospel [*Injil*] According to St. Mark, VI:17-29)."

"In the New Testament (*Injil*) we find many examples of followers of (Jesus) Christ, beginning with the deacon St. Stephen (Acts VI::8 - VII:60) and the Apostle St. James (Acts XII:1-2) who died as martyrs in order to profess their faith and their love for (Jesus) Christ, unwilling to deny him."

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"The (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) Church proposes the example of numerous Saints who bore witness to and defended moral truth even to the point of enduring martyrdom, or who preferred death to (committing) a single mortal sin. In raising them to the honor of the altars, the (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) Church has canonized their witness and declared the truth of their judgement, according to which the Love of God entails the obligation to respect the commandments, even in the most dire circumstances, and the refusal to betray those commandments, even for the sake of saving one's own life.

Martyrdom, accepted as an affirmation of the inviolability of the moral order, bears splendid witness both to the holiness of God's Law and to the inviolability of the personal dignity of man. This dignity may never be disparaged nor called into question, even with good intentions, whatever the difficulties involved. Jesus warns us most sternly:

"What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?" (Gospel [Injil] According to St. Mark VIII:36) Martyrdom rejects as false and illusory whatever "exceptional" conditions to an act morally evil in itself. Indeed, it even more clearly unmasks the true face of such an act: *it is a violation of man's humanity*. Hence, martyrdom is also the exaltation of a person's perfect "humanity" and of his "life", as is attested by St. Ignatius of Antioch, addressing the Christians of Rome, the place of his martyrdom: *"Have mercy on me, brethren: do not hold me back from the living; do not wish that I die. Let me arrive at the place of pure light; once there I will be truly a man.*

"In this witness to the absoluteness of the moral good, *Christians are not alone*: they are supported by the moral sense present in peoples and by the great sapientiel traditions of East and west, from which the interior and mysterious working of God's Spirit are **NOT** absent. The words of the (Pagan) Latin poet Juvenal apply to all: *"Consider it the greatest of crimes to prefer survival to honor, and, out of love of physical life, to lose the very reason for living."* The voice of conscience has always clearly recalled that there are truths and moral values for which one must be prepared to give up one's life. In an individual's words and above all in the sacrifice of his life for a moral value, the (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) Church sees a single testimony to truth." (62)

Here are two citations from Pope John Paul II
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concerning Islam:

To the Islamic Community: "I share your belief that mankind owes its existence to the One, Compassionate God Who created heaven and earth. In a world in which God is denied or disobeyed, in a world that experiences so much suffering and is so much in need of God's mercy, let us strive together to be courageous bearers of hope." (63)

"Abraham, our common (spiritual) ancestor, teaches all of us, Christians, Jews and Muslims, to follow this way of mercy and love." (64)

From the above, it is obvious that the last paragraph of Veritatis Splendor which we cited above was inspired by the memory of tens of millions of Muslims martyred by Marxist atheism and materialism.

Was said paragraph, and to some degree the other paragraphs cited, also inspired by the example of Imam Hussein? The answer is a resounding **"YES"**. Let me explain.

As one gathers from reading his writings, Pope John Paul II was a very learned man, whom many already considered to be a "Doctor of the Church" even in his lifetime, and was very knowledgeable concerning the other great religions, i.e., Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism. It is therefore evident that he knew of Imam Hussein.

Pope John Paul II was a disciple of St. John of the Cross, who inspired his priestly vocation and his doctoral thesis. Among other languages, Pope John Paul II reads both Spanish and English. It may therefore be considered certain that he has read the works of Luce Lopez-Baralt cited in the previous chapter.

As we said in the previous chapter, and will deal with in

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detail below, St. John of the Cross was A Sufi initiate, inspired not only by certain Sufi poets and thinkers, but also by the Shi'a Imams, especially the Sixth Imam, Ja'afar as-Sadiq. By way of Ibn Abbad of Ronda, St. John of the Cross had a firm if indirect link to Hasan ibn Ali, the Second Shi'a Imam.

Besides its intrinsic interest, the above has implications for the question of Shi'ism in Muslim Spain, as we noted in some detail in the previous chapter. We now give a brief summary of said reasons:

- ❖ 1.) St. John of the Cross was a Sufi initiate, and his knowledge of Islam, including Sufism and Shi'ism, can only have come from the Moriscos; all other theories

and hypotheses have been shown to be false and untenable.

❖ 2.) As we noted previously, living in a Catholic environment inevitably, though in an unconscious manner, have strengthened any Shi'a tendencies among the Moriscos. However, living in a Catholic environment could, by itself have implanted knowledge of the Shi'a Imams and their teachings. Said knowledge could only have reached the Moriscos by way of their Hispano-Muslim ancestors.

As we shall see below, Imam Hussein often spoke of St. John the Baptist (Yahya), indeed seemed obsessed with him, when on his way to Karbala. Pope John Paul II very prominently speaks of St. John the Baptist (Qur'an: Yahya) in the second paragraph from Veritatis Splendor cited above.

The authors of the above quotations concerning the Russian Civil War see in the spirit of sacrifice of the White Army in the Russian Civil War a manifestation of Byzantine asceticism and also specifically Russian elements. Everything indicates the the many

(2791)

Catholics (mostly of the Ukrainian or Slavonic Rite, to be sure) and the many Muslims in the White Army shared this spirit of sacrifice in some manner or other, as is indicated by Kurban Said, Azeri and Shi'a, veteran of the White Army and author of the novel Ali & Nino, of which we have spoken before.

Here it might be wise to explain some references which might be obscure to most readers, which Shi'a Muslims might find particularly fascinating.

There is a medieval Spanish song which says:

*En el reino de Moravia marchan las piedras
En la Catedral of Praga duermen tres reyes*

In the Kingdom of Moravia the stones march
In the Cathedral of Prague (ancient capital of the
Kingdom of Bohemia) sleep three kings.

No doubt this lore was brought to medieval Spain by Czech
pilgrims on the Pilgrims' Road to Santiago de Compostela.

St. Wenceslas (or *St. Vyacheslav*) of Bohemia is well known
thanks to the Christmas song "Good King Wenceslas", which we give
below:

Good King Wenceslas looked out,
On the Feast of (St.) Stephen (December 26),
When the snow lay 'round about,
Deep and crisp and even:
Brightly shown the moon that night,
Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
Gathering winter fuel.

"Hither, page, and stand by me,
If though knowest telling:
Yonder peasant who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?"
"Sire, he lives a good league hence,
Underneath the mountain,
Right against the forest tall,
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By Ste. Agnes' fountain."

"Bring me flesh and bring me wine,
Bring me pine logs hither:
Thou and I shall see him dine,
When we bear them thither."
Page and monarch, forth they went,
Forth they went together;
Through the rude wind's wild lament
And the bitter weather.

"Sire, the night is darker now,
And the wind blows stronger;
Fails my heart, I know not how;
I can go no longer."

"Mark my footsteps, good my page;
Tread thou in them boldly:
Thou shalt find the winter's rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly."

In his master's step he trod,
Where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod
Which (the feet of) the saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure,
Wealth or rank possessing;
Ye, who now bless the poor,
Shall yourselves find blessing.

St. Wenceslas (or *St. Vyacheslav*) of Bohemia was a wise, pious, indeed saintly and just king. When he was only 25 or 26 years old, his brother Boleslaus invited him to a religious festival at Boleslayvia, Bohemia on September 29, 929. As he was on his way to Mass, St. Wenceslaus (or *St. Vyacheslav*) was attacked and murdered by Boleslaus and his followers. Thus, St. Wenceslas (or *St. Vyacheslav*) was martyred in a treacherous, cowardly and, indeed, sacriligious manner. St. Wenceslas (or *St. Vyacheslav*) was immediately proclaimed a martyr, and is the patron saint of Bohemia. In both the Catholic and Russian Orthodox calendars, September 28 is dedicated to St. Wenceslas (or *St.*

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Vyacheslav) of Bohemia, "Good King Wenceslas".

St. Wenceslas (or *St. Vyacheslav*) of Bohemia lived nearly a century before Sts. Boris and Gleb. Relations were close between Kievan Russia on the one hand and the Czech-speaking kingdoms of Bohemia and Moravia on the other, and the story of St. Wenceslas (or *St. Vyacheslav*) of Bohemia was well known in Kievan Russia. One very early source states that Boris (and presumably Gleb) was familiar with the story of St. Wenceslas (or *St. Vyacheslav*) of Bohemia.(65) Note that St. Wenceslas (or *St. Vyacheslav*) of Bohemia was only 25 or 26 years old at the time of his death, that he was a just and pious king and that he was, for purely political

motives, murdered by his brother in a most treacherous, cowardly and sacreligious manner. The above facts may help to explain certain things which are enigmatic and difficult to understand, as we shall see below.

Norman W. Ingham has dealt in great detail with the parallels between St. Wenceslas (or St. Vyacheslav) of Bohemia on the one hand and Sts. Boris and Gleb on the other. As Ingham says:

"(St.) Wenceslas' martyrdom was used as a model and precedent for (Sts.) Boris and Gleb. The concept was further developed in (Kievan) Rus' and took on new and original features there."(66)

Ingham carefully itemizes the common elements in the story of St. Wenceslas (or St. Vyacheslav) of Bohemia on the one hand and that of Sts. Boris and Gleb on the other:

- ❖ 1.) A brother of the saint conspires with evil men, holding stealthy meetings with them, and plans to kill the saint.

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- ❖ 2.) The murderer uses deceit and cunning, pretending to love his brother but enticing him to a place where he can be trapped.
- ❖ 3.) The saint is warned about the fratricide but rejects the warning (either from disbelief or out of principle).
- ❖ 4.) The site of the murder is away from the prince's own territory, and he is virtually undefended.
- ❖ 5.) The killing takes place in the morning, after the saint's activities of the night before have been described.
- ❖ 6.) He usually has time to pray (and attend Matins).
- ❖ 7.) The murder is done as though from ambush; the victim is suddenly surrounded by several men, who close in on him by stages.

- ❖ 8.) The saint does not resist his attackers. The essential fact must be examined further.
- ❖ 9.) He is stabbed to death, the actual killing being done by henchmen, not by the brother himself.
- ❖ 10.) The body is mistreated and/or neglected.
- ❖ 11.) The slaughter and robbery of the saint's followers take place immediately.
- ❖ 12.) The remains of the saint are retrieved and entombed with appropriate honors.
- ❖ 13) Divine vengeance is visited upon the murderers, who suffer "evilly" for their crime." (67)

St. Wenceslas (or St. Vyacheslav) of Bohemia and Sts. Boris and Gleb are all perfectly historical figures. However, in their cases it is not possible to determine where history ends and legend begins. Many, probably most of the parallels listed by

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Ingham are simply the result of historical coincidence, though certainly not all.

The story of St. Wenceslas (or St. Vyacheslav) of Bohemia was well known in Kievan Russia, known by all the clergy, and, through them, by the general populace. As we said above, one chronicler specifically states that the story of St. Wenceslas (or St. Vyacheslav) of Bohemia was known to Boris (and presumably also to Gleb). This may help to explain certain things which may seem strange, enigmatic and difficult to understand.

For much of the year, the sun-drenched Ukrainian steppes, and the contiguous steppes of the Don and Kuban (since the Kuban Cossacks are Ukrainian-speaking, perhaps the Kuban steppes should

be considered as part of Ukraine) are a riot of color, with wild flowers, some so tall as to reach a horse's belly, forming a veritable Persian carpet and perfuming the air. In spring and early summer, when warm breezes waft over the Ukrainian, Don and Kuban steppes from the Black Sea, and make the tall feather-grass wave and flutter, wild flowers cover the rich earth: dog rose, lupine, crocus, anemone, white and yellow daisies, larkspur, toadflax, Aaron's rod, poppies, liverwort, buttercup, wallflowers, dandelion, Madonna lilies, corn flowers ('bachelor buttons'), mauve, common mallow, musk mallow, wild flax, helianthus, foxglove (or "St. John's Bells"), steppe lavender, lady's mantle and wild mustard. In the autumn the Ukrainian, Don and Kuban steppes are covered with steppe asters, autumn crocus, thistles, caraway flowers and goldenrod.

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Some 412 species of birds are native to Ukraine, including such songsters as the bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*), oak thrush (*Monticola saxa tilis*), stock dove (*Columba oenas*), wood pigeon (*Columba palumbas*), turtle dove (*Streptopelia turtur*), thrush nightingale (*Luscinia luscinia*), calendar lark (*Melanocorypha calandra*), Nordmann's pratincole (*Glareola nordmani*), rock pipit (*Motacilla cinerea*), meadow pipit, tawny pipit, stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*), blackbird (*Turdus merula*), tomtit (*Parus caeruleus*), and jay (*Garrulus glandarius Iphigenia*), to name but a very few. The calendar lark (*Melanocorypha calandra*), with its melodious song and spectacular flight, together with the kite (*Milvus milvus*) and the black kite (*Milvus migrans*), with their

spectacular dives and aerial acrobatics and their soaring, wheeling flight, are virtual symbols of the steppe.(68)

As I know from speaking with them, Russian, German, Austrian, Rumanian, Hungarian, Spanish, Italian, Croatian, Bosnian, Slovak and Slovenian veterans of World War II in the southern sector of the Eastern Front are ever after haunted by the "violins of the steppe", the "concerto of the steppe", the "song of the steppe" the "silver flutes of the steppe", the "chorus of the steppe", "hymn of the steppe" and a host of other names which they called it, though all referred to the same thing. Years after the end of the war, when they were far from the Ukrainian, Don and Kuban steppes, they needed only to close their eyes to hear it once again. The same is true of Ukrainians and Don Cossacks and Kuban Cossacks fleeing Communist tyranny, to whom the haunting

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"violins of the steppe", "silver flutes of the steppe", "song of the steppe", et cetera, brings bitter tears of nostalgia.

The "song of the steppe" or whatever one wishes to call it is impossible to neatly or scientifically analyze, to neatly break down into its component elements; as we said above, is one of a vast multitude of examples of "the whole being greater than the sum of its parts", something which the materialists cannot explain.

"The Song of the Steppe" is made up in part of wind in the high feather-grass and wheat, the chirping, buzzing, whirring and humming of insects and the high piping trilling and warbling, the madrigals, arias, bel canto, melismas and pearling pianissimas of

the songbirds. In "the song of the steppe" we have a perfect example of **"the whole being far greater than the sum of its parts"**, something outside the comprehension of those sometimes called "squints" or "geeks in lab coats", who, in the words of William Blake are mired in "single vision and Newton's sleep". To dissect something is to kill it.

Heinz Schroter, himself a veteran of World War II in the Ukrainian, Don and Kuban steppes, writes:

"When they (veterans of World War II in the Ukrainian, Don and Kuban steppes) close their eyes in the silent hours they hear again the song of the steppe. Its sound is tender and high, like the delicate whirring of dragonflies' wings, or the thin, brittle noise that a man makes when he softly runs his finger around a polished glass. The song of the steppe is sweet, seductive and very sad. It sings of the blue sky and the sun, but also of shadows cast by the clouds and of summer lightning, as sometimes in Mozart's music a peaceful, blue heaven smiles down on a silvery
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landscape until a sudden chill wind casts a handful of withered leaves at our feet, and we shiver.

Many men have heard the song of the steppe. They have heard it on a summer afternoon, when the heat haze waves and shivers over the endless plain, and in the evening when the gnats fill the air with their ecstatic dance. They have heard it in late October when the boisterous organ of the autumn storms roars across the steppe, and in winter when the hollow crackle of ice in the freezing, silent night speaks of death, when the dark shadows of wolves roam under a high, pale moon and there is no other sound save the soft rustle of the snow as it drifts across the deathly silent fields." (69)

In the Ukrainian, Don and Kuban steppes would be born Kievan Rus', the first Russian or East Slav state.

The first Russian or East Slav state was founded by three Viking brothers, i.e., Rurik (Old Norse: *Hroerkr*), Sineus (Old Norse: *Signiutr*) and Truvor (Old Norse: *Thorvadr*), with Novgorod

as its capital. Sineus (*Signiutr*) and Truvor (*Thorvadr*) dies soon afterwards.

Kiev (Ukrainian: *Ky'iv*) was founded in 560 AD by Prince Kii (Ukrainian: *Kiy*) of the East Slavic tribe of the *Poliane*. Kii or Kiy was the founder of Kiev or Kyiv, which is spelled *Kiev* in Russian, and pronounced 'Kee-ehv', but is spelled *Kyiv* in Ukrainian, and pronounced 'Kyee-eev'.

Two of Rurik's (*Hroerkr*) men, Askold (Old Norse: *Hoskuld*) and Dir (Old Norse: *Dyr*) following the track blazed centuries before by the Goths, left Novgorod, and took control of Kiev or Kyiv, from the dynasty founded by Kii or Kiy. Kiev became the capital rather than Novgorod. Rurik (*Hroerkr*) died in 879 and was succeeded by Oleg (Old Norse: *Haelgi*) brother o of his wife

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Efonda. Oleg (Old Norse: *Haelgi*) took control of Kiev after Askold (Old Norse: *Hoskuld*) and Dir (Old Norse: *Dyr*) were killed in combat against the Pechenegs or Patzinaks, i.e., Turko-Mongol steppe nomads. Oleg (*Haelgi*) acted as regent for Rurik's (*Hroerkr*) son Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*), who succeeded Oleg (*Haelgi*) when the latter died in 913.

Oleg (*Haelgi*) has a prominent place in Russian and Ukrainian folklore and legend. One of these legends of Oleg inspired the 19th century Russian poet Alexandr Pushkin to write the following:

THE LAY OF OLEG THE WISE

Wise Oleg to war has gone again
The Khazars have aroused his ire
For rapine and raid, hamlet, city and plain
He gives over to plunder and fire.
In mail of Byzantium, with his host behind,
The Prince gallops along on his faithful charger.

From the darkling fir forest, to meet the array,
Forth comes a grey-haired magician:
To none but Perun [*Slavic god of thunder*] did that sorcerer pray,
Fulfilling the prophet's dread mission:
His life he had spent in penance and pain:-
And beside that enchanter Wise Oleg drew rein
Now read me, enchanter, beloved of Perun,
The good and ill that is before me;
Shall my foes find a cause for rejoicing soon
When the earth of the grave is piled o'er me?
Unfold all the truth; fear me not; and as for reward,
Choose among them -I give you my best battle-steed."

"Oh, enchanters they care not for prince of for peer,
And gifts are but needlessly given;
The wise tongue never stumbles for falsehood or fear,
'Tis the friend of the councils of Heaven!
The years of the future are clouded and dark,
Yet on your fair forehead your fate I can mark:

"Remember now firmly the words of my tongue;
The warrior delights in glory;
On the gate of Byzantium your buckler is hung,
Your conquests are famous in story;
Your boldest dominion over land and over sea,
(2800)

And the foe views with envy your great destiny:

"Not the rage of the deep with its treacherous wave,
At the stroke of the hurricane-hour
Not the knife of the coward, the sword of the brave,
To undo you shall ever have power:
Within your strong harness no wound shall you know,
A guardian attends you wherever you go.

Your steed fears not labor, nor danger, nor pain,
His lord's lightest accent he hears,
Now still, though the arrows fall round him like rain,
Across the field sodden red with blood he gallops;
He fears not the winter, he fears not to bleed-
Yet your death-wound shall come from your good battle steed!

Oleg smiled a moment, but yet on his brow,
In his eye, thought and sorrow were blended;
In silence he leaned on his saddle and slowly
The Prince from his charger descended;
And as though from a friend he were parting with great pain,
He strokes his broad neck and his dark flowing mane.

"Farewell, then, my comrade, fleet, faithful and bold!
We must part, such is Destiny's power:
Now rest you-I swear, in my stirrup of gold
No foot shall be set, from this hour.

Farewell! We have been comrades for many a year-
My squires, now I pray you, come take my charger.

"The softest of carpets his horse-cloth shall be:
And lead him away to the meadow;
On the choicest of grain he shall feed daintily,
He shall drink of the well in the shadow."
Then straightaway departed the squires with the steed,
And to valiant Oleg a fresh charger they lead.

Oleg and his comrades are feasting, I know;
The mead [*honey wine*]-cups are merrily clashing:
Their locks are as white as the glimmering snow
When the sun on the [*Scythian*] grave-mound is flashing:
They talk of old times, of the days of their pride,
And the frays where together they fought side by side.
"But where", says Oleg, "is my good battle-steed?
My mettlesome charger-how fares he?

Is he playing as ever, as fleet in the course?
His age and his freedom how does he bear it?"
They answer and say: On the hill by the stream
He has long slept the slumber that knows not a dream.
Oleg bent his head and in thought knit his brow:
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"What have all my magic affected?
A false lying dotard you are, Enchanter:
Your counsels I should have rejected.
My steed might have borne me till now, were it not for you."
Then the bones of the charger Oleg wished to see.

Oleg rode with Igor the Prince [*son of Rurik*] at his side,
Behind him his spearmen were serried;
And there on the slope by the Dnieper's swift tide
Lay the bones of his charger, unburied:
They are washed by the rain, the dust over them is cast,
And above them the feather-grass waves in the breeze.

Then the Wise Oleg set his foot on the steed's white skull;
Saying: "Sleep, my old friend, in your glory!
Your lord has outlived you, his own days are near full:
At his funeral feat, red and gory,
'Tis not you beneath the axe that shall redden the sod,
That my dust may be honored to quaff your brave blood.

"And I am to find my destruction in *this*?
My death in a skeleton seeking?"
From the skull of the steed a snake, with a hiss, Crept
forth, as the hero was speaking:
Around his legs, like a ribbon, it twined its black ring;
And the Wise Oleg shrieked aloud as he felt the keen sting.

The mead [*honey wine*]-cups are foaming, they circle around;

At Oleg's mighty death-feast they are ringing;
Prince Igor and Princess Olga they sit on the [Scythian
grave] mound;
The warriors the death-song are singing:
And they talk of old times, of the days of their pride,
And the frays where together they fought side by side.

Below is a list of the grand princes of Kiev before the
Mongol conquest:

Rurik (Old Norse: *Hroerkr*), 860-879.
Oleg (Old Norse: *Haelgi*), 879-912.
Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*), 913-945.
Olga (Old Norse: *Haelga*) (as regent), 945-964.
Svyatoslav I, 964-972.
Yaropolk I, 972-980.
Vladimir I, 980-1015.
Svyatopolk I, 1015-1019.
Yaroslav the Wise, 1019-1054.
Mstislav (co-ruler), 1024-1036.
Izyaslav I, 1054-1078.
Vsevolod, 1078-1093.

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Svyatopolk II, 1093-1113.
Vladimir II Monomakh, 1113-1125.
Mtsislav II, 1125-1132.
Yaropolk II, 1132-1139.

Though Kievan Rus' was destroyed by the Mongols, until after
the time of Ivan IV 'the Terrible' at the end of the 16th century,
the Tsars of Russia all claimed descent from Rurik (*Hroerkr*) the
Viking.

The people of Kievan Russia, whether Vikings, Slavs, Greeks,
Balts (Lithuanians) or remnants of Iranians and Goths, were known
as *Rus'* from the name of the *Rukh-As*, a branch of the Alans known
in Latin chronicles as *Roxalani*. This is one of a host of proofs
of the profound, pervasive and lasting influence of the Iranian
Saka peoples - Scythians, Sarmatians and Alans - on the East
Slavs.

Says Marija Gimbutas:

"The Sarmatians, another group of (Iranian) steppe nomads, infiltrated the North Pontic lands at the end of the Scythian era around 200 BC. Before their massive expansion to the west in the second century BC, the Sarmatians lived beyond the Don. However, they had managed to cross it at some time during the fourth century BC. Their sites are known on both sides of this river. Pliny speaks of many Sarmatian tribes west of the Don, and in the first century BC, Agrippa's map shows Sarmatians and not Scythians north of the Black Sea and east of the Dnieper. Archaeological remains indicate that they must have reached the bend of the Dnieper bend around 200 BC. Their early sites are concentrated in the region of the Dnieper rapids, north of the Sea of Azov, and in the Upper Donetz basin, where they left more than 50 *kurgans* of the pure trans-Volga type.

The bulk of Sarmatian archaeological evidence pertains to the period from the first century BC to the first century AD. In the north west, Sarmatian tribes appeared west of the Dnieper, south of Kiev, along the
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rivers Ros', Rosava, Tjasmin, Turja and Vsya. Strabo (63 BC - 23 AD) knew of a number of Sarmatian tribes: Iazygians, Roxolani, Aorsians, Siraces and Alans. During the second century AD they reached Moldavia, the lands of the Lower Danube, the Hungarian grasslands and even Poland. Most of the Sarmatian sites in Rumania and eastern Central Europe date from the third century AD.

...
...The physical presence of the Sarmatians naturally influenced Slavic culture. Linguists and mythologists speak of strong Iranian influences and similarities in the Slavic religious vocabulary. It was during this era that the Slavs borrowed from the Iranians the words *bogu* = 'god', *raji* = 'paradise', and *svetu* = 'holy'. (70)

Suffice it to say that the 19th century Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko was fascinated by the Scythian burial mounds which dot the Ukrainian countryside, and today there is a political party in Ukraine of traditionalist and patriotic ideology known as *Rukh*. The motifs of Russian and Ukrainian peasant embroidery are of Scythian, Sarmatian and Alan origin.

At first the kingdom of Kievan Russia was Pagan. Sources list names of the pagan Slavic and Iranian deities worshipped in pre-

Christian Kiev. Marija Gimbutas gives an account of the destruction of the idols by Vladimir:

"In the East Slavic area, the only Slavic pantheon to find its way into the written records is the one set up about 980 by Prince Vladimir, who eight years later cast down these same gods and forcibly baptized the population of Kiev in the River Dnieper. The Russian Primary Chronicle, compiled about 1111, says:

"And Vladimir began to rule Kiev alone, and he set up idols on a hill outside the palace court - a wooden figure of *Perun*, and his head was of silver and his mouth was of gold; *Khors*, and *Dazhbog*, and *Stribog*, and *Simargl*, and *Mokosh* - and he and his people made sacrifice to the idols.'
Simultaneously:

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'Vladimir also placed Dobrynya, his uncle, in Novgorod, and after Dobrynya came to Novgorod, he set up an idol of *Perun* above the river Volkhov, and the people of Novgorod revered him as a god.'

The Primary Chronicle goes on to tell how the people of Kiev cried when Vladimir caused the idol of *Perun* to be cast into the Dnieper.

A ruined temple, presumably that of *Perun*, was discovered in 1951 near a place called *Peryn*, 4 km. south of Novgorod. It stood on a hill, surrounded by the River Volkhov, its tributary the *Verjashja*, and a swamp. The wooden structure had decayed, but the floor plan showed an octagonal rosette shape. In the center was a circular mound enclosed by a ditch containing charcoal, probably a base for an idol and a place for the ceremonial fire. Nearby were traces of a field stone hearth, and beneath these a flat stone which was probably part of an altar.

During the excavations of *Staraja Ladoga* in 1958, a wooden idol was found, within a small timber structure considered to have served cult purposes, in the lower cultural horizon dating to the ninth-tenth centuries; 23 cm. high and 2.5 cm. wide, it was the effigy of a god with moustache and beard, wearing a conical helmet. The hands were lacking, and it had only one leg.

The Primary Chronicle gives the texts of the peace treaties with Byzantium made by Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*) (945) and *Svyatoslav* (971). The 945 treaty was ratified by the Byzantines in the Cathedral of *Hagia Sophia* (in Constantinople); Igor and his men went out to the hill where the idol of *Perun* stood (at Kiev; either this

antedates the Perun of Vladimir or it is an anachronism on the part of the author), and laying down their shields, weapons and gold, ratified it on oath. The 971 treaty records their oath: that he who would not respect the treaty should be cursed by *Perun* and *Volos*, the god of flocks; and that he should become as yellow as the gold of his ornaments and be destroyed by his own weapons.

Slavic temples and statues of gods of early historic times are well documented. Even in the later Christian era, sculptures or reliefs portraying the figure of Christ, or a nobleman, continued pre-Christian stylistic traditions. Were they epigones of pre-historic sanctuaries and idols or a phenomenon of the late pagan era? For a long time the Zbrucz idol was held to be the only one of its kind, but the number of statues (some of them undated, some from excavated
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sites) has by now considerably increased. Very probably the carved images of gods produced throughout the Pre- and Proto-Slavic periods stem directly from the Pro-Indo-European stone stelae of the third and early second millennia BC. They are strikingly similar in style to those of the later Slavic period. A series of stone statues representing one-, three- or four-headed gods, usually holding a drinking horn, wearing a conical cap, and bearing incised horse figures of solar symbols, have been unearthed in the upper Dniester region; they are dated through association with the Chernjakhovo pottery to about the fourth century AD. Such stone idols were clearly located within the boundaries of a cult precinct, surrounded by hearths and offering places. In most Slavic areas idols were built of wood; traces of massive posts standing in the centre of a round clay plastered ares - the floor of a wooden temple - bear this out. Such have been attested in the River Tjasmin basin in association with Pen'kovka finds of the sixth-seventh centuries AD and in the Don basin in the hill fort of Borshevo typ belonging to the Severjane tribe.

Temples are often found at the topmost point of a hill fort, as evidenced in both early- and proto-Slavic periods, and showing a continuous tradition up to the early second millennium AD when the temples were destroyed. Around cult places in the hill forts of Scythian and later times offerings of acorns, grains, clay imitations of grains and bread, miniature and normal sized pots, iron ornaments and other objects have been found. The practice of offering up grain continued among the Slavs in the nineteenth century and is not unknown in the twentieth.

Burials of dogs and of horses' skulls together with leg bones dating from various prehistoric and early

historic periods are found in association with temples or sacrificial places. Such burials were discovered for instance in the settlement of Pozharnaja Balka in the district of Poltava on the bank of the River Vorksla, dating back to the seventh-sixth centuries BC. The same site yielded extremely interesting representations of birds, mostly swans, measuring from 1.5 to 2.5 metres, which had been made by cutting away the earth around the outlines, leaving them in relief; they had been covered with ashes.

A strong belief in life after death is indicated by the burial rites. Slavic royal tombs are as eloquent as other Indo-European royal tombs, be they Hittite, Phrygian, Thracian, Greek or Germanic. A classic example is the magnificent burial known as Chernaja Mogila discovered in the town of Chernigov, which dates (2806)

from the mid tenth century. Three members of a royal family, husband, wife, and son, had been placed in a timber mortuary house and equipped with everything - horses, weapons, sickles, buckets, pots - that was believed to be necessary for the after life.

Saxo, Helmold, and the Old Icelandic Knytlingasaga all mention *Svetovit*, the patron god of Rugen; Saxo, Helmold, and Herbold also mention *Jarovit*, *Porovit*, and *Ruevit* on the same island, and Helmold says that some of these idols had two, three, or even more heads. At least two of these names had calendrical significance: *Jaro*, connected with *jaru*, 'young, ardent, bright, rash' means 'spring', and *Jarovit's* priest proclaims in his name: "I am your god who covers the plains with grass and the forests with leaves. The produce of fields and woods, the young of the cattle and all things that serve man's needs, are in my power'. *Ruenu* is the autumnal month named for the maring calls of the newly matured animals: Old Church Slavonic *ruinu*, *ruenu* - 'September'; Czech *rijen* "October"; Serbian *rujan* - 'September'. *Pora* means 'midsummer'. These three aspects of *Triglav* encompass the spring-to-autumn growing season for plants and the maturing season for animals.

The root *svet-*, like *jar-*, has an original meaning of 'strong'. *Svetovit* was both war god and protector of fields; his feast was a harvest festival. He had his own white horse, which only the high priest might ride, and was believed to accompany those going to war seated upon it. Before a war began, the horse was made to walk down a row of crossed spears; if he did so without catching his hooves on the spears, the future augured well. Hence the Russian phrase *veshchij kon'* - 'prophetic horse, which has an exact parallel in the Avesta and among the Balts. The Common Slavic word for 'time', **verme*, interprets it as a wheel-track (Old Indic *vartman-*). This word was apparently connected with ritual chariot

races (*vartanna*, known in this connection among the Mitanni from 1380 BC). It is worth noting that both the Russians and the Kirghizians imagined the Polar Star as a post around which an ox, reindeer or horse is forever walking. The horse draws the wheel of the seasons. When war or winter is approaching, that is the time for prophecy: for the cult of the horse and of Boundless Time. Seeing that the Iranians regarded the Persian *Vrthragna* and *Zurvan* (who had three epithets: 'virile', 'mature' and 'feeble') as two separate deities, there is reason to believe that their Slavic equivalents likewise coexisted. In the northwest we know *Triglav* and his four aspects, some of which, it would appear, gave

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their own particular name to the polycephalic deity for which 'Triglav' was perhaps only a generic or a taboo name. We also know *Svarozhich* 'Svarog's son' (adiminutive of *Svarog*), and in Russia we have the well attested figure of *Jarilo*.

St. Tikhon Zadonskij, an eighteenth century Orthodox bishop of Voronezh, proscribed the pagan festivals and 'satanic games' centered on an old idol called *Jarilo*, which traditionally took place from Wednesday or Friday until Sunday in the week following Whitsuntide. Until 1673 the Voronezh 'games' featured a man adorned with flowers and carrying jingle-bells, with his face painted red and white. Belorussian folklore preserves the image of *Jarilo* riding upon a white horse: he wears a white cloak, is crowned with wild flowers, carries a bunch of wheat ears in his left hand, and goes bare foot.

Svarog, though not included in Vladimir's pantheon, is identified in the Russian translation of the Malalas Chronicle with the Greek metalsmith god *Hephaistos*. According to Old Russian records, *Svarog* is said to have generated the sun, *Khors Dazhbog*, and tradition called both the celestial and the hearth fire *Svarog's* son. The worship of the hearth fire, preserved among the Ukrainians and Belarussians, must once have been as strong among the Slavs as among the Balts: guarded by priests in the sanctuaries and by mothers in the home, the fire never went out except on the eve of the eummer solstice festival, when it was symbolically extinguished and then rekindled. The northwest Slavic *Zuarasic* - Latin transliterations of Slavic at the time being quite haphazard - may have been identical with *Svarozhich* (*Svarog's* son), the early Russians' personification of the solar fire. *Svarog's* name is probably related to the Indic *svargas* 'radiant sky' and *svarati* 'gleams, shines'. The suffix -og shows his name to be of Scythian, i.e., Iranian, origin. He survives in the Rumanian adjective *sfarog* 'torrid, sunburnt', and in

names of hills and towns along the Slavic-German borderline in Poland.

As generator of the sun, *Svarog* rates comparison with Vedic *Indra* and Iranian *Vrtragna*. *Indra's* great feat is the slaying of the *vritra*, 'obstruction', an evil serpent who has imprisoned the waters behind the 'mountain' (i.e., the sky). The Iranian warrior god *Vrtragna*, as his name shows, also overcomes obstructions, though there is no record of him as a dragon fighter. He is also a smith, associated with fire and with generative power, particularly of a sexual nature. A master craftsman, he can change his

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own form into that of the wind, the golden horned aurochs, the boar, the horse, or the falcon *Varagna*, the last named being his main incarnation. This suggests the Russian *bylina* of the *bogatyr' Volkh* (*volkhv* 'priest', 'sorcerer') who could turn himself into a grey wolf, a white bull with golden horns, or a bright falcon. It also suggests the creature in folklore, a supernatural falcon or hawk or a fiery dwarf who turns into a whirlwind, called *rarog* in Polish or *rarich* in Ukrainian, *rarach* in Czech. The whole character of *Svarog* is probably complicated by borrowings from the tradition of *Vrtragna*.

From Lusatia to the Urals it was customary to toss a knife or other sharp instrument into the whirlwind for protection. Only a few decades ago in Pomerania, the West Beskids, and Bulgaria, people would cast themselves face down before a whirlwind, to ward off the misfortune and illness which it brought. Russians, while doing so, would cry, 'A belt around your neck!', so that the whirlwind would be strangled. A whirlwind was feared because it contained a demon, who was often called *rarog*. It appears likely that *Svarog* once was the shining hero who stirred up a whirlwind by fighting with the evil serpent. St. George, who was primarily a dragon killer in Christian mythology, became a popular Slavic folklore figure, perhaps by identification with some dragon killing Slavic god; if such a god did exist, it was surely *Svarog*. This George was also thought to be ruler of the wolves. There is a very ancient Slavic belief that the white wolf is a divine being; in Belarus he is called the king of all animals. So possibly George has a wolf incarnation like the *bogatyr' Volkh*, which would certainly reflect his connection with *Svarog*.

Associated with *Svarog's* functions are maidens called *vila*, known among the Slavaks, Croats, Serbs and Bulgarians (see Chapter 2), who laid offerings for them under trees, at springs, caves, and stones, as attested in records since the thirteenth century. They take the form of beautiful, very strong, naked girls equipped with arrow heads, but can also appear as swans or

snakes, as well as falcons, horses, wolves, and whirlwinds. In these last four incarnations they parallel the incarnations of *Svarog*. They are battle maidens like the Germanic *Valkyries*, and friends of heroes. When they are dancing on mountain tops or meadows they shoot at anyone who approaches, or blind him or pull him into the ring and dance him to death (once again, see Chapter 2).

Simargl, mentioned as a separate god in Vladimir's pantheon, is best explained, as Roman Jakobson has (2809)

suggested, as *Simourg*, a winged griffin, a divine bird of the Persians. The Slavs probably borrowed him in the last centuries BC from their Sarmatian overlords, whose name for him was *Simarg*. He may have been connected with the warrior god's functions, and perhaps merged in Slavic folklore with the eagle. In Bulgaria, Macedonia, Bosnia, and Serbia, the eagle was believed to rule over hail storms, and to cause fire, illness, or other misfortune if harmed. *Khors* is an obvious borrowing of the Iranian name for the personified sun - 'Khursid'. 'Dazhbog' means in Slavic 'the Giver (< *dati* - 'to give') of Wealth' (*bogu* - 'wealth'; also 'god', i.e., the source of wealth). One of the clues to *Stribog* is that in the Tale of Igor's Campaign it is stated that the winds are his grandchildren; his name is probably connected with the Slavic root **srei* - 'to flow' or to Iranian *srira* - 'beautiful', a common epithet for the wind, which also suggests the sublimity of the sun. Another possibility is that *Stribog* is the relic of an old Father God: **patribhagos*.

There is no doubt that the Slavs were sun worshippers, as indeed the tenth century Arab traveler al-Masudi reported them to be. According to him, they even had a temple with an opening in the dome and special architectural arrangements for observing the sunrise. The dead were buried with their heads to the east or with their eyes or face oriented eastward. Custom prescribed sleeping with one's head turned toward the east. Greetings and prayers to the rising or setting sun are recorded from southern Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine. The personified sun fused with the Christian God, as among the Lusatian Slavs of eastern Germany, where it is the custom, upon entering a church, to turn around and greet the rising sun.

Perun is the god best preserved in popular tradition and in toponymy. The name's Indo-European root **per-*, **perk-* or **perg-* meaning 'to strike' links most of the Indo-European language families to a common conception of the thunder god. He is definitely a very old god and common to all the Slavs.

Perun's anthropomorphic features were presumably much like those of the Lithuanian *Perkunas* - a vigorous

man with a copper beard, riding in a chariot drawn by a he-goat and holding in one hand an axe or hammer, which he throws at bad people and evil spirits, and which afterwards returns to his hand. The axe, a fetish known among the European peoples since Neolithic times, was subsequently identified with the thunderbolt. The Slavs in their Common Period called axes by the name **strela* ('arrow', i.e., 'bolt'). It was widely believed that Perun's bolts pass through the earth, penetrate it to a
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certain depth, and after a certain period (usually seven years and fifty days) gradually return to the surface. The *strela* were used to protect a house from an oncoming storm, to restore milk to cows who were without, to protect crops, to ease a difficult labor, and guarantee good fortune to new born babies and newlyweds. Perun's fiery purifications chastise the forces of death and barrenness. There is a widespread belief among the Slavs and Balts that the first thunder in spring moves the earth to action: the grass begins to grow rapidly, trees turn green, the land is safe for sowing and planting. A person or tree struck by lightning was regarded as being filled with health giving powers.

Big trees, especially the oak, were sacred to the thunder god all over Europe. In eighteenth century Russian Feofan Prokopovich issued a regulation forbidding people 'to sing prayers before the oak tree'. (The oak tree was also sacred to the Druids.) The Vita 'Life' of St. Adrian Pozhechonskij, written in 1612, tells of a deacon who worshipped an icon of St. Elias (the Christianized *Perun*) which was fastened to an ash tree. The groves of *Proven*, mentioned by Helmold, where the god's sacred oak was fenced about, illustrate an important principle: repositories of such awful power as that imparted by the impact of a thunderbolt must be shielded.

It is no mere coincidence that those same 'high places' - trees and mountains - which the thunder god selects for his coming, are almost universal symbols for the center of the world - the navel from which it developed outward. This is a logical consequence of the belief that all life is generated by the union of the male and female principles - of earth and sky, which are joined at some 'high place' in a burst of thunder and lightning.

As we learn from Procopius, the Slavs sacrificed animals to *Perun*. The cock was a frequent victim; the bull, bear, or he-goat was slaughtered only on great occasions. The animal is slain in order to be eaten, for he is filled with the holy manna of his patron god, made manifest in his whole living body. He is killed and eaten communally so that the group as a whole will be

strengthened. As late as 1907, Schrader witnessed this sort of ceremony in northeast Russia, combined with Christian hymns and blessings. It took place on St. Elias' day (20 July), when the meat, prepared entirely by men, was taken into the church and divided among the villagers.

After the Conversion, Perun became fused with the old, white bearded St. Elias, who travels across the
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sky in a fiery chariot, But he also lived on in the *byliny* of the Elder Heroes cycle, as the *bogatyr* ('hero') Il'ja (Elias) of Murom, who rides on his horse 'above the motionless forest and a little below the clouds scudding across the sky', bringing bandits to justice and shooting arrows which bring down church cupolas and split robust oaks into thin slivers. The word *perun* came simply to mean a thunderbolt or a flash of lightning, although surviving curses such as 'May *Perun* kill you!' (Ukrainian), 'May *Perun* take you!' (Russian and Slovenian), and 'May *Perun's* bolt strike you!' retain shades of the older meaning. An old Slavic prayer when thunder is heard goes: 'Sitting in the thunder, commanding the lightning, outpouring rain water on earth's face, o frightful ruler! Judge over devils, satans and sinners ... Amen.'

Volos, god of horned animals, mentioned with *Perun* in the treaties of 945 and 971, and his alternate name *Veles* known from fifteenth and sixteenth century Czech demonology and preserved in toponymy (*Veles*, southeast of Skopje in Macedonia) has recently been proven through an ingenious linguistic study by Roman Jakobson to be an old Slavic god derived from the common Indo-European pantheon. Close parallels exist in Baltic and Old Irish. In Lithuanian *velinas* now means 'devil' and *vele* 'shade of the deceased'. Latvians in their mythological songs have preserved *vels*, god of the underworld and guardian of cattle. Tacitus mentions Celtic *Veleda* 'prophetess', while Old Irish *felmac* (from the record of 880) is a musician and poet, 'a son of musico-poetical power'. In the (Kievan) Russian epic Slovo o polku Igoreve (Song of Igor's Campaign), Boian, a (Bulgarian) musician and poet, is called 'grandchild of *Veles*'.

The above etymologies lead to a parallelism of Slavic *Veles* with the Vedic thousand-eyed magician-god *Varuna*, who upholds the cosmic order and binds his adversaries by spells. In the *Rig Veda* he has a double name *Varuna Asura*. The Slavic *Veles* as well as the Old Celtic god *Esus*, portrayed with a bull's head, as to the old Norse god *Asir*. The cult of *Volos* was strong around Novgorod and Rostov, and his name became a common one for churches and monasteries. In Christian times *Volos/Veles* was replaced by the Byzantine Saint Blasius (*Vlos* or *Vlah* in Slavic), who continued to be the

guardian of cattle until the present time.

The last figure in Vladimir's pantheon is the goddess *Mokosh*. The sixteenth century church chronicles contain the question, addressed to women, "Did you not go to Mokosh?" Peasant women believed that if *Mokosh* was pleased with their offerings she would help them

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with their laundry. The Czechs prayed to *Mokosh* in time of drought. In northern Russia she survived as a female house spirit called *Mokosha* or *Mokysha*. In the Novgorod area she is identifiable by her large head and long arms, and she spins flax at night. In the Olonets area she spins wool or walks abroad at night, and if the sheep lose hair, the proverb says: "*Mokosh* has sheared the sheep". Plave names in the fifteenth century include *Makushi*, *Makushina*, *Makushovo*, etc., from Pskov, Novgorod, Kostroma, Chernigov areas.

In Iranian mythology *Ardivi Sura Anahita*, literally the "wet, strong, spotless one", is the source of the celestial waters, goddess of prosperity and fertility. *Mokosh*, whose name brings to mind the Slavic *mokru* = 'wet'. Might be an analogous figure. Unquestionably ancient is the worship of 'female' stones - the *kamenennye baby*. Some of them had female breasts. Paralytics, the deaf and the blind came from great distances to offer grain, flax, wool, pigs, calves, sheep, and money to such stones. When in the nineteenth century archaeologists in Ukraine removed stones from the Scythian barrow where they stood, the people blamed this action for the start of a drought.

The god *Rod*, known from medieval Orthodox denunciations, is connected with the Slavic word *roditi* - 'to give birth'. In a Russian translation of a fifteenth century saint's life, *rodu* stands for the Latin *fatum* (fate). Birth fairies (Russian *rozhenitsa* or Slovenian *rojenica*) or 'determiners' (Czech *sudicha*, Serbo-Croatian *sudjenica*), analogous to Scandinavian *Norns* and Greek *Moirae* exist in the folklore to this day.

A truly female divinity is the *Moist Mother Earth (Mati syra zemlja)*. The peasants of Volynia and the Belarussian woodlands believed that in spring it was a very grave sin to strike the earth with anything before 25 March - because during the time the earth is pregnant. The Russians, similarly, forbade ploughing and digging on various holidays including Memorial Day and Assumption Day - for these were the Earth's name days - and demanded that if a person spat on the ground he must beg the Earth's pardon. For centuries, Slav peasants settled disputes over landed property by calling the Earth to witness the justice of their claims. Marriages were confirmed by swallowing a lump of earth (nineteenth century, Pskov area). Oaths were taken by swallowing a

lump of earth (*circa* 1870, Orel area), or by putting it on one's head. Crop predictions were made in certain parts of Russia by digging a small hole in the ground and listening to what the Earth said: a sound like a full sleigh meant a good crop; that

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of an empty sleigh, a poor one.

The festival of *Moist Mother Earth* was *Kupala*; it took its name from the mass bathing (*kupati* = 'to bathe') which, along with prayers at springs, marked the observance. But it was primarily a celebration of the summer solstice, and featured great bonfire (as is also true in countries with a Celtic background). The straw idol of *Kupala* was attired like a woman. During the festival, it was placed under a tree which had been cut down and stuck into the ground. Among the Baltic Slavs (i.e., those Slavs who lived along the coast of the Baltic Sea; in an ethnic rather than a purely geographic sense, "Baltic Slav" is an oxymoron) the sacred tree was the birch, cut and prepared by women only, with all the branches stripped off; the crown alone was left, and that was hung with garlands and flowers. Sacrifices took place by it. This was a representation of the Tree linking Heaven and Earth.

Christianity, introduced in the ninth century in Bohemia and Moravia and in the tenth century in Poland and (Kievan) Russia, determined the trend of Slavic culture for centuries. This would not have been decisive in the rapid development of Slavonic culture and its Byzantinization but for an event which caused an epochal upheaval. Constantine (later called St. Cyril of Salonika) and his brother Methodius, two Byzantine missionaries brought up in Salonika, Macedonia, came to Moravia in 863 and organized a national church with services in Slavic. For this purpose they translated the Bible, liturgic and other ecclesiastical texts into the Slavic dialect spoken in the Salonika region, and adapted it to the language of the great Moravia Empire. This first literary language, called Old Church Slavonic, penetrated almost all Slavic lands during the ninth-eleventh centuries. In the beginning the Glagolitic alphabet, invent by St. Cyril who adapted and modified certain Greek Samaritan and oriental letters, was used. The Cyrillic alphabet was created in Bulgaria at the beginning of the tenth century so that Slavic writing would be more closely allied with Greek. It is still used in the Greek Orthodox Slavic countries. Before the arrival of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Moravia, the Slavs in central Europe and elsewhere had no script. As a consequence of the mission, the Old Church Slavonic language developed into the common Slavic literary language. Thus, Slavic culture was enriched and a new era in Slavic history was

inaugurated.”(71)

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Oleg (Old Norse: *Haelgi*) was a pure Viking, as was Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*). However, Vikings were a minority of the population of Kievan Russia, which was overwhelmingly Slavic.

After Oleg (*Haelgi*) and Igor (*Ingvar*), the princes of the Rurikovich Dynasty of Kievan Russia sometimes bear Viking names, sometimes Slavic names, indicating their now mixed ancestry. Of course, in this context, “Slavic” implies a certain Celtic, Iranian, Gothic and Baltic admixture. For some time the princes of Kiev would keep Viking mercenaries as their “Praetorian Guard”. Being foreigners, these Vikings had no local connections and were absolutely loyal to princes who were themselves of partly Viking ancestry.

After much hesitation, Vladimir, Igor’s (*Ingvar’s*) grandson, was at first a militant pagan. According to the Christian author of the Russian Primary Chronicle, in 978 Vladimir set up idols of *Perun*, *Khors*, *Dazhbog*, *Stribog*, *Simargl* and *Mokosh*. Except for *Perun* and *Mokosh*, all of the above deities are in their attributes and their names of Iranian origin, which would date from the days of the Scythians, Sarmatians and Alans. Obviously, the influence of these Iranian nomad peoples on the Slavs must have been very great indeed, at least in some quite important respects. *Khors*, *Dazhbog*, and *Stribog* may have been the three sons of *Svarog* (Iranian *Svarga*, a sky and sun god) and were therefore known as *Svarozhichi* (sons of *Svarozh*, Slavic form of *Svarog*). The name

Khors is obviously related to the Persian *Khurshet*, meaning "sun", or, more exactly, "resplendent sun", a name composed of

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the personified and divinized sun called *Hvara-Khshaetem*, while the name *Stribog* is also clearly Iranian, the Slavic *stri-* corresponding perfectly to the Iranian *sri-* and to the Sanskrit *shri-* of *Shri-devi*. In fact, as we shall see below, the Slavic *Stribog* is a very exact translation of the Sanskrit *Shri-devi*. Likewise, the nearest parent of the Slavic *svetu*, Lithuanian *shventas*, [nota bene: Lithuanian is NOT a Slavic language, but rather belongs to the Baltic branch of the Indo-European family] in both cases meaning "holy" or "sacred", is also Iranian, i.e., the Avestan *spenta*, meaning "beneficent". The Slavic word for "God" or 'a god", which is *bogu*, is most probably and plausibly derived from the Iranian *baga* or *bhaga*, Vedic Sanskrit *bhaga*. Below is the definition of the Vedic Sanskrit *bhaga*:

BHAGA:

A masculine noun, meaning "dispenser", "gracious lord", "patron" (applied to gods, especially to *Savitri*), Rig Veda, Atharva Veda. Name of an *aditya* (bestowing wealth and presiding over love and marriage, brother of the Dawn, regent of the *Nakshatra Uttara Phalguni*; Yaska enumerates him among the divinities of the highest sphere; according to a later legend his eyes were destroyed by Rudra; the *Nakshatra*; the sun; the moon; name of a Rudra; good fortune, happiness, welfare, prosperity, Rig Veda, Atharva Veda; dignity, majesty, distinction, excellence, beauty, loveliness, Rig Veda, Atharva Veda; love,, affection, Rig Veda, Atharva Veda. ... [See: Avestan; *bagha*: Old Persian; *baga*: Slavic; *bogu*, *bogatu*: Lithuanian; *bagotas*, *na-bagas*].(72)

The Indo-European stem meaning "God" or "a god" is **deiwos*, Sanskrit *deva*, Avestan *daeva*, Lithuanian *dievas*, Latin *deus* (genitive *divi*), Old Gaelic *dia*, Old Norse *tivar* (plural), Old

East Slavic *div*. Later we shall see how and why in Old East

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Slavic *div* came to mean "demon". With *div* coming to mean "demon" it is easy to understand how the Old East Slavic word for "God" or "a god" ceased to be directly related to the Indo-European stem **deiwos* and came to be a word related to the Vedic Sanskrit *bhaga*, itself of course an Indo-European word, but unrelated to the stem **deiwos*.

Notes Roman Jakobson:

"The sense of **deiwos* is "divinity" in the broadest sense. The Iranian languages diverge from this, but not essentially: the *daeva-s* of the *Avesta* are not gods, but rather are the demons, non-human beings, enemies of the gods.

In his remarkable study of the affinities between the Slavic and Iranian vocabularies, J. Rozwadowski cites among the numerous points of contact in the religious and moral vocabulary of the said two branches of the Indo-European languages the basic difference of meaning between the Slavic *bog* and the Iranian *div* due to the influence of the religion of Zoroaster. The Slavic *bog*, like the Iranian *baga-* takes on the meaning "dispenser", rather than "a god", and in a parallel manner, the Slavic *div*, like the Iranian *daeva-*, passes from the meaning of "a god" to the meaning of "a hostile and demoniac spirit": the two mutations are closely parallel indeed.

The image of a hostile spirit which precipitates upon the earth - *uzhe vrzhesa div na zemlyu* - appears in The Song of Igor's Campaign as "a sort of personification" of the neuter *divo* in the abstract sense of "miracle, marvel", as Mazon informs us, in this case as the complete coincidence of an "ancient error" with the antiquity which the comparative study of the Indo-European languages at present attempt to reconstruct, is, truly, miraculous.

The evocation of the demon *div* and of the earth (*zemlya*) is interesting for various reasons. The vestiges of the Phrygian mythology confront us, in spite of their fragmentary character, offering a great number of striking concordances with Slavic mythology. As J. Bonfante and H. Gregoire have remarked, *sabadios* - the divine Phrygian epithet, has an exact equivalent in the ancient Slavic adjective *svobod*; as well as the Indo-Iranian *bagaios* - another divine Phrygian epithet, is

the exact synonym of the Slavic *bog*. The *Mat syra*

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zemlya adored by the (pagan) Russians corresponds very closely to the goddess *Zemele* ("earth mother" of the Phrygian mythology, which enriched the Greek pantheon. In the Phrygian formulas of cursing, the name *Zemele* appears associated with *Dios* (who etymologically corresponds in the Phrygian language with the Greek *Zeus* and the Slavic *div*; according to an ancient Phrygian legend, *Dios* is precipitated through *Zemele* (which is precisely "*v'rzhe cya Div na Zemlyo*" in the base. The formula found in The Song of Igor's Campaign therefore is very ancient.

In vain do we search for those traits which, according to the promise of Mazon, the author of The Song of Igor's Campaign "announces to us" the mythological antiquities of a "disconcertant fantasy". In vain do we search for an affinity between the words of the Song of Igor's Campaign and the Slavic pantheon constructed by the Polish, Ukrainian and Russian mythologists of the 16th to the 18th centuries. Of all the mythological names of The Song of Igor's Campaign, the only derivative (*dazhbozhan* etc. with the locative *dazhbozhi* in the Chronicle of Malalas), is of good interest. And if perchance said names are employed among the bookish calques used in the letters of Kievan Rus', we observe also in The Song of Igor's Campaign many reminiscences of ancient myths which comparative philology is able to authenticate. These are in particular the vestiges of myths of the hostile *divs*, the remnants of *Stribog*, of *Khps* and of the werewolf, and, finally, of *Boyan* the Magician."(73)

Since the Goths were also much influenced by the Sarmatians and the Alans, more so in many respects than were the Slavs, it would be most interesting to know what was the pagan religion of the Goths after they had reached the shores of the Black Sea and before their conversion to Arianism by *Ulfilas* or *Wolflein*; however, this is one topic of which our ignorance is virtually total. Some have assumed that Gothic Paganism was always purely Germanic, as they originated in what is today southern Sweden and their language was Germanic, though with a great many Celtic and Iranian elements, as well as considerably smaller numbers of

Baltic and Slavic influences. However, it would seem to me that the pagan religion of the Goths when they lived on the shores of the Black Sea was almost certainly, indeed must have been, a highly syncretistic mixture of Germanic, Celtic and Iranian elements.

Below are selections from Russian Piety by Nicholas Arseniev which will one an overall view and serve as introduction to many things which may otherwise be nearly incomprehensible.

"Let us return to the Russian (and Ukrainian) people. They found an equilibrium or axis in the life of the Church. That chaotic element, the exuberance of feelings and sometimes even revolt against all established order, against all law and regulation (represented in the mind of the people by the figures of the great popular brigands, such as Stenka Razin or any of the ferocious bandits of the Volga region and the Brynsk forests [or the Taras Bulba of the novel of same name by Nikolai Gogol]), that chaotic element was counterbalanced by the settled pattern of religious usage and custom, by the framework of the Church's ritual, by family traditions sanctified by the religious life. There was here a quite different ideal, opposed to the lack of order and moral equilibrium and the ideal of brazen audacity; here was an ideal developed out of a spiritual discipline influencing both the soul and also outward behavior. The ideal found its expression in such words as *blagolepie*, *istovost*, *blago-obrazie*, words that are difficult to translate but which signify a penetration of the entire being by a spiritual order imparting a *religious beauty* to the whole of one's conduct and manner of life, a quality that is humble and at the same time full of a sense of religious responsibility and interior dignity. Here is an example taken at random from Russian literature, the scene from one of the fragments of Leo Tolstoy's unfinished novel The Decembrists, in which the old peasant (woman) Tikhonova is going on foot to Moscow (at the beginning of the sixteenth century) to submit a petition on behalf of her husband, who has been unjustly imprisoned. Having rested at the home of acquaintances, she sets out for the great mansion of her owners, who live in Moscow, the wealthy and aristocratic Chernyshev family, a house surrounded by

outbuildings, courtyards and gardens. She enters the kitchen of the vast servants' quarters, and feels lost and intimidated. For her this was a venture into 'another world'. The younger servants look at her mockingly. But she does not lose her presence of mind. Humble, modest and full of natural dignity, in her peasant garb, with white bands wrapped round her legs, she first bows deeply three times before the holy icons in the corner, and only then bows respectfully to all those present. And suddenly the scoffing stops. This was the same ancient custom mentioned by foreign travelers coming to Russia prior to the time of Peter the Great - for example, Baron von Herberstein, who visited the court of Moscow in 1517 and 1526, and Baron von Meyerbeer, who stayed there from 1660 to 1665. Immediately upon entering someone's house, even the house of very high placed persons, one bowed deeply first before the icons, which represented the presence of the invisible God. The honors given to men came after; one began by giving honor to God.

Let us dwell for a moment on the religious traditions of the family. At the heart of this tradition there is the *parental blessing*, something which is found all over the world in families with a Christian background. The old Russian epic ballads or *byliny*, corresponding to the French *chansons de geste* (or the Spanish *cantares de gesta*), often depict heroes asking for the blessing of their parents. ...

This is not a verdant oak bowing to the ground,
These are not little papery leaves being scattered round,
This is the sosen bowed down before his father,
Begging for his benediction.

...these are the words of the epic ballad about the exploits of the great legendary heros: Ilya Muromets. Then there is the hot-headed and adventurous Basil Buslayev, with his wild, bandit's heart, often without faith or sense of law, the typical representative in Russian medieval ballads of the impetuous and enterprising young man from the great and powerful republic of Novgorod. Even Buslayev bows respectfully before his mother, it is she alone whom he venerates and still obeys, and to whom he turns for counsel and a blessing.

Vasinka (diminutive of Basil) decides he'll go to Jerusalem.
Vasinka goes to ask a blessing from his mother.
He bows his fiery head down to the damp ground.
This is not a white birch bowing down,
These are not little silken leaves that scatter on the ground.

This is Vasinka bowed down before his mother. ...

...When a young couple set up a new household, they would bring into their new home the 'paternal blessing', i.e., the ancestral icon with which their parents had blessed them, and with which the grandfather or great-grandfather had previously been blessed by his own parents at the time of his own marriage. These ancestral icons were often preserved with awe in old families which had maintained their position and identity, in those families among the nobility which were imbued with religious tradition, in the great old merchant families, in lesser middle class families too, and in many peasant families. ...

...Thus the ancient icon with which Prince Ivan Dolgoruky had blessed his son was kept in one branch of the Dolgoruky family right down to the time of the Soviet Revolution. The icon of the *tsarskaya nevesta* - i.e., Maria Khlopov, who at the beginning of the seventeenth century was officially betrothed to Tsar Michael Romanov, but was removed from the court as a result of palace intrigue before the marriage was celebrated - has been kept in the Ermolov family; this icon represented the 'blessing' of the parents of the bride to be. In one branch of the family of Prince Golitsin and later in the Arseniev family an ancient and much honored icon has been reverently preserved, dating from the seventeenth century; the famous Prince Alexander Menshikov, exiled to Siberia in the eighteenth century under Peter II, used this icon to bless his daughter on her marriage, during the time that he was in exile.

In the important work of R. Tereshchenko, The Customs of the Russian People, which appeared a little over a century ago, we have a description of the family rites for the blessing of young married couples by parents in peasant homes, as was done in various provinces. In the district of Nizhni Novgorod, for example, the rite was carried out in the following manner. Before the departure of the bride and groom to the church, each of them received their parents' blessing in the paternal house. A table was placed beneath the icons in the holy corner and was covered with a white cloth, then some salt, some rye bread and some white bread were placed on the table, candles and an oil lamp were lit before the icons, and all would pray there with the bridegroom. Then the betrothed would be led before his parents, standing by the table, the father holding the icon, the mother holding the rye bread. Three times the betrothed would bow before the

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parents, asking for their blessing, and then the father and mother would bless him in turn, first with the icon

and then with the bread, kissing the betrothed three times. I am presenting here only the general outline of this rite, which was sometimes quite elaborate.

The blessing was also given before a departure on a journey or a long separation, when, for example, a son or husband left for war. There were many family traditions in all social classes concerning the power of blessings and a mother's prayer to protect her child in perils and temptations. Sometimes a small icon or medal hung by the mother around the neck of her son would, during battle, deflect a bullet and save a young man's life. Tolstoy's great-grandfather, Prince Sergei Volkonsky, was miraculously saved in this way during the Seven Years' War. A beautiful scene in Tolstoy's War and Peace was inspired by this family tradition. Prince Andrei is taking leave of his sister before leaving for the front. He is an unbeliever. But she begs him to let her hang around his neck a small image of Christ which their grandfather had worn during battle. "Even against your will, He will save you and have pity on you, and will convert you, for truth and peace come from Him only", she said in a voice trembling with emotion. She held up before her brother, with a solemn gesture, an ancient oval image of the Lord, a tarnished tin image set in gold, on a thin golden chain. She made the sign of the Cross, kissed the image and held it out to Andrei. "Please, do it for me. ..." Her large eyes shone with goodness and a hidden light. Her brother was about to take the image, but she stopped him. He understood what she expected of him, and also made the sign of the Cross, and kissed the image.'

General D.S. Dokhturov, a hero of the War of 1812 (the Napoleonic Wars), wrote to his wife just after the battle of Borodino (where he had taken command of the left flank of the Russian Army after Prince Bagration was mortally wounded), 'I thank you, my darling, for sending me the holy image. I am going to wear it against my chest. I see clearly God's great mercy toward me. In terrible danger He has saved me. I thank the Most High.' ...

...There is too the First Confession - children usually make it at the age of seven in the Orthodox Church. In pious families it is the mother who prepares the child, who explains to him the meaning of the Sacrament of Repentance, the necessity of making an effort to better one's life and serve the Lord, it is she who prepares him to receive the Holy Communion worthily, with humility and trembling, with a contrite

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heart. And then there are the purifying days of Lent, especially the first and last weeks, and Holy Week, when the mother goes to church with her children, when the whole schedule of the day is adapted to the services of

the Church, when the last stages of Our Lord's earthly life before His Passion are relived step by step; and then comes the Passion, His death on the Cross, His burial, and His glorious Resurrection. The life of the pious families used to be full of echoes of this cultic life, one was carried along on the great stream of the Church's life. The fasts were observed - no butter, no milk, no meat, no eggs. The night of Good Friday to Holy Saturday was spent at the service of the 'Burial of Christ', when the whole church glowed with innumerable lighted candles held by the faithful, when the people took part in the solemn procession around the church, when the linen cloth or 'shroud' (*plashchanitsa*) depicting the Lord lying in the tomb was carried on the head of the priest above the thronging crowd. And the night of Easter, which was the greatest, most joyous and most intimate family festival that Orthodox Russia has ever known! After the all-night service, after this outburst of triumphant joy, when the bells in their towers rang out across the Russian land from midnight on, when the bonfires, the illumination of the churches, the lighted candles, the alternating chants of the choirs, and the greetings with the Kiss of Peace all translated the gladness of Christ's victory over death, people would gather again at home around the sumptuous Easter table (decorated and well provided on this night even in the most humble homes). This was not just a treat after the long days of Lent, but also a feast of joy and spiritual communion between the members of the family and household, a pure and innocent human joy, illumined by the rays of the Lord's victory. The life of the family - on these warm and lively occasions - was brightened and made glad, on the background of Easter glory. A little 'gleam' or ray of the transfiguration would come for a few minutes into the ordinary life of man. This Easter night lived through in the bosom of the family is one of the greatest treasures of the religious and family traditions of Russia." (74)

"In spite of the very important role played by the ritual element in the religious life of the Russian people, the conversion of Russia to (Byzantine) Christianity was far from being merely the acceptance of an external body of rites and ceremonies. At the time that (Byzantine) Christianity was officially introduced into Russia there was, of course, a mass conversion, imposed by the prince of the land. Here is

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how the chronicler describes the baptism of the people at Kiev: 'Vladimir came down, with the princess' (Princess Anna of Byzantium's) priests and those from Kherson, to the shores of the Dnieper and an innumerable people gathered and went into the water. Some up to the neck, others up to the chest. Younger ones stood on the

bank; men were holding children; adults were standing in the water; and the priests, standing over them, said the prayers.'

But beside this mass conversion, which at first could not fail to be external in many cases, an authentic religious instruction gradually developed, thanks to the enlightened zeal of the princes Vladimir and Yaroslav, and to many missionaries and apostles of the new faith. There was in many cases an inner *shaking of the soul*, for which there is ample testimony even from the earliest times. Indeed Christianity could boast of martyrs at Kiev long before the conversion of Vladimir. His grandmother (Ste.Olga; Old Norse: *Haelga*) was a Christian already, and there were Christians among the members of the princes' *druzhiny* from the beginning of the tenth century. These were individual conversions. And Prince Vladimir himself, after his conversion to Christianity, became a new man, a man with a changed heart. The chronicler tells us about this in the following words: 'He listened to Solomon, who said, "He who gives to the poor is giving to God", and other similar passages from Scripture. Having heard this, he commanded all the poor and afflicted to come to the prince's palace and to take all that they needed - to drink, eat, and take sable skins from the prince's Treasure house. He gave yet another command, saying, "The weak and the suffering are unable to come to my palace." And so he gave orders to bring carts, and to load them with bread, meat, fish, different kinds of fruit, casks of mead and kvas, and to take them through the city, announcing that there were to be given whatever they needed.' His heart had so changed that he did not even wish to inflict capital punishment on highway robbers, something that would not have troubled him at all before his baptism. The bishops even urged him to use this form of punishment. 'Vladimir lived in fear of God; but the number of bandits increased, and the bishops said to Vladimir, "The number of brigands is growing; why not punish them?" And he said to them, "I am afraid to sin. ..."'

We also have, at the very beginning of this Christian era in (Kievan) Russia, the touching figures of the two young princes and favorite sons of Vladimir, who, after their father's death, let themselves be

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assassinated by hired men sent by their elder brother Svyatopolk, rather than revolt against him. 'It is not pleasing to God,' the young warrior Boris said when his troops offered him the paternal throne, 'that I should raise my hand against my elder (half) brother (note: the fact that Svyatopolk was only half-brother to Boris and Gleb may explain, at least in part, his lack of fraternal affection for them), for since my father is

dead it is he who must take his place.' The young Russian Church was deeply moved and edified by the way these two young men met death at the hands of their assassins. They were not martyrs giving their life for the faith, and yet they died consciously *for Christ's sake*, they accepted their violent death and their sufferings as a participation in the death of Christ. The ancient author of the story of the murder of the two young princes - as incorporated in the Chronicle of Nestor - places this prayer on Boris' lips as he faces death, 'Lord Jesus Christ, who hast revealed Thyself on earth in human form for our salvation, and who of Thine own will allowed them to nail Thy hands to the Cross, and didst suffer Thy passion for our sins, give me too the strength to endure. I accept death not from my enemies, but from my (half) brother. O Lord, do not lay this against him as a sin.' It was in the Lord's death, therefore, that this young man found the strength to suffer. In a more detailed version (the Skazanie, which dates from the end of the eleventh century) realistic and concrete psychological details abound. The two young brothers are not heroes or representatives of a strict asceticism. It cost them dearly to say farewell to a life so beautiful. Their sadness and inner struggle, especially that of the younger brother Gleb (note; Boris and Gleb were full brothers, both sons of Vladimir and of the same Danubian Bulgarian mother, while Svyatopolk was the son of a Greek mother), are painted in a pathetic way. Both find comfort in Christ. After a final prayer - in which he turns to the Savior with these Pauline words: 'It is for Thy sake that I am crucified all day long, and I am reckoned as a lamb lead to slaughter. Thou knowest, O Lord, that I am not resisting, that I submit' - Boris finds the strength to give himself up to the assassins. He is then a hero of Christian suffering, i.e., of *suffering accepted voluntarily for Christ's sake*. It is indeed in this form, with this central idea of suffering with Christ and for Christ, of suffering accepted in the name of Christ, that the Good News (the literal meaning of the Greek *Euangelion*, i.e., the Gospel) often takes hold of humble souls, and that the religious experience of the great righteous ones and saints of Russia was to bloom
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and to flourish. The Cross of the Lord, suffering accepted voluntarily out of love for Christ - this is what makes the memory of these young princes who were murdered at their (half) brother's command so dear to the Russian people. They were the first saints canonized in Russia. Indeed the Russian Church has invoked them as saints and intercessors before God since 1020, only five years after death..

Many examples of personal, inner conversions could

be cited, taken from the first centuries after the official and mass conversion of (Kievan) Russia. There are the celebrated Caves (Crypts) near Kiev, which became the Crypt Monastery (perhaps better known as the Cave Monastery) (*Kievo-Pechersky Monastery*), whose first monks were recruited from all classes of the population, and about which the ancient chronicler wrote these eloquent words: 'Many monasteries were founded by kings, boyars and wealthy persons; but they were not as precious as those which were built with tears, fasting, prayers and vigils. Anthony had neither gold nor silver, but he accomplished his task with tears and fasting.'

There is another impressive document: the Testament of the Grand Prince Vladimir Monomakh (died 1125) to his children, filled with a profound Christian spirit which combines wisdom, moderation and justice with the spirit of charity toward others. Many historical tracts show us that an encounter had begun between the soul of the people and the Good News, this suffering and buffeted Russian soul, so often given to orgy and tumult, so imperfect, so full of sins, and not always free from superstition. ... (75)

"This overflowing tenderness that takes hold of the soul of the repentant sinner, the deep emotion of prayer, the tears of contrition and joy at the feet of the merciful Lord - this is what has given strength to the soul of the Russian people in the midst of all its weakness and falls, and in spite of them. Often this is inseparable from the need to feel the *nearness of God* in the midst of this sinful world. This explains, for example, the great influence exercised on the widest range of people by the holy men of spiritually illumined life - the *startsy* (elders). It also explains the flood of pilgrims, moving from one holy place to another - who travelled across Russia from the far north to the southern borders with extraordinary endurance and enterprise, right down to the beginning of the twentieth century. This too explains the great importance which miraculous icons have had in the life of the people. The writer Gleb Uspensky, who belonged
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really to the Russian radical intelligentsia but was, nevertheless, well acquainted with the popular soul and a man filled with a lively concern for the spiritual welfare of the people, has given us an acute and objective description of the annual transfer of the celebrated icon of the Holy Mother of Tikhvin. In the words of a rough peasant:

'...our most Holy Mother was brought out of the church, the archimandrites bowing deeply and taking leave of one another at the monastery door, and the

people took over the carrying of the icon. All of them - from Tikhvin and from Staraya Russa - were inspired as one man. And the people kept on coming and coming by the thousands - from all the villages and cities. At the entrance to each village the clergy would come to meet the icon with banners flying, and they would carry it into the church. They carried her high, our Most Holy One, high above the crowd, and she gleamed in the sun like a bright fire. ... Women, especially nuns, they came from all over, singing on and on like the angels of heaven - Oh! How fine it was to hear 'Thou who dost intercede for us.' The singing never stopped for a minute, day or night. A huge crowd walked along and sang. And there was plenty of everything, just like a miracle. Who gave this crowd something to eat and drink? She did it; the Queen of Mercy. If it was a field where they stopped, great fires were suddenly lit up, huge cook-pots steamed on the fires, all kinds of food was cooked, every one ate his fill, and drank, and every one was happy and satisfied. And the singing went on night and day around the icon, a great crowd of people was always around it, and she was carried along the whole long road in the arms of the people. There wasn't a single one left of all those poor hoboos you see so much of on the the highways. Every one found food, and work, and lodging, thanks to the Holy Virgin.'

For the soul of the people these holy icons are a point of contact with the world of divine realities; in these icons the nearness of condescending and merciful grace becomes palpable, so to speak. The greatest of the epic painters of the life of the Russian people, Leo Tolstoy, inserted in one of the scenes in War and Peace the *Te Deum* which the Russian troops sang on the eve of the battle of Borodino, before the image of the Holy Mother of Smolensk:

'A procession was following, coming up the road from the village of Borodino. At the head of the column there was the infantry, in perfect order, their shakos
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in their hands and their muskets lowered, advancing along the dusty road. Behind the infantry a religious chant could be heard. Going ahead of Pierre (Bezhuhov), the soldiers and militia ran to meet it. 'They are carrying the Holy Mother, the Merciful One, the Holy Mother of Iberia. ...' "...the Holy Mother of Smolensk," another corrected. The militiamen from the village as well as those who were working on the gun position threw down their spades and ran in front of the procession. Behind the battalion of infantry walked the clergy - an old priest with a *kamilavka* on his head, and other ecclesiastics and the choir following. Behind them, soldiers and officers were carrying a large

icon that had been brought out of the ruins of Smolensk, and had since then followed the army everywhere it went. Groups of soldiers came up and ran around it on all sides, crowding up to it, bowing to the ground, their heads uncovered.

'Pierre's whole attention was caught by the serious expression on the faces of the soldiers and militiamen, who were all looking at the icon with the same rapt intensity. As soon as the tired singers (this was the twentieth Te Deum they had sung that day) began to intone in a monotonous and mechanical way "Protect thy servants against all evils, O Mother of God", and the priest and deacon joined in the chant and continued "for we flee to thee as to a firm defence, as to One who intercedes for us with the Lord" - the same consciousness of the solemn significance of this moment illuminated all faces, the same expression Pierre had already encountered on many faces during the course of the day. The heads bowed down with increasing fervor. Groans could be heard, and the sound of hands beating on chests as they made the sign of the Cross. ..."

In numerous great crises in Russian history there have been interventions of miraculous icons of the Virgin - the Holy Mother of the Don accompanied the Russian troops on the battlefield of Kulikovo, where the Tatar forces were overthrown; the Holy Mother of Kazan accompanied the troops of Minin and Pozharsky when they liberated Moscow from the Poles in 1613.

Thus too in the famous church of the Holy Mother of Iberia in Moscow the soul of the people used to come to pour out and bewail its afflictions before God. Ivan Kireevsky, the great religious philosopher and one of the fathers of the Slavophile movement, describes in the following way the impression made upon him as the people prayed before this deeply venerated icon: 'One day I was in the church and looking at the miraculous icon of the Holy Mother, meditating on the child-like faith of the people who were praying before it. Several

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women and sick old men were kneeling and bowing down to the ground and making the sign of the Cross. With a lively faith I looked at the holy features of the icon, and I began to understand the mystery of this miraculous power. No, this was not a simple board with an image on it. For whole centuries it had absorbed the torrents of prayers which have poured over it, the cries of afflicted and unhappy souls. It has therefore been filled with the power of faith, which now shines from it in order to be reflected in the hearts of these supplicants. It has become a living organ, a point of contact between man and the Creator. As I thought about all this, I once more looked at the old men and women with their children, bowing humbly, and looked to at the

holy icon. And I saw the features of the Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bozhii Mater* or *Bogoraditsa*) take on life. She was looking at these poor people with love and pity. ... I knelt down there, and prayed humbly before her.'

How many mothers and brides came here in sorrow to pray for their children or husbands during the First World War and the terrible time of the civil war that followed? How the popular soul used to pray too before the relics of St. Sergei in the monastery of the Trinity. These silent cries, these passionate appeals from the masses of people, before the face of God. How typical they are! How they draw us into the interior of the soul of the people, as it was only forty years ago! And again now, for in the midst of all the current antireligious persecution (remember, this book was first published in 1964), people are once more streaming from all parts of Russia to the shrine of St. Sergei.

The love of *religious* or *cultic beauty*, so deep-rooted in the popular soul, may also be explained in large part by this overflowing of emotion before the boundless condescension of God. The aesthetic charm of the cult and of the whole atmosphere of the church had a profound effect on the distant ancestors of present-day Russians. The story of the conversion of St. Vladimir, toward the end of the tenth century, bears witness to this. According to the legend Vladimir had sent emissaries to different lands in order to find the best religion. They came to the Volga Bulgars (also known as *Chuvash Tatars*, who are of Turko-Mongol language and stock, and are not to be confused with the Balkan or Danubian Bulgarians, who are Slavs and Orthodox Christians), who were Muslims] and saw their cult, but there was nothing joyous about it; on the contrary everything there was sad and gloomy, and their
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religion was not good.' What they saw among the Germans (who were at this time all Catholics) pleased them no more. 'We came to the Germans and saw them worship at length in their churches, but we saw no beauty there.' They went then to the Greeks (who are Byzantine Christians), and the Greeks took them to the place where they worshipped their God. 'And we did not know if we were in heaven or on earth, for on earth there is no such beauty. Nor do we know what we ought to say. One thing only do we know: the God was living there with men, and that their form of worship is the best of all. We cannot forget this beauty. Just as a man refuses to eat what is bitter after having tasted what is sweet, so we cannot remain with you here.'

The ancient documents of Russian history are full of moving descriptions of this cultic beauty. Thus in the middle of the eleventh century, in a sermon

commemorating the late Prince Vladimir, Metropolitan Ilarion says: 'Behold the city gleaming in majesty, behold the churches flourishing, behold the Christian faith increasing, see how the city is sanctified by the holy icons, illuminated, perfumed with incense and resounding with hymns of praise and divine canticles. ...' A thrill of enthusiasm can be felt running through the chronicler's tale when he speaks of the construction, by Prince Andrei Bogolubsky (in 1159) of the celebrated Cathedral of the Assumption in Vladimir. This was a temple 'such as never has been in Russia and never will be. The most pious Prince Andrei is to be compared with King Solomon. He erected a cathedral of beauty in Vladimir, he decorated it with gold, silver, precious stones and pearls, and made it magnificent with mosaics and bas-reliefs. He had the domes and the great entrance doors gilded, he made it like the temple of Solomon in its splendor.' A series of old texts, especially from the fifteenth century, we find the following words addressed to the Grand Duke Basil the Blind: 'It is right that you should rejoice with all the people in the true Orthodox faith, which shines throughout the world. The grace of God is upon us as a shining mantle, and the churches of God are as flowers, as the stars of the sky, as the gleaming rays of the sun, magnificently adorned, and resounding with holy songs.'

Cultic beauty became one of the sources of Russia's national consciousness, one of the constituent elements in the concept of 'Holy Russia'. This love of cultic beauty has remained as one of the distinctive characteristics of popular Russian psychology throughout the centuries. It is often in these external forms of liturgical beauty that the soul of the people

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feels itself seized by an inexpressible Presence. Here is a recent incident, which I heard about from an eye witness. At the beginning of the German-Russian war (World War II), in 1941, an Orthodox Liturgy was authorized by the Germans in a camp of Russian prisoners not far from St. Petersburg. Almost all the Russian war prisoners expressed the desire to be present - most of them probably out of curiosity. A native of the Baltic districts who is an acquaintance of mine, whom the Germans had seized and compelled to act as an interpreter, was also there. Not far from him there stood a young Russian peasant, about 18 years old, a prisoner of war who since infancy had no opportunity to see the cult of the Church. The Orthodox priest of the village church (which the Germans had just reopened) celebrated the Liturgy with feeling, in the open air. There was snow on the ground. A little choir of five women, who had come from the village with the

priest sang the responses and the canticles. Suddenly this lad exclaimed in an undertone: 'My God, how beautiful that is.' His heart had been touched by this liturgical beauty. This is one of the paths along which grace encounters the soul of the people.

Let us recall, also, this typical passage from an old Russian text of The Legend of Peter, Son of the Tatar King. 'Now this young man came to the bishop of Rostov and saw the church all decorated with gold, pearls and precious stones, decked like a bride, and heard harmonious chanting - one choir in the church of the Holy Mother was singing in the Greek tongue, the other in Church Slavonic. Having seen and heard all this, the young man felt a fire kindled in his heart, and though he was not of the true (Orthodox) faith his soul was illuminated by the rays of the divine sun, and he fell at the feet of the holy bishop.' In the Russian prison camp there was no gold, nor pearls, nor gems, nor choirs singing antiphonally, but the beauty of the cult was present, even under the most austere external conditions, and it had 'melted' this young man's soul.

The very words of the Church's hymns, which with the liturgical melodies are often known by heart, were also full of great spiritual beauty for the religious mind, and profoundly 'moving'. The great (Russian) writer Chekhov has described this for us with keen perception and love in his well-known story Holy Night. You will recall how the monk Hieronymus is operating the ferry which is carrying pilgrims from one bank of the river to the other on Easter night (Holy Saturday), and how he speaks of his best friend, the Hiero-deacon Nicholas, who had just died, and who used to write such fine *akafists* or poems of religious praise. 'Now it is
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a great gift to know how to compose *akafists*. ... They must be written in such a way that the one who is praying will rejoice and weep in his heart, that he will shudder, and be seized by a spirit of reverence. In the poem of praise dedicated to the Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bozhii Mater* or *B ogoroditsa*), there are these words: 'Hail, O Highness inaccessible to the thought of men! Hail, O Depth unfathomable even for the sight of angels!' And in another place in this same hymn it is said: "Hail, Tree of shining fruit which nourish the faithful. Hail, Tree whose leaves are a blessed shelter and by whom many are defended." Hieronymus was as it were suddenly frightened by something, and intimidated, and covered his face with his hands and shook his head. "Tree of shining fruit, Tree whose leaves are a blessed shelter ..." he murmured, "You have to be a real expert to find such words. You must have a special gift from God!"

This impulsive feeling for liturgical beauty, for religious beauty, is revealed too in the phenomenon of pilgrimage so intimately connected with these aspirations of the soul of the people. The pilgrims speak enthusiastically of the magnificence, the moving beauty of the divine services they attend. Here is the testimony of the monk Parthen. The story of his pilgrimage to Mount Athos (in northern Greece) in the 1930s of the last (19th) century was one of Dostoevsky's favorite books. Some of the features of the *starets* Zossima (in Dostoevsky's novel The Brothers Karamazov) were inspired by this figure. With profound emotion the naïve and pious monk tells of one of his first impressions of Mt. Athos - the solemn Vespers in the Monastery of Hilendar. "Truly this Vespers was a blessing for me. It was the first time that I had seen a service of such beauty. When I was in the church I really felt as if I were in heaven, so filled was I with dread and joy." Everything that he saw amazed him. "The beauty of the ancient icons on the great iconostasis, the mosaics and slabs of colored marble ..." After the service he returned to the monastery quarters where his travelling companion was waiting for him. His companion asked him what he had seen, but he answered: 'I cannot tell you whether I was on earth or in heaven. I have never seen or heard anything to compare with what I have just seen and heard, nor can I express it to you. ... There is only one thing I can say: Happy are we to have come here. ...' This naïve story reminds us a little of the words of Prince Vladimir's envoys. The fact that popular religious experience was strongly impregnated with aesthetic

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elements carried with it, however, some genuine spiritual dangers. We have already spoken of this in the preceding chapter. The religious feeling could become shallow and attached primarily to the forms of the cult, and this could at times give rise to an excessive and intolerant ritualism.

* * *

And yet liturgical beauty serves only to indicate the nearness of another world - the divine world that is so far superior to ours and is filled with an overpowering Presence. Beauty serves only to prepare the soul for this encounter with God. Thus it is the nearness of the Divine, the contemplation of heavenly beauty and of one's own unworthiness which has inspired this moving canticle sung during Holy Week: 'I behold, O my Lord, Thy banquet chamber magnificently arrayed, but I have no garment to put on that I might enter in. ...'

It is especially in the sacrament of Holy

Communion, the Sacrament of God's boundless condescension, that the presence of God Most Holy is revealed to the believer's heart with incomparable power, and also the sense of his own littleness and unworthiness in the face of God. We have already spoken of this, and will dwell on it again here only for a moment. The soul is shaken by the grandeur of this experience: the coming of the Lord and His presence in the midst of the faithful. Here the King of Kings, the Master of all Creation, the Living Lord, He who suffered and was glorified, is present in the midst of us, in all His Glory, surrounded by the Heavenly Powers. 'For this is the King of Glory who comes in, this is that which has been accomplished by the mysterious Sacrifice.' 'We who represent in a mysterious way the cherubim - let us now lay aside all earthly thoughts, that we may receive the Lord of All.'

This magnificent Liturgy of the Orthodox Church and the holiness of the Eucharistic mystery have spoken to the Russian religious soul, and have profoundly influenced it, have nourished the spiritual life of Russia's holy and righteous men. In a letter to Prince Andrei of Mozhaysk (1408-1413) St. Cyril of Belo-ozero once wrote: 'My Lord, conduct yourself in church with fear and reverence, as if you were in heaven, for the church is called "heaven on earth", because the Sacraments of Christ are celebrated there.' St. Sergei of Radonezh, his spiritual master and one of the great Russian saints, had the gift of special fervor in the
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Eucharist. In the account of his life written by his disciple Epiphanius we are told that he was seen surrounded by celestial fire as he celebrated the Holy Eucharist.

The Lord comes and meets our souls, as they tremble in their depths and lie prostrate before Him. 'Lord I am not worthy to come near, I am not worthy to contemplate Thy heavenly summits, but I take courage and commit myself to Thy mercy, I flee unto Thee.' 'I am not worthy that Thou should come under the roof of my soul, for it is all in ruins, and there is no place in me worthy enough for Thee to lay Thy head. But come! Enlighten and heal my darkened thoughts, my afflicted soul.' These words from the ancient Eucharistic prayers - from the prayers of St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil, St. Ephraim the Syrian and other Fathers of the Eastern Church - find their echo in the soul of the Russian believer. Here is the way in which a great Russian saint, Dmitri of Rostov (a contemporary of Peter the Great), expressed the joy of the Eucharistic union or encounter with God: 'Enter, O Light, and enlighten my darkness! Enter, O my Healer, and heal my sores! Enter, O Fire Divine, consume the thorns of my sins and enkindle my heart with the flame of Thy love! Enter, O

my King, and take Thy place upon the throne of my heart, and reign over it, for Thou alone art my King and Savior!' And after receiving the Sacrament: 'O Exaltation of my soul, O joy of my spirit and Balm of my heart, O merciful Jesus - do Thou remain with me always, and by Thine almighty hand keep me with Thee and in Thee. Let me be united to Thee in one spirit and let all my thoughts and all my words and all my acts be in Thee, for Thee, and by Thee, for without Thee I can do nothing. Henceforth let me live no longer for myself, but for Thee, my Lord and Benefactor. Let all the feelings, all the motions of my soul and body be henceforth not in service of self, but in Thy service, my Creator, that I may live and move in Thee, and let all the powers of my soul and body be subject to Thee, O my Savior, and let my whole life, until my dying breath, be consecrated to the glory of Thy Holy name, O my God. Amen.' It was near the beginning of the (20th) century that a great Russian layman, an ardent Christian and an eminent religious thinker, spoke these words as he lay on the point of death: 'The royal doors are opening! The great Liturgy is about to begin.'" (76)

Comments Robert D. Kaplan:

"The next morning I visited the Crypt of the Alexander Nevsky Memorial Church (in Sofia, Bulgaria),
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which holds one of the most dramatic collections of Byzantine-style icons in the world.

The finest of the icons dated from the late fourteenth century, on the eve of the Turkish invasion. Although 600 years old, these icons had been restored to perfection. The gold leaf, the ruby and pomegranate reds, the ochers, the midnight blues, and even the grays shone after the fashion of precious stones. The eyes of St. George, the Virgin Mary, St. John the Theologian, and St. John of Rila could have been those of Byzantine emperors, empresses, and courtiers in the medieval era: every emotion was contained in them, but above all, they conveyed the sense of holding back, of guarding a secret. That was the Bulgarian crowd symbol, I realized: the Byzantine icon, a world of surging passion that contained a deep secret." (77)

It is obvious that Kaplan has limitations both as an aesthete and art critic and also as a student of religion. What appears to Kaplan as some sort of deep dark secret is really a commentary on his own ignorance and lack of religious, spiritual insight. To the

Orthodox believer, there is nothing "secret"; all is plain to he who has the esoteric knowledge and the aesthetic and spiritual sensibility.

Nota bene that Kaplan, in spite of his obvious limitations, much prefers the icons of the late fourteenth century to the later ones, though the later ones would seem to be more accessible to him. Did Kaplan vaguely intuit something he was unable to articulate or even comprehend?

Just so, as we have noted in another part of this chapter, Henri Matisse, who certainly did not lack aesthetic sensibility, which, after all, is somehow related to spirituality and mysticism, as we have seen, much preferred the Russian icons of the Kievan period to the later ones. Thus, Henri Matisse affirmed

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his belief that the art of the Middle Ages is superior to that of later periods. Matisse is generally considered to be one of the important figures of modern art, yet his tastes were anti-modern. Had Henri Matisse truly been a "modern artist" or a "modern man", he would have much preferred the later, post-Mongol, post-Medieval Russian icons, which are far more accessible to someone of the modern spirit or mentality, and would no doubt have considered the Russian icon painters of the Kievan period to have been mere "daubers".

Ancient Slavic - Russian, Bulgarian, Serbian - icons much influenced the films of the late (1924-1990) and widely acclaimed Armenian-Ukrainian film maker Sergei Paradjanov, especially *The Color of Pomegranate* and *Ashik Kerib*.

We now return to Nicholas Arseniev:

"To close this sketch of the depths of the Russian soul as influenced by Christian teaching and experience, I would like to take note of one further characteristic: *simplicity of heart*. We shall see its full importance among the saints and righteous men. In the soul of the people there was - alongside the inclination to hysteria and excessiveness already mentioned - an often naïve and primitive simplicity. And yet in this 'primitive' simplicity of the common vistas and depths may often be seen which are not apparent at first glance, the signs of a spiritual authenticity nourished by contact with the Gospel (*Injil*). In radical contrast to the morbid hysteria which could often be found and of which we have already given so many examples, *the main stream of popular*

Russian piety, its ideal, remains imbued with this simplicity, so characteristic of the teaching and spirit of the Gospel, and of the Orthodox Church.

Among the majority of great Russian writers (not in Dostoevsky, however) there is a tendency which can be connected with this national character: the cult of sober simplicity. It is this, among other things, which constitutes the charm of the style and whole aesthetic

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outlook of Pushkin - the greatest of Russian poets. A cult of true simplicity, clear and beautiful, full of feeling, at times full of deep passion; and yet this feeling is subdued or reserved in its expression and the passion is dominated. The ring of authenticity is all the greater, then, all the more poignant. The depth is often stormy and turbulent, but here is a passion illuminated by beauty, an impetuosity mastered and tamed, even transfigured, so to speak, by a creative movement, by a breath of hidden spirituality. On the 'psychic' plane this was already a certain anticipation of the spiritual life, a presentiment of the creative, calming and transfiguring power of the Spirit as manifested in beauty - a religious awareness partly unrecognized by the poet himself, who remained torn by internal conflicts.

Pushkin and the other classic authors of Russia, especially Leo Tolstoy, liked to contrast what was true and authentic, that which is expressed in noble simplicity, with the false and theatrical, with whatever seeks outward effect but lacks moral substance. Pushkin, especially in the second phase of his literary career, loved to describe characters who are simple but heroic and full of a sense of their responsibility. He set them in contrast with dandies draped in affected 'Byronism', the assumed 'Child Haroldism' which was then the 'sickness of the age'. This same opposition of the true

and simple man who is not given to grand speeches, but reveals his worth at moments of crisis, over against the empty talker who is always living 'for show' and is unreliable and without spiritual consistency, this same opposition we find in Leo Tolstoy's writing, in his Caucasian story The Foray, for example, or in his Sebastopol Sketches, and above all in War and Peace.

Extolled as it was by all the great writers of Russia, this simplicity had its roots in the moral life inspired by religious experience.

In closing this chapter I would like to quote Yuri Samarin's well-known letter to Baroness Raden on the soul of the Russian peasant - as he came to know it during his prolonged stay in the country in 1872, in the district of Samara. Each Sunday after the Liturgy he managed to enter into conversations with the peasants on religious subjects. At the request of the peasants he began to explain the meaning of the chants, and the whole service of the Church, and then to expound to them the fundamentals of the Christian faith. 'I need hardly tell you that in these discussions I learned more than I taught. What a mystery is the religious life of a people abandoned and

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ignorant, as ours is. One wonders where it comes from. ... Our clergy do not teach it, they are busy officiating and administering the Sacraments.' Samarin was shocked by the unbelievable religious ignorance of the people; even the 'Our Father' was being said in such a way that it had lost all meaning. 'And yet in all these uncultured minds there is an altar built by some unknown hand, as there was in Athens, to an "Unknown God". The real presence of a providential Will in every event of life is a fact so incontrovertible that when death comes to these people, who have never heard the word of God explained, they open the door to Him as if to a well-known visitor long awaited. They offer their souls to God in the literal sense of the word.'

Is it possible to make generalizations on the basis of this penetrating but perhaps too limited observation? However that may be, it sheds a very interesting light on the religious soul of the Russian peasant in the middle of the last (19th) century. Another current in this religious life of the people, more consciously imbued with the Christian message, may be found in the Tales of a Pilgrim to his Spiritual Father. The narrator of these 'Tales' is akin to Dostoevsky's figure of the pilgrim in A Raw Youth: Makar Ivanovich. (78)

Mr. Arseniev continues:

"I would like now to glance rapidly over several

types of righteousness which have played an important role in the religious history of the Russian (and Ukrainian) peoples.

Suffering accepted for Christ's sake and in Christ's name plays a central part in all Christian (at least in all traditional Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) experience. We have already seen how the first Russian saints represent this type of suffering - the young brothers Boris and Gleb. In general the type of a suffering just man has flowered richly in Russia (and Ukraine) as also in other Christian (i.e., Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) lands. It can even be considered as representative of all popular Russian (and Ukrainian) piety at its best. Ivan Turgenev found inspiration in the most profound and authentic sources of the religious life of the people when, in his little story Living Relics, he sketched the touching figure of a young peasant woman, once healthy and robust. Seized by a sudden and mysterious illness, she watched her body wither and waste away; and now finds herself condemned to total immobility. She can only move one of her hands
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slightly. Her body has shrunk to the size of a little child's, her head alone remains beautiful and striking. Day and night during the summer she lies without movement in a shed, and in winter in the *predbanik*, the small heated ante-room of a peasant bath-house. She is full of infinite gratitude for the tiniest joys of life, for the least sign of attention on the part of men. She senses and recognizes the slightest breeze, the rays of the sun, she is filled with joy when she hears some bees, or sees the flight of a butterfly or a sparrow. She loves the coming and going of a lark which in the summer builds its nest in the shed. She bears no grudge as she submits herself to the will of God. And the narrator, who had known her when she was the young beauty of the village, is overwhelmed by this encounter.

Or there is the peasant Mikhail Bezrukov, of the district of Ufa, who died at the end of the nineteenth century. He too had been struck suddenly in the flower of his age by a paralysis, after exhausting himself in the field, and his body became covered with running sores. He suffered terribly, was unable to move, and at the moments of sharpest pain would murmur against God. Then a moral change took place: he accepted his suffering, and little by little he became the shining center of an intense religious life. Inhabitants of the village and people from the most distant places came to ask his counsel, and to seek his prayers. The great pains gradually disappeared, but he remained paralysed; now full of patience and humility, a man of constant prayer.

Asceticism is intimately bound up with the

Christian (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) life. Certain forms of radical asceticism still existed in Russia in the nineteenth century, in particular the characteristic instances recalling the life of St. Alexis, so popular in the West throughout the medieval period. These were cases of the renunciation of all the advantages of life accepted and venerated by the world. There were then cases of total renunciation, where the holder of an honored position would descend to the bottom of the social scale (so clearly stratified in Russia) and mix with simple people, with the poor among the non-privileged classes, and would become one with them, even poorer than they, having no home, no means, no family, no position however modest. Such people might become simple pilgrims without a place to sleep, or poor laborers who would divide their life between work and prayer. We find an example of this renunciation of the glitter of the world, a much more radical one than that which takes place in modern

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monasticism, in the mysterious existence of Feodor Kuzmich, who died in Tomsk, Siberia, in 1864, past the age of eighty. He had obviously been an important person, a man of culture familiar with the life of politics, diplomacy and war in his time, about the beginning of the nineteenth century; a man who knew foreign languages, with a fine bearing, a majestic gait, an innate distinction. Was the (Tsar) Alexander I, who had perhaps left his throne in a clandestine manner and simulated his death with the help of close friends in the remote little town of Taganrog, making his death "official" in 1825 by passing off the body of a dead soldier as his own? No one can be certain even now, and many facts if weighed seriously speak for the probability if not the certainty of this story, which at first seems so fantastic and incredible. In any case this Feodor Kuzmich became a true Christian who in his life of self-denial and humility became a center of the spiritual life. In a charming little book which describes some of the most profound and intimate aspects of Russian (and Ukrainian) religious life - The Letters of a Pilgrim to his Spiritual Father (dating probably from the 40s or 50s of the nineteenth century) - we have the figure of another great nobleman who, as an act of contrition and in an effort to quiet his bruised and troubled conscience, had left all to become a penniless pilgrim.

The pilgrims, the "idiots", the "fools for Christ" (*urodivi Khrists radi*) and the collectors of alms who would travel on foot all over Russia (and Ukraine) gathering large sums of money for the construction of churches, promoting the construction of new churches in all parts of the land ... and other such figures ...

how typical they are of the currents of religious experience in the vast ocean of the people's life! And how many false pilgrims, false ascetics, false men of God there were among them, living on the credulity of the people! But falsehood goes hand in hand with the truth, like a shadow. Many of these wanderers lived an authentic and often deep-rooted religious life. I turn her to the Tales of a Pilgrim because it is a text which is now translated and readily accessible. It is a remarkable work. The author is a special kind of pilgrim, a simple young peasant who reads the Philocalia (of which I am very fond), the celebrated collection of ascetical and mystical writings, and devotes his time to continual prayer. One winter he spends in an abandoned forest hut, dug out of the ground (*zemlyanka*), far from all human habitations, practicing continual prayer and reading in his precious book (the Philocalia). And here
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are his unexpected encounters with persons coming from the most varied walks of life, yet all united in the practice of interior prayer and their love of the Philocalia. It is a sort of silent and spontaneous "confraternity" of adherents of the mystical life which is introduced to us in the pages of this little book (not so little; the complete Philocalia is made up of four volumes, making it quite a large work). Here, for example, is an officer escorting prisoners to Siberia - a man of piety who always carries his New Testament (*Injil*) with him under his uniform, a man of compassion having the fear of God, in spite of his work. Or again, here is a hospitable and pious couple - husband and wife - who receive pilgrims in their house and bear witness to a radiant and active Christian goodness. On the other hand the pilgrim describes for us his own interior life and the transfiguration of all creation in the beams of the Divine Word - a transfiguration which he feels at moments of inner exaltation. "Sometimes: he says, "I would feel a burning love for Jesus Christ and for all of God's creation. At times sweet tears of recognition of the Lord would flow of their own accord, at times a comforting warmth coming from the heart would penetrate my whole being, and I would feel the presence of God all around me." "Not only in the inner recesses of my soul," he says further on, "did I feel this, but every external thing would also appear in a glorious aspect and would continually invite me to love and sing the praise of God. Men, trees, plants, animals, all seemed so close to me, everywhere I recognized the mark of Christ." All creatures testify to "the love of God for men, everything is filled with an impulse toward God and sings His glory. And by this I understood what the Philocalia calls "the knowledge of the hidden meaning of creation", and I have seen in what

manner one can deal with God's creation."

The authenticity of this little book is corroborated indirectly by a similar figure described by Dostoevsky in his novel A Raw Youth, another pilgrim, but already in his old age - the moving figure of old Makar Ivanovich. As with the author of the Tales, the world becomes transfigured in the eyes of Makar Ivanovich by his feeling of the presence of God, a Presence which is the great "mystery" of creation. "What is this mystery? Everything is a mystery, my friend, in everything there is the mystery of God. Whether it is a little bird singing, or the stars shining like a huge choir in the night sky - it is always the same mystery. ... If I feel better, I will go on a pilgrimage again in the spring. Everything is

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in Thee, O Lord, and I am in Thee - accept me!"

A great deal has been written about the "fools for Christ's sake", some of it true and some of it false. At times this was simply a desire to shock people, sometimes even a pious mask for cynicism or laziness, or again it could be a genuine mental defect, a congenital "idiocy". Sometimes such idiocy was combined - strange as it may seem - with real depths of the spiritual life which concealed but did not put an end to the defects of intellect. This last condition was frequent enough, and those who were "poor in spirit" in the literal sense of the word could be true servants of God. Sometimes, even there were great ascetics and servants of God, perfectly normal from the psychological viewpoint, who would hide an extraordinary rich religious life under the eccentricities of a feigned madness for the sake of humility, that they might be despised and scorned by men. These latter were the only ones who really corresponded to the designation "fools for Christ's sake". A great number of these fools for the love of Christ (especially from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century) have been venerated by the Russian people; about thirty have been canonized. If one looks into the twelve volumes of the Lives of Righteous Persons in Russia in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries the number of *urodivye* is comparatively large. For example, the one-volume for the month of September presents, out of a total of thirty-four, five biographies of *urodivye*. Classic Russian literature sometimes gives us illustrations of this type. It may be a pseudo-saint, as described by Dostoevsky in the comic scene in Demons. Or there is the moving figure of the poor fool Grisha in Leo Tolstoy's Childhood (1853). In his secret prayer this poor fool pours out before God the hidden riches of his ardent, innocent soul. ... "I pushed my head gradually through the half-open door," Tolstoy writes, "and was afraid to breathe. Grisha

remained motionless on his knees; his chest heaving with deep sighs; in the dark pupil of his eye there was a tear gleaming in the moonlight."

"Thy will be done!", he cried out suddenly with an indescribable expression, and touched his forehead against the ground sobbing like a child. ... O Grisha, what a Christian! Your faith was so great that you felt the presence of God!" (Chapter XII).

Through the centuries of Russian history the authentic "fools for Christ" have often spoken their word of truth in a startling and courageous manner (especially in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) to the great ones of this world, before whom all others

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quailed.

* * *

In general the social function of a holy life or the *social mission* of righteous people and saints is a theme of very great importance for Russia, as it is also for other countries. It is not true that Russian piety has lacked a philanthropic and social impulse, that it has remained purely contemplative, ignoring the life and sufferings of men. Russian monasticism, besides its contemplative elements, manifests also an eminently social concern: a tremendous outburst of charity in the service of one's neighbor. The great saints were full of compassion (for them *compassion* did not mean condoning every vile thing, as is very often its meaning today; those too weak or too depraved to resist temptation merit no compassion). The monastic tradition of the Christian East, when it penetrated into Russia, even accentuated this element of service to one's neighbor so inseparable from the Christian life. For the people were ignorant, poor and forsaken, and there was a great need for someone to be concerned about them and about their spiritual welfare. The same cause injected a strong and active philanthropic quality into the great monastic institutions of the medieval period in the West.

The common people stood in great need of help. Many examples could be cited of the philanthropic activity of the large monastic centers in medieval Russia. Professor Smirnov, the eminent historian of Russian (Orthodox) Christianity, has gathered together many pieces of information which are characteristic of this trend, in his excellent little book How the saints and Ascetics of Old Russia Ministered to Their Neighbors. This corresponds exactly to that element of compassion and active piety, a piety that would go beyond the boundaries of a moral "bourgeoisie", that piety which we have stress as a major element in the religious and

moral life of the Russian people. How remarkable, for example, are these words from the Testament of St. Paphnutus of Borovsk (died 1477): "Do not buy for me a coffin of oak wood; instead of the coffin use the money to buy some white loaves (*kalachi*) and distribute them to the poor. As for me, wrap me in the of a tree, dig a hole in the ground, and put me in." St. Joseph of Volokolamsk, the disciple of St. Paphnutus, was especially full of this active charity. During a great famine a huge crowd gathered one day, from all directions ... 7,000 persons not including children ... in front of the monastery gates. St.

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Joseph gave orders that all should be fed, as for the little starving children, he sheltered and cared for them for a long time in a special hostel in the monastery. When, after some time, the holy abbot had the parents summoned to come and take their children back again, no one came, and it was necessary to build a special home for these children, and to care for them. "In his pity the holy man nourished these children whom he had not brought into the world, and took care of them as if they were his own." Another great representative of the monastic life, St. Cornelius of Komel (died 1537) was also a man of outstanding charity. St. Daniel of Pereyaslav (died 1540) transformed his monastery into a shelter for invalids and a hospital for the sick people brought to him from all over the country. "He took care of them". There are a great many such examples, and this is, after all, only natural. A true Christian would not be able to live without compassion for his neighbor.

* * *

"Let us add a few words here about *confessors of truth*, those who have spoken the truth to the powerful and great men of this world. The Russian Church has not always been passive and silent in the face of injustice. Her misfortune was that she often depended too much on the State, especially since the eighteenth century but also in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; so much so that a great number of her representatives lost not only their independence at the hands of the State but also, sometimes, even their spiritual freedom. A spirit of obsequiousness and careerism swayed the hearts of a great many prelates. The danger that exists today (remember, this book was first published in 1964) is on a much larger scale. The chief difference is that in the time of the Tsars the temporal power was always, in principle if not in fact, intimately connected to the Church by bonds of faith. The power in modern (Soviet, at the time this book was written) Russia, on the other

hand, is atheistic and hostile to faith in God, and is absolutely ruthless and cynical in its moral outlook. And yet in spite of this great difference, which cannot be exaggerated, there is a certain similarity between the dangers the Church faced then and the dangers she faces today. For this reason, as we end this chapter, we must say something about the courageous defenders and confessors of the truth.

As early as the eleventh century St. Theodosius of the Pechersky Monastery near Kiev spoke the truth with
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courage to the great ones of this world. He wrote a severe letter criticizing Prince Svyatoslav, who had seized the throne from his elder brother by driving him out of Kiev, and compared Svyatoslav with the murderer Cain. St. Gregory the Wonder-Worker, from the same monastery, was thrown into the Dnieper by Prince Rostislav, whose crimes he had denounced. St. John, abbot of the Pechersky monastery, condemned Prince Svyatopolk II for his rapacity and oppression of the common people. In 1430, in the Vologda region in northern Russia, the abbot St. Gregory denounced the savage Prince Dmitri Shenyaka to his face for the crimes and endless cruelties of the civil war he had unleashed. 'Prince Dmitri', he said, 'have you not read in Holy Scripture that judgement without mercy awaits him who has shown no mercy? You, even you, have committed acts that are opposed to the Christian faith ...' The great St. Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow in the sixteenth century, was not afraid, as a good and faithful pastor of his flock, to try to influence the violent and furious nature of the criminal Ivan the Terrible to preach justice and mercy to him, and to denounce his crimes and impious acts. He paid for this with his life.

We also find confessors and martyrs for the faith in Russia in more recent times. We must pause here, however, since we have now come to a turning point in Russian religious history. For the first time the *martyr* appears among the countless representatives of the Church in Russia. This martyrdom equals or perhaps surpasses (in point of numbers) the great persecutions of the first centuries of Christianity [in fact precisely in point of numbers, the number of martyrs for the faith, both Christian and Muslim, during the Soviet period in the former Russian Empire vastly, overwhelmingly surpasses those martyred by the pagan Roman Emperors during the first three centuries of the Christian Era]. A large number of bishops, thousands of priests and a countless number of faithful have suffered for their loyalty to Christ and the Church [just so, countless numbers of Muslims were slaughtered by the Soviet Regime because they refused to renounce the

faith]. Veery often the demand has been made by civil authority: Deny the faith, and you will be set free. I quote from reliable witnesses. These show clearly enough that it was *the faith (Christian or Muslim) which was being persecuted*. Where are we to begin in describing these afflictions? Here is a long procession of priests and bishops being deported (among them old men who could scarcely walk); dressed almost in rags, most of them without winter clothing. They are

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leaving the city of Archangel with a crowd of people accompanying them, seized with pity, and weeping openly (trying not to be noticed, some women are hastily giving them their coats, wollen scarves, knitted sweaters, and jackets). The procession sets out, in the dead of winter, across the blank stretches of snow, toward the banks of the Pechora river, over 400 miles east of Archangel. Two-thirds of the deportees die on the way, killed by the cold on the arctic plain; some of them are left to die slowly alone. Here are the priests beaten with steel bars in one of the Soviet concentration camps (invented in Russia long before the terrible camps in of Hitler's National Socialism), as we learn from the report of one who managed to escape with a Finnish passport. Here is the slow and dreadful martyrdom of Anthony, the venerable bishop of Archangel, an old man with a good and simple heart, who used to share all he had with the poor. His pastoral cross was torn from his neck. There could ne no formal charge laid against him, since he was not involved in affairs of State or any intrigue. He was acheerful pastor, with a good and simple nature, a true bishop, and that was enough. He lay on the ground, without fresh air and without water, all through the days of summer, in suffocating heat, in a small over-crowded cell, in the filthiest conditions, begging for water. They gave him nothing but beatings. Persons who were devoted to him and others imprisoned with him have preserved accurate details of his imprisonment and death. Here too are the Metropolitans Arseny of Novgorod, Cyril of Kazan, Ilarion and Peter of Krutitsa, the Archimandrite Taube, and a grea many other bishops of the Church who have remained steadfast in prison and true to their faith, to the point of death. (I have seen in a paper published in Kuwait that 30,000,000 [yes, thirty million] Muslims were martyred by the Soviet Regime.)

Here again is the trial and execution of Metropolitan Benjamin of Petrograd (St. Petersburg). A spirit of early Christian martyrdom inspired everything he did during his 'trial', ifa tissue of obviously false testimony - often refuted by the defence - can be called a trial. But the verdict had been determined in advance. The defence lawyer Gurevich (not a Christian,

incidentally, but a Jew) was a man of energy, intelligence and noble character, who had the courage to defend the Metropolitan in a lost cause. As he said in a lecture in France, he was deeply moved by the spiritual atmosphere which radiated from the Metropolitan and his fellow prisoners. This was the spirit of primitive Christian heroism, a fervent faith

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which won hearts. But Mr. Gurevich's account goes further. Certainly he admired the simple, gentle heroism of the Metropolitan and the other prisoners, their gentleness of soul, but it was not this which struck and overwhelmed him during the course of the trial. 'It was', he said, 'that behind and above the Metropolitan and the other accused prisoners something greater could be felt, a *living reality*, to which they were only bearing witness. What more can be said when one is speaking of martyrs? These were not just heroes, they were witnesses to the truth.' Here are a few words from Metropolitan Benjamin's last letter, written on the eve of his death: 'We must now go beyond our science and self-sufficiency, leaving the field open for grace.'

We are reminded here of the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews (II:32). 'What shall I say then? For there is not time to speak of all the heroes of the faith. The limitations of my task compel me to bring this short sketch to an end. But again, think of those bishops imprisoned with common criminals who converted thieves and murderers to faith in God. And there are too the 'wandering priests', who go on foot and secretly from village to village, preaching in the name of God and administering the Sacraments. And the secret Easter Liturgies in the forests of the Vologda region. And the feats of heroism and Christian courage which have been demonstrated very widely among the people, among simple people, among the humble village women (for example) who have held up their heads before examining magistrates and preferred detention and torture to apostasy. A special chapter in this Christian epic is the exile of bishops to the arctic lands of Siberia, sometimes well beyond the Arctic Circle, in little huts covered with snow, in a climate where it is difficult even to survive, with 65 degrees of frost in winter, the arctic night lasting almost half the year, and in summer the hordes of mosquitoes everywhere. It was under such conditions that the *locum tenens* of the Russian patriarch, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa and the Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan were exiled, and died. We have some remarkable letters written by the young Bishop Damascene of Glukhov to his people while he was in exile beyond the Arctic Circle. As he celebrated the Holy Eucharist in his little hut, surrounded by mountains of snow, he would see 'all those

so near and dear to me standing with me before the altar.' 'I believe', he wrote in another place, 'that in these dark days the right thing is for the faithful to let their personal sufferings dissolve in the common suffering, and that they strengthen

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themselves by recalling the warning given in the Word of God concerning the inevitability of the trials and sufferings which must come upon the world.' And here is the voice of Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan resounding across the arctic night: 'Let the Holy Spirit who dwells forever in the Church lead us through the furnace of the present trials to the great revelation of His Glory!'...

During the war (World War II) the wave of persecutions which had broken over the Church was calmed. But the dangers were not over. After the truce or period of outward calm, which was filled, as we have seen, with other hazards, in the realm of morals, a new wave of anti-religious persecutions has spread over Soviet Russia, especially since 1960. But the courage and faith of the martyrs has not been in vain, they have fertilized and strengthened the Church. They have demonstrated *the living power of Christ* before the entire world. It is a great work of universal significance which has been accomplished in the Russian Church over these years of persecution." (79)

Mr. Arseniev continues:

"Let us now turn our attention to the inner life of the Spirit.

The 'silence of the heart', a great peace - this is the impression that one gets on being introduced to the world of the saints and the great just men of Russia. Simplicity and calm, purity of heart and restraint, inner balance and, on the other hand, constant spiritual tension, sober and courageous virility, and finally gentleness and profound humility. ... And then prayer, fervent, untiring prayer, as the point of departure and source of nourishment, as the support and framework of this prayer-life in the directness of the heart, the constant interior turning to Jesus Christ the Son of God, who has pity on sinners. All this new life has a *Christocentric* orientation, is rooted in the invocation of our Lord Jesus Christ. These, then, are the fundamental characteristics of the piety of saints and just persons in Russia. This purity and simplicity have about them a special perfume, the perfume of authenticity. This is no hysterical effusion; there is a soberness here, the mark of truth, of peace restored, of divine inspiration. Along with this (we must repeat) there is a rigor towards the self, an activeness, an unceasing spiritual combat, after the pattern of the

ascetical and mystical tradition of the greatest Fathers of the East.

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Let us try first to bring out the essential elements of the teaching given by the masters of the spiritual life. The already quoted Bishop Theophan of Vysha (1815-1894) writes in a letter of direction: 'You should conquer your self-love (*samougodie*), as the Savior has commanded: 'If anyone would follow me, let him deny himself. ... When you have done that you will no longer need to ask how you ought to live to attain salvation. ... You will see clearly that there is no other way to obtain salvation than that of renouncing self. This is indeed the narrow way that leads to life.'

It is the renunciation of or contempt for self, then, that is the dominant note. Here is where the new life springs forth. The new life is, in fact, just that. It must be won through constant interior struggle. Without combat there is no new reality. It is a virile ideal that is preached here: the figures of the just and the saints have the stamp of virility.

I would like to shed some light on this interior reality by quoting further from the correspondence of Bishop Theophan:

"The Lord is the Commander-in-Chief. You are the warrior. He expects you to repulse the enemy. Do not let him down."

'...seek and you will find. And yet there will be struggle. Without combat the warrior is but a poor soldier. Everything is learned in combat.'

"The Christian life runs into many obstacles at the very start, and further on there are more. Whoever enters upon this life, let him arm himself with a firm courage, that he may approach without fear the struggles and obstacles which await him."

"Force yourself to acquire the habit of standing watch over your heart, and do not give free rein to your thoughts, feelings or instincts, if they are not moved by a spirit that is pleasing to God, but suppress them at once."

"There is a way to spiritually raise up the Cross in your heart. You do this when you make the firm resolution to crucify yourself or mortify your passions, something which is so essential for Christians that according to the Apostle only those belong to Christ who have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires."

"This spiritual combat should never be relaxed; it must be taken up again and again. If you have fallen, do not despair, get up at once with the firm resolve to fall no more. And continue your struggle. It is especially important not to be discouraged, not to give up the fight. There is, on the other hand, the no less

categorical affirmation: *We can win nothing without His help.* In Him - in the Lord Jesus Christ alone - is the power, the help, the succor. Without Him we can do nothing.

The two points are not mutually exclusive: the demand for an intense spiritual activity, for a constant and courageous struggle ... and the fundamental conviction that salvation lies *only in Him*, in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that without Him we are able to do nothing at all. They are, rather, mutually conditioned. The two dispositions grow together into a *living synthesis* of the Life in Christ.

For this activity, the virile combat is by its essence a turning to God, a constant stretching forth toward Him, an appeal and a prayer. The whole of the interior life is centered in prayer.

"Whoever takes up the spiritual life can never say: I will do this, I will do that. Force yourself to seek God without ceasing, like a fish caught in the ice striking out round itself with its tail. And you will receive what it pleases the Lord to give you, and *when* it pleases Him.

"One must seek Him and cry to Him out of a contrite heart: Save me, according to Thine own will. ... For there is salvation only in Him. But let this abandonment of self to God include a firm zeal, full of self-denial, that His holy will may be done.'

'Whoever does not labor spiritually with all his powers and makes no effort to feel his own impotence, and does not utter the cry for help which arises out of this impotence, will not obtain this awareness. ... You must do this: in the sense of your own impotence call on Him for help; and even after having accomplished something continue in the awareness of your own powerlessness.'

"Seek and you will find. This is the immutable law of all success on the path of spiritual progress. Nothing comes without difficulty. The help of God is always ready and close at hand, but it is given only to those who seek and give themselves up to hardship, and only when those who seek have exhausted all their own resources and given themselves up to prayer with all their heart: O Lord, come to my rescue. But if the least confidence in one's own resources still remains, the Lord will not intervene, as if He were saying: "Are you hoping to attain your goal on your own? Very well then hope a little longer ..." And no matter how long you hope, nothing will come of it. May the Lord give you a contrite spirit, a contrite and humble heart!"

The Lord is able, nows how to and wishes to save us. He looks for those He will be able to save. And he

saves all who come to Him. Those who wish to save themselves are the only ones who fall short of salvation."

We have the Lord, the one Lord, the only Savior, without whom we are unable to do anything good at all. He is always near. Turn then to Him."

"You must not rely upon your own powers. On the contrary, whenever any trouble overwhelms your heart, you should turn at once to the Lord, and not cease calling on Him until your anxiety is calmed."

"You must have the feeling of a man who is drowning in the sea and has caught hold of a board that can hold him up and carry over the deep. He constantly feels that he is about to go under, but at the same time he is touching the board of salvation. This is an exact picture of every soul proceeding in the Lord along the path of salvation. It feels that it is sinking, yet at the same time there is salvation in the Lord."

In short: "Embrace suffering. God will give you the strength. The awareness of your own weakness is the first step in obtaining the help of God."

"For we must not cease thinking and feeling that success in the spiritual life, in all its external manifestations, is a fruit of God's grace. This new spiritual life proceeds entirely from the thrice holy Spirit of God (a title which is often used in Islam to refer to Jesus Christ). We have our own spirit, it is true, but it is impotent. It acquires strength only when the grace of God covers it with its shadow."

One's entire life should be lived in a stream of prayer: "The Lord is near. If you turn to Him with anguished supplications and cries of distress, you will be heard at once."

"With fervor make all your spiritual needs known to the Lord, and He will help you. Prayer is the breath of the spiritual life, as you know very well already. It is useless, therefore, to waste words on this subject. Pray more fervently, **pray without ceasing** - the Lord is near, and His relief is near at every moment."

"We must become used to living constantly in the presence of the Lord, used to spending our life in ceaseless contemplation, and used to walking before Him."

"The most important thing is to walk before God, or in God's sight, with the feeling that God has His eyes upon you, that He is looking into your heart and soul, and sees everything ... this feeling is the strongest lever for advancing the interior life."

"When you withdraw into yourself, it is necessary
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to place yourself in the presence of the Lord, and to live in this way without turning your spiritual eyesight

away from Him. This is the interior hermitage; live there alone before God."

That is the central meaning of the Holy Communion: "You have received the Lord. Only let Him fill your soul to overflowing. The Lord is near. If you speak to Him, no spiritual distress will come upon you that you will not be able to conquer and subdue."

From this a completely new attitude is born, extending not only into the spiritual but also into the physical life.

"Keep the muscles of the body taut and disciplined. Give no freedom whatever to the sybarite of the body." "Your body must be subjected to the rigorous discipline of the soldier."

(The great Byzantine general Belisarius reportedly once said: "The Empire lost a fine soldier when Benedict [St. Benedict, founder of the Benedictine Order] decided to become a monk.")

"We are called not to kill our bodies, but to mortify them, not provide for them in ways that would gratify their lusts (Epistle to the Romans XIII:14). The rule to observe is to discipline the body in a reasonable way, without indulgence and complacency."

"This spirit of discipline, fear of God, and of a life in the presence of the Lord, engenders an inner maturity, gravity, moderation and spiritual sobriety which flee and scorn all excesses of feeling."

"The most important fruit of prayer is not warmth or inner sweetness, but fear of God and contrition. Its best manifestation is a contrite spirit, a humble and contrite heart. Since you have written that you feel better when you place yourself in God's presence, do this always."

There is a virile and quiet attitude of mind here which has its ultimate crown in humility.

The *startsi* abhorred all spiritual aberrations, all excessive emotionalism, looking on such things with deep distrust (as did St. John of the Cross). This is illustrated in the correspondence of the celebrated *starets* Makar of Optino.

A young woman had decided to enter a convent. She received her mother's consent, and wished to live in extreme poverty from that moment on. She begged her mother to furnish the cell being built for her in the convent as poorly as possible. The *starets* Makar warns her against impetuous zeal, which conceals much pride

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and complacency:

"You are asking your mother to furnish everything or you in the simplest way possible. But according to

the Holy (Church) Fathers we ought not to kill our bodies but our passions. I warn you again of this danger: do not take in into your head to become holy all of a sudden. Be careful. You have asked questions about prayer. When we pray we ought to have great humility, and this serves to break down our willfulness and the exaggerated opinion we have of ourselves. Take care not to wish to pray only in spirit, you are not yet capable of this. You will fall at once into illusion. Pray simply. He who bestows the gift of prayer to the one who prays will also give you this pure prayer, in the spirit, but only if you become truly humble and consider your sin. In this way the soul becomes contrite and the hearts is humbled ..."

"You are reading the works fo *starets* Athanasius. You are undertaking things which are not suitable for you. You have no idea how necessary it is to humble your thoughts. Let us say that you accomplish everything that is written in this book. You would not then be able to escape pride and self-sufficiency, those enemies which insinuate themselves into your nature so quietly that you do not notice them. It will do you great harm. But with humility you also gain peace. If in all you have done you have reaped no spiritual profit, but only interior trouble, it is clear that you do not have humility. You are thinking only of external things and are not thinking about uprooting your passions. This is why it is nexessary for you to be able to take counsel with someone who is right there with you, and to repress your willfulness and pride ..."

"You continue to aspire to the most elevated experiences of the spiritual life and to rules which are not yet suitable for you. You ought rather to follow simply the humble path, as others do without experiencing inner turmoil. You must no longer yield to interior anxiety when you have committed some blunder or mistake, but go down into the depth of humility, and rise aagain in penitence - and soon you will discover the right path ..."

"You ask me what is the ultimate goal of prayer and you quote the words of St. John Climacus (also known as "St. John of the Ladder"), saying that prayer by night consecrates theworks of the day. But does this really fit your present spiritual situation? To whom were these words addressed? Ask the Reverend Mother M. to instruct you on this point, and all the others. She sees your spiritual state and will tell you what is

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useful. If not, you will get up at night to pray, and in so doing will condemn the others who do not, and will set yourself above them. You desire to enter into what is truly 'spiritual activity', but this consists in rejecting your own will and your own judgement."

This *simplicity* and *absence of pretension* are characteristic. The great master of the ascetic and mystical life, St. Nil Sorsky (1453-1508), wrote long before: "We should not begin too quickly with what is too high for us... The best thing is to stay midway between..." For the goal of all this is *humility*.

I would like to conclude these words about the life in God by referring to a remarkable letter, addressed by the celebrated *starets* Paisy Velichkovsky (1722-1794) of Moldavia (northern Rumania) to M.P. Protasseva, his spiritual daughter, the Superior of a small community of nuns in the province of Nizhi Novgorod. The letter is a rich synthesis of spiritual counsel. What stands out particularly here is the great kindness and condescension toward one's neighbor, the boundless charity, the mortification of the old man and, as the fundamental attitude, *humility*. Thus the *starets* describes the duties of the Superior toward the sisters entrusted to her care: "Teach them the way of salvation by giving them - with God's help - an example of good works, by the careful observation of the commandments of the Gospel (*Injil*), by love for God and your neighbor, by kindness and humility, by the deep peace of Christ expressed in your dealings with others, by a truly maternal pity, by patience and long-suffering, by prayers accompanied by tears, consoling them and encouraging them to do better. Support all their burdens and frailties with God's love, be on fire with God's love for them, teach them diligently to obey God in all things., to restrain or rather to mortify their own will. As for yourself, you ought always in the secrecy of your heart and soul regard yourself as dust before God, as the greatest sinner among men."

* * *

Let us pass on now to the actual lives of these saints.

We shall have much to say, of course, about their *humility*, since this is the dominant element in their lives. Their entire life is one of *humility*. Theodosius of Pechersk (eleventh century) and Sergei of Radonezh (fourteenth century) were noted for their exceptional *humility*. They wore the most shabby clothes, they did not refuse to do the most menial tasks (even when Sergei was an abbot). They shunned all honors and distinctions (even when they were the noted counsellors

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and spiritual directors of reigning princes. "A *humble gentleness* such was the fibre of the personality of St. Sergei of Radonezh," wrote Professor Fedotov, and with good reason. We know the story of the peasant who was unwilling to believe that the man with the poor, patched garments, digging so vigorously there, could be the

celebrated abbot of the great monastery, and proceeded to insult him. Sergei, on his part, welcomed the peasant kindly and graciously, and invited him to the table of the monastery, making him sit at his side in the place of honor. This humility, as we have said, goes hand in hand with a gentle kindness toward others. It can become a charitable ministry filling the whole of life. This was so among the *startsi* at Optino, and in other places, who put their whole life at the service of those who were suffering, those who had a real need for consolation and encouragement.

I would like to introduce here some excerpts from the life of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk (1724-1783), written by his servant Chebotarev. A marvelous simplicity, candor and kindness radiate from this document. In him the life in God is united with a limitless charity toward one's neighbor.

The greater part of Chebotarev's writings deal with the time when Tikhon was living in the monastery of Zadonsk, after he had officially resigned the episcopal see of Voronezh (he had been Bishop of Voronezh from 1763-1767) because of ill health (or, perhaps, guided by some inner voice). And yet at the height of his work of spiritual counselling and service to the poor and afflicted came in this period. Thousands of people of all kinds streamed to him from near and far to relieve their material or spiritual needs, seeking from him some lesson or word of advice. He drew the nourishment for his inner life from prayer. Prayer was, so to speak, the axis of his inner being.

"It was his custom to spend the night without sleeping, and to lie down on his bed only at dawn", writes his servant ... 'unworthy as I am, I have witnessed this. During the night he would give himself to prayer, making deep prostrations. His prayer was ardent and never cold. It came from a contrite heart, so that at times he cried aloud, "Lord, have mercy on me (Greek: *Kyrie Eleison*; Church Slavonic: *Gospodi Pomilui*)! Lord have pity on me!" and he would add, "O loving Father, have mercy!" as he touched his head on the ground. All this was inspired in him by a great inner flame and by his love of God. Then, about midnight, he would go into the outer room and softly, in a voice full of feeling, chant the holy psalms. When he was in a sad mood, he would chant "It is good that

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Thou hast afflicted me ..." etc., and other consoling psalms, and he never failed to shed tears of emotion and groan audibly.

"After eating he made a practice of lying down for a little while, an hour, sometimes a little longer. Then he would read from the lives of the saints, and other books. In summer he would take a short walk in the

monastery garden, or outside. At such times he had given me this order, which was always to be observed:

"If you have something urgent for me, you must cough before approaching me, so that I can look around; and I always did this. But one day it happened that as he was walking in the garden I coughed several times, wishing to approach him, and he was so deeply immersed in his thoughts that he heard nothing; he was on his knees, his face turned toward the East and his arms raised to the sky. I approached him, saying, "Your grace ... "He was so startled that the sweat stood out on his forehead and he said to me: "Look, my heart is pounding like a bird's. But then I have already told you several times to cough before approaching me." He never set out on foot or in a carriage without his little psalter, which he always carried under his cassock. In the end he knew the whole psalter by heart. He also blessed me with this book. On the road he would always read the psalter aloud as he walked, sometimes chanting the verses aloud, and he would demonstrate or explain passages to me. Every day he would go to the Liturgy and sing in one of the choir stalls. He rarely sang without shedding tears. At the monastery of T., about midnight, he would go round the church, praying before each door, making genuflections, and shedding burning tears. I would sometimes listen, and would hear him say: "Glory to God above all the heavens", and he would begin to read the holy psalms. Before the west door he would pray more than half an hour, then he would return to his cell with rapid steps. There he would work hard, sometimes even splitting his own firewood. ... One day he went for a walk behind the monastery and he told me, on returning to his cell: "I saw a dead tree in the forest which would make two cart-loads of firewood, maybe more. Bring the axe for chopping." We went into the forest and began chopping;

he took off his cassock and began to work in his shirt. He would then often say: "He who lives in idleness never stops sinning." He himself was never idle. In the morning before the Liturgy he would write his edifying books, which are still available and are read by a great many people seeking the salvation of their souls.

"Let me speak now of the simplicity and unselfishness of his life in his cell, for he owned only

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the barest necessities. As a bed he used a little rug stretched out on the floor and two cushions; he had no blankets, but covered himself with a sheepskin lined with cotton. He girded himself with a simple leather belt. He owned only one cloak, made of camel's hair. He wore big leather moccasins like those of a hunter, or a peasant's shoes of plaited bark (*lapti*) which he put on only in the cell, saying, "How good these shoes are on

the feet!" However, when he had to go to church or receive visitors he took off these shoes and put on the leather ones. His rosary was of the simplest style, of plaited thongs. He had neither trunk nor locker in which to put his things, only an old leather bag which he always carried with him on his trips, and in which he put his books and his comb. This was all his luxury. For three years he had a horse and a two-wheeled cart, given to him by the landowners B. After his rest he would go to the fields in the cart, sometimes also into the forest, where I always accompanied him. "Go and harness the cart," he would say to me, and we will go and mow a little grass for the 'old fellow' (which is what he called the horse, a very old one indeed) and drink a little water too." As we went along the road he never stopped talking; he would speak of the grass as an example of life, or he would explain some sentences of Holy Scripture. His words were always on the subject of eternity. Sometimes we went into the forest, and there he would mow the grass in the clearings himself, and would order me to put it in piles with my rake, saying: "Put it on the cart now, the 'old fellow' will need it tonight." Sometimes we would go to the spring, which is ten versts from Zadonsk on the bank of the Don; and there we would drink the water. He loved this spring, for the water there was very pure...'

How simple this life is, how naïve and poetic in its simplicity! But this is not just a life that is peacefully sheltered. It has two pivots: the 'vigil' before the Divine Presence ... and the service of one's neighbor. This man of prayer was at the same time a man who comforted and assisted his neighbors with a spontaneous and active concern.

'Now I shall speak of his works of charity and mercy,' continues Chebotarev. 'He fed orphans and the poor, he was charitable toward all those suffering poverty and distress - in short, he gave away all that he had, the pension he received from the State and also what the old Cossacks brought him. In Voronezh and Ostrogozhsk noblemen and rich merchants also sent him large sums of money. And not content with giving all his money to the poor, he gave away his private linen too, keeping only what he actually wore on his body.

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The bread which charitable merchants sent to him he gave to those who needed it, but this was not sent to him and so he bought more. The poor and needy received shoes and clothing from him, and for this purpose he would buy furs, and suits of clothes, and linen. He even bought huts, horses and cows, which he then gave to the poor. But this was still not enough, and he began to contract debts. When he had given all away, he would ask me; 'Go, I beg you, to Yelets, and borrow

from this or that merchant. I will repay him as soon as I receive my pension, but now I have nothing. Here my poor brothers come looking for me and leave without having received comfort from me. It is painful to be able only to look at them.' Sometimes it happened that he would refuse a poor person, and simply ask him who he was and where he came from. By the next day, however, this would be hurting him, and he would call me, saying: 'Yesterday I replied to a poor man by turning him down; take this money, please, and give it to him. Perhaps we can comfort him in this way.' All the poor had easy access to him. His humility was wonderful. He would speak to the old peasants, sitting with them, talking with them at length in a friendly way about the life of the village, and he would let them go in joy, having offered them whatever was necessary. Out of his own pennies he would help maintain the poor peasants who lived in the vicinity of the monastery, especially the widows and orphans, and would pay all their personal taxes and duties to the State. He provided them with bread and clothing - in short, he helped them in all their needs. There were days when the poor who came were especially numerous and he had given away a great deal of money and other gifts. In the evening on those days he would be more gay and joyful than ever. But when only a few people came, or perhaps none, he was grieved. I can say this boldly, it was like Job's "the eye of the blind man and the leg of the paralytic." His door was always open to all the poor, the destitute, and the pilgrims who came to him. They would always find something to eat and drink with him, and a place to rest.

"He taught the little children of the village to go to church. How did this happen? When he came out of church they all ran after him. He entered his cell, and the children followed him there, made three deep bows, and cried out: "Glory to God!" And he asked them, "Where is our God?" They answered in a loud voice: "Our God is in heaven and on earth." "That is good, my children," he said then, and patted the head of each one, and gave each a kopek or piece of white bread and, in the summertime, an apple. Sometimes because of

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physical weakness he could not go to the Liturgy, and the children would go first to the church, but seeing that the bishop was not there they would go away. When I came back from the Liturgy he would ask me if the children were there. I answered: "Indeed they were, but when they saw that your grace was not there they went away." He would smile then gently: "That is all right." The poor come to the Liturgy to get bread and kopeks. Why have you not brought them to me? I am very happy when they go to church."

"Likewise, the peasants who had to pass his house on the way to their work could always find an asylum of peace under his roof in the event that any one had fallen ill along the way. He himself took care of the comfort of the sick, even bringing them his own cushion and night cap; and he would give orders to make them more comfortable still. Two or three times a day he would pour their tea, would stay at their bedside for an hour or more, and would comfort and encourage them, carrying on with them friendly and intimate conversations. Some would be dying. He made himself responsible for them with the deepest and most Christian compassion, and urged the sick to receive the Holy Communion. Those who were healed continued on their way, loaded down with gifts. In 1761 a great fire broke out in the city of Livny. The bishop did not fail to aid the victims. He sent the monk Mitrophan with money to be distributed. The next year a similar disaster fell upon the city of Yelets. Moved by compassion, the bishop manifested great charity. He went in person to Voronezh and Ostrogorzhszk to get money from his benefactors, to help build new houses for those made homeless by the fire; this was a tremendous help to them. He also visited those who lay in prison. At Yelets he visited the prison twice in person, comforting the prisoners, giving them helpful instruction and providing them with money and all sorts of other things. When a new prison was built at Zadonsk, with prisoners kept under very heavy guard, he was able to help support them too out of his own resources."

His other servant, Ivan Efimov, has also left an account of Tikhon's life. "At the time when the magistrate's court was located in a part of the Zadonsk monastery," he writes, "a prison for criminals was also established there. The bishop loved to go there at night to visit sick prisoners and give them gifts. On Easter, as he went through the prison, he exchanged the Paschal Kiss with all the prisoners. Again, in the city of Yelets, where he went from time to time at the request of the people, he would visit the prison and

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the home for the aged, and during this visit he would hide his episcopal rank under a simple vestment.'

'...at the very beginning of his stay at the monastery of Zadonsk he sold his silk garments, his light and warm cassocks, the double cloak of fox fur and the other garments of his office, also his eiderdown blanket and feather pillow and fine linen, for the sole purpose of giving the money to the poor. He even sold his handsome moire cloak, a gift of the bishop of Astrakhan - using the money he received to give to the widows and orphans.'

Dostoevsky venerated the memory of Tikhon, and it

is easy to see why he had this personality in mind when he was creating the *starets* Zossima.

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This humility and simplicity was accompanied - as we have seen - by a *spiritual fervor* (Tikhon was praying alone in the garden with such concentrated ardor that he was literally startled when someone came near him) ... and a *charity* having no bounds.

Let us say something more about this spiritual fervor. At the heights of religious experience in the lives of the saints spiritual tenderness (*umilenie*) can attain a great degree of purity and humble, sober illumination, it can become a permanent state, a sort of deep background or constitutive element nourishing the whole interior life. National differences lose their significance on these spiritual heights. And yet it is possible to speak of a piety and mysticism that is typical of the Eastern (Orthodox) Church, and to illustrate this piety and mystical experience with examples drawn from Russian religious life. This piety, especially at its best, is certainly not monopolized by or limited to the Russian or Greek or any other national element; on the other hand it is no less certain that this type of Orthodox piety has been decisive in the development of the religious ideal of the Russian soul.

On these heights, then, we often find a serene and luminous fervor, a glow of interior peace combined with 'spiritual tenderness', often manifested in the 'gift of tears', something which is discussed at length in the writings of the great masters of spirituality in the Eastern (Orthodox) Church. We have the touching passages on this subject written by St. Isaac the Syrian: 'Here is the sign that you are approaching the borders of this mysterious country: when grace begins to open your eyes so that they see
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things in their essence, it is then that your eyes begin to flow with tears, which run in streams down your cheeks, and the conflict of the senses is subdued within'. The heart becomes humble and little, like a child's, and when you begin to pray, the tears flow.'

It is like coming into another spiritual country to read these writings. Thus, the monk Parthen, whom we already know, describes the remarkable figure of the 'schema-monk' John, a man of very advanced age: "The flesh of the *starets* John was so wasted away that only skin and bones remained. His face was radiant and full of joy, his eyes were always full of

tears, and he could say nothing without tears. His words were kind, gentle and penetrating, he ate very little, never any delicacies. He counselled patience especially, and obedience, temperance, humility and charity.' After refusing the insistent requests of Parthen for a long time, he finally consented to shed some light on the secret of his interior life. He had followed the path of 'interior silence', and of 'pure', continual and unceasing prayer. "When I had spent many years in this way, then prayer began to deepen in my heart. Later, in the hermitage of Pokrov, the Lord visited me, thanks to the intercession of Father Platon. An inexpressible joy was born in my soul and interior prayer became possible. It fills me with such an inexpressible sweetness that I am unable to sleep. I sleep an hour or so, and then get up fresh and alert, as if I had not slept at all; even when asleep my heart is wakeful. And this prayer began to bear fruit. It is very true that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us. An inexpressible love for everybody was generated within me, and the gift of tears ... when I wish, I can weep without stopping. And the Holy Scripture is now full of such sweetness for me, especially the Gospel and the Psalter, that I cannot read it enough. Each word fills me with wonder and makes me shed tears.'

We have in these words a glimpse of a life of extraordinary spiritual intensity, belonging already to another psychological order. Similar characteristics are scattered through the biographies which sketch the personality of this or that saint or just person, written by those who knew them well. Of course these are only brief indications, allusions to the riches hidden in the spiritual life. In the ancient Life of St. Cyril of Belo-ozero (circa 1400) we read, among other things, that 'he worked for nine years in the monastery kitchen, and acquired such a power of tenderness that

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he could not eat bread without tears. The holy man was so imbued with the love of God that when celebrating the Liturgy and during the reading of Holy Scripture he could not restrain tears of profound wonder and love.'

We find this same spiritual fervor in the life and writings of the great starets Paisy Velichkovsky. The letter to Mother Mary Protasevna, which we have already quoted in part, begins with a reference to the Savior's words: 'I have come to bring fire upon the earth, and I desire that it be kindled!' (Gospel According to St. Luke, XII:49). And the starets speaks at length, with amazing force, of 'this divine fire which the holy apostles received in their

hearts', and after them the holy martyrs, and all the other servants of God, a fire with which he himself was consumed.

Let us add a few words about the boundless charity, that great gentleness and kindness and fervent love for one's neighbor, that infinite compassion which is found on the summits of this spiritual life. Here we have the spirit of the first Epistle of St. John. It is the spirit of the boundless condescension of the Son of God, by whom this love is inspired and from whom it comes, it is the 'humility of love' (*smirenje lyubovnoe*) about which Dostoevsky speaks ("the humility of love is an incredible power!"). In the writings of an old Russian saint of the twelfth century, Bishop Cyril of Turov, we find this prayer for one's enemies: "Save, O Lord, and pardon, those who hate me and offend me, are full of enmity towards me and do evil against me and injure me, and also those who speak evil of me; let none of them suffer any evil as a result of my impurity, neither in this age nor in the age to come, but purify them after Thy mercy, and cover them by Thy grace."

The famous passage from the ascetical writings of St Isaac the Syrian about the compassionate heart "inflamed with love for all creatures - for men, for birds, for beasts, for reptiles, for all that exists, even for the enemies of the truth' - a heart which prays to God unceasingly that they be delivered from their sufferings, preserved and purified - these words have undoubtedly been echoed in the hearts of a number of Russian saints and ascetics. We know that the works of St. Isaac the Syrian were well read in Old Russia.

We have already referred to instances of this kindness and compassion in the life of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk and others. Here are a few more examples.

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The ancient biography of St. Denis of Glushitsa (1363-1437), written shortly after his death, speaks of his endless goodness. He would give to those who came to him with requests without trying to find out who they were, would give even to imposters. To his disciples, who wanted him to exercise greater reserve, he replied: "Stop begging me to be deficient in mercy." The same thing is said of Cornelius of Komel (1455-1537). No one who asked help of him was sent away empty-handed. The resources of the monastery were always available to the needy. On one major feast day when a very large number of poor people gathered at the gates, all the monastery's money was given away. At this time it happened that the Grand Duke Vassily Ivanovich had sent twenty-one ruble (a large sum for that time) to the monastery,

and this too was distributed at once to the needy.

This characteristic note of extreme humility combined with boundless charity, always ready to pardon and serve, has been captured by one of the greatest Russian writers in the wonderful figure of the peaceful old man Pambo (in The Angel Sealed with a Seal by Nicholas Leskov).

"So what more could I say?" the narrator tells us. "If I were to insult him, he would bless me; if I were to hit him, he would bow down before me to the ground; a man of that kind of humility is invincible. What could he fear if he even asked to be condemned to hell? No, with his humility he would chase all the demons out of hell, or convert them to God. They would torment him, and he would pray: "Torture me more cruelly, for I deserve it." No, no, Satan himself could not bear such humility. He would wear out his two hands hitting him, he would blunt all his claws and would end up acknowledging his own powerlessness before the Creator of such love, and would blush with shame before him." Strange as it may seem, this is a quality taken from real life, it has really existed and is a special characteristic of Russian sanctity. We have here the type of a quite *supernatural gentleness*. Without meaning at all to monopolize it, we can say that this is an almost 'national' element in Russian piety.

More striking yet, perhaps, are the words of the old missionary Kiryak (in another of Leskov's stories: At the End of the World, which is set in the far north-eastern part of Siberia). Carried away by the force of boundless love, full of trust in God, he contends with God before his death, catching hold of the hem of His garment, so to speak, and refusing to let go. "I will not let go before you bless them
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all." This is the same infinite boldness of love that we saw in St. Isaac the Syrian.

This fervency of spirit - this immense love for men which sacrifices itself, multiplies good works, gives alms - the fervor of this constant pleading before God - all this was incarnated in the figure of the great man of prayer and active charity, the Archpriest St. John of Kronstadt (1829-1908).

* * *

On the heights of this life in grace we find, finally, a quiet, humble *jubilant* or *illumination* of the spirit, despite all the earnestness of unceasing, courageous and indefatigable spiritual combat. The manliness of this struggle, the courage of this spiritual attitude is illumined and

transfigured by the joyous experience of the nearness of the Lord. These qualities appear with special force in the life of the *starets* St. Seraphim of Sarov (1759-1833), canonized by the Russian Church in 1903), a life imbued with a supernatural radiance. 'Christ is risen, my joy!', he used to say by way of greeting to those who came to see him, all through the year and not just at Eastertide.

In this saint the *pneumatophoric* element, the penetration of the entire being by the Holy Spirit, is particularly prominent. He had attained the state of interior illumination, the inexpressible peace so full of measure and sobriety which lies at the heart of the triumphal Paschal joy. Many witnesses describe him to us in this way. He himself says: 'Whoever admires the world cannot avoid being troubled. But he who despises the world is always in joy.' Particularly remarkable is his long conversation with the layman Motovilov, which the latter recorded carefully, and which was published posthumously in 1903. This was not merely a conversation, it was an ineffable experience, an illumination by the presence of the Holy Spirit. We approach a realm here where reverent silence should be preserved. 'The power of prayer is prodigious', St. Seraphim said, 'and stronger than all that exists, for it is prayer that causes the Holy Spirit to descend ...'

In conclusion I would like to refer to some elements in the life of the *starets* Makar of Optino (1788-1860), using extracts from a biography written by one of his disciples.

'...One Maundy Thursday he was singing alone in the middle of the church the hymn "O my Lord, I behold Thy bridal chamber richly adorned", and as he
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sang it it seemed that the words "I behold" had on his lips a literal and not merely figurative meaning, that the hymn was expressing what he was really seeing with the eyes of his soul. The old man's voice trembled with emotion, torrents of tears ran down his pale cheeks and those who heard him were stirred to the bottom of their hearts...'

'...His face was burning, like that of an angel of God. His expression was peaceful, his speech humble and without pretence. His spirit was constantly united with God in unceasing interior prayer, and by virtue of this untiring inner prayer his face shone with spiritual joy and radiated love for his neighbors. When he received the holy mysteries of Christ at the altar, it was always with the deepest emotion. His garments were of the humblest and simplest make. Up to his death the *starets* preserved his natural liveliness, which made him a very active

person, always disposed to do good works. This liveliness always expressed itself in his actions and external gestures. He had an amazing memory. When someone came to make his confession to him, or had asked him for spiritual counsel, the *starets* would often remember all about him, all the main circumstances of his life. It often happened that an old woman would come to him for the second time, and would be greeted by him: "A very good day to you, Darya! Are the little ones all right? How is your daughter Trinushka? You married her off three years ago, if I am not mistaken." And the poor woman, amazed and deeply moved that God's servant should have remembered her, would be at once consoled; her embarrassment and confusion passed she would open her soul to him, telling him her cares and drawing comfort from his words.

"In all his qualities and external actions the *starets* lived in a regulated way: the "royal way", as the holy (Church) Fathers called it. He concealed his great temperance in his humility. He would eat all that was offered to him at the monastery table, but only very little, not more than a third of the normal serving.

"He was full of pity for animals. In winter he cared for the birds every day; he would spread out hemp seeds for them, on a little shelf he had attached outside his window. A flock of little titmice, linettes and woodpeckers used to enjoy the *starets'* favors. He used to watch that the bigger birds, like the jays, did not hurt the little ones. Since the jays tried to devour all the food meant for the other birds, he would put out grain in a little

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glass trough where the little titmice could easily get it.

"The *starets* would get up every day for morning prayer at the sound of the monastery bell, which rang about two o'clock in the morning. If, however, he was kept later than usual in the evening writing letters, or if he was indisposed, he would get up at three. He himself awakened his servants, knocking at their door so that they could say the rather long morning prayer with him. He would sing the hymns in honor of the Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic; *Bozhii Mater* or *Bogoraditsa*) in a very loud voice. After the prayers he would send his servants away and remain alone before God. At six o'clock he would call the servants back in order to read with them the prayers for that time, and the Liturgy. Then he would drink one or two cups of tea and would turn to writing letters or reading. From this time on his cell was open to all who had need of

his material or spiritual help. After a midday meal, he would then begin to receive the people who thronged to visit him..."

"...at times the *starets* would enter a state of spiritual joy, especially when he was meditating on the ineffable ways of God's Providence, or was conversing on this subject. Then he would often sing one of his favorite hymns, for example" "Come ye faithful, let us adore God the Three in One..." or one of the canticles which celebrate the inexplicable and unfathomable mystery of the Incarnation, and the most pure Mother of the Immanuel. Sometimes he would leave his cell and walk between the flower beds in the garden; he would go from one flower to another, plunged in admiration for the glory of the Creator."

There is here a great spiritual synthesis, as there was in the life of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk. And in all these various qualities (in St. Tikhon's life too we hear a good deal about the inner struggle against temptation, melancholy and sadness) what stands out above all is this tranquility, the peace of a transfiguration that has already begun.

These men were the guides of the Russian (and Ukrainian) peoples on the path toward the summits of the life in Christ. Every nation has had guides such as these (I am not so certain on this last point). Both the cultural and the spiritual life of the Russian (and Ukrainian) peoples have been made fertile by their presence, their example and their teaching. No doubt the great mass of Russians (and Ukrainians) - both at the top and the bottom of the social scale - were all too often unworthy of these

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saints. And yet, in spite of everything - and I am convinced of this - the saints continue to influence the history and destiny of these peoples."(80)

As we have noted above, in 990 Vladimir had a change of heart, was himself baptized a Christian, and had the population of Kiev forcibly baptized, while the pagan idols were cast into the River Dniepr. Unfortunately, we do not have a list of the names of said idols, with the exception of Perun, or, most likely, *Thor-Perun*, as the Viking god *Thor* had long been conflated with the Slavic *Perun*, both being thunder gods.

In some respects at least. Vladimir accepted Christianity

from Byzantium rather than Rome, though due to his close relations with Bohemia, Poland and Norway, this was by no means inevitable. This is of enormous importance; Russia and Ukraine would be Eastern Orthodox, not Catholic.

Apparently, there was little resistance to this forced Christianization, no doubt partly because there were already numerous Christians in Kievan Russia, especially among the Greeks and Goths in the Crimean Peninsula. Olga (*Haelga*), Vladimir's grandmother, had converted to Byzantine Christianity. Also, many of Vladimir's wives were Christians.

Kievan Rus' had now fully taken shape; wealthy from both agriculture and trade, with a rich and vibrant culture in which Viking, East Slavic, Danubian Bulgar, Iranian and Byzantine elements intermingled. Long after Kievan Russia had been savagely crushed by the Mongols, Russians and Ukrainians would look with

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profound nostalgia to the Kievan Period as a lost golden age.

In his pagan days, Vladimir the Russian Viking had been a polygamist on a grand scale; historians do not agree as to the total number of his wives. Sviatopolk was son of a Greek mother. Yaroslav, Mstislav, and Iziaslav were the sons of Rogneda, a Viking woman, and thus were pure Vikings, though they bore Slavic names. Sviatoslav was son of a Czech woman, while Boris and Gleb were sons of a Danubian Bulgarian woman; indeed, the very name "Boris" indicates a Danubian Bulgarian origin. Thus, the general though far from total lack of brotherly ties and affection among the sons of Vladimir the Russian Viking was no doubt due to the

fact that they were born of various and ethnically very diverse mothers.

One thing should be clarified at this point. Many people today believe that Gleb was a mere child at the time of his death. In emphasizing Gleb's youth, the early sources may indeed give the impression that Gleb was a mere child when he was killed; much later Gleb became confused in the popular memory with the Tsarevich Dmitri, who was in fact a mere child at the time of his martyrdom. Whatever impression they may tend to give at times, the early sources, though they never give Gleb's precise age, certainly affirm that he was not a mere child at the time of his death. Vladimir had named Gleb as governor of Murom, northeast of Kiev, which he would hardly have done had Gleb been a mere child. Said early sources also attribute to Gleb speeches which are most certainly not those of a child. The early sources affirm that

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Boris and Gleb were sons of the same Danubian Bulgarian woman; as George Vernadsky has noted, were Gleb a mere child, then Boris and Gleb could not possibly have been sons of the same mother, as Boris' mother died only a few years after his birth.(81)

There are indications that Vladimir the Russian Viking intended to leave his realm to Boris, though Boris was not his eldest son.

Boris, whom Vladimir the Russian Viking had made governor of Rostov, to the northeast of Kiev [not to be confused with *Rostov-na-Donu* or Rostov-on-Don], was leading a military expedition against the Pechenegs or Patzinaks, a Turkic tribe who were blood

enemies of Kievan Russia, when Yaroslav sent him word the death of their father. Some of his counselors encouraged Boris to immediately march on Kiev. And claim his rights. However, Boris desperately wished to avoid a (literally) fratricidal civil war. Boris not only did not march on Kiev with his troops, but dismissed most of them so as to avoid any warlike provocation. Svyatopolk had meanwhile seized Kiev and was determined to consolidate his power by any means necessary. He sent emissaries to Boris' camp, where they entered Boris' tent and killed him, along with several retainers. They wrapped Boris' body in a canvas and put it in a wagon. However, Boris gave signs of life, and was given the *coup de grace* by two Vikings, who ran him through with their swords. Boris' corpse was buried in the Church of St. Basil in Vyshhorod (Ukrainian form; in Russian it would be *Vyshgorod*), a few miles north of Kiev. No doubt it was feared that entering Kiev

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with the body of Boris might spark a revolt.

Svyatopolk then sent a message to Gleb in Murom, saying that Vladimir was gravely ill. Gleb then set out for Kiev. Gleb's brother Yaroslav sent him a message warning him of their father's death and of the murder of Boris. Gleb did not heed Yaroslav's warning, because he could not believe in the evil intentions of Svyatopolk. Shortly thereafter, Gleb and his retainers were found by Svyatopolk's men in the wilderness near Smolensk. Lamenting the deaths of his father and brother, Gleb offered no resistance and was brutally slain by Svyatopolk's men. Gleb's body was buried between two logs. It has been noted that this appears to be some

sort of burial rite, though scholars do not agree as to its significance. I am reminded of certain Scythian burials.(82)

As Talleyrand said to Napoleon in reference to the execution of the Duc d'Enghien, the murder of Boris and Gleb was not only a crime, it was a blunder. In committing these crimes, Svyatopolk was acting like a Viking pagan; his actions remind us of Viking sagas.

However, Viking pagan ways were no longer acceptable in Christian Kievan Rus'. Svyatopolk did not long enjoy his ill-gotten power. Civil war broke out between Sviatopolk and Yaroslav. Sviatopolk requested aid from his brother-in-law, Boleslav I of Poland. However, the Poles were, to put it mildly, half-hearted in their support of Sviatopolk, whom they considered to be a murderer and fratricide. Sviatopolk and Boleslav soon quarreled, and the Poles went home. Meanwhile, the populace of Kievan Russia

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repudiated Svyatopolk, since they, like the Poles, considered Svyatopolk to be a murderer and fratricide, and the Vikings rallied to Yaroslav, partly no doubt because he, unlike Svyatopolk, was a pureblood Viking. Svyatopolk was defeated and sought help from the Pechenegs, who were not so squeamish and scrupulous as the Poles, but was defeated once again, this time very near where Boris had been slain, and fled to Poland, where he died in 1019.(83)

The martyred princes Boris and Gleb immediately captured the imagination of the populace of Kievan Rus'. In this case, the people led and the Church eventually followed, though with great

reluctance. To learned churchmen, it simply did not seem that Boris and Gleb qualified as saints, for two reasons:

- ❖ 1.) Boris and Gleb were murdered for purely political motives; they could not be considered as "Martyrs for the Faith", as there is no evidence that Sviatopolk had any intention of restoring Paganism; though his actions were those of a pagan Viking, as we said above, Sviatopolk took pains to see that Boris was interred in consecrated ground, as befitted a prince of the *Rurikovichi*, as we have noted.

Of course, St. Wenceslas of Bohemia was also murdered for purely political motives, which brings us to the second point.

- ❖ 2.) As the song "Good King Wenceslas" indicates, St. Wenceslas of Bohemia was considered to be a saint even in his lifetime, giving abundant evidence of rare sanctity. Boris and Gleb were unquestionably upright and pious young men, but the early sources give no indication that they did more than was expected of any devout, conscientious Eastern Orthodox Christian.

As we have said before, fire was sacred to Celts, Iranians and Indo-Aryans. Fire was also sacred to the pre-Christian Slavs;

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whether this is the result of contact with Celts and Iranians or of an Indo-European background common to Celts, Iranians, Indo-Aryans, Balts or Lithuanians, and Slavs there is no way to know. Many mistakenly believe the Balts or Lithuanians to be Slavs, hence the expression "Balto-Slavic" which in reality is an oxymoron, as Balts or Lithuanians on the one hand and Slavs on the other represent two quite distinct branches of the great Indo-European family.

In any case, there is no doubt that fire was sacred to the pagan Balts or Lithuanians as well as to Iranians, Celts, Indo-Aryans and Slavs. As late as 1386 Byzantine sources refer to

Lithuanians as "fire worshippers".

As Gail Lenhoff has noted:

"There is abundant (documentary) evidence that fire was sacred to the pre-Christian Slavs. Travelers describe rituals, sacrifices and the burning of the dead to insure their ascent to paradise. The widely disseminated royal statute known as the *Estav Vladimira* expressly forbids the Kievans (Russians) to *Milit'sja pod ovinom* (i.e., to pray to the spirits in the *ovin*, a barn-like structure in which a fire is built to dry sheaves of grain). A fourteenth century copy of the *Slovo Xristoljubca* contains a list of East Slavic gods and reports that, among other deities, the (East) Slavs prayed to *Svarozhich*, the fire god (*ogneve moljat'sja zovushche ego Svarozhichem*). Sermons attributed to St. Gregory of Nazianzus and St. John Chrysostom, as well as to the writings of Kirill of Turov, contain similar references to pagan Slavic customs connected with fire worship." (84)

A.N. Afanas'ev notes that in his day (mid 19th century), fires appearing over graves due to phosphorescent fumes were taken for the souls of the deceased. (85) I have heard from many people of flames appearing over graves in Galicia in the northwest corner

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of Spain, in circumstances in which the usual naturalistic explanations can be ruled out. Of course, Galicia is a part of Spain in which the Celtic past is visible everywhere, as we said before.

The first miracles concerning Boris and Gleb are all related to fire, as we shall see below.

Gleb's body for some time was lost in the wilderness near Smolensk. As an early source says:

"Although the holy one (Gleb) lay there a long time, the Lord did not leave him to remain utterly unknown and disregarded. He gave signs: sometimes a pillar of fire was seen, sometimes burning candles. In addition, merchants passing by on the road would hear the singing of angels, and others, hunters and

shepherds, saw and heard these things." (86)

Another early source says:

"The Christ-loving prince (Yaroslav) ordered a search for Gleb's holy body, which many sought and had not discovered. After one year hunters came upon the body of the holy one lying whole; neither beasts nor birds had touched it. Going at once to the town (Smolensk), they told the town elder. The elder went with his servants and saw the holy one's body shining like lightning and was awe struck. He ordered his servants to guard the holy one's body on this spot until he sent word to the Christ-lover Jaroslav, who was then occupying the throne of his father. Hearing this, Jaroslav wrote a letter to the town elder ordering him to send Gleb's body quickly to the town (Vyshhorod) where (Boris') body had been placed." (87)

The narration continues:

"When certain Vikings, who had come from another land (Scandinavia). Were standing near, one of them unwittingly trod on the (graves of) the saints (Boris and Gleb): flames came out and scorched his feet. He could not endure it and leapt from that spot; unable to walk, he told his retinue. Having heard this and seen his scorched feet, they dared not approach that spot from that moment on. When the citizens heard of this,
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they came and worshipped with fear at the grave of the saints." (88)

Kievan Rus' was a land recently converted; for churchmen, the above miracles had far too many resonances of pagan Slavic fire worship. Also note that among those who witnessed said fiery miracles were merchants, hunters, shepherds, even Vikings, not a priest nor a bishop nor a monk nor even a *staretz* (mystic) among them. Note that at Smolensk it is the elder (mayor), not the bishop who believes the story of the hunters concerning the body of Gleb. For a long time, the Church showed great skepticism concerning miraculous cures attributed to Boris and Gleb.

Even in 1072, year of the canonization of Boris and Gleb by

the Russian Orthodox Church, the Metropolitan Bishop George of Kiev did not believe that Boris and Gleb met the qualifications to be canonized as saints, but yielded to popular pressure on this point. (89)

The early sources say:

(At the canonization of Boris and Gleb in 1072) "The Metropolitan (Bishop George of Kiev) was unsure that the blessed ones (Boris and Gleb) were saints." (90)

And:

"(At the canonization of Boris and Gleb in 1072) "The Metropolitan Bishop George of Kiev) was seized with fright, for he had not been strong in his faith in the saints (Boris and Gleb)." (91)

While the Church was obviously reluctant to accept Boris and Gleb as saints, some will say that, for his own political

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purposes, Yaroslav favored the cult of Boris and Gleb. Let us examine this.

Yaroslav used the murders of Boris and Gleb to turn the populace against Sviatopolk. Also, Yaroslav may well have been sincerely saddened by the deaths of Boris and Gleb, and vengeance may well have been one of the motives for his implacable hostility towards Sviatopolk (a very Viking motive, one might add, nothing more typically Viking than vengeance, as anyone who has read the Viking sagas knows). However, Yaroslav did not consider Boris and Gleb to be saints for a very simple reason: in their passivity and non-resistance, Boris and Gleb had abdicated their duty, their princely *noblesse oblige*. This is particularly true in the case of Boris, who had a considerable military force at his command.

Sviatopolk was a usurper, and all too obviously a power-hungry, treacherous and evil person, unfit to rule Kievan Russia. Yaroslav had no doubt that he was fulfilling his *noblesse oblige* as a prince of royal blood in fighting against and finally defeating and dethroning Svyatopolk. However much personal affection Yaroslav may have felt for Boris and Gleb, he would have found it difficult to think of them as saints.

When Yaroslav first set out to make war on Sviatopolk, he harangued his Slav and Viking troops thusly:

"It was not I, but he (Sviatopolk) who set to killing off our brothers. Let God be the avenger of my brothers' blood, because without cause he spilled the righteous blood of Boris and Gleb. Shall he do the same to me? Judge according to righteousness, O Lord, and let the wickedness of the sinner come to an end." (92)

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The final battle between Yaroslav and Sviatopolk, by ironic coincidence, occurred very near the spot where Boris had been murdered. Before the battle against Sviatopolk and his Pecheneg minions, Yaroslav harangued his Viking and Slavic soldiers thusly:

"The blood of my brothers cries out to Thee, O Lord. Do thou avenge the blood of this righteous one (Boris, who was murdered very near to the place where Jaroslav was speaking). Even as Thou didst avenge the blood of Abel by bringing groaning and trembling upon Cain, do Thou likewise to this (Sviatopolk)." And he (Jaroslav) prayed: "My brothers (Boris and Gleb), even if you have departed from here in the flesh, aid me against this proud and inimical murderer." (93)

Note that Yaroslav refers to Boris and Gleb as "righteous", but not "holy" nor "saint". In other words, Yaroslav simply said that Boris and Gleb were upright and pious young men, but not saints. Significantly, Boris and Gleb were not canonized until

1072, eighteen years after the death of Yaroslav.

Perhaps a few points should be clarified. As we said before, while the mother of Boris and Gleb was Bulgarian (the very name **Boris** is Bulgarian), the mother of Sviatopolk was Greek, and the mother of Sviatoslav was Czech, Jaroslav, in spite of his Slavic name, was a pureblood Viking. This may have contributed to the fact that so many Vikings rallied to Jaroslav in his civil war with Sviatopolk. No doubt Jaroslav's pure Viking origins also inclined him to cultivate relations with the Scandinavian homeland of his ancestors.

In Russian the word *poustinia* literally means "desert"; like the early Celtic monks, the first Russian monks considered themselves as continuing the tradition of the Desert Fathers of

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Egypt. Though lacking the dazzling intellect of many of those whom we cite in this work, as well as the sheer spiritual genius of a Staretz Silouan, for this very reason Catherine de Hueck Doherty, born Ekaterina (Katya) Feodorovna Kolyschkine in Russia in 1896, writes with a simplicity and immediateness which makes her works instantly accessible.

"...What is the answer to all these darkneses that press so heavily upon us? What are the answers to all these fears that make darkness at noon? What is the answer to the loneliness of men without God? What is the answer to the hatred of man toward God?

I think I have one answer - the *poustinia* (pronounced "pou" as in "you"). Poustinia stands for prayer, penance, mortification, solitude, silence, offered in the spirit of love, atonement, and reparation to God! The spirit of the prophets of old! Intercession before God for my fellowmen, my brothers in Christ, whom I love so passionately in him and for him.

Yes, that "doing something more" can be the *poustinia*: an entry into the desert, a lonely place, a

silent place, where one can lift the two arms of prayer and penance to God in atonement, intercession, reparation for one's sins and those of one's brothers. Poustinia is the place where we can go in order to gather courage to speak the words of truth, remembering that truth is God, and that we proclaim the word of God. The poustinia will cleanse us and prepare us to do so, like the burning coal the angel placed on the lips of the prophet.

The word *poustinia* is Russian, meaning "desert". It is an ordinary word. If I were a little Russian girl, and a teacher during a geography lesson asked me to name a desert, I might say, "*Saharskaya Poustinia*" - the Sahara Desert. That's what it really means. It also has another connotation: it means the desert of the "Fathers of the Desert", who in ages past went away from everything and settled in desolate places. In the Western sense of the word, it would mean a place to which a hermit goes and hence it could be called a hermitage.

To a Russian, then, the word can mean a quiet, lonely place that people wish to enter, to find God who dwells within them. It can also mean truly isolated places to which specially called people go as hermits
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to seek God in solitude, silence and prayer for the rest of their lives!

However, a *poustinia* was not necessarily completely away from the haunts of men. Some people had reserved, in their homes, a small room to which they went to pray and meditate, which some might call a *poustinia*.

Generally speaking, however, a *poustinik* (a person dwelling in a *poustinia*) meant someone in a secluded spot. A *poustinik* could be anyone - a peasant, a duke, a member of the middle class, learned or unlearned, or anyone in between. It was considered a definite vocation, a call from God to go into the "desert" to pray to God for one's sins and the sins of the world. Also, to thank him for the joys and gladness and all his gifts.

I got to be very familiar with one *poustinik* to whom my mother went for advice. I never knew who he was. We used to go there on foot and return on foot. When we arrived my mother knocked on the door and opened it. There was no latch on the door. The *poustinik* was always there to welcome anyone who came. Mother bowed to the cross that was prominent against the log wall, and to the icon of Our Lady. Then she would bow to the *poustinik* and say, "Peace be to this house", and he would say, "May the peace of the Lord be with you." I did the same. Then he would offer us some tea and some bread, whatever he had, and say, "Come and partake of

what God in his mercy has sent me." Upon doing so, I went to play outside, and my mother talked to him. The we went back home.

It is difficult to simply relate this man, and other poustiniks that I came to know through my lifetime, and what is called a "hermit". There was some kind of difference. The *poustinik* seemed to be more available. There was a gracious hospitality about him, as if he were never disturbed by anyone who came to visit him. On the contrary, his was a welcoming face. His eyes seemed to sparkle with joy at receiving a guest. He seemed to be a listening person. A person of few words, but his listening was deep, and there was a feeling that he understood. In him St. Francis' (of Assisi) prayer seemed to become incarnate: he consoled, he understood, and he loved - and he didn't demand anything from anyone for himself.

He was available in other ways. If someone from the village was in need (for instance, if a farmer needed his hay in before the rain), he rushed over to the *poustinik* and asked his help. The *poustinik* immediately dropped everything and went with the farmer. He was always available.

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Usually the *poustinik* was a man, though there were women *poustiniki* also. Sometimes they were single people, sometimes they were widows and widowers. Not all of them were educated in the academic sense of the word. Quite often they were just ordinary peasants, but usually they had what we call "letters", that is to say, they could read and write. Amongst them could even be found the nobility. It is said that one of the tsars, Alexander I, went into a poustinia. There is a mystery about the many years of his absence, so they say.

In Russia poustiniks were called *staretz* (or *staritza* for a woman), meaning the "old one" or the "wise one", even though they had gone into the poustinia around the age of 30 or 35, and were not necessarily old in age. Some were older, and were people who had been married, had reared their children, and then felt the attraction of the desert. But the majority seemed to have entered poustinia when they were around 30 to 40 years old.

There was no big fuss about going into a poustinia. From some village, from some nobleman's house, from some merchant's house - from any part of our society in Russia - a man would arise. (Of course, only God knows why he did arise.) He would arise and go into the place (as we Russians called it) "where heaven meets earth". He departed without any earthly goods, usually dressed in the normal garb of a pilgrim. In summertime this was a simple handwoven shift of linen, of the kind that ladies wear these days, only it came down to his or her ankles.

It was tied in the middle with an ordinary cord. He took along a linen bag, a loaf of bread, some salt, a gourd of water.

Thus he or she departed, after taking leave of everyone in the household or village. Some didn't even do this. They just stole away at dawn or in the dark of the night, leaving a message that they had gone on a pilgrimage and maybe would find a poustinia in which to pray to God for their sins and the sins of the world, to atone, to fast, to live in poverty, and to enter the great silence of God.

There were poustiniki, both men and women, who had been monks or nuns. Since Russian religious orders are contemplative in the Western sense, these people would get permission from their abbots or abbesses to become poustiniki, dwellers of the poustinia and the desert. Since some of the real estate holdings of the monasteries were large, and often included much wild and uncultivated land, it would not be difficult to find a place where they could build themselves a poustinia, or have one built for them if they were

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women.

Or they might simply be given permission to go and find their desert for themselves. In this case, they might go on a pilgrimage to a holy place, pray there, and get some inspiration as to where to go. Then again they might just simply walk around prayerfully until they found a place. Yes, there were a variety of poustiniki or dwellers of the desert - *startzi* as we call them in Russia. Women were in the minority; usually they began to dwell in the poustinia in their old age.

There is another vocation in Russia that is somewhat similar to that of poustiniki: the *urodivoi*. This word means "fools for Christ." My father had a friend who was one of these. His name was Peter and he was well-born, of the nobility, the eldest son of an old Russian family. He was what is called in America a millionaire. He had a lot of gold and silver in the bank, and owned real estate.

One day he came to my father and said, "Theodore, I have been reading the Gospels (Injil) and I have decided, as so many before me, to accept them literally." My father listened. He continued: "I am going to gather my goods. I am leaving my farms, my real estate to my family, but my money in the bank I am changing literally into silver and gold pieces." This he did, and my father accompanied him through the whole transaction.

In those days there were no trucks. There were drays pulled by two horses. My father said that Peter's was a big dray, perhaps the equivalent of a one-and-a-half ton truck. It was filled with sacks, and the sacks

contained gold and silver. Peter, with my father accompanying him, went to the poor section, what they now call the slums, of Petrograd (St. Petersburg). There, family by family, house by house, Peter gave away his pieces of gold and silver. When the tray was empty Peter said: "Now I have in some small measure ransomed the 30 pieces of silver for which God was sold. And now I must go."

So they returned to his house where, on his bed, there was laid out a linen tunic. He took a linen bag, a loaf of bread, and in another little linen bag, some salt. He also had a gourd of water and a staff. [The same as a medieval pilgrim to the tomb of St. James the Greater in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.] On foot, my father walking with him, he went through the streets of Petrograd. My father accompanied him to the outskirts of the city and onto a country road. The last he saw of him was just a silhouette against the setting sun - a man in a long garment with a staff in his hand. He had

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no cash in his pockets (he had no pockets), nor in his bag. He had only some bread, salt, and a staff. Not even shoes. That was all.

Years later, my father chanced to be in Kiev, a large city in Ukraine. He went to Mass and, as was the custom in those days, all the beggars assembled on the church steps before Mass to beg from the good people who went in. Amongst them was a man with a beard, matted and seemingly uncombed long hair, and tattered garments. He looked like a fool, a retarded person. His eyes were vacant; there was no expression on his face except the one usually associated with retarded people.

Then a ray of sun came out and fell on his face - and my father recognized his friend Peter! He called out his name and intelligence returned to his face. They embraced. They went to Mass together and then had breakfast. My father asked, "Why have you chosen this vocation of idiot or retarded person?" Peter answered, "I am atoning for the men who have called Christ a fool during his lifetime and during all the centuries thereafter." They kissed each other goodbye, and Peter disappeared. My father never saw him again.

Peter belonged to the *urodivoi*. These were a group of people who lived with the poor and were totally poor themselves, begging their alms at church doors and street corners. They fasted. One might say that they stood side by side with the *poustiniki*, for they, too, though living in abject poverty, lived alone, prayed, and listened. But their vocation was that of witnessing to the "folly of the cross". Because men continue to call God a fool, the *urodivoi* feel they have a continuous vocation of poverty, atonement and prayer - like the *poustinik*, yet different from him.

Then there were the pilgrims who constantly crisscrossed Russia carrying their poustinias in their hearts, sleeping under stress, in haylofts, wherever they were allowed to. They were poor, alms-begging people, praying for the whole world constantly.

These spiritual traditions still go on. For when I was in Rome in 1967 for the International Lay Congress, I had occasion to translate for four Russian theologians. They spoke neither French nor English, so I had to translate back and forth for them.

We became very well acquainted. I asked them: "Are Russians still pilgrimaging?" They just looked at me and said. "Do you think communism can stop pilgrimaging in Russia?" I felt like falling through the floor! Nevertheless, I asked another question along the same lines. "And what about the poustiniki?" They answered that the forests were still full of poustinias and poustiniki, and that even the communists were known to
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go into the forests to look for the poustiniki - and somehow or other remain there! But, they added, these were unconfirmed reports.

Perhaps as a nation we Russians have been chosen for these somewhat strange vocations - lest the world forget about the essence of our faith, which is above all to render glory to God. The essence of our faith is to eternally seek to know God better in order to glorify him more and to serve him better in men.

We Russians tend to identify ourselves especially with the poor, and so to be cold, to be homeless, to be pilgrims for those who have no holy restlessness and who don't want to arise and seek God. All this seems quite natural to us. So many of us feel that the rest of men are looking for him where he cannot be easily found - in the comfortable life which is in itself not sinful, but which can become a sort of asphyxiation and isolation from the rest of mankind. Comfort can become an idol too.

So these are the strange vocations of my people and of many other Eastern (Orthodox) Christians." (94)

Catherine Doherty (born Ekaterina Feodorovna Kolyschkine)

Continues:

"...The desert (*poustinia*), as understood in Eastern spirituality, is also the dwelling place of Satan. We know from the Gospels that he dwells there, and that is where he tempted the Lord (Jesus) Himself. The three great temptations of Christ happened in the desert. The desert thus has deep significance in Christian spirituality.

The *poustinik* desert dweller goes into a hidden place to be alone with the great silence of God, to learn to know God as God reveals himself to the *poustinik* in response to the latter's love. The *poustinik* waits in poverty, surrender, and in the knowledge that he is one of the *anawim*, a real poor man in spirit of the Beatitudes.

The *poustinik* also foresees that he is going to meet Satan. In the beginning he doesn't know how often these meetings are going to take place. This is hidden from him. But he knows that inevitably, sooner or later, the Evil One will come to tempt him.

In the Eastern tradition, temptations are seen as stepping-stones. It seems ridiculous to compare them to school "grades", but God allows men to be tempted so that they may grow in faith, love, and hope. It's as if God puts us through a school of love. Our passing

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from grade to grade is our reaction to, and our overcoming of, the temptations which he permits the devil to try us with. The Lord wants us to grow in faith and love of Him, trusting in Him alone.

He wants us to absorb, with our whole being, his words: "Fear not - I have overcome the world;" "In me, the Prince of this world has nothing;" and "Fear not, little flock, I shall be with you at the end of time." He wants us to experience, with St. Paul, that "My grace is sufficient for you". All this is what he wants to teach us, and therefore he allows Satan, who roams in a dark and waterless desert of his own, to come to the *poustinik* in his desert.

For those who go into the desert for any length of time, or who have the vocation to dwell there for many years, these temptations will come. The temptations might be subtle, like the whispering of leaves on the trees, like the rushing of shifting sands on the dunes, like the rustling noises of the forest. Or they may come in cries, like the baying of a coyote in the distance. They may come without sounds, but they will come. And suddenly the *poustinia* will become fearsome. The house will seem to close in on the *poustinik*. Quite unexpectedly, the Holy Book will become just a jumble of letters, mere words and sentences which no amount of praying will be able to connect with anything else in the mind and heart of the desert dweller.

In the night, fear will come to dwell with him who dwells in the *poustinia*. The place will become cold on the hottest days. There will be a desire to run away from the *poustinia*, to get among people, to get away from the loneliness that has suddenly taken possession of the heart which only a moment ago seemed to be united with God. Suddenly, it is as if God had never been there. There is nothing but a shack, a log cabin. Its

poverty seems more distasteful and grim than ever.

The night will be barely endurable. Prayer will become impossible. Sleep has fled, seemingly never to return. An almost physical, palpable fear reaches to a fever pitch and takes hold of one. The uselessness of such a life suddenly becomes quite evident, and the person begins to wonder why he is in this desert place. "Why has God led us into this desert place?" (Exodus XVI:3). What folly brought him here? Again and again the mind is centered on getting out, getting out from under everything that now appears completely senseless.

Yes, Satan might come under these guises. Or, he might enter the intellect and, with clear and irrefutable logic, prove that the poustinik is wasting his life, that he or she would do so much more good among his fellowmen, and that he should leave this

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utterly foolish vocation. Sometimes the power is given to Satan to try and persuade the poustinik that it isn't a vocation at all, that it is an illusion. This agony of the mind is even worse than terror and panic. It is as if an edifice were crumbling, as if the person himself were crumbling. Yes, Satan can come in this guise too.

Or, he can come in the guise of pride. The poustinik might really think that he is a wise man, wise with his own wisdom, and that he should go and preach to thers now - now that he is "ready".

Periods of temptation may be long or short. This depends on God's permissive will. But they will be there. There will be moments of darkness, of lostness, of loneliness, of agony, of fear, of questioning, of doubts, of terror, and of panic. Against these things there is only one answer: to stand still and say the Jesus Prayer, even though each letter of that simple prayer weighs a ton! Make the sign of the cross, and kiss the icon of Mary, th Mother of God (Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*).

Stand still ... don't run away! Stand still! Such is what writers in Eastern spirituality offer asa a remedy against the temptations of the devil. They also recommend more fasting, some bodily penance perhaps, but above all they counsel this standing still. It is in such standing still that faith grows, hope comes alive, and love deepens.

If anyone thinks that he can enter the poustinia and live there without meeting Satan, then let him not enter the poustinia. If he does enter the poustinia, let him not count on his own strength of mind and soul. Rather, let him admit more keenly and more simply that he is a sinner, a poor man, one of the *anawim*, and because of this he must lean more on God, and reach out to him like a drowning man reaches out to a floating

log.

In the knowledge that without God we can do nothing we reach a high point of understanding. When we experience in the darkness, the fear, the terror, the panic, that his grace is indeed sufficient for us, this becomes the moment of real believing. We come to see that if God has permitted the tempter to come to us, then God will give us the grace to resist him.

Yes, these are great moments of growth in faith, hope, and charity that God sends to the poustinik. These are also moments when the poustinik is really fighting for the world, for he is attacked, as it were, in the name of humanity. As at these times he knows himself to be extremely human, so at the same time he knows that God gives him special graces to fight these

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temptations, not only for himself but for all humanity. Always the poustinik knows that he is in the poustinia for others, and that his prayers and mortifications, his being exposed to temptations, his meeting with Satan - all these are experienced by him as a representative of humanity.

For the *poustinik* lives in Christ, and Christ took humanity upon himself. So too, by the grace of God, the poustinik takes all of humanity upon himself, and becomes, with the help of God, a holocaust for all men. He becomes a Simon of Cyrene, a Veronica. A poustinik is never alone. The whole world is with him and it is for that world that he weeps, mortifies himself, enters the silence of God, and fights the temptations of Satan. All these things are never for himself alone!

This aspect of the spirituality of the poustinik is terribly important. It's the very reason why in Russia we say that this vocation is *given* to someone. A community rejoices that God has chosen someone out of their midst because their faith tells them that his vocation is precisely *for them*. The poustinik's whole reason for going into loneliness, into solitude - his whole reason for exposing himself to temptations, is always for others.

It is always an identification with the holocaust of Christ, with his whole life, with his crucifixion. This identification is the way to *our* resurrection and that of others. For we die in Christ and we resurrect in Christ, not only through baptism, but through the fruit of baptism - faith, hope, and love. The men and women whom God calls to be alone with Him in His immense silence and to be his prophets must understand that well, with His help and that of Our Lady!

The road is long and hard and difficult. Never be afraid. You won't be if you understand where you are and why you are there. You won't be afraid - but you might be awed. Somewhere along the road you will meet evil.

For whenever God reveals himself, he must allow you to meet the other one, who is also part of his creation. It is not that you are grasping at the forbidden fruit of the tree, but God allows a confrontation with it.

You have to know how to encounter evil at God's bidding, in his time, in order to be able to contribute to the community of man. For evil is among us. You will understand how to handle evil of the Evil One because God has put upon you the nuptial robe and the ring, and you have come close to the Trinity - you have been drawn into him.

So now you will be tempted, but you won't be afraid. If you are afraid, then you had better have a
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talk with your spiritual director. Then the dimension that we are discussing has not yet happened in you. There is a connection between God's teaching you about himself, and the encounter he permits you to have with evil.

How do you overcome evil? Again, by faith. By the sign of the cross, the invocation of the name of Jesus (*Hesychasm*, also known as "The Jesus Prayer" and the "Prayer of the Heart") and of Our Lady, but above all by faith. For when you encounter evil you know God exists. I don't know if I am making myself clear on this point. Physically and emotionally you might be afraid. You may perspire. You must disregard these things.

The next step is the invitation to faith. God is calling you to come up higher, and Christ, your brother, is saying to you: "Yes, this is the Evil One, but I am here, and I have conquered evil and death on the Cross. So give me your hand and the Evil One will be but a stepping-stone to where you wish to go." So in faith, you put your hand into Christ's hand and you walk over, symbolically speaking, the back of the devil. He's just a stepping-stone. But you have to believe that Christ has extended his hand, because then you will be utterly unafraid.

Such things will happen to you again and again, but they are not to be feared if you believe. As a poustinik, you figuratively and sometimes factually prostrate yourself and cry out, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief." He will help you. Zthor poustinia is God's constant school of love. When you have finished with this school, explosions like the atom bomb will be like toys to you. You probably will not realize exactly who you are, what has happened to you. But people will come to the place where you are. You will be going out to make your contribution because now you know that you don't, he does.

Thus the poustinik is always moving slowly into a deeper understanding of *martyrdom*. Martyrdom has many

faces.

Perhaps sometime in the tomorrows of Madonna House, evil, really evil people will come. God will let you know that they are evil. You will not be afraid because somehow you will see Christ, even in them. Who knows, perhaps you may be killed. If so, with your last breath you must say, "My Lord and my God, Alleluia!"

Charles de Foucauld understood this kind of senseless martyrdom. He was uselessly killed by a group of Tuareg in the Sahara to whom he had done no harm. He was truly a poustinik with an open door; he accepted this martyrdom and did not run away. He didn't even try
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to protect himself. He lived out his interior martyrdom.

There is another kind of martyrdom. Most of us will not be martyred in the way that Charles de Foucauld experienced. But a poustinik will be a martyr of another sort, and he must be prepared for it. It is the martyrdom of facing oneself, one's emotional self. No one wants to face his emotional self. Nobody wants to admit that he or she acts at times like a 10 year old, that they have a thousand different moods, that they are afraid of the silliest things. We don't like to face these facts. This is the beginning of our martyrdom.

Then (Jesus) Christ comes in. Remember that the poustinia door has no latch. That means that Christ too can come in! He enters and says, "Come, let us go a little farther on our journey." The second stage of the journey toward martyrdom is being torn apart between your emotional states and knowing yourself as you are. It's a very deep martyrdom.

The third stage is an ability to really face oneself without all the emotional camouflage. Though painful, it is a stage so filled with grace that, in a sense, it ceases to be a martyrdom and becomes a sort of oneness with God. Now, one looks at one's sins truly and honestly. That looking is another phase of the martyrdom. But one is no longer upset or in any despair. The martyrdom is being oiled by the love of God. It no longer rubs abrasively, hurtfully.

There descends an understanding that all martyrdom in this area of self-knowledge is one of the greatest graces that God can give us. The poustinia gives birth to that grace. Outside the poustinia it is more difficult to acquire it because too many things distract us - and because we desire to be distracted.

Some people may think that such self-knowledge will lead to depression. For a Russian, depression in a poustinik is impossible. A person who tends toward a depressive complex will not choose the poustinia. He will choose a pilgrimage, because he is restless, unhappy; he has to keep moving all the time. Furthermore, a community is very aware of depressed

people. They wouldn't want to have them around. In Russia they would write to a bishop or someone to say that something is wrong with the poustinik!

The martyrdom continues. We are beginning to know who we are. We are beginning to be at home in our difficulties, with our sins, seeing with more clarity of soul. I imagine that for Westerners it will take quite a bit of time to reach this clarity of soul.

Clarity of soul is different from clarity of mind.
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I can see my sins clearly with my mind. I can use the methods recommended by ascetical theology (which is based on reason) to overcome my sins.

But clarity of soul is required by the *gift of tears*. I weep, and the tears wash away my sins and the sins of others. My mind is serene and unaffected, because I know that the grace of tears is not from my mind but proceeds from the heart of God. It comes to my heart, and I weep. My mind now is clear and my heart is clear - I am clear. You must never forget (and the poustinia gives you this understanding), that when I weep, *Christ weeps*, because Christ is in me. When my tears mingle with those of Christ, then *his holiness* washes me, not mine.

Again, we should distinguish between depression and a state of sorrow. Sorrow is a state of union with God in the pain of men. It is a state of deep and profound understanding. It is as if God put his hand out and the panorama of the whole world and its pain is opened before you. This is the action of the Holy Spirit. The gift of tears flows. The tears are such that you cannot stop them - nor should you try. You must allow them to flow. They will stop - just like that - when God wants them to stop. These are never tears of anger, or tears of animosity toward anyone. These are very pure tears, not subject to your control. You can neither begin them nor stop them. But neither are you upset by them.

When tears come to my eyes in this way I do not investigate where they're from, who they're for, and so on. I believe in faith that they are from God, that I am crying with him because he cares for me and cries with me. Sometimes when I go to church I am in a perfectly happy mood. I do a little skip, pick up a flower or two. I'm fine. I arrive at the church. I kneel down. I'm happy to be at Mass. Suddenly, without any action on my part, I begin to cry. Why do I cry? Nothing told me I should. No unfortunate or sorrowful incident happened between my waking and coming to church. It's as spontaneous as the wind. I just cry; it's uncontrollable. I have no way of stopping the tears. I've tried to stop them; nothing works. Slowly they stop spontaneously.

Afterwards I don't know why I cried or what started

or stopped it. But I know that it came from God. Something happened in the world that made God cry and he invited me to cry. Or perhaps I cried and invited him to cry. It has something to do with the exceeding holiness of God, not me.

The tears wash away my sins and the sins of the world. When this happens, you have nothing to do with
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it. If it happens of your own will or because of your own emotions, they're not tears from God. They are somebody else's tears, not God's. They're your own tears. Poustiniki are more prone to shedding the tears of God because their lives are so concentrated on God. It always happens unexpectedly, without knowing when or how or why. It's suddenly there.

This brings us back to clarity of soul again. The clarity achieved by these tears does not mean that now the soul is sinless, nor, of course, does it mean that we are saints. It just means that my soul has been cleansed by God, that I have been able to recognize who I am - with all my arrogance, my pride, my self-will. It doesn't mean that tomorrow we will not be arrogant, proud, or self-willed. But we have reached some new level where we can recognize that the arrogance is there, and the recognition leads us closer to God. This is clarity of soul.

Russians believe that the greatest purity is achieved through tears, tears that really wash us. Our tears mingle with the tears of Christ and cleanse the soul of every extraneous thing that is bothering it. Tears wash away every interior attachment which hinders true poverty of spirit.

Tears are also another way through which we come to appreciate the great gift of God: our freedom. Our soul, washed by tears, can see clearly that we really are free, that we can say yes or no to God. In the poustinia, this struggle between yea and no, this struggle with God, is intensified a hundredfold. At some point, your yes to God will make you nonexistent. For only a second. Something will happen in your purified soul through these tears and struggles. You will return, and on that day you will know a miracle. You made your choice for God. The true liberation that God reserves for those who love him will be yours.

The Lord, from time immemorial, has known you. He has allowed his fire to come down upon you like a crimson dove. His fire is over you. You are moving slowly up his mountain, the mountains of the Lord. To get to the top you must pass through the heart of God. As you pass through his heart, you become a bonfire, and, together with him, a huge bonfire. You become a bonfire on the top of the mountain.

Many people see it and come to find out what it is.

So they climb the mountain too; they come to your poustinias. They see that you are very strange bonfire; transparent ones. You are a bonfire through which they can pass. On the other side the heart of Christ is waiting for them. Having been yourselves scooped up by the hand of God, and having agreed to it by your yes,
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you have now become a transparent bonfire that leads other men to Christ." (95)

Yaroslav, who would later be known as *Mudry*, "the Wise" and his-half brother Mstislav were co-rulers of Kievan Rus' from 1024 to 1036. So, Jaroslav was sole ruler of Kievan Rus' only from 1036 to 1054. True it is that the memory of Sviatopolk has been denigrated, he being known as *okajanny*, "the accursed", for his role in the death of Boris and Gleb; in fact, it is most difficult to see any injustice in this denigration of Sviatopolk, guilty as he was of the crime of fratricide. Says A.P. Vlasto:

"The epoch of Yaroslav *Mudry* ('the Wise') was marked, like that of Symeon of Bulgaria, by a apid flowering of Russian spirituality and culture. Russian annalists have glorified him as Solomon to Vladimir's David - a not unjust if banal parallel, for, as the consolidator of Vladimir's work after the difficulties and interruptions of the previous decades, he was a man at the same time more ostentatious and more calculating. And he built the temple. In the apt metaphor of the Russian Primary Chronicle Vladimir ploughed and broke up the soil; Jaroslav now sowed the seed. No sooner did he return to Kiev in 1036 than he put in hand a great reconstruction of the capital. Neglected for long and ravaged in recent years by the Pechenegs, it needed both rebuilding and expansion. Vladimir's Tithe Church, perhaps already dilapidated, was no longer considered worthy to be the mother church of Kievan Rus'; it is nowhere mentioned in the annals of Jaroslav's reign. Jaroslav at once (1037) laid the foundations of a splendid new cathedral to receive the next (Byzantine) Greek Metropolitan, Theopemptos, whose appointment must have been agreed upon with Byzantium about 1036. It was dedicated to the Holy Wisdom. Kiev thus became the Constantinople of Kievan Rus'.

The Church of the Holy Wisdom has been repeatedly altered since the eleventh century as to its details but the main structure is still substantially the same.. The

best available (Byzantine) Greek masters were brought to direct the work, to design and make the mosaics, and to paint the greater part of the frescoes. Certain galleries and stairs of access from the Palace were decorated in fresco (alfresco painting) with
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secular scenes of life in the Imperial City - musicians and entertainers. At the West end is a great frieze of the royal founder and his family. The portrait of Jaroslav himself is unfortunately not preserved. Holy Wisdom was sufficiently advanced to be used by the new Metropolitan in 1039 but was not consecrated till 1046 and the decorations were not completed until after Jaroslav's death.

Jaroslav was also responsible for two more personal foundations, the monastery of St. George, his own patron and the monastery of Ste. Irene, his wife's (Ingigard, daughter of Olof Skottkonung of Sweden; it will have been noted that, more often than not, as with the assumption of an angelic name on taking monastic vows ['second baptism'], a Christian name is chosen starting with the same sound as the secular name: Jaroslav - Juri, the East Slav colloquial form of George; Ingigard - Irina). He further completed Mstislav's cathedral at Chernigov (*Spaso-Preobrazenski sobor*) in the 1030s, a magnificent edifice still largely intact, and built the Golden Gate in Kiev with the Church of the Assumption above it. The plans and style of all these buildings follow the best Byzantine models of the time. Both the Golden Gate and its Church of the Assumption (Dormition) had Constantinopolitan prototypes. In Kievan Rus' there was naturally no impulse to follow other than contemporary models, since in contrast to the Balkans the country was not littered with relics of the basilicas and baptisteries of an earlier age.

Kiev's Church of the Holy Wisdom was followed by that of Novgorod (1045-1052), founded by Jaroslav's son Vladimir, and by that of Polotsk at the end of the eleventh century. In all these cathedrals the gradual emergence of a specifically Kievan Russian style can be observed imposed on a conventional Byzantine model. Novgorod's *Sofia* is a simplified version of Kiev's, with three apses instead of five. Since it was started in 1045, just as the main structure of the Kiev *Sofia* was completed, it seems probable that the same craftsmen were sent north to carry out this second task. But at Novgorod the main material had to be brick, and the decorations all in fresco since mosaic was very costly indeed.

All was not plain sailing in the life of the Church after 1039. Jaroslav's *rapprochement* with Constantinople in 1036 was as much political as ecclesiastical: a close military alliance was needed by both sides to meet the

menace of the Pechenegs. Indeed, unless we believe in the full autocephaly of Vladimir's church and in the corollary the Jaroslav 'climbed down'
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in 1036 in accepting a metropolitan from Constantinople, there had been no significant estrangement since 989. It is difficult to define how Byzantine Greeks and Kievan Russians conceived their mutual relationship. While new Slav churches subscribed to the Eastern Church's conception of Christendom as a brotherly diversity in unity the Slavs were understandably hesitant towards the complementary doctrine of the one Universal Christian Empire under God's viceregent ruling in Constantinople. Even in Byzantine political thought this was naturally seen more as a theoretical truth than as a practical possibility. It was patently untrue from the time of Otto I's imperial coronation in 962, reluctantly recognized by Byzantium. The neophyte Kievan Russians of the ninth century could be looked upon by Photios as autonomous but subject barbarians, similar in status to the Danubian Goths in the time of Ulfilas (or Wolflein) (*foederati* of the Roman Empire). But the Russian Viking dynasty did not, any more than other Vikings, see their rule in this light. Jaroslav was too great a monarch to consider himself a vassal of the (Byzantine) Emperor. Though he and his successors always recognized a special but undefined relationship towards the (Byzantine) Emperor, even down to 1453, they did not allow it to affect their independence of action. Clovis and succeeding Franks in the sixth-seventh centuries had similarly been aware of a vague attachment to New Rome, which had no effect on their title of *Patricius*. The pervasiveness of the Imperial idea may be gauged from the fact that Edward the Confessor (1042-1066) styled himself *Anglorum Basileus* on the first known Great Seal of England. He and other Saxon kings probably used the title as a learned equivalent of the native *bretwalda*, with the real *basileus* in Constantinople at the back of their minds.

If a Slav ruler thought he might be sinning in this reservation towards the universal suzerainty of the Emperor - the 'visible icon of the invisible King' - the logical response was to try and make himself that Emperor - witness the rulers of Bulgaria and Serbia. But the rulers of Kievan Rus' were ill placed to emulate their Balkan cousins in this respect.

The ecclesiastical relationship was much more immediate. (Byzantine) Greek metropolitans (and in the early years bishops) predominated in the Russian Church. This was not an imposition. By Canon XXVIII of the Council of Chalcedon a daughter-church or a province that had the right to elect its own head subject to the

approval of the Patriarch of Constantinople. This right was occasionally exercised
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in Kievan Rus'. But though local election remained canonical, in practice the Patriarch's Standing Committee in Constantinople had from the beginning of the tenth century more and more taken over the appointments of metropolitans throughout the Empire. The practice was extended automatically in Kievan Rus'. In any case Constantinople could apply pressure through the latitude of the Canon. But she rarely did so and the Byzantine Greek metropolitans did not in general attempt to deflect the Russian Church from its own natural development as a church using the Slavic liturgical language (Old Church Slavonic). One might venture to assert that at certain times, not long after Jaroslav, the warring Kievan princes were glad to have a foreign head of church - a man who stood above internal politics both by virtue of his office and his origins - to whom they could turn for impartial counsel.

In Yaroslav's reign the position was simpler. Until the wherewithal existed for perpetuating a wholly East Slav hierarchy, outside help was imperative. Jaroslav could not call on Bulgaria for bishops. He therefore accepted many Greeks, as Vladimir had done, and there are no good grounds for ascribing the deterioration of relations with the Byzantine Government in 1042 to intransigence on the part of Metropolitan Theopemptos. The short Russo-Byzantine war of 1043, which (Michael) Psellos is pleased to call a 'rebellion of the Russians', may rather have had economic causes: the murder of Kievan Russian merchants in Constantinople is mentioned. Theopemptos' retirement from Kiev is no more than the natural consequence of the situation; the Emperor had similarly removed all Kievan subjects from Constantinople when hostilities were imminent.

Peace was made in 1046. This was the last passage of arms between the two powers. The interrupted friendship was restored by the betrothal or marriage of Yaroslav's son Vsevolod to the Byzantine Greek princess Maria, probably in 1047. The peace negotiations presumably also touched on ecclesiastical affairs. To them we may reasonably attribute the elevation of the East Slav Hilarion (Ilarion) to the Metropolitanate in 1051. The argument that Jaroslav had not only once (in 1036-1039) but now again failed to extract from Byzantium autonomy for the Russian Church has naturally led to Hilarion's election being viewed as a much more serious 'rebellion of the Russians'. In this view Yaroslav had him elected in the face of the indignation of the Byzantine authorities, especially the Patriarch Michael Kerularios, but sacrificed him again in 1052 to

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the greater triumph of a Byzantine marriage for his son. This is improbable. There is nothing in the available accounts to suggest any departure from all due formalities. It is true that Hilarion is not mentioned as Metropolitan after 1052 but nothing contradicts his continuance in office during Jaroslav's lifetime. Most probably he resigned on Jaroslav's death. By amicable agreement with Constantinople a certain Efrem (Ephraim), perhaps a Greek who had already been many years in Kievan Rus', was translated to the Metropolitan throne. There is in fact every sign that Byzantine policy had lost some of the rigidity of which it is commonly accused. The elevation of Hilarion could well have been agreed upon in advance. The reading of these events depends largely on the internal evidence of Hilarion's own Sermon on the Law and Grace with its encomium to the first Vladimir. The date of the sermon certainly falls in the 1040s. One of its purposes was to put Vladimir's merits in such a light as to promote his canonization. It is 'nationalist' only in the sense that he glorifies Vladimir as the great preceptor (*9nastavnik*) who brought the people of Kievan Rus' to regeneration in Christendom - a personal achievement directly inspired by God. It is not nationalist in the sense of being propaganda directed against the Greeks and Byzantine ecclesiastical tyranny. A date of 1042-1043 to bolster up its alleged purpose as a call to prosecute the war against the Greeks is much less likely than 1049, when friendly relations again prevailed.

A much stronger and more direct influence of Constantinople on Jaroslav's church must not be held to imply a decline in already existing relations with other Christian bodies. The international economic importance of Kiev was now at its peak. Jaroslav extended the policy initiated by Vladimir of close political ties with the major European states. Dynastic marriages provided the framework. He married Ingigard of Sweden about 1019. Of their numerous issue he married Vesvolod into the Byzantine Imperial House at the end of the 1040s. In 1049 he negotiated the marriage of his daughter Anna to Philip, son of Henry I of France; a French embassy, led by two bishops, Roger of Soissons and Gauthier of Meaux, came to Kiev to fetch the bride. Jaroslav had already married other daughters to Andrew of Hungary and to Harold of Norway (circa 1044). His son Izjaslav took a Polish wife, Gertrude daughter of Mieszko II, in 1043; his sons Vladimir and Sviatoslav married Germans. Economically the European connections were now quite as important as the Byzantine. This is the background of Hilarion's
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claim in his Sermon that Kievan Rus' was 'famed in all

the four quarters of the earth'.

The so-called schism of 1054 did not alter the tolerant temper of Kievan Christianity. Its juridical validity is questionable, its immediate impact exaggerated. While the fissure between the Eastern and Western churches had been imperceptibly widening since the time of Charlemagne, the stumbling-blocks to unity even in the middle of the eleventh century were far more political and cultural than theological. The sharpening of tempers on both sides and the subsequent polemical intransigence scarcely antedates the fatal intervention of the First Crusade (1096) which bred jealousy and suspicion between Greeks and Latins coming as conquerors to the Near East.

Kiev knew of the schism at once. For the Papal Legate Humbert made his way back to Rome via Kiev (August 1054). Whether this was part of his original instructions from the Pope is not known for certain. The long journey could scarcely have had any other purpose than to persuade Kievn Rus', now a great power, to sever its obedience to Constantinople. The appeal was disregarded. Latins continued to enjoy full tolerance. There were many Latin residents in Kiev who had their own churches and continued to have them undisturbed down to the final overthrow of Kiev in 1240. Novgorod had an even larger proportion of Latin residents. Contacts with Bohemia did not cease till the very end of the century and then because of events in Bohemia.

As we mentioned above, Jaroslav's son Vesevolod married the Byzantine Princess Maria. From this union was born Vladimir II, known as *Monomakh*, from the Greek *Monomakhos*, meaning "single combat", a title earned by a Byzantine ancestor due to his warlike exploits. We shall have much more to say concerning Vladimir II Monomakh.

Yaroslav's reign marks the first flowering of the culture of Kievan Rus', which flowering drew gratefully on all sources. The Bohemian contribution was relatively modest and short-lived. Bulgaria's dominant role was now over. Her imperishable merit had been the transplantation of the Slavic liturgical language, i.e., Old Church Slavonic, to Kiev and the earliest provision of the necessary liturgical texts. This South Slav written language so permeated Russian culture that it was not only perpetuated in Russian use as a learned tongue outside the strictly ecclesiastical field but, through its cultivation by the educated class, exerted a variable influence throughout the centuries on spoken and written Russian and Ukrainian in much the same way

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as Latin was to influence many Western European languages. Mixed styles arose which steered a path between the pure liturgical language and the vernacular according to the genre and matter of the writing. The

early coinage shows some inscriptions in Church Slavonic, as is to be expected in a field which partook of the sacred in most medieval states.

New Bulgarian works were no longer available. Nothing written after 1018 reached Kiev. Russians merely continued to exploit those of an earlier generation. Allusion has already been made to the copy of the Aprakos made for Ostromir in 1056-1057, evidently based on a much earlier manuscript. Similarly in 1073 a copy was made to Sviatoslav II (1073-1076) of an Encyclopaedia originally compiled for (Tsar) Symeon of Bulgaria. Another similar compilation of 1076, copied by the same scribe, rests mainly on the Bulgarian material but also contains some passages in all probability newly translated in Russia. Taken together they show the range of Christian learning being then assimilated in Kievan Rus' in the form of excerpts both dogmatic and moral from the Church Fathers (i.e., St. John Chrysostom, St. John of Damascus, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Basil, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Anastasios of Sinai, and St. Efrem the Syrian), and from Greek historical works illustrating the Byzantine conception of world history as God's purpose revealed through Jewish history, the Christian Church and the Byzantine Empire. The Greek chroniclers George the Monk (Hamartolos) and John Malalas were freely drawn upon. But translation of complete works is exceptional; Kievan Rus' was still content with excerpts, especially those which afforded prescriptions for the leading of a truly Christian life. Kievan Rus' by now possessed the whole corpus of liturgical texts in full Slav translation. Everything else was secondary to this.

Direct translations from the Greek now come to the fore. Outstanding among these is Josephus' Jewish Wars, probably translated in Jaroslav's reign. It shows not only a thorough command of the Greek text but also the development of a native style of historical writing which contributed much to that of Russian annals then in the making. The involved process of the creation of Russian historical records cannot here be entered into. It must suffice to note that the first methodical records may go back to Vladimir's reign and that the material was gradually organized throughout the course of the eleventh century, drawing on local oral tradition and outside written sources, and crystalized in the texts of the Russian Primary Chronicle as
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preserved in recensions of the early twelfth century.

However, as with Bulgaria, the translation of contemporary Greek works, whether religious or historical, was rare. It was the great Classics of Christian spirituality that were required, and excerpts already translated in Bulgaria often sufficed. An

intermediate stratum is represented especially in hagiography: translations were made of the popular Lives of St. Theodore of Studios, St. Demetrios of Salonika, St. Stephen of Surozh, St Andrew the Fool (*jurodivy*) and many others. The homilies of St. Theodore of Studios were also popular.

It is important to observe that it was only Greek Christian culture which was now being eagerly absorbed. Greek Classical learning met with little response in Kievan Rus'. It is true that, since Russia from the first possessed the fundamental texts of Christianity in Slav (Old Church Slavonic) form, there was less impulse to master Greek and therefore to extend enquiry into pagan and secular Greek literature. The Scriptures were the pearl of great price. The pagan authors and Byzantine humanism which studied them contradicted the original spirit of Russian piety in the making. Knowledge of Classical Greek literature remained fragmentary and unimportant. The word *Hellene* and its derivatives indicated suspicion and, in later centuries, positive disapproval. It was a synonym for *pagan*, *pre-Christian*, as in the usage of conservative Greek monks. Concurrently knowledge of the Greek language gradually declined and became exceptional after about 1200. The only secular Greek literature which appealed to Russians was of more or less historical content, in which class may be included the legends of Alexander the Great, of the fall of Troy (partly taken from Malalas) and the heroic epic Diogenis Akritas. The last great Greek humanist, who was also an outstanding contemporary historian, Michael Psellos (1018-1078), was quite unknown in Kievan Rus'. He knew the Iliad by heart; for Russians Homer was a nebulous name.

The best products of original East Slav literature in the heyday of Kiev bear witness to the creative stimulus of Greek models. Such were Hilarion's Sermon, the stories of Sts. Boris and Gleb, the collection of lives of saints and pious men which made up the Paterik of the Kiev Cave Monastery. Outstanding among the latter is the Life of St. Theodosius, its great abbot. Even taking into account some loss in subsequent centuries it would still appear that the proportion of original East Slav to translated devotional literature, as in Bulgaria, remained quite small. It was the great

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works of the past that mattered.

If this conservative attitude towards what the Greeks had to offer is to be considered an intellectual limitation it is one inherent in St. Cyril's own principle of liturgical translation. The converse principle, which maintained Latin in the West, cannot be allowed to have been an unmixed blessing either. But

no exact antithesis can be constructed. As far as the Orthodox Slavs were concerned, Church Slavonic became their international language and performed for them a vital service, very similar to that of Latin, in the dark days from the fourteenth century to within sight of modern times. No blame is to be attached to their ancestors for rejecting Hellenism, which was scarcely more than an intellectual game; they concentrated on the vastly more important Christian thought. One can only successfully borrow what fulfils a conscious or unconscious need. The West itself only became permeable to secular Hellenism in the fourteenth century. As late as 1204 the behavior of the Latin conquerors of Constantinople stands out as a notorious example of incomprehension not only towards Hellenism but towards Eastern Christianity as well.

Kievan Rus' was fortunate enough to receive her Orthodox Christianity still within the great period of Byzantine culture, which had begun in the lifetime of Sts. Cyril and Methodius and came to a close at the end of the eleventh century. The maturity of the Russian Church may be fitly symbolized in Daniel, abbot of an unknown Russian monastery, one of the growing number of East Slavs who made the pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Arriving in Jerusalem via Cyprus and the Jaffa-Jerusalem road, opened not long before by the First Crusade, he attended the Easter ceremonies (in Latin) at the Holy Sepulchre in the year 1105. King Baldwin and other dignitaries received him with all the friendship and honor due to a fellow Christian. He was accorded the signal privilege of lighting with his own hands an Easter candle at the Savior's tomb in the name of the whole Russian Church." (96)

It should be made clear that the Goths, though their original homeland was what is today southern Sweden, spoke a language which, though Germanic, was somewhat different from Old Norse. Never at any time could the Goths have been classified as "Vikings". To refer to the Goths as "Vikings" or "Swedes" is

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somewhat like referring to the Byzantines as "Turks" or to the pre-Roman Celtic Britons as "English" or "Anglo-Saxon".

For both geographical and historical reasons, the great majority of the Vikings who came to Rus' were from Sweden; in

fact, one of the earliest names for Kievan Rus' was "Great Sweden".(97) The route from Baltic Sea to the Black Sea was blazed by the Goths, whose original homeland was what is today southern Sweden, as we said above. So long as they lived on the shores of the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, the Goths never completely lost contact with their ancient homeland in the Scandinavian Peninsula, something amply proven by Viking or Old Norse literature. The name *Gardarik*, which was the name for Russia most commonly used by the Vikings, appears to be Gothic; the element *rik* is obviously Gothic, ultimately Celtic rather than Germanic.

However, *Vladimir* (known to the Vikings as *Waldemar*), father of Boris, Gleb, Yaroslav, Sviatoslav and Sviatopolk, entered into close relations with Norway. Olaf Trygvason, later king of Norway, lived for some years at the court of Vladimir, rising to a high position.(98)

Olaf Trygvason remained a pagan all his life, in spite of the efforts of Vladimir. Since Vladimir had himself been born a pagan, he could hardly object to Olaf Trygvason because of his religion.

Olaf Haraldson was chosen king of Norway in 1015. He was a baptized Christian, and is known as "St. Olaf, Apostle and Patron Saint of Norway". Yaroslav (known to the Vikings as *Jarisleiv*)

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wished to favor the expansion of Christianity in Norway. Yaroslav and St. Olaf became fast friends. It was St. Olaf who arranged the marriage between Yaroslav and Ingegerd, daughter of the king of Sweden.(99) Though his kingdom included Slavs, Balts, Khazars, lans, and, in Crimea even some Greeks and Goths, and his fathers

wives had included Bulgarian, Greek and Czech women, Yaroslav, himself a pure Viking, apparently preferred to "marry his own kind." (100)

Later St. Olaf again visited Yaroslav, remaining as his guest for about a year. Yaroslav and Queen Ingegerd begged him to remain, but St. Olaf insisted that duty called him to return to Norway.

Shortly after returning to Norway, St. Olaf was killed in battle. St. Olaf's half-brother Harold Sigurdson, later known as Harold Hardrada, managed to survive the battle and escape, though he was wounded. Harold Sigurdson fled to the court of Jaroslav, great friend of his half-brother St. Olaf. Yaroslav greeted Harald Sigurdson with open arms. After recovering from his wounds, Harald was given a high command by Jaroslav.

After a time, Harold Sigurdson or Harold Hardrada, went to Byzantium (called *Tsargrad* by the Slavs and *Micklegarth* by the Vikings), where he served the Byzantine Emperor in a war against Bulgaria. When he returned to the court of Yaroslav, he was wedded to Jaroslav's daughter Elizabeth, known to the Vikings as *Ellisiv*. The career of Harald Sigurdson or Harald Hardrada after his return to Scandinavia need not concern us here.

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Magnus Olafson, son of St. Olaf, sought refuge at the court of Yaroslav, his godfather and great friend of his father, St. Olaf. At Novgorod (called *Holhgard* by the Vikings), refugees from Norway came to visit Magnus, promising to help him become king of Norway. Yaroslav gave aid to Magnus and his men. Magnus Olafson

later became king of Norway. Known as "Magnus the Good".(101)

All the nationally established Norwegian kings, from Harold Fairhair down, not only surrounded themselves with *skalds* (Viking bards) but themselves practiced the art. However, only one, Harold Hardrada (or Harold Sigurdson), showed a decided talent. To be sure, as might be expected from a man of such adventurous career and restless ambition, he composed only occasional verse, mostly of an autobiographical nature. What we have of it does not entitle him to be called "a poet on the throne", though it is technically excellent and spirited. His active interest in the art is shown furthermore by his evaluation of the *skalds* about him; witness his critical appraisal of Arnor's *drapas* and Thiodulf's metrics.

The life of this "last Viking", as told in the historical sagas, reads like a long story of colorful adventures. He was born in 1015, a son of St. Olaf's mother Asta by another marriage, and thus a half-brother of St. Olaf. Already at the age of three years he is said to have shown that aggressive spirit which, governing a huge and active frame, was to make him one of the foremost warriors of his time. He fought his first battle at Stiklestad. There the fifteen year old youth stood shoulder to shoulder with

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his kinsman - against the latter's express wish. When Olaf fell and the yeomen of the Thronheim district prevailed, he escaped, though wounded. He dwells on this first great event in his life repeatedly, as in this stanza:

Share I had where shields were
Shattered, wounds were bleeding,
Franklins fell beneath blows of
Foes-of-linden-targes.

In holes I hide me now, am
Hunted, without honor:
Who knows if not, sometime, my
Name be known and famed far!

Harold Sigurdson or Harold Hardrada made his way to Kievan Russia and joined the court of Prince Yaroslav, the old friend of St. Olaf and foster father of Magnus, at Novgorod. He quickly distinguished himself as a leader of the *Varangians* or Vikings, the bodyguard of the Russian princes, and was promised the hand of Princess Elizabeth (Old Norse: *Ellisif*). Eager for more glory, Harold with a large company of tested warriors marched along the Baltic coast to Lower Saxony, thence to France, to Lombardy, Rome, and Apulia, finally sailing to Constantinople where he offered his services to the emperor. There followed years of fighting for the Byzantine Empire - in Asia Minor, where he was in charge of an expedition to Jerusalem against the Saracens; in Sicily, in difficult operations against the Normans; in Bulgaria, where he put down a dangerous revolt. The historical sagas recount these events with credible, and incredible, detail; but so much is certain, because borne out by Byzantine documents as well, that he won great renown - and much treasure - and for his merits was made

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head of the formidable Imperial bodyguard. As such he became involved in the intrigues and palace revolutions of the corrupt capital. He boasts of having fettered and blinded the emperor himself. Finally he is incarcerated and makes a hairbreadth escape, boldly invading the palace and abducting a Greek princess (whom he releases, though, quite gallantly). On his way back to Novgorod, by way of the Black Sea, he is said to have composed a

series of sixteen *gamavisur* (humorous, or sportive, stanzas) "with the same burthen in most," in which without undue modesty he refers to a number of the outstanding exploits in his life. They are addressed to Princess Ellisif, somewhat in the spirit of the languishing trobadors, as though she were putting him off. The following have been preserved.

The Throners, thus it fell out,
Defeated us with their numbers,
Fiercely though we fought, and
Fearless, in that struggle:
Young, from peerless prince (St. Olaf) I
Parted, for he fell there.
*Yet the gold-ring Gerd (Valkyrie) from
Gardarik (Kievan Rus') puts me off.*

On Sicilian seas we
Sailed in stately fashion -
Shield-walled moved the shapely
Ships, full-manned with warriors:
Scarce would cowards care to
Come, I say, where we did;
*Yet the gold-ring Gerd (Valkyrie) from
Gardarik (Kievan Rus') puts me off.*

"Let no high-born lady
Make light, nor fair maid, of
How I hewed, one morning,
Hard, within a castle -
Laid about with broadsword:
Abound eye-witnesses;
*Yet the gold-ring Gerd (Valkyrie) from
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Gardarik (Kievan Rus') puts me off.

Born I was where bows were
Bent by Upland (province in south-central Norway)
yeomen;
Feared by foemen, now my
Fleet hugs the skerries (rocky islets) -
Wide o'er salty waters
Went my prows since boyhood;
*Yet the gold-ring Gerd (Valkyrie) from
Gardarik (Kievan Rus') puts me off. (102)*

In the Russian Orthodox Church, July 24 is the day dedicated

to Sts. Boris and Gleb. Out of respect for the Russian Orthodox Church and for Catholics of the Ukrainian or Slavonic Rite, the Catholic Church includes Sts. Boris and Gleb in its list of saints, but conceded them no place in the calendar, though, like the Russian Orthodox Church, the Catholic Ukrainian or Slavonic Rite celebrates July 24 as the day of the Holy Martyrs Sts. Boris and Gleb.

In the case of the canonization of Boris and Gleb, the people led and the Church and finally the state followed, though with considerable reluctance. No criticism of the Church or the clergy is meant by this; the Church has a vital duty to maintain standards of various sorts, including standards relative to the canonization of saints.

As many sources testify, in Kievan Rus' there was a great abundance of Christian fervor, monks, scholars and even *startsia* (mystics). That such should be the case in a recently converted land is perhaps not a surprise; Ireland is another example. Also, Kievan Russia had inherited a very rich and vibrant Christian

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culture and heritage from Byzantium, partially filtered through Slavic Bulgaria, as is demonstrated by Church Slavonic, which is basically Old Bulgarian and is the liturgical language of the Russian Orthodox Church and of the Catholic Ukrainian or Slavonic Rite. Yet, of the many saints of Kievan Rus', none so captured the imagination of and inspired so much devotion among the populace as Sts. Boris and Gleb, in whose case the people had led and the Church had followed, as we said above. Taking the longer view,

Russia and Ukraine have produced an extremely rich harvest of saints of all types, yet, to this day, no indigenous Russian or Ukrainian saint has such a hold on the imagination and the devotion of the populace of Russia and Ukraine as have Sts. Boris and Gleb.

The story of St. Wenceslas of Bohemia was well known in Kievan Rus', as we said above, and to some extent this "prepared the ground" for the popular devotion to Sts. Boris and Gleb. However, by itself, this hardly seems to be an adequate explanation.

George Fedotov speculates that the popular devotion to Sts. Boris and Gleb is a manifestation of what he calls "*Russian pacifism, non-resistance.*" (103) Nevertheless, on this point I must agree with Paul Hollingsworth that Fedotov's thesis mentioned above:

"Tells us more about Fedotov than about Kievan Russia or Russia and Ukraine in general, and represents a projection of Tolstoyan pacifism onto Kievan Russia." (104)

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I see no reason whatever to claim that pacifism is a general Russian or Slavic characteristic; even Tolstoy became a pacifist very late in life. As a young man Leo Tolstoy was an artillery officer in the Russian Army, fighting in the Caucasus and in the Crimean War. Many believe that the character of Captain Tushin in War and Peace is based on Tolstoy himself. Certainly there is no sign of pacifism in Tolstoy's War and Peace, nor in his many tales of the Caucasus and the Crimean War, nor, for that matter in Anna Karenina, Tolstoy's last great novel.

To claim that St. Boris was a pacifist is ludicrous, as he was leading a military expedition against the Pechenegs when he received Yaroslav's message concerning their father's death, as we noted above.

Why it was that Sts. Boris and Gleb so captivated the imagination and inspired the devotion of the populace of Kievan Rus', and why, out of an immense multitude of indigenous saints, it is Sts. Boris and Gleb who continue to this day to have the strongest hold on the popular imagination and devotion of the populace of Russia and Ukraine is a question for which there is no easy answer, indeed no answer at all, an enigma for which there is no solution, a controversy for which one can find no firm conclusion, a topic for much thought, reflexion, and, yes, meditation.

It was late in the 16th century. Kievan Rus' was gone, crushed beneath the hooves of Mongol horses. The center of Rus' had shifted from the sun-washed, wild flower-scented steppes of

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Ukraine where the song of the steppe filled the air, to colder and darker Muscovy, where tsars of the dynasty of the *Rurikovichi*, Old Norse: *Hroerkerson*, the Sons of Rurik (Old Norse: *Hroerekr*) the Viking, still reigned.

Below is a brief account of the fall of Kievan Rus' which appeared in the monthly "Russian Life" (December 2010, Montpelier, Vermont, U.S.A.) under the title "Mongols Sack Kiev" by Tamara Eidelman:

"What kind of city was Kiev ("Ki'yiv" in Ukrainian) in 1240? It had already passed the pinnacle of its tenth

and eleventh century glory, but it was still one of the richest and grandest cities of ancient Rus.

This city, which grew up along what was then the most important European trade route, leading "from the Varangians (*Vikings*) to the Greeks (*Byzantines*), from Scandinavia to Byzantium [which route was first discovered, or, to use more colorful language, "the trail was first blazed" many centuries before by the Goths: an odd concept somehow; the Goths as *coureurs du bois*), glistened with golden cupolas and was protected by mighty walls. Kiev (or *Ki'yiv*) was home to Slavs and Scandinavians (*Vikings*), Turks and Khazars, and was frequented by travelers from Western Europe and the Arab caliphates. All were amazed by its magnificence and wealth.

By the thirteenth century, the main centers of ancient Russian life had shifted to the northeast. Vladimir, and Suzdal had emerged and blossomed, and ships were traveling down the Dnieper (Ukrainian: *Dniepro*) to Byzantium, which had also passed its prime, as often as they once had. Nevertheless, many still saw Kiev as the heart of Rus.

The princes of the region were still fighting for the right to possess this city, which remained Rus' most important religious center. While, by 1238, northeastern Rus lay in ruins, destroyed by the Mongol hordes of Batu Khan, Kievan Rus, although it had suffered from princely infighting, had so far escaped devastation. However, in 1239 Batu Khan again advanced into Rus. This time the target was the southern cities.

Mongol ambassadors arrived in Kiev demanding that the city surrender. The city responded by killing the
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entire embassy - one of the worst possible crimes according to the Mongol code of honor. The Kievans had chose their fate.

In the fall of 1240. A huge Mongolian army lay siege to the city. A southern chronicler, clearly basing his history on survivor accounts, eloquently described how the city was surrounded, how around its mighty walls a new wall was erected, from behind which the attackers day and night chipped away at the city's fortification with their weaponry. A famous detail is that the noise generated by the attacking army - the creaking of the multitude of wagons, the bellowing of camels, the neighing of horses - was so loud that the defenders of the city fighting atop its walls could barely hear one another.

History had yet to see city walls that could stand up to the Mongol catapults and battering rams, and Kiev was no exception. On December 5, the enemies stormed the city. Archaeological finds confirm the chronicler's account describing how the majority of the city's

defenders hid in the Church of the Tithes [*Desytnnaya Tserkob*], overlooking the Dnieper. There were so many people in the church that it collapsed, burying them in its rubble. Twentieth century excavations found a multitude of skeletons on the site where the ancient church once stood and the remains of people who unsuccessfully tries to escape from its basements.

The city was destroyed and brutally plundered. Soon afterward, the Italian monk Giovanni da Pian del Carpine passed through the area and wrote:

"They marched against Rus and committed a great massacre, destroyed cities and fortresses and killed people, besieged Kiev, which was the capital of Rus, and after a lengthy siege they captured it and killed the residents of the city; from here, when we traveled through the land, we found countless heads and bones of the dead lying in the fields, since this city was quite large and very populous, and now it is reduced to almost nothing: there are barely two hundred houses now, and those people are held in the most oppressive servitude."

The only fortunate one was the *voyevod* (commander) Dmitrii [Ukrainian: *Dmitro*], who was commissioned by Prince Daniil [Ukrainian: *Danylo*] of Galicia to lead the city's defense. The Mongol khan was impressed by his bravery and spared his life. The chronicle states that Dmitrii tried to give Batu Khan advice that stood to benefit other cities of Rus, suggesting that that the khan should leave for Hungary as quickly as possible which, it should be mentioned, is exactly what

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Batu Khan did.

Despite the utter devastation of Kiev and other cities, southern Rus conducted itself much more independently than the North. The southern princes did not cringe before the (Mongol) khans like their brothers from Vladimir or Pereslavl. They tried to maintain at least a remnant of their former independence. The strongest prince of the time, Daniil [Ukrainian: *Danylo*] Romanovich of Galicia, was not able to defend Kiev, but at least tried to stand up to his enemies and sought allies in the struggle. He approached the princes of Lithuania and even the Pope in Rome, hoping to inspire the (Roman) Pontiff to undertake a new crusade [*this one against pagan Mongols, not Turkish Muslims*]. For a long time he managed to avoid traveling to the (Golden) Horde to swear an oath of allegiance, but what choice did he have? In the end, he made the trip.

"Oh, more evil than evil is the honor of the Tatar (Mongol)" [***one is reminded of the opinion of Babur the Tiger, founder of the Moghul Dynasty, concerning the Mongols, whom he considered to be worse than the very***

fiends of Hell] wrote the chronicler. "Daniel Romanovich, Grand Prince of Russian Lands - Kiev, Volhymia, Galicia - on bended knees calling himself a servant, promising tribute, trembling in fear for his life, frightened by threats!"

And this would appear to be the end of it. The southern lands of Kiev, Galicia and Volhynia submitted exactly the same way those of Vladimir, Suzdal, and Pereslavl had done in the North. Well, not in exactly the same way. The resistance that the Kievans put up, the recalcitrance of Daniil Romanovich, the cities that escaped Mongol destruction, (perhaps due to the cunning of the *voyevod* Dmitrii, or perhaps other reasons - all this created an atmosphere in the South that was different from that in the North, where Alexander Nevsky decisively and confidently cast his lot with the (mongol) khan and submissively carried out all the (Golden) Horde's orders, at times going so far as to invite punitive detachments into Rus. The southerners, even as they consented to pay tribute, kept their dignity intact, along with the memory of independence.

About a hundred years passed and the South made another important choice. These lands began to gradually submit to the authority of the dukes of Lithuania, which meant that they ceased to pay ruinous tribute and tremble before the arrival of the *baskaks* when they came to collect tribute. The lands of Kiev became a part of the magnificent and mighty Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Northern and southern Rus had chose
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different paths.

The terms Russia and Ukraine did not yet exist. But the seeds of division had been sown."

Please note that Russian and Ukrainian spellings are often quite different; at no time do I intend to show disrespect for the Ukrainian language; I only strive for uniformity and consistency of spelling in order not to confuse the reader.

Kievan Rus' was a brilliant period. In Chapter 4 we mentioned the early Slavonic liturgical chant of Kievan Rus'. Though the Kievans used the eight Byzantine modes (Greek; *oktoechoes*: Syriac; *Ikhadias*), they created a chant very much their own, called *Znamenny*, which is of a sublime beauty.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the painter Henri Matisse ranked the creators of the holy icons of Kievan Rus' among the greatest masters of the world. (105)

Says Roman Jakobson concerning the literature of Kievan Rus':

" In Russia prior to Peter the Great, artists were nothing but ignorant daubers (*bogomazy*), if we are to believe a contemptuous remark dropped toward the *fin de siècle* by I. Repin, a leading representative of the so-called [*sic*] "realistic" trend in Russian painting. When, at the very outset of our (20th) century, (the famous painter) H. Matisse visited Moscow and saw the old Russian icons, he ranked their creators among the greatest masters of the world and as the most inspiring precursors of modern art. We are not concerned here with the problem of whether the last two centuries have meant the rise and flourishing of Russian painting, as Repin affirmed, or its decay, in accordance with (Henri) Matisse (I thoroughly agree with Matisse); at any rate, it is obvious that only the modern art and science of art discovered the artistic values of the Old Russian sacred images which had been undiscernible in the light of previous biases (said biases are also "modern" in the sense that they are anti-medieval and based on the naivete, frivolity and provincialism of
(2910)

both time and place so typical of the so-called "Renaissance" and the so-called "Enlightenment"; in this sense, Henri Matisse must be considered to be "anti-modern", a "reactionary", "neo-medieval" rather than "modern").

The way to grasp the works of early Russian literary art is even more intricate. The difference of the whole artistic conception and of the various specific devices is no less striking than in pictorial art, but this discrepancy is increased by an additional obstacle: the often under-estimated distance that separates modern Russian from the language of early Russian literature [which language should be called "East Slavic" rather than Russian: if one compares a copy of the *Slovo* in the original East Slavic with a modern Russian translation of same, it is obvious that one is dealing with two kindred but distinct languages: I have heard that Ukrainian is closer to East Slavic than is Russian, but having never seen a copy of the *Slovo* in Ukrainian translation, I am unable to comment on this] with all of its stylistic shadings and all the fanciful interplay of Church Slavonic and native (East Slavic) components. The semantics and aesthetics of the Old Kievan literary language were often misinterpreted

through present Russian or Ukrainian pattern: the seeming similarity easily concealed significant divergences. The pre-Mongolian period of Eastern Slavic literature is so distant from subsequent periods that even such a rare and refined connoisseur of Muscovite literature as Aleksej Remizov feels somewhat lost when confronted with the Kievan heritage. With all its inventiveness the literary art of Muscovite Russia is far simpler, both in its provincial rudiments and in its imperial pretensions, than the sophisticated productions of Old Kievan Russia." (106)

We shall mention even more examples of the brilliance of the culture of Kievan Rus', which brilliance, particularly if one takes into account the circumstances, is truly dazzling. Below we deal with one of the literary masterpieces of Kievan Rus', The Song of Igor's Campaign (**Slovo o polku Igoreve**).

We continue with Roman Jakobson:

"Early in the sixteenth century four secular literary texts of Kievan Russia were copied, apparently from one and the same old manuscripts, by a scribe
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connected with Pskov, as his spelling reveals. His book included three translations made or reshaped in Russia before the Tartar invasion (Legend of the Indian Kingdom, Tale of Akir the Wise Deeds and Life of Diogenes Akritas, all three in the most archaic of their (Church) Slavonic versions) and one original work, the Tale of the Raid of Igor (**Slovo o P"lku Igoreve**), mourning the ill-fated (Kievan) Russian expedition of 1185 against the Polovtians, and written soon after the event as an ardent and skillful appeal to the Russian princes to unify their forces against the menace of Polovtian aggression. The Igor Tale is the only integral epic monument of Kievan Rus' which has reached us. A cornerstone of Russian (and Ukrainian) literature, it stands as one of the most typical and refined achievements of the allusive and symbolic style which flooded nearly the whole of European literature in the second half of the twelfth century. Political eloquence and pure poetry, Christian eschatology and pagan survivals, oral tradition and sophisticated Byzantine patterns become whimsically entangled. The Igor Tale is intimately linked with many aspects of Old Russian art, both verbal and pictorial, but here the familiar devices become particularly pointed and condensed. By saving this masterpiece for posterity, the

anonymous scribe gave us an irreplaceable key to many literary and cultural puzzles of the Russian Early Middle Ages.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century this manuscript, hidden in a monastic library, was acquired for Count A.I. Musin-Pushkin's renowned collection of Old Russian writings, and in 1812 it perished with the whole treasure-house of this cultivated dignitary in one of the fires which devastated Moscow under Napoleon's occupation.

Many Old Russian texts have survived in a single copy. Thus of the Igor Tale, besides a number of approximate quotations and paraphrases in some writings of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we now only Musin-Pushkin's manuscript or - more exactly - its two reproductions: (1.) the so-called Archives version, a copy made toward 1796 for the Empress Catherine and found in her Archives; (2.) the editio princeps. Prepared from the original manuscript by the Count with two archivists, A. Malinovskij and N. Bantysh-Kamanskij, and issued in Moscow on the fifth of December 1800. Of this edition only a few copies have been preserved. The Archives version, quoted usually as *A*, and the edition princeps, quoted as *P*, often differ from each other in the pattern of their mistakes and modernizing misspellings. We have based our critical

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edition of the Tale on a systematic comparative study of *A* and *P*, which permits a more accurate reconstruction of the original text.

In order to detect the deviations from the lost manuscript in its reproductions *a* and *P* we must make the best possible acquaintance with the laboratory work of Musin-Pushkin and his collaborators. The printer S. Selivanovskij stated that the editors "frequently made corrections in the proofs, to publish the original accurately, and therefore printing advanced slowly". This testimony has now been corroborated by new material evidence.

First N. Zarubin, a specialist in Old Russian literature, described a copy strangely deviating from the standard of the first edition of the Igor Tale. In this copy, inherited by the Leningrad Public Library from Bychkov's collection, the long footnote on page 15-16 substantially differs from the standard. The footnote in the usual copies identifies the Prince Boris Vjacheslavlich mentioned in the Tale, whereas the corresponding footnote in Bychkov's copy offers nothing but groundless conjecture. Moreover, as Zarubin has exhaustively shown, the whole setting of both of these pages is different: in Bychkov's copy they contain several printer's errors in the note and single misprints in the upper part of p. 15 - in the Old

Russian text of the left column (1. 9. *Bladimir* instead of *Vladimir*) ...

...Then, in April, 1951, A.P. Struve, a distinguished Russian bibliographer in Paris, called my attention to a copy of the *Edition Princeps* which fully coincides with Bychkov's copy on pp. 15-16 and moreover considerably deviates from the standard specimens of this edition on pp. 1-2, 7-8, and 37-38. According to the French dealer who sold the book to Mr. Struve, it had been bought at an auction in southern France some two decades ago, coming from the library of Prince Aleksandrovich Oldenburg, the last of the Russian branch of this ancient family. Tsar Paul's graet-grandson and Tsar Nicholas's brother-in-law, who after the revolution escaped from Russia to France, was there active under the pen-name Petr Alexandrov, and died in poverty. Thanks to Aleksej Petrovich Struve, who immediately recognized the importance of this peculiar copy for the study of the *Igor Tale*, to the generosity of Bayard L. Kilgour, Jr, '27, mem, to the generosity of Bayard L. Kilgour, Jr, '27, member of the Visiting Committee of the Harvard University Library, and to the efficient cooperation of R. Gordon Wasson, member of the Visiting Committee for the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Harvard, this precious
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volume was acquired for the University and added to the collection of old Russian books and manuscripts in the Houghton Library.

Two copies of the standard form of the *edition princeps* have kindly been lent to the Harvard Library for purposes of study. One, now in the collection of Mr. Kilgour, was in 1890 owned by B. Molas; in the early nineteenth century it received the No. 232 of an unidentified private library and was provided with two pen-and-ink annotations on page [iii]. The other is in the rare Books Division of the Library of Congress (PG3300.S6. 1800) as a part of the famous Yudin (G.V. Judin) Collection, the spine of the binding bears the first two initials of a former owner, "V.X.", the last name having been torn away. A close comparison of these standard copies with the new Harvard copy reveals that all four deviating leaves belonged to the original composition of the *edition princeps*; after the galleys had been destroyed and before the book appeared on the market these leaves were replaced by the substitutes newly set up. One unmodified copy of the original make-up has been preserved for us by chance, while in another, Bychkov's copy, only one of the rejected leaves has been preserved. The reason for all these replacements can be easily detected. While the *Tale* was still at the printer's, some of the initial comments and surmises expressed in the footnotes seemed to the

editors to be too hasty and shaky; each of the four leaves which have been replaced contained such a risky footnote: one about Boris Vjacheslavlich on pp. 15-16, and the other three dealing with the singer and magician Boyan, the legendary "nightingale of olden times" repeatedly apostrophized and cited in the Igor Tale.

On p.2 of the Harvard copy (which may be lettered *H*), footnote (6), devoted to Boyan, says: "There is no evidence whether his lyre rang under Rurik or Sviatoslav". In *P* the corresponding passage is worded much more cautiously: "There is no evidence when and under which ruler his lyre rang". The puzzle of Boyan, supposed to be the oldest native poet, preoccupied the first editors of the Igor Tale, and Mailinovskij, the most active among them, seems to have worked on a special paper about Boyan. There were notable oscillations in dating Boyan's activity. *P* censored the allusions of *H* to the time of the first famous rulers - Rurik (died 879) and Sviatoslav (died 972). At the earlier stage of these studies, Boyan was guessed to have been active about the time of Prince Vseslav (died 1101). In *A* the corresponding footnote states: "There is no indication in the chronicles as to what time he
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lived. But from the latter part of this Tale it is seen that he had sung Vseslav's deeds."

On p. 7, *H* develops a surmise regarding the pre-Christian frame of Boyan's activity. The footnote (u) remarks that Veles was the Slavic pagan god protecting the cattle: "He was considered the second after Perun. Perhaps Boyan was a shepherd and is therefore named the grandson of Veles. Since Boyan is called the grandson of Veles, this proves that he lived before the conversion of Russia to Christianity." *P* changes this categorical assertion to a mere supposition and strikes out the conjecture that Boyan was a shepherd: "judging from Boyan's being called grandson of Veles, it seems that he lived before the conversion of Russia to Christianity."

In total discrepancy with the opinion supported on pp. 2 and 7, *H* then suddenly agrees with *A* in timing Boyan's life to the reign of Vseslav. The translation of the Tale in *H*, p. 37, follows *A*, which assumes that Boyan made a song for Vseslav. The footnote (m), referring to Boyan, explains: "hereit is clearly revealed that Boyan sang about Prince Vseslav." Prejects tjhis interpretation. The translation arbitrarily replaces "him" (i.e., Vseslav) as the addressee of Boyan's "ditty" by the indefinite addressee, "such kinds of people". *H*'s footnote referring to Boyan's name is replaced by an entirely new note referring to the "ditty": "It is likely that this ditty was introduced

into the original text from Boyan's songs."

Now, when our acquaintance with the Old Russian (or Old East Slavic) language and the study of Slavic written and oral traditions against a vast comparative background have greatly advanced, neither the translation nor the exegesis of the passage connecting Boyan with Vseslav should present any difficulties. The songs of "Boyan the seer" are seen in the Igor Tale as prophetic. He "had wisely made afore the ditty" of Vseslav's epilogue, he had predicted the heroic end of Vseslav's descendant Izjaslav, and he had "bespoken even" Igor's tragedy. In the songs and saws attributed to Boyan by the Igor Tale he recalls events of the eleventh century and foretells those of the twelfth century. However, any dating of Boyan's life is vain, since his name and image belong to a migratory myth of Altaic provenience which reached Russia most probably through Bulgaria. ...

...A summary of the various stages in the printing of the edition princeps may now be attempted. It is probable that leaf 7-8 was reset immediately after the composition of the final pages. Because of
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typographical similarities, it seems likely that leaf 1-2 was reset at the same time. These two cancel leaves may well have been inserted before the printing of the errata leaf and the genealogical table of Russian princes, both of which are missing from *H*. Leaves 15-16 and 37-38 were reset later, when the typographical pattern, stabilized in the setting of the final pages, was no longer fresh in the printer's memory. Leaf 37-38 came first, and seems to have been reset in a hurry, with some gross misprints. These misprints were noticed by the editors when a number of copies had already been printed, ...

...This occurred after the revision of the problem of Boyan had been completed, and after the errata page was printed. At least for a part of the edition, this recomposed leaf used a quite different blue-colored paper, as seen in the Kilgour and Library of Congress copies and in a few others cited by Zarubin.

The Harvard copy reveals to us the archetype of the Edition Princeps, while Bychkov's copy uncovers the second of the two intermediary aspects between this initial phase and the definitive form *P*. Thus, of the four stages which the edition went through, the first and the last two are directly documented, while the second can be discovered only by a comparison of *H* with *P* in their typographical peculiarities.

APPENDIX

Although it is easy to boast of hindsight, it is

not unlikely that if a competent bibliographer had examined a copy of the normal state of *P*, that is, one with the fur substituted leaves, before the discovery of this new Harvard copy containing the uncanceled settings, he would have been able to detect the existence of the cancels. The first two of these, pp. 1-2 and 7-8, which occur as the first and last leaves of quire I, in both the Kilgour and Library of Congress copies have chain-lines which do not fit; are pasted to the two inner conjugate leaves; and are printed on paper slightly thinner than was originally used in that quire. He might at first be uncertain if both were cancels or only one, but a comparison of the typography of these leaves, which have the proper names italicized, with that of the inner half-sheet would probably convince him that both were cancels, particularly when he considered the evidence of the paper.

The third cancel, pp. 15-16, is the last leaf of quire 2. In both the Kilgour and Library of Congress copies it is printed on a paper of a distinct bluish
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tint and is tipped in on the stub of 2. From the fact that it is on paper which occurs nowhere else either in the original setting or in the other cancels, and since at least one copy, besides the newly discovered Harvard copy, viz., the Bychkov-Leningrad copy, has this leaf in its uncanceled form, it is not unlikely that this cancellation and substitution was made later than in the case of the other cancels. The last cancel, pp. 37-38, is the third leaf of quire 5, and in both the Kilgour and Library of Congress copies is pasted to the stub of 5.

The errata leaf, which is a disjunct leaf, occurs in both the Kilgour and Library of Congress copies but not in the Harvard copy. Since it refers to an erratum which occurs in the uncanceled leaf 2, it provides further evidence that that leaf was canceled later than the others. The Harvard copy evidently represents the earliest state, before the errata leaf was printed and probably before the folding leaf of the genealogical tables of Russian princes was prepared. The Harvard copy, in what may be original marbled board is - except for the insertion of a photographic reproduction of the folding table printed on wood-pulp paper and slight strengthening of some inner margins - in the condition it first came from the press, with the original blank leaf, 6, still intact. This leaf is also to be found in the Kilgour copy, which is in original mottled calf, blind tooled on the spine; but is lacking in the Library of Congress copy, which is in a mid-nineteenth-century black cloth." (107)

We continue with Roman Jakobson:

"The typical epics of this (12th century) world style are far from being epic in the usual sense of the term. Instead of narrating, they allude to facts that they presume to be familiar to the reader and link them by fanciful associations of contiguity, resemblance, and contrast with various levels of reality, with events close and distant in space and time. This spatial, temporal, and thematic multiplicity and condensation is naturally supplemented by a skillful combination of diverse and even contrasting styles of bookish and oral provenance and of diverse and contrasting attitudes - secular and clerical, popular and seigniorial, Christian and semi-pagan.

Just as the Russian (or rather, East Slavic) literature of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries is one of the typical manifestations of the contemporary international poetic current, so the Tale of the Raid of Igor (*Slovo o p'lkhu Igoreve*), composed (2917)

during that period, belongs to the representative epics of the type described. What is the subject? It is the adventurous and unfortunate raid of Prince Igor against the Plovtsians, the rout of his army, his imprisonment and escape, and an appeal to the Russian princes for a new common front against the foe. This matter, however, is multiplied by metaphoric references to such various fields as agriculture, falconry, revelry, and love, by focusing not only on Igor's rout but also on the whole of Russia (or, rather, Kievan Rus') and surrounding countries, by wide digressions into the historical past and glimpses into the future. Every event, every image, dream and reported speech in the Igor Tale foretells, portends, prophesies. The epic is far from any psychologism, any subjective lyric attitude any sentimentalism. The author represents and appeals, but none of his personal emotions is directly expressed: at the tragic events, he does not mourn: he only reports the verbalized passions of the *dramatis personae* - the laments of the women and the grief of the men - and, finally, sorrow as well as joy fully embodied in the transparent imagery of the Tale.

Melchior de Vogue was right: at the end of the eighteenth century (the manuscript of the *Slovo* was discovered in 1796), there was no one in Russia able to understand it. ...

...Most of the retouchings committed by the first editors, critics, and emendators of the Igor Tale remained decisive for the further interpretation of the epic. The critical apparatus to the text was elaborated and to a high degree standardized by scholars adhering to the aesthetic bias of Russian realism. The quoted judgement of Repin is one of the innumerable examples of

the complete incompatibility of this tenet with the artistic values of the Russian Middle Ages. The hermetic style and intricate symbolism of the final chapter of the pre-Mongolian epoch was unreadable through realist glasses. Hence the process of modernizing the Igor Tale continued, and it must be stated that sometimes the results were no less distorting than the notorious "restorations" of Old Russian frescoes, icons and buildings in the nineteenth century. The exegesis was as far from the original wording as the illustrations of Viktor Vasnevov and other realist painters were from the poetic world of the *Slovo* and from the Old Russian pictorial pattern.

When, on the eve of the last war (World War II), Andre Mazon grappled with the puzzles of the Igor Tale, this French philologist, deeply rooted in the aesthetic and scholarly tradition of the nineteenth century, and
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educated in Goncharov's and Turgenev's language and literary art, naturally felt much more at ease with all these recent linguistic and artistic interpretations of the *Slovo* than with the *Slovo* itself and its literary ambiance of the twelfth century. Hence it is not surprising at all that the observant Frenchman grasped some of the modernisms superimposed on the Igor Tale by its editors and commentators and doubted whether they could be of ancient date. It would, however, be asking too much from a foreign specialist in modern Russian literature to accomplish the task of cleansing the *Slovo* of this disturbing modern superstratum. Instead of analyzing the *Slovo* itself, it was much easier to take the modernisms injected by popularizers for genuine ingredients of the Tale and subsequently to launch what Mazon calls the "legitimate hypothesis" of the *Slovo* as a forgery of the late eighteenth century: *Le Slovo d'Igor* (Paris, 1940).

A group of students of Slavic and comparative medieval literature and of its philological background were linked with the Institut d'Histoire et de Philologie Orientales et Slaves, which during Hitler's occupation of Belgium was transported from Brussels to New York. They undertook a systematic study of the *Slovo* to liberate it from the prejudices and retouchings accumulated since its discovery, and the results were printed under the title *La Geste du Prince Igor, Epopée russe du douzième siècle* in New York in 1948 as the eighth volume of the *Annuaire* of the institute under the editorship of H. Gregoire, M. Szeftel, and myself. Further works connected with this collective research appeared as *Russian Epic Studies*, edited by E. Simmons and myself and published by the American Folklore Society (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1940; the monograph by K. Menges, *The Oriental Elements*

in the Vocabulary of the Oldest Russian Epos, the Igor Tale (Slovo o P' lku Igoreve) appears as a publication of the Linguistic Circle of New York.

Our basic device was quite simple. In 1813 Count Musin-Pushkin, the discoverer, owner, and publisher of the manuscript of the Igor Tale, which in 1812 (during Napoleon's occupation of Moscow) perished with his entire renowned library and house, acknowledged in a letter to the philologist Kalajdovich that the manuscript was written in rather clear characters, but that nevertheless it was very difficult to decipher it because there was no orthography (comparable to the modern one), no punctuation, and no divisions between words. As he stated, a multitude of these words, themselves were unknown and obsolete, so that first and foremost it was necessary to introduce divisions and

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then to sift out the meaning, and this was extremely perplexing. The Count adds that he did not even dare to print his results, for fear of repeating the notorious mistakes of the Prince Shcherbatov, who, in deciphering a Novgorod charter, rendered the words *zajachimi lovcy* as *zajach I Milovcy*. In fact, the edition princeps of the Igor Tale teems with such errors, distorting the sense; and many of them have slipped into the later editions. In spite of the clear warning quoted, most of the critics tried to eliminate the obscurities of the text by changing letters and words, while the most natural way to rewrite the text as, according to Musin-Pushkin, it looked in the manuscript - that is, without divisions into words and phrases - and then to read these lines as we read numerous Old Russian manuscripts of this type, dividing the text into lexical and syntactic units in the light of the abundant philological data we now possess. In applying this device we obtain a version nearly free of the alleged obscurities and the imaginary modernisms.

It is startling to what extent erroneous punctuation distorted the sense and style of the *Slovo*. The Edition Princeps reads in verse 30 (we follow *La Geste* in the enumeration and translation of the "verses"): "Their carts [those of the fleeing Plovtsians] scream at midnight like startled swans. Igor leads his warriors toward the Don..." This reading, repeated by later editors, including the recent ones of the Academy, gave full right to Mazon to detect a *retouche moderne*; but when we eliminate the period inserted by the first editors and replace it with a colon (inaccordance with the style of the Tale, for which any descriptive image is but a presage, omen, announcement) we obtain a perfectly clear 17th century text: "Their carts scream at midnight like startled swans: Igor leads his warriors toward the Don!"

According to S.H. Cross' accurated translation in La Geste). In other words, the strident sound of the fleeing Polovtsian carts in the darkness of the night announces that Igor's attack is close; and by the way, the comparison of the Polovtsian carts with startled swans is based not only on an external resemblance, but on the totemic link of the swans with the Turkic hordes, as Menges points out in his monograph. This construction was no longer understood either two centuries later by the imitator of the Slovo - the author of the Zadonshchina - or by the first editors of the Slovo; hence the Zadonshchina and the translation of the Igor Tale in the edition princeps quite naturally replace the unusual "scream" (krychat) by the purely descriptive "squeak" (skrypjat, skripeli).

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In the same way the Edition Princeps reads in verse 50: stjazi glagoljut, Polovtsi idut' ... and translates "the banners rustle, the Polovtsi come..." (although the verb does not mean "rustle", but "say, announce"); and again Mazon is right in having some doubt whether it is not a modernism imputable to Musin-Pushkin: the comma and the subsequent translation are indeed such. But for the Slovo we must once more substitute a colon as Jungmann, Erben and Barsov

already did, contrary to most of the editors who still follow the blunder of 1800. Then the translation becomes "the banners announce: the Polovtsians come..." and this reading, argued in La Geste, finds its support in the Old Russian formula quoted by Gorskij and Nevostruev in Opisanie slavjanskix rukopisej Moskovskoj Sinodal'noj biblioteki, II, 2, p. 85: znamen'e glagolet' stjag imzhe znamenajut' vojevody pobedu. Again, neither the author of the Zadonshchina nor the first editors understood the construction they found in the Slovo.

Mazon's book and the American response provoked a considerable series of articles and critical notes both in American and in European academic periodicals. A list, far from complete, is printed in the Russian Epic Studies, pp. 220-223. ... As to the style of the Igor Tale, the only valuable and instructive contributions are I. Eremin's papers on the Slovo as a monument of the political eloquence of Kievan Russia, especially his article in the cited Symposium.

Except for A. Vaillant, who prefers to "circumvent" the Slovo with its "strange problems" (Revue des etudes slaves, XXV, 106; cf. XXIV, 179), all of the international philologists and literary historians who have touched upon the recent discussion reject any suspicions and recognize "the final proof for the genuiness of the remarkable monument of early Russian secular literature" (K.H. Menges, Journal of the American Oriental Society, 1949, p. 44): "the conclusive

evidence of authenticity" (P.L. Garvin, *Language*, XXIV, 322); its "indisputable evidence from a linguistic, historical and literary point of view" (Y. Malkiel *Sur* Number 176, Buenos Aires, 1949, p. 43); "the refutation of Mazon's indictment paragraph by paragraph" (L. Tesniere, *Bulletin de la Societe de Linguistique de Paris*, XXIV-2, p. 145); the "pulverizing of all his arguments and doubts", (H. Peyre, *La Republique francaise*, V, p. 369); their "futility" (E.L. Tartak, *The Russian Review*, VIII, p. 232); their "absolute groundlessness" (R. Nahtigal, *Slavistichna Revija*, III, 395); their "going to pieces for not being soundly constructed" (N. Arseniev, (2921)

Slavonic and East European Review, XXVII, 301f.); "the difficulty to persist in skeptical hesitations" (S. Urbanczyk, *Kuzhnitsa*, IV, 48, 7). "The *Slovo* arises from this new campaign as an even more interesting and eminent phenomenon of Old Russian literature and as a very important monument for the history of the Russian language" (A. Dostal, *Byzantino-slavica*, X, 284); "The Lay of Igor's Campaign is a masterpiece of Old Russian poetry" (F. Dvornik, *Catholic Historical Review*, XXX, 467); "the authenticity of the Igor tale is definitely established beyond any doubt" (A. Stender-Petersen, *Word*, IV, 154); "the uncertainty recently expressed is merely a product of a scholarly blunder" (D. Chizhevskii, *Gesxh der altrussischen Literatur des 11., 12., und 13. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt am Main, 1948, p. 330); "neither for me is Mazon's view of the spuriousness of the Old Russian poem convincing" (M. Vasmer, *Zeitschrift fur slavische Philologie*, XX, 465) "Mazon's theses are destroyed point by point" (M. Jakobiec in the introduction to the new edition of Tuwim's translation, Wroclaw, 1950, p. lxii); "his construction is razed to the ground and it is simply amazing with what resources his attempt had been undertaken" (G. Fedotov, *Novyj Zhurnal*, XX, 302); "the sensational thesis of the French scholar can be dismissed quite safely" (R. Wellek, *Modern Language Notes*, LXIII, 502); "his position at every point is proven so unsound that the reader naturally asks himself whether so heavy an attack was really called for against so weak a foe" (A. von Gronicka, *Comparative Literature*, I, 81). In a special article - "*substantial et mesure*", according to Mazon's own opinion (*Revue des etudes slaves*, XXV, p. 159) - N. Gudzij thoroughly criticizes "the revision of the authenticity of the *Slovo* in the study of Professor A. Mazon" and judges the latter's arguments: "one hardly could go farther in violating common sense and the facts" (*Uchenye zapiski* of the Moscow University, Chair of Russian Literature, I, 172, 186).

Summing up the purely literary side of the discussion, A.B. Lord, expert in the comparative study of the Slavic epic traditions, states that "the alleged pseudo-classicisms and pre-romanticisms exist only in the mind of the French scholar and the bold imagery of the Slovois entirely in keeping with the literary tradition in Medieval Kiev" (Journal of American Folklore, LXII, 203). . . .

...Besides the literary links with the eighteenth century which proved to be nonexistent, Mazon's book of 1940 particularly insisted on linguistic modernisms. In fact, he did not succeed in detecting one single word
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or form of the Slovo that would be out of place or even dubious in an Old Russian (or Old East Slavic) text, whereas our monument presents a number of ancient Russian (or East Slavic) words and forms totally unknown to the students of the late eighteenth century. Mazon's answer to our detailed refutation of his linguistic arguments brings no proof and no data whatsoever.

In his book Mazon quoted three examples of an "oddly used genitive in the Slovo (I, 6, 11), but in his reply he admits their complete justification, still trying to extenuate his mistake: "*Potebnja ne se fut pas attend a recevoir la pesante lecon d'Amerique - car c'est a lui qu'elle revient plutot qu'a ses lecteurs de France - pour s'etre etonne du genitive nachjati toj pesni survenant a bonne distance d'un verbe principal negative...*" (p. 521). However, (1.) *pesni* is a dative, whereas Potebnja discussed the genitive *povestij*; (2.) Potebnja simply did not succeed in explaining this form properly but Mazon was the only one who labeled it as an "odd construction" due to a "pseudo-archaism"; (3.) since Potebnja's commentary of 1877 many precise statements which should be known to any student of Slavic languages have been made on the Slavic genitive of negation; (4.) the lesson was rather mild, since items which make Mazon's faults particularly inexcusable were deliberately omitted, e.g., the fact that the genitive after *poz'reti* denounced by Mazon as a revealing *hapax* in the Slovo occurs as early as in the Glagolita Clozianus and in one version of Kosmas' treatise against the Bogomils. We passed over in silence Mazon's neglect not only of Old Church Slavonic vocabularies (especially V. Vondrak's Glagolita Clozuv, Prague, 1893) but even of Meillet's textbook, where the construction *ne lepo bjashet cachjati trudnyx povestij* finds adequate elucidation: "the feeling that the direct complement is a genitive in a negative phrase is so strong in Slavic that, by a kind of contamination, it expands into phrases (e.g., into infinitive constructions) which depend upon negative phrases" (Le slave commun, Paris, 1924, p. 418).

It is amazing that Mazon confronts the equivalent constructions 174 *ma lady voi* and 183 *na lade voi* "on the warriors of [my] beloved" and nevertheless interprets "lade" as an "unwonted possessive dative", whereas it is a banal fusion of the genitive and dative singular of this declension induced partly by the interplay of its hard and soft varieties, partly by a fusion of the feminine adjective forms. It is not only well documented in Pskov manuscripts, particularly that of the Igor Tale, but was generally long
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widespread in Great Russian dialects (cf., for instance, A. Sobolevskij, *Lekcii po istorii russkogo jazyka*, Moscow, 1907, p. 202; A. Shaxmatov, *Kurs istorii russkogo jazyka*, III, St. Petersburg, 1911, p. 525, etc.).

In the construction 12 *spada knjazju um' poxoti* "the prince's mind was ablaze with eagerness", is the prepositionless locative *poxoti* legitimate, or should it be replaced either by a locative with the preposition *v* or by an instrumental? The prepositionless locative competes with the instrumental in constructions denoting a status, as Tymchenko pointed out and as the oscillation noted by Shaxmatov for the quoted word, *paxoti* | *poxotiju zhlanija bludnago* in the Revelation of the Pseudo-Methodius proves. As often stated (in particular see the rich material published by A.D. Grigor'eva, *Doklady I soobshchenija* of the Institute of Russian language of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 1948), the denial of this "pretend locative sans preposition" in Mazon's reply (p. 517) is as unsubstantiated as is his statement that our edition excessively multiplies such locatives. Besides the mentioned sample, we had detected in the Igor Tale only ordinary prepositionless constructions with locatives denoting time (30 *polunoshchy*; 33 *nochi*; 186 *polunochi*) or place (181 *Putivle*) and in an adverbialized use (4 *predi*; 29 *vr"xu*; 175 *gore*; 197 *dne*).

Mazon's reply asserts that in 197 the genitive-locative dual *kustu* could refer only (!) to two bushes known before, which is not justified by the context, but he forgets that besides the "anaphoric dual" there exists a "free dual" signifying, to speak with A. Belic, "unity in duality", in this case "a couple of bushes", and that this use is well documented by such perfectly similar samples as *sta mezhi valoma*, "stand between a couple of banks" (Laurentian Chronicle, 107 B).

Again the verbal form +12 *spada* (cf. 34 *zapala*), acknowledged as aorist by Partyckij, Golubovskij and Longinov (cf. La Geste, 240 [196], Stender-Petersen, *l.c.*, 150; Tesniere, *l.c.* 147; Ju. Sherex, *S'ohochasne j minule*, III, 101), is nevertheless condemned in Mazon's

reply as a "doubtful aorist", although the verb *palate*, *palaju* "to blaze, flame, burn" is perfectly attested in Old Russian both independently and with prefixes; *spalati* and *zupalati* have survived in Ukrainian; and *spala*, *zapala* are the regular aorist forms, as *vita*, *gada*, *igra*, *dela*, *s"dela*, *duma*, *s"duma*, *kon'cha*, *s"kon'cha*, *s"veshcha*, *s"gljada*, etc. Likewise the aorist construction *v"sta zbi*,

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"drove together [the birds] by hundreds" (cf. *La Geste*, 242 [197] and Stender-Petersen 149) is accused of "improbability", although the Primary Chronicle under 6605 presents an identical construction: *s"bisha e v mjach*, "drove them [Hungarians as compared with jackdaws persecuted by falcons] into a heap".

The form *Rusichi* current in the *Slovo* appeared to Mazon in 1940 as "*une anomalie sans seconde*". Soloviev, in a special study on *Rustichi* (*Zametki k Slovu o polku Igoreve*, II, Belgrade, 1941) and *La Geste* (263f. [215]) corroborated this derivation by various similar examples, and moreover stated that semantically it corresponds with the expression *Rus'stii synove* usual in Old Russian and occurring both in the *Slovo* and in the *Zadonshchina*. Of course this expression, as well as *Rusichi*, means simply "sons of Rus'", as is stressed in *La Geste* 262. Mazon's reply in one place (p. 526) accepts this self-evident translation, but takes these *Russes* - "*fils de la Russie*" - for what he ironically calls an "ancient myth which without the *Slovo* would have escaped us", although "Russia's sons" is a customary idiom not only in the *Slovo* but in the whole of old Kievan literature. However, in another place (pp. 520f.) of the same reply, he superfluously and arbitrarily translates the same term as sons of the eponymous *Rus'*. As to the eponym, its antiquity, in spite of Mazon's belief, has never been refuted, and n.

Nikol'skij's conclusion on the Old Church Slavonic origin of the legend quoted by the *Boguphali Chronicle* "*ex vetutissimus codicibus*" is independent of whether we attribute it to the version of this chronicle of 1295 or to the supplements of the early fourteenth century, as P. David does, all the more since the *Hypatian Chronicle* emphasizes that the Russians are grandsons of a single grandsire (*edinogo deda vnuci*).

Mazon's lack of acquaintance with the Old Russian lexicon is documented by further new and eloquent examples. When admonishing H. Gregoire that the aorist *rostre* can mean only "a *etendu*" and not "a *presse*", he confuse, unbelievable as it seems, two current verbs - *ros-tereti* "to grind, to jam, to squeeze" and *pro-stereti* "to stretch, to extend"! For the various nuances of crushing, *-tereti*, with different prefixes such as *ros-*, *s-*, *po-*, *za-*, is used both in Old Russian and in

other Slavic languages. Despite the nominal interpretation of 14 *oba poly* in Mazon's reply, (p. 520), which follows here the erroneous translation of the first editors, it is nothing but a preposition in Old Russian. In Russian dialects it means, according to Dal', "round, around, in the neighborhood of, circumference". It translates the Greek *peri*, Latin
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circum in the twelfth century Russian text of Hippolytus' Discourse on Christ and Antichrist, and in one of the strings of synonyms which are a favorite device of Epiphanius the Wise, *oba poly* appears as one of the terms meaning "around". Consequently Mazon's rejection of this Old Russian use is groundless. The sentence 121 *Volodimir pod ranami* "blows are dealt to V.", is neither "inarticulate and ambiguous" nor a "mediocre pun", as Mazon insinuates (Journal des savants, 1948, p. 25), but simply the normal Old Russian locution. Mazon still forgets that *rana*, which means primarily "abrasion" in modern Russian, signified both the blow itself and its result in the Russian and general Slavic usage of the Middle Ages. Two kinds of blows and resulting injuries were carefully distinguished in Russian and other Slavic legal documents, the "blue" one (bruises) and the "bloody" ones (abrasions), which did not hinder Mazon from declaring the perfectly traditional 171 *krovavye rany* to be an expression foreign to the Middle Ages. No student in the least bit familiar with Old Russian or other mediavl Slavic languages would translate 108 *vr"zhesa (v'rzhesja)* by "tombe precipite" as Mazon persists in doing, but obviously by "s'est precipite" or equivalent terms. The so-called Archives Copy made from the manuscript of the Slovo for Catherine II has in 156 *vazni* (genitive of "good luck") and not *vozzni* as Mazon's reply (517f.) says; and the reading *vozni* is simply non-existent. The formula "three bites (*kusy*) of good luck" puzzles the critic, although the Old Russian literature has brought down to us an aphorism comparing a dop of good luck (*vazni*) to a barrel of wisdom, and although the apportionment-attitude to luck is clearly reflected in its Old Russian names: *chast'*, *s"chastle*, *dolja*, *udacha*, etc., and points to an Indo-European tradition, as L.R. Palmer demonstrates (Transactions of the Philological Society, 1950, pp. 149ff.). ...

...Even more than with separate vocables, Mazon stumbles over the locutions of the Slovo, because here the help of dictionaries and textbooks is particularly lacking. *Buj tur* "Fierce aurochs", an apposition to the name of Igor's gallant brother, is labeled in Mazon's reply (p.519) as an extraordinary surname perhaps forged on the pattern of *bujvol* "buffalo"; while, in fact, the latter was on the contrary forged, as Meillet indicates,

through the folk etymology on the pattern of *bui vol*. The adjective *bui* asan epithet of ferocity for animals was usual in the Slavic literary tradition, particularly in metaphorical application to heroes. Moreover, *Buj tur* exactly corresponds to the Turkic *Telebuga*, known as a name of Polovtsian and

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Tatar warriors. The expression 183 *bosym vl"kom*, "as a barefoot [whitefoot] wolf", is neither suspect, as Mazon believed in 1940, nor familiar to the modern literary language, as the reply suggests (p.518), and it is attested not only by contemporary dialects but also by its onomastic use since the fourteenth century. The "refined" formula "a double incidence" 25 *ishchuchi sebe chiti, a knjazju slave* is not a modern lucky find, as Mazon teaches, but an ancient Russian pattern documented by such turns of phrase with a similar gradation as *v slavu Bogu i v chest' svjatyni bozhii* "to the glory of God and to the honor of God's sanctuary" (First Pskov Chronicle, year 6865). The list could be prolonged.

Unfortunately, in his search for the desired clues to the souriousness of the *Slovo* in its vocabulary and phraseology the critic usually ignores both the linguistic indications and the literary and pictorial testimonies, as well as the archaeological data. For example, the remarkable reference of the *Slovo* to the "Hungarian pacers" (*inoxodcy*) between which Izjaslav's body was placed for transportation from the battlefield to Kiev raises Mazon's skeptical reaction only because this word is fortuitously absent in the unfinished and hence very fragmentary sketch for a dictionary prepared by Sreznevskij; however, he does not notice that this word, well attested in Old Russian documents, figures in Kochin's dictionary of Old Russian terminology (p.25), and that another interesting record of the forgotten Slavic rite of transporting the dead between two horses is contained in the Latin legend dating back to the tenth century *Translatio Sancta Ludmile*. Moreover, the placing of the litter between pacers is confirmed by the gait of the horses in an expressive miniature of the Radziwill Chronicle, p. 219 verso. There would be no sarcastic incomprehension of the embers shaken up in a flaming horn (82) by Russian women if Mazon would recollect the "Kultlampe mit horner-artigen Ausgussoffnungen" which the German archaeologists note in the East and West Slavic excavations. The rape of the Polovtsian girls (37) would not startle Mazon as an anachronism if he would pay attention to the precise technical terminology of this rape, a concomitant miniature in the Radziwill Chronicle, and the characteristic semantic changes of the Polovtsian word *karavash*, which meant first "military loot", thn "female

prisoner, girl servant", and finally "girl" in general, as Zajaczkowski establishes (Sprawozdania, III, 161 ff.).

Any student of Old Russian will agree with S. Obnorskij that the language of the Igor Tale "may serve
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as indisputably significant material sufficient for the elimination of any surmises whatsoever that tend to cast suspicion upon the authenticity of the Slovo. (Ocherki po istorii russkogo literaturnogo jazyka starshego perioda, Leningrad, 1946, p. 193). The so-called hapax legomena of the Slovo are in this respect particularly revealing. Often their uniqueness proves with the development of Russian philology to be imaginary. For instance, Bulaxovskij in the Academy Symposium cites the absence of the form 196 *Chaca* "gull" "in other sources and languages"; but the Low German textbook of colloquial Russian, written in Pskov by Tonnie Fenne at the beginning of the seventeenth century, translates the German "Mowe" precisely by this form. Sometimes comparative Slavic etymology detects the antiquity of such vocables as 97 *knes*, replaced in the modern Russian dialects by *kon'*, *konjok*, *knjok*, *knjaz*, *knjazjok*, related to *kneja*, Slovenian *knjacek*, *knjakast*, and Serbocroatian *knes* "lame, sickly" (cf. above, p. 213), and M. Alekseev in the Academy Symposium) and the verb 46 *potruchati sja*. Comparative Slavic philology uncovers likewise the antiquity of these vocables of the Slovo which occur both in contemporary Russian dialects, and in old texts of other Slavic countries: e.g., *lada*, a Slavic ritual matrimonial term attested in medieval Czech literature and in the oral tradition of the whole Slavic world, so that Mazon's doubts about its existence "*dans la langue ancienne*" (reply, p. 519) are unjustified. Thus far, Mazon has not adopted Obnorskij's sober conclusion quoted above, but he substantially retreats from his original use of linguistic proofs against the Slovo and declares in his reply that it would be futile to expect decisive testimony from the study of the language (p.521). . . .

. . .Neither mythological nor historical anachronisms appear in the Igor Tale. Mazon's affirmation (reply, p. 527) that the author's appeal to the prince of Galich 132: "shoot, Lord, at Konchak [the Polovtsian Khan]!" "*semble venu tout droit*" from the epoch of Ivan the Terrible, is beyond understanding. Also in the quoted paper of 1944, p. 213, Mazon's reference to the "evident anachronism" - the mention of Our Blessed Lady of the Tower (*Pirogoshcha*) in Kiev in 1185, "although she was transferred to Vladimir in 1160" - is borrowed, strange as it may seem, from the hodge-podge that the dilettant Rumjancev leveled in 1814 against the Slovo and that was

immediately refuted by the historian Karamzin. First, the Slovo does not refer to the icon, but to the obviously non-transferable Kievan stone church of Our Blessed Lady of

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the Tower, founded (according to the Hypatian Chronicle) in 1132 and cited in the epilogue of the Igor Tale for political reasons, as Lixachev convincingly explains. Second, a simple glance into this Chronicle would suffice to teach the critic that in 1155 and **not** in 1160) an icon brought from Constantinople on the same ship as Pirogoshcha (and **not** Pirogoshcha herself) was transferred to Vladimir: the world-renowned Vladimir Mother of God (Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*). ...

...To sum up the significance of Mazon's raid against the Igor Tale, let us recall Pushkin's view of the Slovo as "a solitary monument in the midst of the desert of our ancient literature". It has been made clear since then that the Old Russian literature is far from being a desert, but, as a matter of fact, until recently the Igor Tale still continued to be studied in artistic and ideological isolation. Its literary structure was never systematically matched with the style problems of its time in their Russian aspect - still less in their international aspect, because the later isolation of Russia was illegitimately projected into the pre-Mongolian past. The few scattered exceptional attempts to tackle the question only confirm this general rule. The unfortunate habit of interpreting the Slovo out of real touch with its aesthetic and philosophical ambiance involved a

subconscious inclination to perceive this epic against the background of the literary schools of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and hence to modernize its translation and even (as we have seen) its text. We owe to Andre Mazon a courageous carrying of these latent tendencies to their frank and logical conclusion. He succeeded, indeed, by a masterful *reductio ad absurdum*, in proving that the Igor Tale, when deliberately isolated from its Kievan and pan-European medieval context and matched to the literary pattern of the recent past, becomes an insoluble puzzle, senseless and amorphous. The scholar tangibly demonstrated that if we go this way we inevitably lose all contact with historical reality and then may admit anything, even that the Slovo was written by N. Bantysh-Kamenskij, one of the three original editors of the Igor Tale, and (according to Lixachev's notes) a pedantic archivist, most distant from literature, well versed in the documents of the Foreign Office archives, knowing Greek and Latin, but neither an orientalist nor a philologist, nor a writer with any poetic style. The argument Mazon

brings up in favor of his authorship is that "*l'heure venue de la polemique, il gardera le silence*" (Comptes rendus, 1944, p. 218). The first
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intimations of a polemic came, however, with the grumblings of Rumjancev in 1814; but the archivist was taken ill in the middle of 1813 and died in January 1814, and one of his last letters warmly introduces to the Count Rumjancev a philologist whom he praises for help in understanding the Igor Tale.

Mazon's experiment was an effective stimulus which drove students to break with any modernizing endeavors and to examine the Tale in all its connections with the literary activities around Igor and his line, as well as with the whole literary tradition of the twelfth century in Kievan Russia and abroad. The primary effect exerted was to read the text of the Slovo free of its modern reshapings. The conclusion which this reading suggests, for the Slovo as well as for the excerpta from the other portions of the same manuscript, is the relative reliability of the lost manuscript, in striking contradiction to Mazon's verdict on its "*qualite fort mediocre*". The relative faithfulness of the copy to the original text and its graphic distinctness enable us to confine ourselves (1) to a tentative filling in of a few letters or words obviously omitted. ...

...The good preservation of the text in this relatively late copy of the Slovo makes possible attempts at a tentative reconstruction of the original version such as those sketched in La Geste and by Nahtigal (o.c., 369ff.), and the Slovo appears liberated from its enigmas to the same extent as the other representative East Slavic works of the same epoch. This liberation puts a definite end to both Mazon's evaluations of the Igor Tale, which in 1940 he declared to be "on the whole a mediocre work" and in 1949 "a skillful pastiche of a mediocre model". The arguments of the French scholar obviously yield to the intuition of the French poet Philippe Soupault reflected in the fascinating introductory essay to his recent translation of the Chant du Prince Igor (Rolle, Switzerland, 1950): "*Ainsi n'y a-t-il pas de meilleur exemple de poesie au sens le plus pur du mot que ce Chant du Prince Igor un des plus purs textes poetiques que jamais les hommes anciens recites.*"(108)

So, let not the reader be deceived; the Slovo o polku Igorevye is NOT an 18th century forgery, but is a genuine product of 12th century Kievan Rus'. As was noted by Phillippe Soupault, the Slovo is a product of the Middle Ages, uncontaminated by the

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so-called "Enlightenment". As I have indicated in other places, I make no effort to hide my loathing of the so-called "Enlightenment"; I hate its ideology, its literature, its art (as did Henri Matisse, among a multitude of others), its naivete, its shallowness, its provincialism of time and place, its sophomoric arrogance. One is reminded of Goethe, who, reading a document of the so-called "Enlightenment" could not avoid bursting into peals of laughter.

Among other things, the so-called "Enlightenment" was the great age of Mammon worship, of what Joseph de Maistre so accurately called "the odious hierarchy of wealth", which made "money the measure of all things".

John Zmirak, a devout syncophant of "the odious hierarchy of wealth" said in his book Illiberal Catholicism:

"We ought to be deeply thankful for the heritage of the (so-called) Enlightenment - because the American anti-Catholics of the 19th and 20th century were dead right about one thing: Catholicism minus the Enlightenment equals the Inquisition."

Now, Mr. Zmirak is obviously either an ignorant lout or a congenital liar, or, more likely both, and he most certainly speculates with the presumed ignorance of his prospective readers. The fact is that until the middle of the 13th century the Inquisition did not exist anywhere. So, for more than 1,200 years the Catholic Church existed without the Inquisition. How can this be, Mr. Zmirak? Even if what Mr. Zmirak said above were true - which it manifestly is not, it would be irrelevant, for the so-called "Enlightenment" was far worse than the Inquisition ever

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was, and for an immense multitude of reasons. To give only one example, the French Revolution, child of the so-called "Enlightenment", killed more people in a few months than did the Inquisition in five centuries. Pure products of the so-called "Enlightenment" are Marxism, with its acolytes Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, Kim il Sung, Enver Hoxha and Slobodan Milosevic ("Slobo Saddam the Red Bandit"). Also products of the so-called "Enlightenment" was Hitler's National Socialism and Saddam's Ba'athism. Zionism could also be included in the above list, as the combination of nationalism and socialism is pure "Enlightenment", and all the first Zionists were atheists. I have only scratched the surface of the evils wrought by the so-called "Enlightenment"; whole books have been written on the subject.

I must ask the reader to forget what he thinks he knows concerning the Inquisition; Protestants and secularists have told whole libraries of gross exaggerations and bald-faced lies concerning the Inquisition. To give a classic example, William Draper said:

"In the 13th century alone, the Inquisition burned more than 300,00 people in the city of Madrid."

Now, the Inquisition did not exist in Spain until 1484; in the 13th century Madrid was not a city, but was a half-Muslim village.

As we said above, the Inquisition did not exist until the middle of the 13th century; it came into existence in what is now

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the region of Languedoc in the south of France due to a very

particular set of circumstances, and cannot by any stretch of the imagination be considered as something congenital to Catholicism. The circumstances which had given birth to the Inquisition were peculiar to what is now Languedoc in southern France; said circumstances did not exist in Spain, so the Inquisition was not established there until 1484. We have no intention of giving a detailed history of the Inquisition, but only to warn the reader to beware of Protestant and secularist lies and slanders. Apparently many Protestants are unaware that bearing false witness is a sin.

**Slovo o polku Ihorevi (Russian: *Igorevi*) - (*The Tale of Ithor's* [Russian: *Igor*; Old Norse: *Ingvar*] Campaign)
Original Old East Slavic: *Slovo o polku Igorevye***

"This is the only example of an old epic that has been preserved and since it is unique, its form cannot be taken as typical of lost works.

The work was found in a manuscript, probably of the sixteenth century, of Pskov origin, at the end of the eighteenth century. This manuscript was burned in 1812. Suspicions that the text was forged in the eighteenth century or earlier (Mazon) do not appear to be well founded for there are no linguistic or historical mistakes; the scanty knowledge of the old literature in the eighteenth century would have made such a forgery impossible; and there could be no political interest in forging a description of an unsuccessful campaign.

The subject of the epic is a campaign conducted by Prince Ithor (Russian: *Igor*; Old Norse: *Ingvar*) of Novhorod-Siversky (Russian: *Novgorod-Siversky*), against the Cumans (or *Polovtsi*) in 1185, which ended in his complete defeat. The exposition contains many obscure details and this is not only because of its rich symbolism, which the author does not always explain, and which almost conceals reality. Symbols replace events (a battle is a wedding banquet or a harvest), are used for the names of persons and objects (the princes are suns, the *Rusychi* (Kievan *Rus*) are

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falcons), and indicate countless good and bad portents (bloody dawns, the groan of the earth, dark clouds). Another favorite device is hyperbole. The princes are

depicted as cosmic forces; for example, Yaroslav Osmomysl of Halych (Galicia; Russian: *Galych*) "shoots sultans beyond the clouds; Sviatoslav "trampled graves and abysses ... dried up streams and swamps."

Mythological images which in the twelfth century appeared in Byzantine and western European poetry are another characteristic form of ornament - Khors, Veles, Dahzboh (Russian: *Dazhbog*), Troian, and the beings of "lower mythology," *Dyv, Diva-Obida*. Perhaps at the time they were interpreted euphemistically (as in Malalas and the *Hypatian Chronicle*) as princes and heroes of olden times who were later mistakenly considered "gods."

Much alliteration and other types of euphony adorn the language, which is sometimes rhythmical but is not versified.

The most brilliant images in the work depict sounds and colors: all the animals and birds in the steppe have their own voices (special verbs) and all actions are connected with real or symbolic sounds (*zvenyt slava* - praises peal, literally; "glory rings"); the epithets "golden, silver, black, red, green," etc. are used frequently and in an original manner. There are images, phrases, and separate words which connect the work closely with the old literature and with Ukrainian folklore (E. Barsov, V. Peretts, R. Jakobson).

The work was written by someone in court circles and is evidence of the beginning of a "court literature" in Ukraine. Attempts to identify the author have failed, although it is possible that he was a Galician boyar who went to Novhorod-Siversky (Russian: *Novgorod-Siversky*) in the company of the daughter of Yaroslav Osmomysl. There are also many words which this work shares with the West Slavic languages (A. Orlov).

Ihor's (Russian: *Igor*; Old Norse: *Ingvar*) Tale is the last expression of the idea of the "unity of the Rus' Land" with its old center at Kiev, and the author seeks reasons and proofs in history for this unity." (53)

Below we present the text of the 11th century epic *The Song of Igor's Campaign* (*Slovo o polku Igorevye*); but first some observations from the "Foreword" and the "Notes" by Vladimir Nabokov, the translator.

"According to the annals of Kievan Russia, four territorial princes with throne towns on the rivers Desna and Seim, east of Chernigov, set out on Tuesday, April 23, 1185, for the prairies beyond the river

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Donets to fight the Kumans (or *Polovtsi*). The four princes were: Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*), leader of the expedition; his brother, Vsevolod; their nephew, Sviatoslav; and Igor's young son, Vladimir. The Kumans, nomads of obscure Turco-Mongol origin [**though, apparently, mainly of Caucasian or Caucasoid race**], who had been assailing the southeastern steppes for the last

hundred years, had been soundly trounced in 1183 by Igor's cousin, Sviatoslav III. Igor was moved by the spirit of rash emulation in undertaking his own expedition without consulting the senior prince.

Igor's mounted troops, marching leisurly in a general southeasterly direction, took nine days to cover the distance, about 250 miles, between Igor's throne town, Novgorod-Seversk, and the river Donets. They continued southward, through oak brush and pine barren, between the Donets and the Oskol. In the steppes some 80 miles south of the junction of these two rivers, about 400 miles from Novgorod-Seversk, they clashed with the Kumans. On Sunday, May 12, after three days of fighting, the army of the four princes was completely defeated. They were captured by four different khans and taken to four different camps. In the course of the following months the Kumans invaded Russian territory between the Sula and Seim rivers and retreated with rich booty.

After at least one year of captivity Igor managed to escape. In the meantime young Vladimir, in *his* place of confinement, married the daughter of Khan Konchuk. Vladimir was back in Russia, with his wife and child, by the autumn of 1187, and it is reasonable to suppose that his uncle, Vsevolod, had also been liberated by that time. The fourth member of the expedition apparently died in captivity. ...

... A modicum of internal evidence, which most scholars today believe to be not an injection by a Russian (James) MacPherson, but a natural exhalation of inherent truth, forces one to assume that the unknown author of the Song of Igor's Campaign) composed it in the spring or early summer of 1187. ...

...The original text of the *Song* as published in 1800 consists of 14,175 letters or about 2,850 words. I (Nabokov) have divided it, in my English literal translation, into 860 lines. Its first sections are devoted mainly to an account of the unfortunate foray. The facts tally with those of the Ipatiev Chronicle but they are grouped and illumined according to the poet's own views and needs. That there was some exchange of information between the original chronicler and the author of The Song (of Igor's Campaign) is evident from a few bizarre coincidences (see, for example, notes to (2935)

lines 91 and 814-830), but who was influenced by whom is far from clear. The chronicle is the work of a learned monk, adept at pious formulas, a conscientious writer with a shapeless style and little originality of thought. The *Song*, on the other hand, is a harmonious, many leveled, many hued, uniquely poetical structure created in a sustained and controlled surge of inspiration by an artist with a fondness for pagan gods

and a percipiense of sensual things. Its political and patriotic slant pertaining to a given historical moment is, naturally, of small importance in the light of its timeless beauty, and although I (Nabokov) have provided the reader with the necessary notes, I am not interested in considering *The Song* as a corollary of history or a birch-stump speech.

The structure of *The Song* shows a subtle balance of parts which attests to deliberate artistic endeavor and excludes the possibility of that gradual accretion of lumpy parts which is so typical of folklore. It is the lucid work of one man, not the random thrum of a people. From the extraordinary prelude, where the tenacious shadow of Boyan is used by our bard for his own narrative purpose, to the conclusion of his work, where Boyan is once more invoked to preside over the happy end, there is a constant interplay of themes and mutual echoes. The entire composition neatly divides itself into five parts: 1.) Exordium (lines 1-70); 2.) Narration (lines 71-390); 3.) Conjunction (lines 391-730); 4.) Liberation (lines 731-830); 5.) Epilogue (lines 831-860). In Part 2, Vsevolod's speech to his brother before they set out (lines 71-90) forms a companion piece to the description of Vsevolod in action on the battlefield (lines 211-230); the bright sun which is eclipsed (lines 91-110), when Igor addresses his warriors before the campaign, later rises in gory grandeur over the battlefield (lines 181-183), is addressed by Euphrosyne from the rampart (lines 722-730), and finally sheds a gay and benevolent radiance on Igor's homecoming (line 841). In another ingenious arrangement of nicely fitting pieces, the Winds, which in part 2 drive enemy arrows over Igor (lines 197-199), are conjured by Euphrosyne in Part 3 (lines 699-708), and in answer to her prayer brew up a diversionary storm (lines 731-732) to assist Igor's liberation. Especially satisfying to one's sense of inner concord and unity is the ample treatment of the theme of the Rivers, among which the Great Don plays a leading role. Igor's urge to take a look at it (line 100) and drink a helmetful of it (line 110), expressed in a stylistically perfect refrain at the beginning of Part 1, is repeated with a symmetrical intonation at line

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180 and line 190, in the beginning of a great battle, when the resounding, redoubtable Don is felt to be on the side of the Kumans. Throughout *The Song* that river is mentioned a number of times in terms of terror and disaster (lines 131, 194, 205, 309, 741) as well as in terms of passionate desire (lines 100, 110, 416, 503, 567), and with the subtheme of the "helmetful" repeated at line 416 and line 503. Igor does not attain the blue mirage of the Don, but in a perfect structural

move the artist substitutes for the Great Don its tributary, the Lesser Don, the "little" Donets. With which, or rather with whom, the prince in the Liberation part of *The Song* indulges in a charming colloquy (lines 771-802), contrasting the kind Donets with a much less amiable stream, the Stugna, in a passage (lines 791-802) which resolves itself in a last echo of danger and misfortune. Igor's speech of thanks to the Lesser Don is beautifully duplicated by his wife's prayer to the Dnepr (lines 711-719): the great Kievan river transmits as it were the power of intercession and assistance to the prairie stream, and Igor's historical recollection of a less fortunate

lady's weeping on the Dnepr's banks is a necessary element of rhetorical harmony to balance, at the close of the entire movement, Euphrosyne's initial apostrophization of that

river. And finally there is the river Kayala, near which the disastrous battle is fought. The reiteration of its name with emblematic allusions is a haunting presence throughout *The Song* (lines 194, 251, 292, 380, 431, 694).

An array of animals, resembling the stylized fauna of rich-hued rugs, and marginal designs of delicate plants play a changeful double role in the structure of *The Song*. They give its circumstances a touch of local reality, and they participate in the general theme of magic, prophecy and conjuration, a theme bespeaking a singular freedom of thought and distinguishing this (largely) pagan poem from the pallid and rigid compositions of routine Christian piety which by that time had begun to direct and to drain literary art. It will be noted that here again the diverse expressions of the theme enter into a subtle arrangement of calls and recalls, with every step having its reverberation and every echo its arch. Thus, the colorful prairie creatures participating as agents of doom and as the Kumans' allies in the excitement of the eclipse (lines 115-126, 132-139) or taking cruel advantage of the dead (lines 263-266, 602-604), or reveling in tragedy (lines 406-407, 422-443), are replaced and responded to, within the work's plural melody, by the antiphonal pro-

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Russian birds (lines 787-790, 806-813), assistants of the river gods conjured by Euphrosyne and, in the case of the nightingales, representatives of (the ancient Slavic bard) Boyan.

In what may be termed a more feminine strain, flowers and trees by their drooping movements express their choral compassion for the misfortunes of the Russians. Besides and allusion in line 562, the formula of their participation occurs as a refrain in lines 299-301 and again in lines 801-801: it comes here during

that triumphant homeward trek where, seemingly, nothing but elation could be experienced by Igor, but where, by an artistic device, the pathetic refrain lends a poetically needful support to the symmetry of the overarching theme of melancholy; which melancholy is now transformed into a remembered event referring to a long-dead prince, and thus brings out, in vibrant contrast, among the light and shade of riverside willows, the lucky fate of the live hero.

The all-pervading sense of magic so vividly conveyed by flora and fauna, demon peacocks and fairy-tale ducks, waters and winds, auroras and thunders, is introduced by our bard's descriptions of Boyan's enchantments (especially lines 1-18 and 35-38) and is further illustrated by a series of thematic panels such as the Eclipse (lines 91-119), the Portentious Storm following it (lines 132-139 and 181-190), the Arrival of the Antivirgin (lines 306-310), the King's Dream (lines 391-410), the Spells of Vseslav (lines 651-690), Euphrosyne's Incantation (lines 691-750) and Igor's Escape (especially lines 731-733, 751-760, 781-790, 806-810).

Among other elements of our author's technique the good reader will note his art of transition and preparation. Thus, interrupting with a dramatic aside the account of the battle which starts with the "Vsevolod Wild Bull" movement (lines 211-230), our bard, in preparation of the political centerpiece of *The Song* (that magnificent section, lines 497-686, where old feuds are recalled and contemporaneous princes implored to help Igor), contrives a first digression beginning at line 231, "There have been the ages of Troyan" (which in itself is a companion intonation to the Boyan apostrophe at line 51-60), and continuing at line 270, after which we return to the Kayala battlefield. In this long digression the feuds of Oleg (Old Norse: *Haelgi*) Malglory (lines 233-238), the death of Boris, son of Vyacheslav (lines 245-250) and that of Izyaslav I (lines 251-254) are recalled, and the image of a dissension-torn Russia (line 255-268) is projected from there into another section (lines 311-350) where a
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clamor of lament rises after Igor's defeat. The transition from that defeat to the recent victories of Sviatoslav III leads to the great scene in Kiev, while the various evocations, pictorial in brightness and dramatic in sonority, of Oleg, Vyacheslav and Izyaslav have now prepared eye and ear for the brilliant glimpses of princes who are rallied to Igor's assistance: Yaroslav of Chernigov (lines 466-478), Vesevolod of Suzdal (lines 497-510), the brothers Rurik (Old Norse: *Hroerkr*) and David (lines 511-522), Yaroslav of Galicia (lines 523-541), Roman later of Galicia and

his brother Mstislav (lines 542-559) and Mstislav's brothers Ingvar (Esat Slavic: Igor) and Vsevolod (lines 571-582), after which a historical recollection, the recent death of Izyaslav son of Vasilko (lines 591-610), leads to the admirable evocation of the enchantment and misfortunes of Vseslav, Izyaslav's grandfather (lines 631-678).

Within these ample surgings of interlinked themes we can mark such smaller elements of inner unity as intonational refrains and recurrent types of metaphor. Among the refrains are such striking repetitions of euphonious formulas as "seeking for themselves honor and for their prince glory" (lines 89-90, 149-150), "O Russian land, you are already behind the culmen" (lines 140-141, 195-196), the double formula of "drooping" pertaining to grass and trees (lines 299-301), to ramparts and merriment (lines 387-390), to voices and merriment (lines 387-390), to voices and merriment (lines 611-614) and in perfect structural symmetry, to the flowers and the tree at lines 801-802. Another refrain is the plea to avenge Russia and Igor (lines 519-523, 539-541, 580-583); and "yaroslavna early weeps in Putivl on the rampart, repeating" is an especially musical reiteration recalling Western European ballads (lines 697-698, 709-710, 720-721). Finally, I leave to the students of generic style the various categories of metaphor which adorn *The Song* and add the pleasures of connotation to those of direct imagery. These metaphors can be classified mainly as belonging to the vocabulary of the hunt, to the domain of agriculture and to that of meteorological phenomena.

Beyond the allusions to him by our (anonymous) bard (and by Sofoniy, i.e., Sofon of Ryazan, 17th century Russian author), nothing is known of this Boyan, a prophetically inclined Kievan bard who -judging by the dates pertaining to the princes (of whom) he sang - must have flourished from 1035 to 1105, a tremendous span for a poet. Our bard deliberately quotes his great predecessor in lines 163 (*to plank marshes/and miry spots/with all kinds of Kuman weaves.*)

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and 210 (*The Fiend's children bar the field/With their war cries;/the brave sons of Rus bar it/With their vermilion shields./with their vermilion shields*), and perhaps in two other passages; lines 4 (*of the campaign of Igor/ Igor son of Svyatoslav?*) and 146 (*Stilled is the trilling of nightingales;/The jargon of jackdaws has woken./With their vermilion shields/The sons of Rus have barred the great prairie*). Moreover, he cunningly mimics Boyan's manner in order to introduce his own story, lines 51-70; (*O Boyan, nightingale/Of times of old!/If you were to trill [your praise of] these troops,/While hopping, nightingale,/ [if you were] flying*

in mind/Up to the clouds;/[if] weaving paeans around these times,/ [you were] roving the Trojan trail,/ Across fields onto hills;/ Then the song to be sung of Oleg [, would be];/ "No storm has swept falcons across wide fields;/ Flocks of daws flee toward the Great Don";/ Or you might intone thus,/ Vatic Boyan, grandson of veles:/ "steeds neigh beyond the Sula;/ Glory rings in Kiev;/ Trumpets blare in Novgorod[-Seversk];/ Banners are raised in Putivl."

Boyan is a name of southern Slav origin. A Bulgarian king (Simeon, d. 927) had a son (named) Bayan (Baianus) who had been taught magic. By an amusing coincidence, in 1783, long before Boyan or Bayan had come to light, Vasilii Lyovshin, author of the famous Russian Tales, while in the process of fabricating pretty feminine names, hit upon *Bayana* (derived from *obayanie*, i.e., fascination, charm) for one of his princesses.

Those familiar with the splendid opera Ruslan and Lyudmilla by Mikhail Glinka, which Tchaikovsky called "the Tsar of operas", will remember the memorable appearance of the bard [East Slavic: **gudets**] Boyan in said masterwork.

Throughout *The Song* there occur here and there a few poetical formulas strikingly resembling those of (James) MacPherson's *Ossian*. I discuss them in my Commentary. Paradoxically, these coincidences tend to prove not that a Russian of the eighteenth century emulated MacPherson, but that MacPherson's concoction does contain after all scraps derived from authentic ancient poems. It is not unreasonable to assume that through the mist of Scandinavian sagas certain bridges or ruins of bridges may be distinguished linking Scottish-Gaelic romances with Kievan ones. (109)

Nabokov was dead right when he says: "Paradoxically, these coincidences tend to prove not that a Russian of the eighteenth

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century emulated MacPherson, but that MacPherson's concoction does contain after all scraps derived from authentic ancient poems." However, when he says: "It is not unreasonable to assume that through the mist of Scandinavian sagas certain bridges or ruins of bridges may be distinguished linking Scottish-Gaelic romances with Kievan ones.", Nabokov was dead wrong. In fact, Nabokov's statement cited above is an example of a pure guess or supposition, with no evidence whatever to support it. If Nabokov

would have had any real knowledge of the Celtic epic - both Irish or Gaelic and Welsh-Breton or Brythonic - outside the romances of James MacPherson, of the Viking sagas, of the Persian epic and of Indo-European philology he would never have occurred to him that the Viking sagas could have been a "bridge" between the Celtic epic and the Song of Igor's Campaign. No one who has any familiarity with the Viking sagas can believe even for one moment that they ever served as "bridges or ruins of bridges" between the Gaelic (Irish and Highland Scot) epic tradition and the romances derived from it on the one hand and the Kievan romances on the other.

The Vikings did borrow artistic motifs from the Celts, and even their harp music. This Celtic influence reached the Vikings from two sources: 1.) direct contacts (though said contacts were almost invariable hostile), and 2.) by way of the Goths; note however, that Celtic literary elements were most unlikely to have reached the Vikings by way of the Goths. As we have noted above, Old Norse or Viking literature bears no resemblance whatever to Celtic literature, whether Gaelic, Welsh or Breton, neither in form nor in content. Content is a large topic, but so far as form is concerned, we have noted that Old Norse verse is based on alliteration, rhyme being unknown, while Celtic verse is based on rhyme, using alliteration in an unsystematic way purely as an ornament. Celts and Vikings were always mortal enemies, and the linguistic and cultural barriers between Celts and Vikings were very great indeed. So, the Vikings could borrow artistic motifs and even harp music from the Celts, but literature, especially

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poetry, is another matter entirely.

Finally. if the Viking Sagas served as a "bridge" between the epic tradition of Kieven Rus' and the Gaelic or Irish epic tradition, then it would seem that said epic tradition of Kievan Rus' must also demonstrate some influence from the Viking Sagas; however, I am unaware of any such influence, nor did Nabokov give any examples.

In summary, if the Viking Sagas served as a "bridge" between the Welsh and Gaelic epics and the ballads derived from them on the one hand and the epic tradition of Kievan Rus' on the other,

how is it that the Viking Sagas themselves show not the slightest resemblance to nor influence of the Welsh or Gaelic epic and the ballads derived from it? How is that the epic tradition of Kievan Rus' bears no resemblance whatever to the Viking Sagas?

As we have noted above, there are three possible theories concerning the similarities between the Gaelic epic and the ballads derived from it on the one hand, and the epic tradition of Kievan Rus' on the other, which are far too close and far too numerous to be a coincidence:

- ❖ 1.)As we have noted in various places, there are indeed proofs of a Celtic presence in the Ukrainian and Russian steppe.
- ❖ 2.)The Goths, in their long migration from what is now southern Sweden to the shores of the Black Sea, were at one stage under intense Celtic cultural influence. &
- ❖ 3.)Something which is really a topic which belongs in the Indo-European field, namely, that the resemblances between the Gaelic epic on the one hand and the epic tradition of Kievan Rus' on the other are a facet of the many affinities between the Celts on the one hand and the Iranian and Slavic peoples on the other.

Obviously, the above three theories do not preclude nor contradict one another in any way, and there is likely some truth in all three.

In Chapter 2 we noted that the VALKYRIES of the Viking Sagas are derived from the FRAVASHIES of the Iranian tradition, such Iranian influence presumably reaching the Vikings by way of the Goths, who were themselves of Scandinavian precedence and always maintained contacts with their ancient Scandinavian

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homeland. We also noted that the Goths, after they had reached the shores of the Black Sea, were profoundly influenced by the Celts, and most especially by the Iranian nomads of the Eurasian steppes, i.e., the Sarmatians and Alans. However, in the Gaelic or Irish epic there is no evidence whatever of anything resembling either the Fravashies or the Valkyries. So, the Vikings received the

theme of the Fravashies by way of the Goths, but did not pass it on to the Irish. In summary, the Gaelic or Irish epic shows no influence whatever of the Viking Sagas; in their turn the Viking Sagas betray no Celtic influences. Nor can any influences of the Viking Sagas be detected in the epic tradition of Kievan Rus'. In other words, we must look elsewhere for the explanation of the evident Celtic influences and affinities which are so evident in the epic tradition of Kievan Rus'.

In Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 we have dealt with the influences of the Iranian nomads of what is today the Russian and Ukrainian steppe on the Slavs. Of the five pagan gods of pre-Christian Kievan Rus' listed by the Christian author of the Russian Primary Chronicle, three - Khors, Dazhbog, Stribog and Simargl - are of Iranian origin. Also, the Slavic word for "God" or "a god", BOGU, is derived from, directly or indirectly, from the Iranian BAGA or BHAGA, Vedic Sanskrit BHAGA, while the Slavic word for "holy", SVETU, Lithuanian SHVENTAS, is derived from, or related to, the Avestan SPENTA. We have dealt with this topic in more detail in another part of this chapter. It is obvious how profound was the influence of the Iranian nomad peoples - Scythians,

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Sarmatians and Alans - on the Slavs.

In Chapter 2 we have dealt at considerable length with the affinities between the Celtic epic tradition, both Irish or Gaelic epic tradition and the Welsh and Breton (or Brythonic) epic tradition, especially the Arthurian Cycle, including Tristan and Isolt, and those tales from the Mabinogion which deal with

Persival or Parzival, and those ballads and romances derived from said epic traditions on the one hand and the Iranian epics, both Persian and Sarmatian-Alanic, on the other. As we said in Chapter 2, some scholars go so far as to say that the Arthurian Cycle is a free translation from Iranian sources, and should be called the Arthurnamah. Though to a lesser degree, the same applies to the Irish or Gaelic epic tradition, noting the virtual identity between the Gaelic Deirdre of the Sorrows and the Parthian romance Vis and Ramin, and the virtual identity of both with the Arthurian romance Tristan and Isolt. The examples could be multiplied; see Chapter 2.

As we note above, Iranian elements, once again both Persian and Sarmatian-Alanic, are also present in virtually all aspects of the culture of Kievan Russia, as we have noted in other places. In other words, it is not right to speak of a "bridge" between the Celtic and the Kievan romances, but rather of common Iranian elements which occur in both, and perhaps, of an ultimate common Indo-European origin. Once again, see Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. In

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summary, there is no "bridge" between the Celtic epic on the one hand and The Song of Igor's Campaign on the other; all spring from a common source. Below we will bury once and for all the theory that the Viking sagas served as the "bridge" between the Irish or Gaelic epic tradition on the one hand and that of Kievan Rus' on the other.

Below we give selections from "Scandinavian Influence in the Slovo? By Margaret Schlauch, which appeared in Russian Epic Studies, edited by Roman Jakobson and Ernest J. Simmons. Firstly we will demolish any idea that the use of alliteration in The Tale of Igor's Campaign is proof of Viking influence.

Alliteration used as an ornament of versification is found in the literatures of many Indo-European languages, e.g., Sanskrit, Persian, Gaelic, Welsh and Provencal and Slavic. However, only in the Germanic languages, including Old English, was alliteration ever used as the basis of versification. This is the key to a passage in Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer which many modern readers find incomprehensible.

Chaucer lived in the 14th century.; by his time, in most of England, under Provencal, French and Welsh influence rhyme had become the basis of versification, alliteration being relegated to the status of an ornament. However, in some parts of England which had been under long and intense Viking influence, alliterative verse had survived even to the 14th century. Thus, one of Chaucer's

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Canterbury pilgrims rather contemptuously refers to "rum, ram, ruf", by which he means alliterative verse.

Notes Ms. Schlauch:

"...The attempt of (Eduard) Sievers to apply Germanic scansion to the *Slovo* was most recently refuted by M. Shtokmar, who pointed to the absence of restricted formal patterns of rhythm (as contrasted with conventional strophic verse in any language), and also the absence of systematic alliteration typical of

Germanic verse. This, he repeated, cannot be imitated in Russian: for this reason nineteenth-century translators encountered such difficulties in rendering Scandinavian epic poetry."

Ms. Schlauch continues:

"Shtokmar also rejected Abicht's division of the *Slovo* into strophes. For more general reasons Valentina Dynnuk has expressed skepticism concerning kinship of the *Slovo* with Scandinavian monuments, whether prose or verse. Her comments on the subject are incidental to a comparison of the *Slovo* with the *Chanson de Roland*; but even so, one feels that she has dismissed the Scandinavian case without fair trial. The unconvincing parallels produced by her are episodes from the more fabulous mythic-heroic cycle (she appears to have in mind the *Volsunga Saga* when she refers unspecifically to the greater distortion of history in Old Norse (certainly not the *Heimskringla!*); she ignores the whole body of skaldic poems celebrating princes' deeds in intricate conventional style but still with factual accuracy. These, it would seem, offer the most appropriate material for comparison with the eulogies and even the reproaches directed towards the medieval Russian princes of the *Slovo*. Yet they have not been examined adequately for the purpose.

I propose, therefore, to survey the problem afresh and restate the case for Scandinavian influence on the *Slovo*. I may say in advance that I find it unconvincing even in the light of additional evidence. Though I may be able to offer a series of new parallels, a scrutiny of their character shows that they are either vaguely generic (and therefore not persuasive), or essentially different, in the poetic use made of them. To approach the problem fairly it will be necessary to summarize once more the objective historical conditions which bring the existence of Scandinavian influence within the range of possibility.

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It is generally conceded that the author of the *Slovo*, writing in the late twelfth century, was not himself surrounded by a flourishing poetic school in the Old Norse tongue. But perhaps his references to and citations from the poet Boyan, his admired master, provide us with a transition to an older age. The three passages about Boyan tell us that he celebrated the deeds of the following princes: Yaroslav the Old; Mstislav the Bold, victor over Rededya; Roman the Fair, son of Sviatoslav; likewise Yaroslav and Oleg "of olden time". Although there may be disagreement as to the identity of some of these persons, it appears fairly certain that the careers in question form a span from

the middle of the eleventh century - Yaroslav the Old being identified with him called the Wise (died 1054) - to its end, or even into the twelfth century. Boyan's own life and creative activity need not have coincided with the period of the careers he celebrated. Like the Old English *Widsith*, he may have commemorated princes of an earlier time known to him by report. It would appear that his work was done about 1100, with the treatment of Yaroslav the Wise, who had flourished more than half a century earlier, relegated to the category of reminiscent praise of one long dead. Such reminiscent praise is certainly well known in Germanic. The text of Beowulf alone contains several such passages.

Nevertheless we may inquire whether Scandinavian poetic tradition was strong enough in 1050, and showed demonstrable. Like the Old English *Widsto*, he may have commemorated the way of Boyan to the *Slovo* poet. For the fragments of Boyan's compositions, or at least explicit imitations of his style by the later writer as incorporated in the text, show no great difference of technique from the rest of the *Slovo*. Parallel sentence structure, sound effects, figures of speech appear to have been very similarly used, as has been pointed out more than once.

Now the existence of strong cultural relations between Kiev and Scandinavia is beyond question for the mid-eleventh century. The famous visit of St. Olaf (of Norway) to Yaroslav's court during his exile need not be rehearsed here, nor the equally famous visits of Harold Hardrada, his half-brother, to the same court, before and after his adventures in Greece, Sicily and Byzantium. St. Olaf was a patron of skalds, whom he regarded as important witnesses to history's future account of him. Snorri Surluson tells us that he ordered poets to go into battle with the shield of defense: "Ye shall", says he [the King], 'remain here, and see the event which may here befall, and you will

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not then have to tell [others'] reports of it when you afterwards say and compose concerning it." And in truth the verses of these men are quoted frequently by Snorri as *dicta probantia*. Some of them refer to (st.) Olaf's sojourn in Russia just before the battle of Stiklestad. Since the King was attended by many followers at the time, we may assume that skaldic verse was recited in Kiev for his pleasure, and was understood by bilingual Slavs about the year 1030. (St.) Olaf's son, Magnus the Good, was himself in Novgorod at this time. As for Harald (hardrada), he was not only celebrated by skalds but himself composed skaldic verses, one poem of sixteen verses, with refrain throughout, being addressed to King Yaroslav's daughter Elizabeth, whom he later married. This was done about 1045, fifteen years after St. Olaf's

visit. Somewhere about 1040 occurred the visit of Ingvar *Vioforli* to Russian territory on an expedition which took him as far as the Caspian Sea. The journey was famous in saga literature. The fantastic *Yngvars saga Vioforla* contains some distorted reminiscences of the situation in Russia: Ingvar's father visits the court of Yaroslav (*Jarisleif* in Old Norse), who is represented as an uncle by marriage, and he helps Yaroslav in a feud against a fictitious brother named Burisleif. Yaroslav actually fought with a brother (named) Mstislav.

In the generations after Yaroslav, Scandinavian connections were still closely maintained. His grandson Vladimir Monomach was married to Gytha, a daughter of the Saxon Harald (generally known as Harold Godwinson), who fell at Hastings in 1066. She had fled to Denmark after her father's death. Snorri Sturluson reports the intermarriages of the manomach and Scandinavian royal families. He mistakenly calls Vladimir the son instead of the grandson of Yaroslav.

The dynastic connections were close, then, until nearly the middle of the twelfth century. We may assume that skalds were present in any considerable entourage of parties to a royal marriage. In addition we have the more elusive but nevertheless impressive evidence of a number of stories which can be proven to have migrated to Scandinavian sources - the *Gesta* of Saxo Grammaticus, and various Icelandic sagas - byway of Russia from ultimate Byzantine originals. Stender-Peterson has made a study of a number of these stories. He has examined narrative recounted in the Russian Primary Chronicle about dynastic heroes still partly Scandinavian by inheritance and alliance, together with their Scandinavian analogues, and he has proven that the tales must have been derived from Byzantium, not migrated thither. Byzantine learned literature, notably
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tracts on the art of war, studded with anecdotes to illustrate strategems, offers frequently the one clear and logical version which explains the distorted Russian and Scandinavian variants. The nature of the distortions and misunderstandings indicates the course of migration. That the Vikings were the transmitters, as they journeyed homeward via Kiev, Novgorod and the north, he has established by strong circumstantial evidence.

One of the Icelandic sources quoted by Stender-Petersen is of special interest here. Bjarni, hero of the *Bjarna saga Hitdoelakappa*, is an historical personage of the first half of the eleventh century. During his adventures in Russia he fights a *holmgang* for King Valdimar (i.e., Vladimir) against a rival claimant for the realm of Kaldimar. The similarity of

names, identical but for the initial consonants, may point to kinship (though it must be noted that rhyming names were often manufactured in pairs for rival characters in the fictitious *lygisogur*. In any event, the situation is surely typical of feudal quarrels in medieval Russia. Boer, editor of the saga, suggested that this anecdote reflected the struggles of Vladimir (died 1015) and his brother Yaropolk (died 980), great-grand-sons of Rurik (Hroerekr). Stender-Petersen suggests a later struggle, namely that between Yaroslav the Wise himself and his brother Mstislav, which occurred in 1024, the approximate time of Bjarni's visit. This Mstislav, he points out, was the hero of some sort of narrative song composed by Boyan, as the *Slovo* tells us. Boyan's source may well have been contemporaneous with the Viking visitors and narrators here discussed.

The connections are present, then, and we may assume that Boyan himself, as late as 1110, may have heard Scandinavian song and conversation from visitors; even later, at the court of that Mstislav who was also called Harald, the opportunity must have presented itself often. But this is quite different from supposing that Old Norse was habitually spoken in twelfth-century court circles, or even among traders, except in the presence of visitors. Were these latter numerous enough to affect the linguistic situations in relation to literary traditions? That we cannot know. Neither sagas nor chronicles offer statistics. Although we have established a channel of communication, we are left without certitude. The literary monuments themselves must be examined for additional evidence.

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II

It will be convenient to discuss details of style first (sound effects, word order, sentence structure, figures of speech, epithets, and so on), and then take up the larger units of structure in the poem: descriptions, eulogies, warnings, reproaches, laments.

One of the most conspicuous items under sound effect is, of course, alliteration. Multiple examples of it appear on every page of the *Slovo*. It is regarded by some as an important argument in favor of Scandinavian influence, which might well be expected to have included this conspicuous Germanic trait.

We have seen, however, that the uses of alliteration in Slavic, with its movable accent, cannot be the same as in the rigid schemes of Germanic poetry, conditioned by a fixed accent. In addition, some

scholars have pointed to instances of alliteration in the *byliny* in order to argue that the device could arise within a native school; and in fact there is no difficulty in finding some examples of it in the popular epic. But in the latter, the incidence of alliteration is in no way comparable to what we find in the *Slovo*. We may grant, I think, that there it is conspicuous and unexplained, and that some sort of Scandinavian effects may be operating at long range. But if so, they are indirect and greatly modified. ...

...The use of parallel structure in short sentence units, so frequent in the *Slovo*, is very typical of Scandinavian verse. ...

...The Old Norse passage is by Eyvind Skaldaspillir, who died about 990. The style was conventional and was maintained with but little change for two hundred years. Thormoth Kolbrunarskald and Thorfinn Munn, in composing songs for St. Olaf before the battle of Stiklestad (1030), used much the same stereotyped forms in parallel construction, though they introduced parenthetical interruptions. ...

...This poem exemplifies use of parallel construction lengthily employed, as well as rhyme. But the rhyme does not result from like inflectional endings, as in Russian. The rhyme adornment in the *Slovo*, I must confess, reminds me rather of tendencies in classical verse as early as Horace, where similar effects occasionally arose, inadvertently perhaps in the beginning, but later by choice.

Another feature of short units in parallel construction in the *Slovo* is that these often involve repetitions of two, three or even four or five (most often three) elements. These repetitions of units have been studied by Hoffmann, who has assembled examples.

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He has not noted, however, that in the most numerous group, namely those repeating three units, there is a tendency to amplify the third unit. ...

...This too can be set beside the use of triads with weighted third element - Axel Olrik applied to it the term *Eftertryk* or *Bagvoegt* - in Old Norse, less conspicuously in the skaldic verse than elsewhere. The epic triads in the sagas have been exhaustively surveyed by L. Alfred Bock, who devotes special attention to those with final weight. A typical example is to be found in the earlier text of the *Iskendinga Bok* of Ari the Wise (died 1148), which stands close to oral tradition. ...

...Eddic verse also furnishes miniature examples. ... But not only is this common to other Germanic verse as well, but it has been suggested by Hermann Hirt and others that the peculiarity was characteristic of Indo-European primitive poetics, since it is found in

ancient Greek and in Sanskrit as well. It is INSUFFICIENT, therefore, to prove a peculiarly close relationship between Old Slavic and Old Norse poetic style.

Nor are the intricate patterns of word order in the two a valid argument. The *Slovo* has artful arrangements of simple inversions (ba, ba) and sequent (ab, ab) and complementary orders (ab, ba). For the first we have *si Donu Belikogo ... u Donu Belikago*; for the second *Oty Belikogo Donu do Malago Dontsa*; for the third *po Rysskoi zemli ... sredei zemli Ruskii*. In intricate word order is also unescapably noticeable in skaldic style, but it is different. It does not yield balanced patterns such as these: its purpose is merely to present words in a sequence bafflingly remote from the normal prose order, with modifiers and modified substantives kept apart, interrupted by parentheses, divorced from verbs, so that modern students must do jig-saw puzzles with these phrases in order to obtain the intended meaning. Ancient listeners were impressed, the skaldic poets won glory, and we moderns are confounded by this tortuous form of discourse. The verses of Egil Skallagrímsson quoted above are comparatively easy; one could quote others more complicated. But none shows the patterns of the *Slovo*.

The repetition of entire phrases as refrain appears in both. These occur in the *Slovo*:

*Za zemla Ryskua, za Igroeni, duego Cvitislavicha;
Iroclavna rano placheti; O, Ruskay zemle! Uzhe za
sholomyemy esi!; ishchuchi ceda chtí, a kniza slavi; a
Igoreva khradrogo pliku ne krachiti.*

(2951)

In Old Norse there are examples from the earliest skaldic verse to the latest: the refrain in Egil's "Hofuthlausn", cited above; Harald Hardrada's refrain about Elizabeth, Yaroslav's daughter, which appeared at the end of each of sixteen verses, the repeated phrase in the late "Kraku mal" of the latter twelfth century. But the use of refrain is a general device which need not necessarily point to literary indebtedness on one side or the other.

Another stylistic detail suggesting kinship with Old Norse is the metaphoric comparison of warriors with wolves, falcons, eagles, etc. Boyan is called a nightingale of ancient time; his thought speeds like a wolf on the plain, and soars like an eagle above the clouds. Vsevolod is called a bull; heroes are referred to as "grey wolves"; the heathen enemy are called black ravens and also wolves. Now it is true that Old Norse abounds in figures employing these representatives of bird and animal life; but the manner is entirely

different. A hero is called a feeder of the eagles and ravens in *kennings* repeated by the score, but he is not himself identified with these birds. This can easily be verified by referring to dictionaries of skaldic verse, under such headings as warrior, hero, man, poet, etc. One significant parallel, and one only, is quoted by Buslaev from the Old Norse kennings: the use of *hawkstrand* or "falcon-strand" for the hand recalls the ten fingers of Boyan, chanting a song with a stringed instrument, where it is implied that the fingers were like falcons sent against a flock of swans. But the Old Norse kenning means merely that falcons are perched on the hands of men. The descriptive phrases and compound nouns and mythological allusions which are listed by the score do not *identify*; they paraphrase. Poetry is called by mythological names such as Kvasir's blood, dwarfs' drink of Sutting's mead, because of stories of the gods - but it is not *compared* to the flight of birds, as is Boyan's poetic thought. Only in one special situation is a hero actually called a wolf, and that is when he is an exile, especially a hostile one. The term was a synonym generally understood; for instance Hildir Hrolfsdottir (circa 900) says:

Ilt 's ulf at ylfask, Yggr valbrikar, slikan

i.e., "It is an ill thing to be angry (show wolf's temper; enmity) with such a wolf, O warrior".

Referring to someone who has been driven out of the land. In two special cases I have found similes of
(2952)

animals applied directly to heroes in a manner suggestive of the Old Russian (or Old East Slavic). Both occur in the *Edda*, and both are spoken by women lamenting dead heroes. Sigrun, speaking of the fallen Helgi (Slavic: Oleg), says:

*Sva bar Helgi af hildingom
Sem itrskapathr askr af thyrni,
Etha sa dyrkalfr, doggo slunginn,
Er ofri ferr ollom dyrom
Ok horn gloa vith himinn sialfan!*

"Helgi rose above other heroes like the lofty-shaped ash above the thorn, or the noble stag, besprinkled with dew, who rises above all other beasts, and his horns glow to the heavens themselves."

Guthrun, lamenting dead Sigurth, says:

*Sva var Sigurthr of senom Giuka,
Sem vaeri groenn laukr or grasi vaxinn,*

*Etha hiortr habeinn af hosom dyrom
Etha gull glothrautt af gra silfri.*

"So Sigurth stood forth among Gjuki's sons as if he were a green leek grown high from the grass, or the tall-legged hart among dusky beasts, or the glowing red gold above grey silver."

Verbal correspondences in details of style exist, then, but they are either of a very general character, it seems to me, or upon closer examination they turn out to be different in essentials of treatment or conception.

III

The larger units of the *Slovo* which suggest comparison are: warnings and premonitions before battle, descriptions of battle, eulogies, the prophetic dream, the lamentation, the quasi-political reproaches directed to unwise chieftains.

The indications of catastrophe about to occur to Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*) offer some of the most significant parallels to Old Norse poetry. Before an expedition against the Plovetsians or Cumans, *Div* cries out from an ancient tree, birds of ill omen croak and beasts yelp; the sun is darkened; the bird of prey is already vocal in the oak. ...

These premonitions are reminiscent of many situations in Old Norse verse and prose. In the *Edda*,
(2953)

at Sigurth's death a raven calls out from the branch of a tree, warning the killers of approaching doom:

*Soltinn varth Sigurthr sunnan Rinar
Hrafn at meithi hatt kallathi:
'Ykkr mun Atli eggjar riotha!
Muno vigskaa of vitha eidar!'*

"Slain was Sigurth south of the Rhine; from a tree-branch a raven called aloud: Atli shall redden the blades on you [with your blood], and [broken] oaths shall bring you, warriors to destruction."

The skald Hornklofi, contemporary of Harald Harfagri, represents a woman addressing ravens at break of day to inquire what tidings of battle they bring:

*Hvat es ythr hrafnar? Hvathan eruth er komnir
Meth dreyrngu nefi at degi ondverthum?*

"What news, O ravens? Whither come ye now with blood-dripping beaks at break of dawn?"

Hromund Halti (died 955) tells how he heard ravens as harbringers of death:

*Ut heyrik svan sveita sara thorns, es mornar
Broth vegr borginmotha blafjallathan gjalla;
Sva gol fyrr, thas feigir folknorungar voru,
Gunnar haukr, es gaukar Gauts brago spo sogthu.*

"Out side I hear the dark-feathered raven crying aloud; when day dawns its prey awakes it: thus once before the war-hawks cried before battle when they gave warning that heroes should die."

And a similar verse by Thorbjorn Hromundarson (died 955) ends:

*Sva gol endr, thas unda eiths, af fornum meithi
Hraeva gaukr, es haukar hildinga mjoth vildu.*

"Thus of yore cried eagles in the ancient tree, wishing to drink of the blood of warriors."

Sighvat, St. Olaf's skald, carried on this convention, hailing the ravens as harbringers of battles in one of his verses (composed in 1031). Wolves appear in the same role quite often, usually with witches mounted on them to warn of coming slaughter.

The darkening of the sun before defeat seems to
(2954)

refer to an actual eclipse in the *Slovo*. Curiously enough, the same portent occurred before the battle of Stiklestad and was celebrated by Sighvat the skald. "It happened then, as was told before", says Snorri Sturluson, "that the sun disappeared although the heavens were clear, and it became dark." Sighvat composed a verse on this:

*Undr lata that ytar eigi smatt, es mattit
Skaenjorthungum skorthu skylass rothull hlyja;
Drjug varth a thvi doegri (dagr nathit lit
fogrum),
Orrostu frak austan atburth, konungs furtha.*

"A wonder not small men declare that it was when the sun, though the day was without cloud, might not send down warmth for the warriors; a heavy portent it was of the king's [end] it was on that day (the day had not its bright color); I heard of this event during the battle in the east."

In the *Slovo* the darkening of the sun, described in terms of an eclipse, also presages defeat for the

princes. Actual events and literary conventions appear to have been combined similarly in the Old Norse and the Old Russian (or Old East Slavic). What is missing in the former, however, is the subjective tone several times perceptible in the *Slovo*, where nature's participation in tragedy is expressed by the pathetic fallacy: the skalds never go so far as to have cart-wheels groan in an anticipation of disaster, nor grass and trees bow in sorrow nor shed leaves when it has taken place. Such literary animism is of an alien school.

There are similarities, again, in the descriptions of battles actually in progress. The *Slovo* gives us flights of birds, continuing their premonitory appearance; wild beasts eager for prey; earth soaked with blood and sown with corpses. Arrows fall like showers of rain and lances sing aloud. Some of the phrases have been cited already in connection with sentence units of style. Their content is to be found over and over again in skaldic verse:

"Thou, prince, didst wipe dry the sword's mouth when thou didst turn from battle; thou didst batten the raven with raw flesh; the wolf howled from the hill; but the next year, martial warrior, you were in Russia to the east (I heard of no fighter more renowned than you)."

(2955)

"You, glorious king, before thy return, with blood didst redden the sharp claws of the eagle; the wolf received food wherever thou didst come."

"At Enderis Isle the ravens received flesh to tear; we gave to the witches' steeds [i.e., wolves] a full fattening then ..."

Such details of battle description appear in earlier poems of the *Edda*, especially the *Helha Kvitha Hundingsbana ii*, as Buslaev pointed out. Snorri Sturluson remarks that there are two birds which are regularly associated with battle, and paraphrased by calling blood and corpses their meat and drink: they are the raven and the eagle. He also gives epithets and quotes staves to show the conventional use of the wolf as ravener of the battlefield. The falling of arrows he compares to a shower of rain and hail, and quotes a number of examples from the poets. There are many elsewhere to set beside the same figure in the *Slovo*:

*Unuth austr fyr Mynni oddhrith, en bratt sithan
Hilmir, fekk, und hjalmi, hrafns verthar lith
sverthum*

"O king, you had, with a helmet on your head, a battle

(arrow-storm) eastward of Mynn, and the army provided raven-food by [its] swords."

I fastri fleindrifu ...

"In hard snowstorm of arrows"

Fannk orva drif ...

"I found (a) snowstorm of arrows"

Horth kom hrith a skjoldu ...

"A fierce storm beat on the shields."

... I odda eli ...

"In the storm of spears".

In addition Snorri Sturluson tells us that battle may be paraphrased as storm or snow-shower of the *Hjathnings*, or the storm of Odin or of Vithrir; and weapons are called hail or rain and endlessly repeated.

It has been claimed by Buslaev and Pogodin that a significant point of similarity in both types of battle
(2956)

description is the attribution of speech to weapons: swords or spears cry out with voices of their own. The comparison can indeed be made:

*Slithrtungur let syngva
Sverthleiks reginn ...*

"The lord of the swordplay [i.e., warrior] let the scabbard-tongues [i.e., swords] sing out"

These pallid figures in Old Norse can scarcely be called *prosopoeia*, however, I know of no cases of extended discourse by nonhuman beings, such as rivers or cities, to place beside the examples in the *Slovo*.

A single parallel may be cited for the blood-red dawn and black clouds of Igor's second day in battle:

*Nu es ogorligt um at litask
Es dreyrog sky dregr meth himni:
Mun opt litath lytha blooi ...*

"Now it is terrible to look about, for bloody clouds gather over the sky; the air shall be dyed with blood of men."

The earth soaked in blood and sown with the dead is a conventional part of battle descriptions in Old Norse

too, though it might be easier to collect examples of water dyed red and choked with bodies, since Viking sea fights were more often described than land battles:

Har fell nithr til iarthar a Nordymbra-landi ...

"[May a corpse fell to the earth in Northumberland.]"

Ira bloth I aegi oetir fell un skaero ...

"Much blood of the Irish fell into the ocean during the battle."

The time of battle is often designated as early morning, as in the *Slovo*:

*Hund marga sa-ek falla
Morgunstund fyr 'meithi men at odda-senno.*

"Very many men I saw fall before the sword in the morning hour ..."

attom odda messo vith upp-runa solar,

(2957)

"We had battle at sunrise."

For other larger units in the *Slovo* I find more general analogies. They have pertinence, though they lack verbal parallels. The composing of eulogies addressed to kings was an important function of skalds, and the repertory of their surviving verse offers many examples; but they are unlike the apostrophe of our *Igor'*-poet to heroes of ages past in both style and purpose. The prophetic dream of Sviatoslav suggests very many Old Norse situations in verse and in prose saga accounts. The specific vision of the dreamer's own funeral bed being prepared recalls vaguely - but very vaguely - the visions of a bench being prepared for a doomed hero in Valhalla. Dreams of catastrophe precede important battles, such as Stiklestad or Stamford Bridge, but these usually involve a witch or an ancestor who appears to the dreamer to tell him he is *fey*. Lamentations after a tragedy are fairly frequent too; when a skald speaks, they assume the form of a celebration of past exploits by the lost kings; and when a womanspeaks, like Guthrun in the *Edda*, they are more lyrical, but I know of none like Yaroslavna's containing an apostrophe to the elements of nature.

Again, skaldic verse contains a few instances of reproaches addressed directly to princes, admonitions about the need for generosity or the folly of stirring us civil strife, but even the latter theme is only

vaguely similar to the Golden Discourse of Sviatoslavna. The closest analogue I have found is the poem called *Bersoglisvisur* of Sighvat, addressed to King Magnus the Good about 1040 A.D. The poet here warns the King that his peasants have just grievances against him, "and it seemed to them that he had delayed too long to pacify them, when they were threatening to raise civil strife against him." To drive home his sermon, Sighvat cites examples of earlier kings who kept laws and ancient customs. *ls and jarls are justified,*" he concludes.

Stanza 7

*Haett's that's allir aetlask (athr skal vith
ratha)
Harir men; es heyrik hot, skjoldungi at moti;
Greypt's that' 's hofthum hnepta heldr ok nithr I
feldi
(slegit hefr thogn a thegna) thingmenn nosum
stinga.*

(2958)

Stanza 8

*Gjalt varhuga, veltir, vithr theism nu ferr
hithra,
Thjofs (skal hond I hofi) holtha kytt (of
stytta);
Vinr 's sas, varmra benja vornuth bythr, en
hlythith,
Tarmutaris teitir, til hvat bumenn vilja.*

"Beware, thief-punisher, of the people's report which goes about here; one should hold short the hand in moderation. He is a friend who warns: hear then, you who delight the hawk with warm blood, what it is the farmers desire. It is dangerous that all the hoar-headed men whose threats I hear are turned against the prince; that should be forestalled in time. It is a threatening sign when the thing-men let their heads hang and thrust their noses down into their hoods; - the *bonder* have fallen silent."

The preservation of pagan mythology in the *Slovo* by a Christian author has been compared to Snorri's antiquarian labors in behalf of the gods of Valhalla. It might as well be compared, however, with the literary use of classical myth by skeptical pagan, or even believing Christian, poets of the later Roman Empire.

These are the chief correspondences in style and content between Old Norse poetic literature and the *Slovo o polku Igoreve*. Other literatures, I am aware,

give closer parallels for some of the types surveyed above. For instance, balanced sentence structure, the pairing of phrases in identical grammatical construction, remind me of Biblical balanced style more than skaldic. The studies of Peretc seem to me to go too far in claiming Biblical influence, since a number of his citations contain only one word (not always expressing the same idea) common to both texts; but where the verbal echo appears in similar balanced constructions, I find them convincing. The Psalter (i.e., the Psalms) furnishes many of these. Throughout, I am inclined to give great weight to the claims of indirect classical influence, though I am in no position to judge its extent or its transmission through medieval (i.e., Byzantine) Greek. I find the recent statements of N. Gudzij and A. Orlov on the learned heritage of the poem rather more persuasive than Sokolov's emphasis on its popular affiliations (though there is a valid point here too on the comparative closeness of feudal court circles to popular tradition,
(2959)

in contrast to the alienation from the people in later centuries) [this is true of the Middle Ages in general as compared with more modern times, and not only in Kievan Rus']. As for the persistence of Scandinavian literary tradition, I am inclined to think that if it survived at all, even to the time of Boyan, it was already attenuated in the extreme, and its effects were felt (as perhaps in the case of alliteration) [even this I find extremely doubtful, as alliteration is by no means peculiar or exclusive to the poetry in the Germanic languages, but is found in the poetry of a great many Indo-European languages, as we have seen] only in the most indirect manner - not to be definitely identified either by singers then or scholars now." (110)

Above, we have given a real expert in Viking literature - which Nabokov was not and which I am not - her say. Note that she minimizes the possibility of any significant influence of the Viking sagas on the *Slovo*.

So far as content is concerned, I have encountered nothing in the Viking sagas which indicates that they were influenced in the least by Celtic literature, nor does Nabokov nor Ms. Schlauch give any examples. Were someone to do a more thorough examination of

Celtic literature - both Gaelic and Welsh-Breton - I have no doubt that a great deal more parallels to the *Slovo*, other than found in the works of James MacPherson, would be found. Nabokov was obviously unfamiliar with Celtic literature, save the works of James MacPherson.

In any case, it is perfectly obvious that the Viking sagas could not and did not serve as a "bridge" between Celtic literature and the *Slovo*. The simple truth is that there was no such "bridge", nor was there need for any. In Chapter 1 and

(2960)

Chapter 2 I dealt in detail with the relations and affiliations between the Celts on the one hand and the Iranian peoples - both Saka nomads, ie.e, Scythians, Sarmatians and Alans, and Persians - on the other, very much including the field of literature. Also, especially in this chapter, we have dealt a great deal with the obvious and intense influence of the Scythians, Sarmatians and Alans on the Slavic peoples. So, the Viking sagas were not the "bridge" between the *Slovo* on the one hand and the works of James MacPherson on the other, because both, to a great degree, sprang from common - in this case Iranian - roots. We have seen above that most of the pagan gods mentioned in the Russian Primary Chronicle are of Iranian precedence.

Notes Margaret Schlauch:

"The curious point is that if we imagine a Russian forger around 1790 constructing a mosaic out of odds and ends with his own mortar, we must further imagine that he knew English well enough to be affected by specific elements of MacPherson's style; but in the eighteenth century, and well into the age of Pushkin, English poetry was known to Russians only through French versions, and therefore the Russian forger would not

have rendered, as Letourneur did not render them, the very special details of that curious "Ossianic" style of which I give examples in my notes.

The eleventh and twelfth centuries were marked in Kievan Russia by amazing artistic achievements, but the making of diadems, frescoes, icons, and marvelously lovely churches, such as the Cathedral of Ste. Sophia in Kiev (built in 1036) or the Uspensky Cathedral in Vladimir (1158-1189) or the Dmitrievskiy Cathedral in the same town (1193-1197), does not necessarily imply a contemporaneous development of literature; and similarly, great poetry is known to have been produced at periods when the (on the whole primitive) arts of painting and architecture did not exactly flourish. Despite the Marxist scholastics and nationalistic emotions which tend to transform modern essays on *The Song* (Slovo) into exuberant hymns to the Motherland
(2961)

(*Rodina*), Soviet historians are as helpless as earlier Russian scholars were to explain the striking, obvious, almost palpable difference in artistic texture that exists between *The Song* and such remnants of Kievan literature as have reached us across the ages. Had only those chronicles and sermons, and testaments, and humdrum lives of saints been preserved, the Kievan era would have occupied a very modest nook in the history of medieval European literature; but as things stand, one masterpiece not only lords it over Kievan letters but rivals the greatest European poems of its day.

Considerations of historical perspective prevent one from believing that *The Song* was composed around 1790 by an anonymous poet endowed with a degree of genius exceeding in originality and force that of the only major poet of the time (Derzhavin) and possessing an amount of special erudition in regard to the Kievan era which none in his time possessed. Suggestions to the effect that a forger gave up a future of personal fame in order to glorify the past of his country, or that he was able to avail himself of documents which are now lost, immediately provoke new questions requiring conjectures to deal with them. But after all this has been said, and the possibility of fraud contemptuously dismissed, and the entire burden of its proof shifted onto the frail shoulders of insufficient scholarship, we still have to cope with certain eerie doubts.

We are faced by the unnatural combination of two generically different notions: we are forced, first, to assume that at a singularly precise point in historical reality, namely in the summer of 1187, somewhere in Kievan Russia a person describes - pen in hand or harp in lap - a series of events which started only two years before and are still in a state of live flux and formlessness; and second, we are forced to combine in

our mind this political, local, actual, journalistic reality with the impact of such poetical imagery in *The Song* as is usually associated with the maturity of fondly manipulated impressions and with a long period of time - a decade, a century - elapsing between the event and the metaphor. In other words, it is very difficult to imagine the author of *The Song* (*Slovo*) singing the actual dew with which Igor's cloak was still wet as he rode into Kiev, or echoing Euphrosyne's sobs while she was rushing down from her wooden tower in Putivl to embrace her prince; or turning into a mannered dialogue the panting messenger's news of Vladimir's bring home a wife from the Kuman steppe." (111)

(2962)

Below are a few selections from Vladimir Nabokov's Commentary on The Song of Igor's Campaign. The first note deals with the ancient bard [East Slavic: **gudets**] Boyan, who is mentioned in *The Song*, and appears in Alexander Pushkin's lay Ruslan and Lyudmila, and in Mikhail Glinka's magnificent opera of the same name.

The anonymous author of *The Song* begins it with a tribute to Boyan:

Let us, however,
Begin this song
In keeping with the happenings
Of these times
And not with the contrivings of Boyan.
For the *vatic* (word related to the Gaelic *faith*, i.e.,
epic bard) Boyan,
If he wished to make a laud for one,
Ranged in thought
[like the nightingale] over the tree;
Like the gray wolf
Across land;
Like the smoky eagle
Up to the clouds.

For as he recalled, said he,
The feuds of initial times,
"He set ten falcons
Upon a flock of swans,
And the first overtaken,
Sang a song first" -
To Yaroslav of yore,
And to the brave Mstislav
Who slew Rededya

Before the Kasog troops,
And to the fair Roman
Son of Svyatoslav.

To be sure, brothers,
Boyan did not [really]
Set ten falcons
Upon a flock of swans:
His own vatic fingers
He laid on the live strings,
Which then twanged out by themselves
A paeon to princes.(112)

(2963)

" ...Beyond the allusions to him by our bard (and by Sofoniy), nothing is known of this Boyan, a prophetically inclined Kievan minstrel who -judging by the dates pertaining to the princes he sang - must have flourished from 1035 to 1105, a tremendous span for a poet. Our bard (author of *The Song*) deliberately quotes his great predecessor in lines 163 and 210, and perhaps in two other passages (line 4 and 146). Moreover, he cunningly mimics Boyan's manner in order to introduce his own story (lines 51-70):

O Boyan, nightingale
Of the times of old!
If you were to trill [your praise of]
these troops,
while hopping, nightingale,
over the tree of thought;
[if you were] flying in mind
up to the clouds;
[if] weaving paeans around *these* times,
[you were] roving the Trojan Trail,
Across fields onto hills;
Then the song to be sung of Igor,
That grandson of Oleg [would be]:

"No storm has swept falcons across
Wide fields;
Flocks of daws toward the Great Don";
Or you might intone thus,
Vatic Boyan, grandson of Veles;
"Steeds neigh beyond the Sula;
Glory rings in Kiev;
Trumpets blare in Novgorod[-Seversk];
Banners are raised in Putivl."

Boyan is a name of southern Slav origin. A Bulgarian king (Simeon, died 927) had a son named Bayan (Baianus) who had been taught magic."(113)

"In the Zadonshchina, Boyan is praised as *gorazdiy gudets v Kievye*, the skillful Kievan bard. While singing or reciting, the *gudets* played (*gudel*) on the *gusli*, a kind of small horizontal harp or cithara, of ten strings (judging by a vignette of 1358. Reproduced in La Geste du Prince Igor, p. 181. Except for *The Song* (and the obviously imitative Zadonshchina) there is no known work mentioning Boyan. He must have died around 1105.(114)

Here are lines attributed to Boyan:

(2964)

And Boyan said:

"Your Guards, Prince,
Birds have hooded with their wings
And beasts have licked up their blood."(115)

Says Nabokov:

"Our bard echoes Boyan with a prophecy of his own:
Russia, too, cannot escape God's judgement."(116)

Below are notes which refer to parallels between *The Song* and James MacPherson's work Ossian.

"Of times of old: *starago vremeni*. Cf. (James) MacPherson's Fingal, Book II (p. 81, Vol. I, Laing's edition of The Poems of Ossian, Edinburgh 1805): "To the ages of old, to the days of other years"; and "Carthon", first line, (p. 311, Vol. I, Laing's edition): "A tale of the times of old! The deeds of days of other years!" [**See Note 56.**]

It is from French versions of Ossian, not from *The Song* (which at that time he did not know as well as he did later) that young (Alexander) Pushkin borrowed the lines relating to *his* Boyan (borrowed from Heraskov) in Ruslan and Ludmila (1820):

*Dela davno minuvshih dnei,
Predan'ya starinii glubokoy ...*

The deeds of days past long ago
Traditions of deep ancients. ... (117)

"The *Daeva*, or *Diva*, *Div* is the demon bird of Oriental myths, a cross between an owl and a peacock. It is here an agent of the Kumans and will swoop down from the top of his poplar:

Already the *daeva*
Has swooped down upon the land. (lines 443-444)

Something of the kind occurs in Ossian. Lines 9-10 in MacPherson's "First Bard" (in "The Six Bards, a Fragment," see Vol. II, pp. 416-417 of Laing's edition) read in their "verse for verse" form:

**From the tree at the grave of the dead
The lonely screech-owl groans.**

Which in the "measured prose" form becomes **"From the**
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tree at the grave of the dead the long-howling owl is heard." This is rendered by Letourneur (Ossian, fils de Fingal, barde du III siècle: Poesies Galliques, Paris, 1777), two volumes) as "*La chouette glapissante crie au haut de l'arbre qui est aupres de la tombe des morts.*"

The steppes to the south and to the east of the river Sula, where the Kumans roam, are termed "the land unknown" or (lines 276, 516) "field unknown." The Daeva's command "to the land unknown", *zemli neznaemye*, is to take heed, *poslushati*. Cf. in The War of Inis-thona, (Vol. I, Laing's edition, p. 264), "**The traveler is sad in a land unknown**"; also, in Cath-loda (*op. cit.* vol. II, p. 298 and p. 318), "**Few are the heroes of Morven, in a land unknown!**" and, "**He fell pale, in a land unknown.**". The Russian counterpart, *zemlya neznaema* frequently occurs in the chronicles (for example under the year 1093; see Lihachyov, in the Andrianov-Peretts edition, p. 394). Letourneur (1777) who never renders, of course, the intonations, the mournful cut, the pathetic brevity of MacPherson, translates the first Cath-loda passage thus: "*Les heros de Morven ne descendirent pas en grand nombre sur cette terre inconnue.*"(118)

The Iranian resonances of the word *Daeva* are perfectly obvious.

Line 187. Blue lightnings. Our bard is far ahead of his first editor's time. The blue throb of an electric discharge is a modern conception. Most people with some amount of color sense today see lightning as a flash of ozone blue. Writers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries rationalized whatever impact lightning had on their sluggish retinas as "yellow" or "red" because logic told them that this was the color of fire. (James) MacPherson has "the red lightning of heaven" in Fingal, Book IV (Vol. I. Laing's edition, p. 131) and (Alexandr) Pushkin has "with the red glitter", *bleskom alim*, of lightning in a short poem ("The Tempest", 1825). We also find in MacPherson's Oithona (Vol. I, p. 527) the "red path of lightning on a stormy

cloud"; but on the other hand, there is also "thy sword is before thee, a blue fire of night", steel being blue (MacPherson's footnote to *Temora*, Book VI, Vol. II, p. 179). It is curious to note that the first commentators of *The Song* (of Igor's Campaign) could not understand why the lightnings were "blue". Musin and his assistants translate the original phrase *v nih trepeshchut sinii molnii* into routine eighteenth century Russian as *sver v nih molniya*, "lightning flashes in them".

Lines 214-215, 219-220. "*Gremleshi o shelomii mechi haraluzhniimi ... poskepanii ... shelomii, you clang on helmets with sword of steel ... cleft are helmets.* Cf. *Fingal*, Book I (pp. 34-35, Laing's edition of *The Poems of Ossian*, Vol. I): "**Steel, clanging, sounds on steel. Helmets are cleft on high.**" *Haraluzhniiy* is supposed to mean "made of steel," "steely". In the *Zadonshchina* it seems to be used as a synonym of *bulatniiy* (the ordinary adjective for weapons of steel) but also as an epithet of river banks which *The Song* calls "silver". The derivation of *haraluzhniiy* has been sought in the Turkish language and in Old Russian (or, more precisely, **East Slavic**) allusions to Charlemagne, Carolus Magnus, which would turn it into "Frankish steel."

Svoim zaltiim shelomom posvyechivaya. (**Darting light from his golden helmet**", line 217) The effect of this image on the mind of the reader is curiously similar to that of "**Intermitting, darts the light from his shield**" in MacPherson's *Temora*, Book V (p. 149, Vol. II of Laing's edition). The phrase is also found in the *Zadonshchina* where it appears as *zlatiim shelomom posvyechivashe*, and other variants such as *dosp'yehom* (armor) instead of *shelomom* (helmet)."

Lines 387-390 *Unisha bo ... zabrali, a veselie poniche: mournful are the ramparts, merriment has drooped.* Cf. in *The Poems of Ossian*, "The Death of Cuthullin" (p. 369, Vol. I, of Laing's edition): "**Mourful are Tura's walls. Sorrow dwells at Dunscai.**" (119)

Lines 424-430: MacPherson, *Fingal*, Book V (Laing's edition, Vol. I, p. 174): "**they sunk behind the hill, like two pillars of the fire of night.**"

Who are the "both young moons", *molodaya myesyatsa*? The names Oleg (old Norse: *Haelgi*) and Svyatoslav which follow may either apply to the second and third sons of Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*) (both of them mere children), or else "Oleg" may have been a scribe's substitution for

Vladimir (Igor's eldest son, 1173-1212), and then "Syatoslav" should mean the young prince of Rilsk (1166-1186), Igor's nephew whose patronymic (Oleg) perhaps influenced the slip. The chronicles do not tell us if Igor had taken his two younger sons with him in the 1185 campaign; but they do tell us that in 1183 Igor summoned his son Oleg, aged

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nine (or rather the company of knights under Oleg's nominal leadership), besides Syatoslav of Rilsk and Vsevolod of Kursk, to fight the Kumans who at that time evaded battle. As to (line) 430, this phrase is obviously misplaced in the text, jammed in between (lines) 435 and 436, where it makes no sense. Historiacally nobody was drowned except the unfortunate mercenaries who perished in one of the lakes of the Tor, termed in the chronicle a "sea". The two setting suns are certainly Igor and Vsevolod. Their red columniform reflections in the water (a fine metaphor based on exact observation) are either their retinues or (if we accept the meaning of the two moons as Igor's younger sons) they represent the two other leaders, Svyatoslav of Rilsk and Vladimir of Putivl:

Two suns were murked,
both crimson pillars
were extinguished,
and with them both young moons,
Oleg and Svyatoslav,
Were veiled in darkness
And sank in the sea.

Cf. Fingal, Book V (Laing's edition, Vol. I, p. 174:

"they sunk behind the hill, like two pillars of the fire of night." (120)

Lines 456-457:

"Early did you begin
To worry with swords the Kuman land"

MacPherson, Fingal, Book III (Vol. I, p. 90, Laing's edition): "early were thy deeds in arms."

Lines 466-470:

"Nor do I see any longer
The sway of my strong,
and wealthy,
and multimilitant
brother Yaroslav -

Yaroslav of Chernigov (died 1198), son of Vsevolod II and brother of Svyatoslav III. Historically he did supply Igor with a regiment of mercenaries.

Cf. the intonation of this passage with Temora, Book I (p. 19, Vol. II, of Laing's edition): "**Cathmor,**
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my brother, is not here. He is not here with his thousands." (121)

Line 584: "The epithet "silvery" applied to "streams" (here in the archaic sense of "shafts of water") has seemed to some commentators to be the odd foreglimpse of the modern cliché. Cf. Fragments, (p. 395, Vol. II, Laing's edition of The Poems of Ossian): "**Blood tinged the silvery stream.**" (122)

Lines 643-644: "*Obyesisya sinye m'glye, having enveloped himself in a blue mist.* Cf. Fingal, Book II (p. 64, Vol. I, Laing's edition): "**The blue mist ... hides the sons of Inis-fail,**" and Temora, Book VI (p. 185, Vol. II, *op, cit.*): "**He clothes, on hills, his wild gestures with mist,** and Book VII (p. 208): "**From the skirts of the evening mist, when it rolled around me.**" (123)

Line 778: *Ne malo ti velichiya*: ot small is unto thee the fame the glory, the greatness). MacPherson in Fingal, Book p. 18, Vol. I, Laing's edition): "**But small is the fame of Connal!**"

Lines 831-832: Song-maker of the times of old: *pyesnotvortsa starago vremeni*. MacPherson, The War of Caros (p. 235, Vol. I, Laing's edition): "**Bard of the times of old.**"

As Vladimir Nabokov has noted above:

"Throughout *The Song* there occur here and there a few poetical formulas strikingly resembling those in (James) MacPherson's Ossian. I discuss them in my Commentary. Paradoxically, these coincidences tend to prove not that a Russian of the eighteenth century emulated (James) MacPherson, but that MacPherson's concoction does contain after all scraps derived from authentic ancient poems."

In the above paragraph, what Nabokov says is absolutely right. However, when Nabokov suggests the Viking sagas as the "bridge" between the Gaelic and the Kievan epic traditions, he is

quite mistaken, as we have said previously. While the above has a certain inherent plausibility, since, as we have said, the Vikings were the founders of Kievan Russia and the very name

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"Igor" is derived from the Viking **Ingvar**. However, apparently Nabokov simply took the above as axiomatic and did not do his homework.

We have pointed out that the **Valkyries** of the Viking Sagas are derived from the Iranian **Fravashis**. However, the answer to this is obvious. As we noted in Chapter 2, the Goths in their long migration from what is now southern Sweden to the shores of the Black Sea were profoundly influenced by the Celts and even more so by the Sarmatians and Alans, the nomadic Iranian peoples of the Russian and Ukrainian steppes. When resident on the shores of the Black Sea, the Goths maintained contact with their ancient Scandinavian homeland; besides the Valkyries and Fravashis, the Runic alphabet is another proof among a multitude, as we have noted in Chapter 2. Viking art is yet another piece of evidence of the above. Though the Vikings certainly put their own unmistakable stamp on their art, which in its own right has very considerable merits, causing some people to speak of its "lyric power", in fact it is obvious that at base Viking art is derivative, of Iranian and Celtic origins. The carved dragon motif used by the Vikings to decorate the prows of their ships, from whence the term "dragon ships", is also obviously of Sarmatian and Alanic origin. The above is exactly what one would expect had the Vikings derived their art from the Goths when these last were residents on the

shores of the Black Sea. Note that in the Celtic epic and the Kievan epic there is nothing which resembles the Fravashis or Valkyries, that neither the Celts nor the Kievan Rus' ever adopted

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the Runic alphabet, and that both Celtic and the art of the Sarmatians and Alans are very much older than Viking art. In other words, the Kievan epic poets [East Slavic: **gudets**] did not inherit anything resembling the Fravashis or Valkyries from the Sarmatians and Alans.

The Kievan epic poets [East Slavic: **gudets**] were indeed influenced by the Sarmatians and Alans, possibly by way of the Goths; the use of the word **Div**, **Diva** or **Daeva** being an obvious example.

Note that in the Tale, the word *Div* means, roughly, "demon" as is true in Persian. Now, *Div* is obviously derived from a very prevalent Indo-European stem meaning, not "demon" but "God" or "a god": Indo-European: **deiwos*, Sanskrit: *deva*, Avestan: *daeva*, Lithuanian: *dievas*, Latin: *deus* (genitive: *divi*), Old Gaelic: *dia*, Gaulish: *devo*, Old Norse: *tivar*.(124)

Note that in the Slavic languages, as in Persian, the word derived from the Indo-European **deiwos* came to mean "demon" rather than "God" or "a god", while the word for "God" or "a god" (*bogu*) is derived from the Iranian *baga* or *bagha*, Vedic Sanskrit *bhaga*.

BHAGA:

Masculine noun, "dispenser", fracious lord, patron, (applied to gods, especially to Savitri), Rig Veda, Atharva Veda: name of an Aditya (bestowing wealth and presiding over love and marriage, brother of the Dawn, regent of the Nakshatra Uttara-Phalguni; Yaska enumerates him among the divinities of the highest

sphere; according to a later legend his eyes were destroyed by Rudra; the Nakshatra; the sun; the moon; name of a Rudra; good fortune, happiness, welfare,
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prosperity. Rig Veda, Atharva Veda: dignity majesty, distinction, excellence, beauty, loveliness, . Rig Veda & Atharva Veda: love, affection. {See: Avestan; bagha: Old Persian; baga: Slavic; bogu, bogatu: Lithuanian; bagotas, na-bagas.(125)

How a word related to the Vedic Sanskrit *bhaga* came to mean "God" or "a god" is obvious enough. Why it almost certainly took the place of a word ultimately derived from the Indo-European **deiwos*, which came to mean "demon" is another matter entirely.

We know very little concerning the religion of the Sarmatians and Alans; they were unquestionably not Zoroastrians, but it does not follow that they were "untouched by Zoroastrianism", as is often claimed. This is illustrated by an analogy.

The West African cults, known in Haiti as Voodoo - Haiti is often called "West Africa in the West Indies", and a proverb says: "Haiti is 80 per cent Catholic, 10 per cent Protestant, and 100 percent Voodoo" - *Santeria* in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, *Candomble* and *Macumba* in Brazil are most certainly not Catholic; yet, the Catholic influence, superficial and twisted though it may be, is present and perfectly visible, so no one says that the above-mentioned cults are "untouched by Catholicism".

The Sarmatians and Alans were not only ethnic cousins of Persian and Parthians, close relations in fact existed between them. So, though the Sarmatians and Alans were not Zoroastrians, it is a *non sequitur* to say that they were "untouched by Zoroastrianism". As is well known, Zoroaster came to consider the gods of the ancient Aryan pantheon - or at least most of them - to

be demons, so the word derived from the Indo-European **deiwos* came

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to mean "demon". Thus, that in the languages of the Sarmatians and Alans *Div*, transparently derived from the Indo-European **deiwos*, came to mean "demon" is proof that these Iranian nomad peoples, though certainly not Zoroastrians, were, to an unknown extent, influenced by Zoroastrianism. Thus, in the Slavic languages the word for "God" or "a god", due to the influence of the Sarmatians and Alans, ceased to be derived from the Indo-European **deiwos* and a word related to the Vedic Sanskrit *bhaga* adopted in its place. Thus in the *Slovo*, the word *Div* means "demon", while the Christian God is *Bogu*.

As we shall see, Nabokov noted that there are a surprising number of close resemblances between the Kievan epic on the one hand and the Celtic epic on the other. As we noted above, Nabokov explained this by saying that the Viking sagas served as the "bridge" between the Celtic and the Kievan epics. However, in point of fact, there is not the slightest evidence in the Viking sagas of any of the many Celtic and Sarmatian/Alanic elements which Nabokov correctly noted in the Kievan epic. In other words, the Viking sagas did **NOT** serve as a bridge between the Celtic epic on the one hand and the Kievan epic on the other; had the Viking sagas served as said "bridge", there would certainly have been some evidence of Celtic and Iranian influence in them, but this simply is not the case. As we shall see, there is indeed some evidence that the lost Gothic epic tradition contained Iranian as well as Celtic elements, but there is no sign of these in the

Viking sagas. In other words, there was no "bridge" between the

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Celtic epic on the one hand and the Kievan epic on the other.

There are three possible explanations for the numerous Celtic elements in the Kievan epic:

1.) The Irish tradition says that the Celts once dwelt in "Scythia", i.e., the Russian and Ukrainian steppes; as we shall see, there are other proofs of a Celtic presence in the Russian-Ukrainian steppes.

2.) The Goths in their long migration from what is now southern Sweden to the shores of the Black Sea were at one stage under intense Celtic cultural influence, as we have shown in Chapter 2.

3.) It may be an "Indo-European" question, having to do with the many affinities between the Celts on the one hand and the Iranian peoples on the other.

Of course, the above theories do not preclude not contradict one another, and there may well be some truth to all of them.

The numerous examples of Celtic elements in the Kievan epic - which are far too close and too numerous to be written off as "mere coincidence" - are simply another manifestation of the many proofs of the affinities between the Celts on the one hand and the Iranian peoples on the other. The "motif" or "archetype" of the Welsh-Breton romance Tristan and Isolt is not only pan-Celtic; its resemblance to the Parthian romance Vis and Ramin is far too close to be a mere coincidence; the examples could be multiplied, as we have shown in Chapter 2. The numerous Celtic elements in the Kievan epic are yet another example of the Celtic-Iranian kinship, of 'Erinn' and 'Iran'.

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Below is the text of The Song of Igor's Campaign:

Might it not become us, brothers,
To begin in the diction of yore
The stern tale
Of the campaign of Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*)
Igor son of Svyatoslav?

Let us, however,
Begin the song
in keeping with the happenings
of ythese times
and not with the contriving of Boyan.
For he, vatic Boyan,
If he wished to make a land for me,
Ranged in thought,
Like the nightingale over the tree,
Like the gray wolf
Across land,
Like the smoky eagle
Up to the clouds.
For as he recalled, said he,
The feuds of initial times,
"He set ten falcons
Upon a flock of swans,
And the one first overtaken,
Sang a song first" -
To Yaroslav of yore,
And to brave Mstislav
Who slew Rededya
Before the Kusog troops,
And to fair Eoman
Son of Swyatoslav.

To be sure, brothers,
Boyan did not really
Set ten falcons
Upon a flock of swans:
His own vatic fingers
He laid on the live strings,
Which then twanged out by themselves
A paeon to princes.

So let us begin, brothers,
This tale -
From Vladimir of yore
To nowadays Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*),
Who girded his mind
With manliness;

Thus indeed with the spirit of arms,
(2975)

He led his brave troops
Against the Kuman (or Polovtsian) land
In the name of the Russian Land.

O Boyan, nightingale,
Of the times of old!
If you were to trill your praise of
These troops,
While hopping, nightingale,
Over the tree of thought;
If you were flying in mind
Up to the clouds,
If weaving paeans around these times,
You were roving the Trojan Trail,
across fields onto hills;
then the song to be sung of Igor,
that grandson of Oleg I, would be:

"No storm has swept falcons across
Wide fields;
Flocks of jackdaws flee toward the Great
(River) Don";
Or you might intone then,
Vatic Boyan, grandson of Veles:
"Steeds neigh beyond the Sula;
Glory rings in Kiev,
Trumpets blare in Novgorod-Severski;
Banners are raised in Putivl."

Igor waits for his dear brother Vsevolod.

And Wild Bull Vsevolod arrives and
Says to him:

"My one brother, one bright brightness,
You Igor!
We are both Svyatoslav's sons.
Saddle, brother, your swift steeds.
As to mine, they are ready,
Saddled ahead, near Kursk;
As to my Kurskers, they are famous knights -
Swaddled under war-horns,
Nursed under helmets,
Fed from the point of a lance;
To them the trails are familiar,
To them the ravines are known,
The bows they have are strung tight,
The quivers, unclosed,
The sabers, sharpened;
Themselves, like gray wolves,
they lope in the field,

(2976)

seeking for themselves honor,
and for their prince glory."

Then Igor glanced up at the bright sun
And saw that from it with darkness
His warriors were covered.
And Igor says to his Guards:
"Brothers and Guards!
It is better indeed to be slain
Than to be enslaved;
So let us mount, brothers,
Upon our swift steeds,
And take a look at the blue Don."

A longing consumed the prince's mind,
And the omen was screened from him
By the urge to taste
Of the Great Don:
"For I wish," he said,
"to break a lance
On the limit of the Kuman field;
With you, sons of Rus, I wish
Either to lay down my head
Or drink a helmetful of the Don."

Then Igor set foot
In the golden stirrup
And rode out in the champaign.
The sun blocks his way with darkness.
Night, moaning ominously unto him,
Awakens the birds;
the whistling of beasts arises;
stirring the **daeva** calls
on the top of a tree,
bids hearken the land unknown -
the Volga,
and the Azov Seaboard,
and the Sula country,
and Surozh,
and Korsun,
and you, idol of Tmutorokan!

Meanwhile by untrodden roads
The Kumans make for the Great Don;
Their wagons scream in the middle of night;
One might say - dispersed swans.
Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*) leads Donward his warriors.
His misfortunes already
Are forefelt by the birds in the oakscrub.
The wolves, in the ravines,
Conjure the storm.

(2977)

The terns with their squalling
Summon the beasts to the bones.
The foxes yelp
At the vermillion shields.
O Russian land,
You are already behind the culmen!
Long does the night keep darkling.
Dawn sheds its light.
Mist has covered the fields.
Stilled is the trilling of nightingales;
The jargon of jackdaws has woken.
With their vermillion shields
The sons of Rus have barred the great prairie,
Seeking for themselves honor,
And for their prince glory.

Early on Friday
They trampled the pagan Kuman troops
And fanned out like arrows
Over the field;
They bore off fair Kuman maidens
And, with them, gold,
And brocades,
And precious samites.
By means of caparisons,
And mantlets,
And furred cloaks of leather
They started making plankings
To plank marshes
And miry spots
With all kinds of Kuman weaves.

A vermillion standard,
a white gonfalcon,
a vermillion penant of dyed horsehair
and a silver hilt
went to Igor son of Svyatoslav.

In the field slumbers
Oleg's brave aerie:
Far has it flown!
Not born was it to be wronged
Either by falcon or hawk,
Or by you, black raven,
Pagan Kuman!
Gzak runs like a gray wolf;
Konchak lays out a track for him
To the Great Don.

On the next day very early
bloody effulgences
herald the light.
Black clouds come from the sea:
They want to cover
the four suns,
and in them throb blue lightnings.
There is to be great thunder,
There is to come rain in the guise of arrows
from the Great Don.
Here lances shall break,
Here sabers shall blunt
Against Kuman helmets,
On the river Kayala by the Great Don.
O Russian land,
You are already behind the culmen!

Now the winds, Stribog's grandsons,
in the guise of arrows waft from the sea
against the brave troops of Igor!
The earth rumbles,
the rivers run sludgily,
dust covers the fields.
The banners speak:
"The Kumans are coming
from the Don and from the sea and from all sides!"
The Russian troops retreat.
The Fiend's (Satan's) children bar the field
With their war cries;
the brave sons of Rus' bar it
with their vermillion shields.

Fierce Bull Vsevolod!
You stand your ground,
You spurt arrows at warriors,
You clang on helmets
With swords of steel.
Wherever the Bull bounds,
Darting light from his golden helmet,
There lie pagan Kuman heads;
Cleft with tempered sabers
Are their Avar helmets -
by you, Fierce Bull Vsevolod!

What wound, brothers,
can matter to one
who has forgotten
honors and life,
and the town of Chernigov -
golden throne of his fathers -
and of his dear beloved,

(2979)

Gleb's fair daughter,

The wonts and ways!

There hve been the ages of Troyan;
Gone are the years of Yaroslav;
There have been the campaigns of Oleg,
Oleg son of Svyatoslav.
That Oleg forged feuds with the sword,
and sowed the land with arrows.
He sets foot in the golden stirrup
In the town of Tmutorokan:
A similar clinking
Had been hearkened
By the great Yaroslav of long ago;
and Vladimir son of Vsevolod
every morn that he heard it
stopped his ears in Chernigov.

As to Boris son of Vyacheslav,
vainglory brought him to judgement
and on the river Kanin
spread out a green pall,
for the offense against Oleg,
the brave young prince.
And from *that* Kayala
Svyatopolk had his father conveyed -
Cradled between Hungarian pacers tandemwise -
To St. Sophia in Kiev.

Then, under Oleg, child of Malglory,
Sown were and sprouted discords;
Perished the livelihood
of Dazhbog's grandson
among princely feuds;
human ages dwindled.
Then, across the Russian land,
seldom did plowmen shout hup-hup to their horses
but often did ravens croak
as they divided among them selves the cadavers,
while jackdaws announced in their own jargon
that they were about to fly to the feed.
Thus it was in those combats
And in those campaigns,
But such a battle
Had never been heard of.
From early morn to eve,
and from eve to dawn,
tempered arrows fly,
sabers resound against helmets,
steel lances crack.
In the field unknown, midst the Kuman land,
(2980)

the black sod under hooves
was sown with bones

and irrigated with gore.
As grief they came up
throughout the Russian land.

What dings unto me,
what rings unto me?
Early today, before the effulgences,
Igor turns back his troops:
he is anxious about his dear brother Vsevolod.
They fought one day;
they fought another;
on the third, toward noon,
Igor's banners fell.

Here the brothers parted
on the bank of the swift Kayala.
Here was a want of blood-wine;;
here the brave sons of Rus
finished the feast -
got their in-laws drunk,
and themselves lay down
in defense of the Russian land.

The grass droops with condolences
and the tree with sorrow
bends to the ground.
For now, brothers, a cheerless tide has set in;
now the wild has covered the strong;
Wrong has risen among the forces
Of Dazhbog's grandson;
in the guise of a maiden
Wrong has stepped into Troyan's land;
she clapped her swan wings
on the blue sea by the Don,
and clapping, decreased rich times.
The strife of the princes
against the pagans
has come to an end,
for brother says to brother:
"This is mine,
and that is mine too,"
and the princes have begun to say
of what is small:
"This is big,"
while against their own selves
they forge discord,
and while from all sides with victories
the pagans enter the Russian land.

(2981)

O, far has the falcon gone, slaying birds:
to the sea!
But Igor's (*Ingvar's*) brave troops

cannot be brought back to life.
In their wake the Keener has wailed,
and Lamentation has overrun the Russian land,
shaking the embers in the inglehorn.

The Russian women
have started to weep, repeating:
"Henceforth our dear husbands
cannot be thought of by our thinking,
nor mused by our musing,
nor beheld with our eyes;
as to gold and silver
none of it at all shall we touch!"

And, brothers, Kiev groaned in sorrow,
and so did Chernigov in adversity;
anguish spread flowing
over the Russian land;
abundant woe made its way
midst the Russian land,
while the princes forged discord
against their own selves,
and while the pagans, with victories
prowling over the Russian land,
took tribute of one vair
from every homestead.

All because the two brave sons of Svyatoslav,
Igor and Vsevolod,
Stirred up the virulence
that had been all but curbed
by their senior,
dread Svyatoslav, the Great Prince of Kiev,
who kept the Kumans in dread.

He beat down the Kumans with his mighty troops
and steel swords;
invaded the Kuman land;
leveled underfoot
hills and ravines;
muddied rivers and lakes;
drained torrents and marshes;
and the pagan Kobyaka,
out of the Bight of the Sea,
from among the great iron Kuman troops,
he plucked like a tornado,
and Kobyaka dropped in the town of Kiev,
in the guard-room of Svyatoslav!

(2982)

Now the Germans,
and the Venetians,
now the Greeks,
and the Moravians

sing glory
to Svyatoslav,
but chide
Prince Igor
for he let abundance sink
to the bottom of the Kayala,
and filled up Kuman rivers
with Russian gold.

Now Igor the prince
Has switched
From a saddle of gold
To a thrall's saddle.
Pined away
have the ramparts of towns,
and merriment
has drooped.

And Svyatoslav saw a troubled dream
in Kiev upon the hills:
"This night, from eventide,
they dressed me," he said, "with a black pall
on a bedstead of yew.
They ladled out for me
blue wine mixed with bane.
From empty quivers
of pagan tulks
they rolled great pearls
onto my breast,
and caressed me.
Already the traves
lacked the master-girder
in my gold-crested tower!

All night, from eventide,
demon ravens croaked.
On the outskirts of Plesensk
there was a logging sleigh,
and it was carried to the blue sea!"
And the boyars said to the Prince:
"Already, Prince, grief has enthralled the mind;
for indeed two falcons
have flown off the golden paternal throne
in quest of the town of Tmutorokan -
or at least to drink a helmetful of the Don.
Already the falcons' winglets
have been clipped

(2983)

by the pagans' sabers,
and the birds themselves
entangled in iron meshes."

Indeed, dark it was

on the third day of battle:
two suns were murked,
both crimson pillars
were extinguished,
and with them both young moons,
Oleg and Svyatoslav,
were veiled with darkness
and sank in the sea.

"On the river Kayala
darkness has covered the light.
Over the Russian land
The Kumans have spread,
like a brood of pards,
and great turbulence
imparted to the Hin.
"Already disgrace
has come down upon glory.

Already thralldom
has crashed down upon freedom.
Already the daeva
has swooped down upon the land.
And lo! Fair Gothic maids
have burst into song
on the shore of the blue sea:
chinking Russian gold,
they sing demon times;
they lilt vengeance for Sharokan;
and already we, your Guards, hanker after mirth."

Then the great Svyatoslav
let fall a golden word
mingled with tears.
And he said:
"O my huniors, Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*) and Vsevolod!
Early did you begin
to worry with swords in the Kumzn land,
and seek personal glory;
but not honorably you triumphed
for not honorably you shed
pagan blood.
Your brave hearts are forged of hard steel
and proven in turbulence;
but what is this you have done
to my silver hoariness!

(2984)

"Nor do I see any longer
the sway of my strong,
and wealthy.
and multimilitant
brother Yaroslav -
with his Chernigov boyars,

with his Moguts, and Tatrans,
and Shelbirs, and Topchaks,
and Revugs, and Olbers;
for they without bucklers,
with knives in the legs of their boots,,
vanquish armies with war cries,
to the ringing of ancestral glory.

"But you said:
'Let us be heroes on our own,
let us by ourselves grasp the anterior glory
and by ourselves share the posterior one'
Now is it so wonderful, brothers,
For an old man to grow young?
When a falcon has moulted,
he drives birds on high:
he does not allow any harm
to befall his nest;
but here is the trouble:
princes are of no help to me."

Inside out have the times turned.
Now in Rim people scream
under Kuman sabers,
and Volodimir screams
under wounding blows.
Woe and anguish to you, Volodimir son of Gleb!

Great prince Vsevolod!
Do you not think of flying here from afar
to safeguard the paternal golden throne?
For you can with your oars
scatter in drops the Volga,
and with your helmets
scoop dry the Don.
If you were here,
a female slave would fetch
one nogata,
and a male slave,
one rezana;
for you can shoot on land live bolts -
these are the bold sons of Gleb!
You turbulent Rurik, and you David!
Were not your men's gilt helmets
afloat on blood?

(2985)

Do not your brave knights roar like bulls
wounded by tempered sabers
in the field unknown?
Set your feet, my lords,
in your stirrups of gold
to avenge the wrong of our time,
the Russian land,

and the wounds of Igor,
turbulent son of Svyatoslav.

Eight-minded Yaroslav of Galich!
You sit high on your gold-forged throne;
you have braced the Hungarian mountains
with your iron troops;
you have barred the Hungarian king's path;
you have closed the Danube's gates,
hurling weighty missiles over the lands,
spreading your courts to the Danube.
Your thunders range over lands;
you open Kiev's gates;
from the paternal golden throne
you shoot at sultans
beyond the lands.

Shoot your arrows, lord,
at Konchak, the pagan slave,
to avenge the Russian land,
and the wounds of Igor,
turbulent son of Svyatoslav!

And you, turbulent Roman, and Mstislav!
A brave thought
carries your minds to deeds.
On high you soar to deeds
In your turbulence,

like the falcon
That rides the winds
as he strives in turbulence
to overcome the bird.
For you have iron breastplates
under Latin helmets;
these have made the earth rumble.
And many nations -
Huns, Lithuanians, Yatvangers,
Dermners, and Kumans -
have dropped their spears
and bowed their heads
beneath those steel swords.

(2986)

But already, O Prince Igor,
the sunlight has dimmed,
and, not goodly, the tree sheds its foliage.
Along the Ros and the Sula
the towns have been distributed;
and Igor's brave troops
cannot be brought back to life!
The Don, Prince, calls you,

and summons the princes to victory.
The brave princes, descendants of Oleg (Old Norse: *Haelgi*),
Have hastened to fight.

(*Old Norse: Ingvar*) (*East Slavic: Igor*) and Vsevolod,
and all three sons of Mstislav,
six-winged hawks of no mean brood!
Not by victorious sorts
did you grasp your patrimonies.
Where, then, are your golden helmets,
And Polish spears, and shields?
Bar the gates of the prairie
with your sharp arrows
to avenge the Russian land
and the wounds of Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*),
turbulent son of Svyatoslav.

No longer indeed does the Sula flow
in silvery streams
for the defense of the town of Pereyaslavl;
and the Dvina, too,
flows marsh-like
for the erstwhile dreaded
townsmen of Polotsk
to the war cries of pagans.

Alone Izyaslav son of Vasilko
made his sharp swords ring
against Lithuanian helmets -
only to cut down the glory
of his grandsire Vseslav,
and himself he was cut down
by Lithuanian swords
under his vermillion shields,
and fell on the gory grass
as if with a beloved one upon a bed.

And Boyan said:
"Your Guards, Prince,
birds have hooded with their wings
and beasts have livked up their blood."
Neither your brother Bryachislav
nor your other one - Vsevolod - was there;
(2987)

thus all alone
you let your pearly soul drop
out of your brave body
through you golden gorget.
Despondent
are the voices;
drooped
has merriment;
only blare

the town trumpets.

Yaroslav, and all the descendants of Vseslav!
The time has come
to lower your banners,
to sheathe your dented swords.
For you have already departed
from the ancestral glory;
for with your feuds
you started to draw the pagans
onto the Russian land,
onto the livelihood of Vseslav.
Indeed, because of those quarrels
violence came
from the Kuman land.
In the seventh age of Troyan,
Vseslav cast lots
for the damsel he wooed.
By subterfuge,
propping himself upon mounted troops,
he vaulted toward the town of Kiev
and touched with the staff of his lance
the Kievan golden throne.

Like a fierce beast
he leapt away from them (the troops?),
at midnight,
out of Belgorod,
having enveloped himself
in a blue mist.
Then at morn,
he drove in his battle axes,
opened the gates of Novgorod,
shattered the glory of Yaroslav,
and loped like a wolf
to the Nemiga from Dudutki.
On the Nemiga the spread sheaves
are heads,
the flails that thresh
are of steel,
lives are laid out on the threshing floor,
souls are winnowed from bodies.

(2988)

Nemiga's gory banks are not sowed goodly -
sown with the bones of Russia's sons.

Vseslav the prince judged men;
as prince, he ruled towns;
but at night he prowled
in the guise of a wolf.
From Kiev, prowling, he reached,
Before the cocks crow, Tmutorokan.

The path of Great Khors,
as a wolf, prowling, he crossed.
For him in Polotsk
they rang for matins early
at Ste. Sophia the bells;
but he heard the ringing in Kiev.
Although, indeed, he had
a vatic soul in a doughty body,
he often suffered calamities.
Of him vatic Boyan
once said, with sense, in the tag:
"Neither the guileful nor the skillful,
Neither bird nor bard,
can escape God's judgement."
Alas! The Russian land shall moan
recalling her first years
and first princes!
Vladimir of yore, he,
could not be nailed to the Kievan hills.
Now some of his banners
have gone to Rurik and others to David,
but their plumes wave in counterturn.

Lances hum on Dunay.
The voice of Yaroslav's daughter is heard;
Like a cuckoo, unto the field unknown,
early she calls.
"I will fly, like a cuckoo," she says,
down the Dunay.

I will wipe the bleeding wounds
of the prince's hardy body."
Yaroslav's daughter early weeps,
in Putivl on the rampart, repeating:

"Wind, Great Wind!
Why, Lord, blow perversely?
Why carry those Hinish dartlets
on your light winglets
against my husband's warriors?
Are you not satisfied

(2989)

to blow on high, up to the clouds,
rocking the ships upon the blue sea?
Why, Lord, have you dispersed
My gladness all over the feather grass?"
Yaroslav's daughter early weeps,
in Putivl on the rampart, repeating:
"O Dniepr, famed one!
You have pierced stone hills
through the Kuman land.
You have lolled upon you
Svyatoslav's galleys

as far as Kobyaka's camp.
Loll up to me, Lord, my husband
that I may not send my tears
seaward thus early."
Yaroslav's daughter weeps,
in Putivl on the rampart, repeating:

"Bright and thrice-bright Sun!
To all you are warm and comely;
Why spread, Lord, your scorching rays
on my husband's warriors;
why in the waterless field
parch their bows
with thirst,
close their quivers
with anguish?"

The sea splashed at midnight;
waterspouts advance in mists;
God points out to Igor
the way from the Kuman land
to the Russian land
to the paternal golden throne.

The evening glow has faded:
Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*) sleeps;
Igor keeps vigil;
Igor in thoughts measures the plains
from the Great Don
to the little Donets;
bringing a horse at midnight.
Ovlur whistled beyond the river:
He bids Igor heed -
Igor is not to be held in bondage.
Ovlur called,
the earth rumbled,
the grass swished,
the Kuman tents stirred.
Meanwhile, like an ermine,
Igor has sped to the reeds,

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and settled upon the water
like a white duck.
He leaped upon the swift steed,
and sprang off it,
and ran on, like a demon wolf,
and sped to the meadowland of thr Donets,
and, like a falcon,
flew up to the mists,
killing geese
and swans,
for lunch,
and for dinner,

and for supper.

And even as Igor, like a falcon, flew,
Vlur, like a wolf, sped,
shaking off by his passage the cold dew;
for both had worn out
their swift steeds.

Says the Donets:

"Prince Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*)!

Not small is your magnification,

And Konchak's detestation,

And the Russian land's gladness."

Says Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*) says:

"O Donets!

Not small is *your* magnification:

You it was who lolled

a prince on your waves;

who carpeted for him

with green grass

your silver banks;

who clothed him

with warm mists

under the shelter of the green tree;

who had him guarded

by the golden-eye on the water,

the gulls on the currents,

the crested black ducks on the winds.

Not like that," says Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*),

"is the river Stugna:

Endowed with a meager stream,

having fed therefore

on alien rills and runnels,

she rent between bushes

a youth, prince Rostislav,

imprisoning him.

On the Dniepr's dark bank

Rostislav's mother weeps for the youth.

Pined away have the flowers with condolence,

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and the tree has been bent to the
ground with sorrow."

No chattering magpies are these:

on Igor's trail

Gzak and Konchak come riding.

Then the ravens did not caw,

the grackles were still,

the real magpies did not chatter;

only the woodpeckers, in the osiers climbing,

with taps marked for Igor the way to the river.

The nightingales

with gay songs

announce the dawn.

Says Gzak to Konchak:

"Since the falcon to his nest is flying,
let us shoot dead the falcon's son
with our gilded arrows."

Says Konchak to Gzak:

"Since the falcon to his nest is flying,
why, let us entoil the falconet
by means of a fair maiden."

And says Gzak to Konchak:

"If we entoil him
by means of a fair maiden,
neither the faconet,
nor the fair maiden,
shall we have,
while the birds will start
to beat us
in the Kuman field."

Said Boyan, song-maker
of the times of old,
of the campaigns of the kogans
Svyatoslav, Yaroslav, Oleg:
"Hard as it is for the head
to be without shoulders
bad it is for the body
to be without head,"
for the Russian land
to be without Igor.

The sun shines in the sky:
Prince Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*) is on Russian soil.
Maidens sing on the Danube;
their voices weave
across the sea
to Kiev.

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Igor rides up the Borichev slope
to the Blessed Virgin of the Tower;
countries rejoice,
cities are merry.

After singing a song
to the old princes
one must then sing to the young:

Glory to Igor son of Svyatoslav;
to Wild Bull Vsevolod;
to Vladimir son of Igor!
Hail, princes and knights
fighting for the Christians

against the pagan troops!
To the princes glory, and to the knights glory - Amen.(126)

The unknown bard or author of The Tale of Igor's Campaign was obviously neither a monk nor a priest nor a *staretz*, i.e., a holy man or mystic, but rather was a *druzhina* or knight. For this reason, George Fedotov believed that the above epic could give a different viewpoint concerning Orthodox Christianity in Kievan Rus'; who can disagree? Says George Fedotov:

"The Tale of Igor's Campaign stands unique in ancient Russian literature. It is the only work of (almost) purely secular content and of intentional artistic form (that has survived intact). It could be styled a poem and would deserve the title but for its external form which reads like rhythmic prose rather than verse. In artistic value it looms like a mountain over the flat plain of contemporary literature (that has survived). The anonymous author, living at the end of the twelfth century, was undoubtedly a poet of genius. One has to wait until the nineteenth century, until (Alexander) Pushkin, to find his equal. In western poetry the Tale can be compared to the Chanson de Roland and the Niebelungenlied; to the Russian taste it might even excel these in poetic value.

Ancient Russia, however, was severe towards her best literary creation. Although read and imitated by some authors up to the fifteenth century, Igor's Tale came down to us in only one manuscript which was unfortunately burnt during the Moscow fire of 1812. The obvious neglect of this masterpiece on the part of
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medieval readers can be explained by its (almost) purely secular - in fact, somewhat pagan - content and form. It was too much for the pious Muscovites. Whether Igor's Tale was always unique in Russian literature (the testimony of Igor's Tale itself indicates that it was not) or rather belonged to a literary species which had flourished in its time (once again, Igor's Tale, itself, as well as historical evidence and logic, testifies that such was indeed the case) but had disappeared completely from the monastic libraries, the only stores that transmitted the ancient documents, is hard to decide (hardly; to me the answer is obvious). The author himself evokes an old poetic tradition which is embodied for him in the person of Boyan, apparently at the end of the eleventh century.

Yet, after what is told of Boyan in Igor's Tale - our only source of information concerning this person (not true; Vladimir Nabokov thought otherwise, having no doubts that Boyan was a real person, and provided proofs: see The Song of Igor's Campaign, translated by Vladimir Nabokov, pp. 80-82, note 15: p. 84, note 10: pp. 87-88, note 51: p. 90, note 59: p. 92, note 70) Boyan was both a poet and singer who accompanied his songs on a musical instrument. The author of Igor's Campaign, is a writer, a literary man who combines the epic tradition of Boyan with the historic style of the Byzantine chronicles. He is well-read in the Russian chronicles as well. In this double stylistic form, in the attempt to merge the oral Russian poetic tradition with the written Greek one, the Tale of Igor's Campaign was perhaps unique. The blending of the two heterogeneous forms was carried out with amazing perfection: the reader is never shocked by, and seldom aware of, the duality of style.

The subject matter of the Tale of Igor's Campaign is an episode of the age-long struggle of the Russian princes with the Polovtsi (called *Kumans* in the Tale of Igor's Campaign), the nomads of the southern steppes. Historically exact, the narrative deals with an event of little importance and of dubious renown. Igor, the prince of a small southern town of Novgorod-Seversk, undertook this expedition with his brother Vsevolod, his son and nephew. They were defeated and taken prisoners by the foes. After some time Igor managed to flee from his capturers. This is the historical content of the Tale. The author must have belonged to the intimate circle of the *druzhina* or retinue of Prince Igor to find in this inglorious adventure matter for his grand epic. The main lyrical strain is the threnos or lament over the fallen Russian warriors and over the whole Russian land torn by the

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inroads of the nomads and feuds of her own princes. These princes are called upon to speed aid and to efface the outrage to Igor. The end resolves the tragic tension in joy and jubilation.

In analyzing the religious tenor of The Tale of Igor's Campaign one must keep in mind its stylistic form. The tale deals with the same feudal society of the contemporary chronicles, but it belongs to a quite different literary school. Stepping from the ecclesiastical air of the chronicles - not to speak of the rest of contemporary literature - into the (mainly) secular and even slightly heathen world of The Tale of Igor's Campaign is no little surprise. Without its miraculous preservation, one would have quite a different idea of the strength of the Christian and Byzantine impact upon pre-Mongolian

Russia.

With regard to the religious and moral world-outlook of The Tale of Igor's Campaign, three strata can be discerned in its artistic tissue: Christian, heathen, and purely secular. Measured by mere verbal criteria, the Christian element is the scantiest of all. There are, all in all, four sentences which give unmistakable evidence of the author's Christian faith. Even these four sentences are, all of them, but formal expressions which do not disclose any profound conviction. One is a gnomic quotation from Boyan: "Neither a clever nor a skillful one can escape the judgement of God." Speaking of Igor's escape from captivity, the author says: "God shows the way to Prince Igor." Having reached Kiev the happy prince is "riding up Borichev hill to the Holy Mother of God Pirogoshchaia," the name of a venerated icon, brought from Constantinople. The word "Christians" appears in the penultimate sentence: "hail to the princes and warriors fighting for the Christians against the pagan hosts." These are all positive expressions of the author's Christianity. Two indirect expressions can be added: the insulting denotation of the Polovtzi (or *Kumans*) as "pagan" which is used throughout, and once as "demon's sons." On the other hand, one cannot be quite sure of the religious meaning of the Russian word *pogany* (derived from the Latin *paganus*) in The Tale of Igor's Campaign. In the Russian language, this foreign word changed its original sense of "heathen" into "unclean", "impure", in the physical or physiological sense. Examining the usage of the word in The Tale of Igor's Campaign, one wonders whether one is present at the beginning of this evolution, which also occurs in Kirik's canons, a generation earlier (why do the two senses of *pogany* necessarily preclude one

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another?). In most cases this word seems to have the meaning of a simple insult, as in such phrases: "*pogany* slave," "*pogany* heads of the Polovtzi" or "thou, black raven, *pogany* Polovets." If the religious sense of *pogany* were always present in the author's mind it would be the more striking that Russian warriors were not called "Christians" except in the concluding sentence; they are designated simply by the national name: Russians or "Rusichi", that is, "Russian sons".

Not only is the Christian vocabulary scarce, but the acts, gestures, and ideas which are unavoidable in any Christian social world are also absent. Prayer is never mentioned. The Russian warriors do not pray when they are starting on their risky expedition; they do not pray before or during the fatal battle. Death is not accompanied by reflections on the destiny of departed souls. Among so many omens of natural order

there are no visions or revelations of the Christian celestial world: no angels or saints protect the Christian army going on this strange crusade.

The French medieval epic Chanson de Roland also contains very few Christian elements. Yet external signs and symbols abound; the author rejoices in opposing "the law of Christ" to "the law of Muhammad" as being at stake in the sacred war. Everyone remembers the scene of the hero's death when the Archangel Michael descends in person from heaven to receive the soul of Roland. The dying warriors of Igor are laid in the bosom of mourning nature, facing their merciless fate alone.

The distance between Christian providence and pagan fate is not always clearcut. Many Christians in our day believe in blind destiny. A newly converted heathen could easily cover his inveterate belief in fate with the name of God. The above quotation from Boyan is too fragmentary to discern with what connotations the poet used the phrase "the judgement of God." But it must be noticed that the Russian word for judgement - *sud* has precisely this double meaning: judgement and destiny. The modern Russian word for destiny is *sud'ba*, *suzhdeno* it is destined, *suzheny* is predestined husband. Yet, on the other hand, *sudy Bozhy*, God's judgements, is the translation of the Biblical "God's counsels."

Not much can be elicited from the author's applying the same word *sud* to the battle or to death on the battlefield. "Glory brought Boris Viacheslavich to judgement," (or to his destiny). We have seen that in the Russian *Chronicles* princes often go into battle to determine the judgement of God. In some Christian
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Slavonic documents, such as The Life of Saint Constantine-Cyril, *sud* is a simple synonym for death. But when the name of God is sometimes omitted the word *sud* sounds ambiguous, especially in The Tale of Igor's Campaign. It can be a simple linguistic rudiment or it can imply some religious idea - Christian or pagan.

Later we shall come back to the Christian ingredients of The Tale of Igor's Campaign in order to investigate Christian traces in the ethical ideas and sensibility of its author. Now it can be stated fairly that its apparent Christian content is very poor.

Incomparably richer is its heathen counterpart, the interpretation of which, however, presents many difficulties. The general skepticism of modern scholars towards the problems of Slavic mythology was reflected in their appraisal of the heathen world of Tale of Igor's Campaign as a simple poetic convention. A distinguished student compared the paganism of the Tale to the mythological names in the classic poetry of the eighteenth century. The exaggeration in this view is

obvious. The medieval poet lived in a time when Christianity in Russia had to wage a serious struggle with the survivals of paganism; when, after the acknowledgement of ecclesiastical preachersm the folk were still devoted to the "double faith" This historical situation, on the borderline between the two religious worlds, requires the most accurate investigation of the poet's religious background.

The pagan elements of the Tale of Igor's Campaign can be found in the names of the great gods of the Russian (or Slavic) Olympus, in a number of minor entities of personifications and in the poet's general attitude to nature and life.

Among the great pagan gods known from other sources, the poet names four [all of whom, as we have seen, are ultimately of Iranian origin], three of them in an indirect way, as the ancestors or masters of men and elements. The formula is always the same: the grandsons of Stribog, the grandsons of Dazhbog, the grandson of Veles. The poet likes to designate the rrelation of descent by employing the expression "grandson" rather than son. Stribog's grandsons are the winds; Veles' grandson is Boyan, the poet, - on what particular ground we do not know. Veles (or Volos), together with Perun, is one of the greatest of the Russian gods; very often he appears as god of cattle and of riches; here he is a patron of the poet, a "magic" poet. Perhaps for a wizard the protection of a pagan god, or the descent from him, is not unfitting.

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We do not know who are the grandsons of Dazhbog, the sun god; the context permits conceiving of them as Russian princes, or Russian folk in general, or even the whole of mankind. The poet says that during princely feuds "the life (or wealth) of Dazhbog's grandson was being ruined." The fourth god Khors, who is also a solar god, probably of Iranian origin, is named directly but obviously as the synonym of the sun itself. The princely Vseslav "raced, as a wolf, across the way of great Khors." The word "great" reminds us again that the divine meaning of Khors is not forgotten: he is more than the luminary itself. In what spirit, with which emotional strain are these names used by the Christian author?

As a poet, the disciple of Boyan, he was the inheritor of a poetic tradition going back to pagan times. This tradition probably transmitted the names of gods who once were full of life and glamour and who, certainly, were dimmed by the victory of the new faith. But even for the official spokesmen of Christianity the ancient gods did not turn into nonentities. Unlike modern theologians, the ancient Church did not deny the

existence of gods. The medieval theology considered them either as demons or as deified men. The second theory, that of Euhemerism, was very popular in Russia. Thus, one finds in the Ipatian *Chronicle* (1114) which resembles the Greek chronicle of Malalas, the history of Egyptian kings who became gods. The king Feost "was called the god Svarog. ... After him reigned his son, by the name of Sun, who is called Dazhbog. ..." It is noteworthy that the chronicler gives to Egyptian king-gods Slavic names. Like the author of these lines, the poet of Igor could believe in the historical existence of the gods. But, whereas for the Christian preachers their names were an abomination, he treated them with the veneration of a son or grandson. Perhaps he had no theological theory at all about the gods: whether they were demons (or spirits, i.e., "elemental spirits") of nature, such as the Sun or Wind, or human ancestors. Christian theological ideas among the Russian folk were very confused, even in the nineteenth century. Essential is the fact that these names conveyed to him great and magical associations. He used them as symbols; but as realistic symbols, necessary for his mythical world-outlook.

His *Weltanschauung* is indeed mythical. It is very interesting for a scholar of religion to observe in him a living process of mythical creation. Most of the great poets have mythical elements in their world-outlook; but in primitive poetry it is quite impossible to draw the line between religious mythology and the
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creation of poetic fictions. The poet of *Igor* is no primitive, but he stands near the primitive world of paganism. He blends popular mythological tradition with his own more or less pantheistic(?) symbolism. There is hardly one abstract idea which could not be turned by him into a living being or living symbol. Such is, for instance, *Obida*, Outrage, one of his favorite symbols, and a symbol necessary for a mourner, for a poet of woe. According to the recent discovery by Professor Jacobson the image of Outrage was borrowed by the Russian poet from a translation of a Greek work by Methodius of Patra (Outrage, *bida*, *adixia*). Outrage to him is a maiden, "Outrage arose among the hosts of the Dazhbog's grandson, stepped as a maiden on the Trojan land near (the) Don, and splashing with her swan wings in the blue sea, she chased away the happy times." But Russian folklore always knew Woe (*Gore*) as a being who pursued an accursed man, sitting on his neck, accompanying him to the grave. Fever, or rather Fevers, were, to a Russian, demonic females of whom he tried to rid himself by the aid of magic spells and incantations.

The maiden Outrage does not stand alone in the poem. Together with her, one finds personified Woe, Lie

(*Lozh*), and two female beings *Karna* and *Zhlia* who, according to the probable meaning of their names, must be interpreted as incarnate Lamentation and Mourning: "Karna shouted and Zhlia rushed over the Russian land shooting forth fire from a flaming horn."

Among these demonic entities who originated as personifications of fate and destiny there is one being of quite a different origin and unclear significance. It is *Div*, whose nature has not yet been fully explained. "*Div* is crying at the top of a tree," forboding the misfortune. The same *Div* rushes to the land when the catastrophe is fulfilled. Most of the commentators take him for a demonic bird-like being, of Slavic or Iranian mythology, who is ominous, evil-bearing, and, consequently, close to the symbolic Woe and Outrage.

All these divine or demonic beings are represented as dwelling and acting within a nature setting which is more than scenery for their action. In fact, nature is living and animated through and through. It can be said without exaggeration that nature and its phenomena occupy in The Tale of Igor's Campaign at least as important a place as human society. Nature, of course, is not quite independent from the latter: it embraces human life with love but also challenges it with threats; it sends its warnings; it shares human woe and joy. That the

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narrative of Igor's expedition is opened by the eclipse of the sun - an evil omen - has nothing peculiar about it. The Russian Chronicles, not unlike those of the western Middle Ages, are full of astronomical events to be interpreted in the same providential sense. But in The Tale of Igor's Campaign nature is not the organ of God's revelation. It is a living essence by itself. When Igor leads his warriors to the fatal campaign, "the sun with darkness barred his way, the night groaned with the thunderstorm ... the whining of the wild beasts arose.

Div cries at the top of the tree: he bids the unknown land hearken." Foreboding the bloody battle, "the wolves conjure the storm from the ravines; the eagles, with their shrieking, call the beasts to a feast of bones; the foxes yelp at the red shields." After the Russian defeat - "the grass drooped in pity, and in grief the tree bowed low to earth."

In conformity with the general tragic character of the Tale, nature reveals itself chiefly in the quality of mourner. Yet it can rejoice as well, in sympathy with human happiness. At Igor's escape from captivity "the woodpeckers show him the way to the river with their tapping, the nightingales herald the dawn with their merry songs." Nature is not only the witness of

human destinies. It can be either a mighty helpmate or the enemy of man. During Igor's flight, the Donets river "caressed the prince on its waves, spread out green grass for him by its silvery banks, clothed him with warm mists beneath the shade of the green trees." Igor himself gives thanks to the Donets, his savior, in a poetic dialogue with the river. But the river can be malicious and evil, like the Stugna whose bad temper is mentioned in contrast with the mild Donets. "Quite another was the Stugna river; it has an evil current, it had swallowed strange brooks and scattered the barges among the bushes. It had closed the Dnieper to the youth, Prince Rostislav [who was drowned in (the) Stugna in 1093]."

Igor enters into conversation with a river. His wife, Iaroslav's daughter, on the walls of the town Putivl', in lament over her captured husband addresses the Wind, the Dnieper River, and the Sun with complaints and incantations which read like heathen prayers. It is worth noticing that the elements are addressed with the title "lord", which suggests not so much sympathetic intimacy with nature as awe and reverence towards it.

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**O Wind, mighty Wind! Why dost thou blow
so violently, O Lord? Why dost thou hurl the
Huns' arrows with they light wings against
my
beloved's warriors? Whay hast thou, O Lord,
scattered my joy over the feather grass? ...
O Dnieper Slovtich [son of the Glorious]!
... bear fondly my beloved one to me, O
Lord, that I should not send him my tears
toward the sea at the dawn. O bright and
thrice-bright Sun! Thou art warm and
beauteous towards all. Why didst thou, O
Lord, spread they burning rays upon my
beloved's warriors?**

Thus far we have seen in The Tale of Igor's Campaign nature personified or acting. But the instances are countless where nature gives substance to similes and poetical figures. Prince Vsevolod's constant surname is "aurochs" (wild oxen). Warriors are compared with wolves, princes with hawks, musician's fingers on the strings with ten hawks loosed upon a flock of swans. In the human and even in the political world the poet does not abandon the world of nature. He lives by its recollections, images, by its inspiring spirit. There is probably no other poem or work of art belonging to

the European sphere of culture in which the unity with nature is so complete and so religiously significant.

Most of the Russian literary historians envisaged the world of The Tale of Igor's Campaign as a purely poetic fiction. A strong pantheistic(???) feeling permeates modern Russian poetry both literary and oral, cultivated and popular. Reared in this poetic tradition, Russians pay no attention to it nor question its roots. In the oral poetry of Russian peasants, arctic pantheism(?) lives hand in hand with the remnants of ancient paganism. The literary Russian poetry of the nineteenth century was strongly influenced by the art of the people, though often ignoring its pagan sources. In the twelfth century, when sacrifices to the gods were still offered in the countryside, the impact of the imaginative and emotional pagan world upon popular art must have been immensely stronger than nowadays.

We certainly do not think that the poet of Igor's Tale, still less Igor himself and his wife, worshipped ancient gods. They were good Christians in their conscious minds. But, the poet, at least, in the subconscious depths of his soul where he communicated with the soul of the people, lived in another, hardly Christian world. It is true that most of his images of nature are purely poetical. But in speaking of nature

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he cannot help feeling it as a living being, and his imagination immediately enters upon mythological creation. In this natural-supernatural world the names of ancient gods, preserved probably by the poetic tradition, find the place which is refused at that early stage of Russian poetry to the saints and spirits of the Christian heaven. The poet feels that the name of the Archangel St. Michael or Saint George would spoil the poetic form which requires the names of Veles and Dazhbog. This is the function of the paganism prevailing in Igor's tale.

If we do not know how far Igor's poet shared the pagan beliefs and superstitions of the Russian folk we can be certain, at least, of his belief in magic. Moreover, magic is treated by him without any repulsion

and even with a certain reverence. Several times he calls Boyan, his master poet, *veshchy*. The word which in later Russian has acquired the meaning "wise" with the nuance of "clairvoyant" and "prophetic", has, in ancient documents, only the sense of "wizard". *Veshchy* is applied by the poet to the ancient Prince Vseslav of Polotsk, of whom it is told: "Vseslav judged the people, distributed towns to princes, but, by night he raced as a wolf: from Kiev he reached Tmutorakan before the rooster [the dawn], racing, as a wolf,

across the way of great Khors [the sun]." In the Vseslav the werewolf, rationalist critics wished again to see a simple metaphor. But of this ancient prince who had died about a hundred years before the Tale was written, a monastic chronicler, his contemporary, related that his mother conceived him by enchantment. (1044) The same belief existed in Bulgaria concerning one of the princes of the tenth century. Hardly any one in the Middle Ages could doubt the existence of werewolves. Remarkable in our poet is the great esteem with which he treats one of them, Prince Vseslav.

If nature in The Tale of Igor's Campaign is saturated with pagan elements which can hardly find their parallels in the Russian Chronicles, in the attitude to society, in social or political ethics, the Tale and the Chronicles come nearer to each other without reaching, however, a full identity. The main difference consists in a complete secularization of the poet's social ethics. It is purely laic, or neutral, neither Christian nor pagan, at first glance, whatever may be the secret sources nourishing it from the two religious worlds. Let us consider first of all its face value, without heeding its religious significance.

Studying the moral world of the chronicler we observed the continual struggle between the two
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outlooks: that of the clerical author and interpreter and that of the feudal society he portrays. We saw how the second scale of values made its intrusion through the pious surface of the narrative, the more frankly, the further one goes down through the twelfth century. The same feudal world speaks in Igor's Tale but here it speaks by itself without any censorious interpreter. It is purified so to speak, or devoid of any obvious Christian impacts in language and symbols which are to be supposed as obligatory and inevitable to every member of Christian society, however worldly or impious he might be. The absence of Christian elements may have partly the same stylistic motivation as the presence of pagan mythology in the landscape.

Three main social ethical streams flow through Igor's Tale - the same which can be distinguished in the lay sections of the Chronicles as well: the ethics of clan or charity of blood; the ethics of class, or feudal and military virtues; and the ethics of mother country or patriotism of the Russian land. Clan or family consciousness in Igor's Tale is perhaps not stronger than in the Chronicles, but it is strong enough and finds eloquent emotional forms for its expression. Prince Vsevolod addresses his brother as they start on the campaign: "My only brother, my only

bright light, Igor! We are both Sviatoslavichi (Sviatoslav's sons)." The patronymic names are used by the poet very often instead of first names: Iaroslavna, Glebovna - speaking of women, or "the brave sons of Gleb."

Price Igor and his brother, the unfortunate heroes of the Tale, belonged to the great Chernigov line of the Russian princely dynasty, descending from the famous Oleg Sviatoslavich who died in 1116. The poet is conscious of the common destiny and the common honor of this clan: "In the field Oleg's valiant brood is slumbering: afar has it flown. It was not born to stand an insult," says he of the Russian camp in the steppe. He dedicates some touching lines to the memory of Oleg, the unfortunate but glorious ancestor. We have seen also how the clan feeling of the poet induced him to use patronymic names even for the elements of nature: winds as grandsons of Stribog, Dnieper-Slovurich; Russian princes are grandsons of Dazhbog or, otherwise, Rusichi, the favorite patronymic commonly used by the poet and coined, perhaps, by himself.

This clan ethics is linked with and overshadowed by the feudal or military ethics - the elements of which we also have noted in the Chronicles. Here all the facets of the warlike virtues are glorified without any restraint: courage, bravery, boldness. In the style

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of the historic tales (and the Chronicles) the poet begins his praise of Igor:

"He strengthened his mind and sharpened his heart with manliness; and, filling himself with warlike spirit led his brave host to the land of the Polovtsi (or Kumans)."

This is still a reasonable courage, the dutiful way of a Christian prince.

"Igor said to his *druzhina*: Brothers and *druzhina*! It is better to be slain than to be captured."

This can also be paralleled in the Chronicles, but, significantly. In the tenth century records of the great pagan warrior Sviatoslav. Even an imprudent, impassioned boldness, beyond reason of war, is glorified. Such was, indeed, the whole campaign of Igor, which is justified in these words by the prince: "I wish to shatter a spear on the farthest borders of

the Polovetsian land. With you, o Rusichi, I wish to lay down my head, or to drink of the Don in my helmet."

The heroic fight of Vsesolod in the last desperate battle is described with the features reminiscent of the popular Russina epics *byliny*, known only through the records of modern times:

O fierce aurochs Vsesvolod, thou standest in the battle, dartest thy arrows on the hosts, crashest with steel swords on their helmets. Wherever thou, aurochs, didst leap, gleaming forward with thye golden helmet, there lie the heads of the heathen Polovtsi, and their Avar helmets are split by tempered saber, by thee, fierce aurochs Vsevolod.

Nowhere in Russian literature, written or oral, can be found such a pitch of warlike intensity, such superhuman or subhuman fierceness as in this portrayal of Vesevolod's warriors, the men of Kursk:

My men of Kursk are skillful fighters, nursed amid trumpets, rocked in helmets, fed at the spear-blades; well-known to them are the paths; familiar the ravines; their bows are strung; their quivers open; and their sabers whetted. Like gray wolves in the
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field, they gallop seeking honor for themselves and glory for their prince.

This last motive of "honor" and "glory" reveals the other side of the same feudal ideal. Glory for real greatness, particularly after death, and honor on a lesser scale, constitute a moral good, the fruit and privilege of the military virtue, valor. Glory is gien not by success or political might, but by intrepid conduct. That is why the poem ends with a "glory song" to Igor and his kinemen, although from the political point of view their campaign was a failure and defeat. In the same spirit the poet glorifies the ancestor of the Olgovichi house to whom he himself gives the name Gorislavich, a compound of *Gore*, woe, and *slava*, glory. He glorifies also the ancient Vseslav - the "wizard" from "whose glory fell away" his weak descendants. Both Oleg and Vseslav left a sad memory after them in the annals of Russia which were well known to our poet. They were the chief "forgers of feuds", the heroes of civil wars. If they remained for the poet or Igor the pattern of glory, as Oleg was for Boyan, it was only

because of their personal valor, of the adventurous spirit which is common to Igor together with the whole of Oleg's house.

What is glory to princes honor is to the druzhina, their retainer-warriors. The refrain, already quoted, "seeking honor for themselves and glory for the prince," is repeated twice in the battle scenes. The idea of "honor", in the sense of personal value based on warlike virtues, is very important for the historical appreciation of ancient Russian culture. It was extremely strong in the medieval feudal West. It undoubtedly lies at the base of aristocratic freedom - and, consequently, of modern democracy(???). On the other hand, the opinion was often maintained that it was alien to Russian national character and to Orthodox Christianity as a whole. Indeed, one looks in vain for its premises in Byzantine social ethics nor does one find it in the later Muscovite society where "honor" was understood as social dignity determined by state rank. In the un-Christian East, however, in the world of Islam and Japan, the consciousness of personal honor is also strong, though lacking the same religious support against the State which the medieval Catholic Church gave to the individual [Note: the consciousness of personal honor was also strong among the pre-Christian Celts, as we have seen in previous chapters.]

The truth is that the concept of personal military honor has little, if anything, to do with the specific

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character of Teutonic nations (though a great deal to do with the specific character of Celtic nations) and can be found in every society in which military service is based on feudal or feudal-like organization. Ancient or Kievan Russia was such a feudal society and developed the corresponding idea of military honor - perhaps, not without Varangian (Viking) influence. On the pages of the Chronicles we had found the idea still veiled and only sporadically breaking through the Byzantine ideal of a humble Orthodox warrior. In Igor's Tale it reaches its free and eloquent expression.

The third source of social ethics for the poet of Igor is his strong patriotism which embraces not any one of the Russian principalities, but the whole of the Russian land. This pan-Russian consciousness, as we had seen, was in its decline at the end of the twelfth century and few traces of it can be found in the contemporary Chronicles. In Igor's Tale it is as

vital
as in the eleventh century; its poet is, in fact, a true inheritor of Boyan's age. There is no phrase repeated as frequently in the Tale as "the Russian land". This expression is taken not in the narrow sense of Kiev and its surrounding lands as it usually was at that time, but in the large sense of all the principalities and countries inhabited by the Russian people. Igor's foray, in itself a very insignificant episode of frontier fighting, is treated as a national tragedy. Igor marches on for the "Russian land", he fights for the "Russian land". His defeat produced a national mourning. The poet goes so far as to complete the sentence of Boyan: "It is heavy upon the, O head, without the shoulders; evil is it to thee, Body, without the Head", by the daring conclusion: "the Russian land without Igor". It looks as if, for him, Igor was the real head or leader of all Russia.

That the "Russian land" is not only a hyperbole serving to enhance Igor's glory appears from the general political outlook of the poet. Spokesman of the poet's political ideals is Prince Sviatoslav of Kiev, the head of the Olgovichi house. In a grand and poignant call to all princes of Russia, Sviatoslav urges them to intervene for the Russian land, "for the wounds of Igor, fierce Sviatoslavich." Smolensk and Polotsk, Galich and Suzdal, the remotest border lands of Russia, are included in this impassioned call. In the panegyric enumeration of Russian princes the poet

makes no discrimination between the branches of the Rurik house. The Monomachovichi, the traditional enemies of the Olgovichi, even take predominant place because of the political importance of their seats. On the contrary, one of the strongest representatives of

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the Olgovichi clan, Iaroslav of Chernigov, is rebuked for his dishonorable conduct: he abstained from all common expeditions against the Polovtsi.

Here the national consciousness of the poet crosses that of his clan. But it crosses also his feudal ethics on unbounded honor. The poet, as patriot, could not help seeing the fatal effects of princely feuds and he condemns them in a most unambiguous way:

Brother spoke to brother: "This is mine and that also is mine." And the princes began to say of a paltry thing "this is great"; and amongst themselves to forge feuds; and the heathen from all sides advanced with victories against the Russian land.

Here is avarice rather than pride, the political original sin, a view which is not incompatible with feudal ethics. But "this is great" points to the exaggerated sensitivity of personal honor. The poet fully acknowledges the national reverse resulting from the search for glory while speaking of his great hero, the ancient Oleg [Old Norse: *Haelgi*]:

**That Oleg forged feuds with his swords
and sowed arrows over the earth. ... Then,
in the time of Oleg Gorislavich, feuds were
sown and grew apace; the fortune of
Dazhbog's grandson was wasted in the
factions of the
princes, and the life of men was shortened.**

This political condemnation of Oleg does not diminish the poet's admiration for his "glory" and bravery. The same dualism of appreciation is found even for the person of Igor. Speaking for himself, the poet dare not utter any word of blame for the adventurous and inconsiderate foray which ended with calamity for the "Russian land". But the political lesson is put into the mouth of Sviatoslav of Kiev who, amidst tears and lamentations, sends the words of rebuke to his captured cousins:

**O my nephews, Igor and Vseslod! Too
early have ye begun to harass the land of
the polovtsi with your swords! But
ingloriously were you defeated, ingloriously
have you shed
the blood of the heathen. Your brave hearts
are forged of cruel steel and tempered in
fierceness. What have you wrought to my
silvered hair!**

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One is here in the presence of an ethical conflict which the poet does not resolve. His heart is equally responsive to the call of "glory" and to the call of suffering Russia. He is obviously not in sympathy with domestic feuds. He prefers to see his admired military valor exercised in the war against the common foes of Russia, the heathen. In this he stands on common ground with the best traditions of the Chronicles.

At this point it would be interesting to compare with the poet's praise of Igor, the appreciations of this prince and his foray by the contemporary chroniclers. There are narratives preserved in the Lavrentian and Ipatian Chronicles. They give very divergent opinions about Prince Igor. The Lavrentian

Chronicle (1186), which is that of the city of Vladimir, reflects the political tendencies of the northern branch of the Monomach's house, the view of Igor's adversaries. This view is very severe. The chronicler stigmatizes the adventurous spirit and the inconsiderate boldness which cost Igor and his army inglorious defeat. The tone is sometimes ironical:

At the same year Oleg's grandsons decided to go against the Polovtsi, because they did not go in the past year with all the princes, but they went by themselves, saying: Are we not also princes? Let us win praise for ourselves.

After the first easy victory their elation grew immensely. Three days were spent in amusements and boastings:

Our brothers went with the great Prince Sviatoslav and fought the Polovtsi under the cover of Pereiaslavl (a fortress). ... They did not dare to go into their land; and we are in their land, we have beaten them and hold captive their wives and children; and now let us go against them, beyond the Don and beat them up to the end; if we have victory there, we shall go to the shore of the sea where not even our grandfathers had gone and we shall take our final glory and honor -

"... not knowing God's providence," adds the author. The conduct of the Russian warriors in the second battle is far from brave:

Our men, having seen them (the Polovtsi), were frightened and fell down from

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their pride, not knowing what was said by the prophet: there is no wisdom for man, no courage, no thought against the Lord. ... And our men were defeated through the wrath of God.

The lamentations of the author over the misfortune of the Russian army are mixed with pious reflections on God's chastising providence. Igor's escape is naturally scored with satisfaction and interpreted as the sign of divine pardon.

"And after a few days prince Igor fled from the Polovtsi: for God does not leave the just one in the hands of the sinners."

The qualification of Igor as a "just one" is rather unexpected, but it can be understood with regard to his Christian faith as opposed to the heathen; besides, it is a Biblical quotation.

The Ipatian Chronicle, that of Kiev, is more than friendly to Igor and gives the story of his misfortune with much detail and in an elaborate religious frame. It is very likely that this part of the Ipatian Chronicle includes the annals written in the house of Prince Igor himself. Igor is represented as a wise, pious prince who is purified by his distress and achieves a high level of Christian humility.

His (Prince Igor's) reflection on the ominous significance of the eclipse of the sun is quite different from his proud challenge to the omen (obviously, Slavs, like Celts, are great believers in omens) which occurs in the Tale. He says in the Chronicle:

"Brothers and družina! Nobody knows the mysteries of God. God is the creator of this portent as well as of His whole world; what good or evil God will do for us we shall see."

When the scouts warn him of the dangerous readiness of the enemy, he answers:

"If we return without fighting then our disgrace will be worse than death; be it as God wills."

The thought of honor is present, but mitigated by resignation and confidence in God. These are his

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reflections after the first victory:

"Thus hath God by His might given us victory Over our foes, and honor and glory to us."

The second, unhappy battle is described in much more detail than in the Tale; we learn that Igor himself was wounded. One feature reminds us vividly of the epic: the love linking Igor with his brother Vsevolod in the moment of deadly danger:

"Igor, captured, saw his brother Vsevolod

fighting stoutly; and prayed for th death of his soul that he might not see the fall of his brother."

The capture of Igor is accompanied by a page-long monologue of the prince in which he assigns his misfortune to a just punishment of God and offers repentance for his sins. One of his sins particularly weighs on his conscience: the cruel sack of a Russian town:

I recollect my sins before the Lord, my God, that I have wrought much killing and blood shedding in the Christain land; I showed no mercy to the Christian folk and took by storm the town Glebov near Pereiaslavl. No little evil then befell the innocent Christians; fathers were parted from their offspring, brother from brother, friend from friend, wives from their husbands - old men were swept aside and youth received wounds cruel and ruthless; grown men were hewn down and mutilated and the women raped - and all this have I done; I am unworthy to live, and now I see the vengeance of the Lord my God. ...

The particular episode of the sack of Glebov points to Igor himself as the source of the recollection, although the general pious development must be ascribed to the chronicler.

The same repentant spirit does not leave Igor in his captivity. He repeats:

"I have justly, according to my deserts, received defeat at Thy command, O Lord, and it was not the bravery of the heathen that broke the strength of Thy servants."

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At the same time, Igor is far from depressed. The sense of honor, even in exaggerated sensitiveness, did not abandon him. It found its drastic proof in the circumstances of his escape. At first, Igor was opposed to the scheme of the flight offered to him by the Polovets (singular of *Polovtsi*) LAVOR (*Ovlur* in the *Tale*). He "was keeping the high spirit of his youth" in these generous considerations:

"For the sake of glory I did not run away from my *druzhina* [in the battle] and now I myself will not depart ingloriously."

His boyars, who shared his captivity, did not approve of his pride:

"You cherish a haughty spirit within you, and one displeasing to God."

The insistence of his counselors and the imminent danger of death finally overcame his scruples of honor or pride.

Both the chronicles note the motive of honor in Igor's conduct, but they deal with it in quite different ways. The Lavrentian (Chronicle) has no sympathy with his motive, ridicules it, and sees in it the reason of the catastrophe. The Ipatian (Chronicle) tries to mitigate and merge it into the general strain of a deep piety which transfigures the character of Igor into that of a saintly Christian hero.

The poet of Igor's Tale has no words of blame for his prince; he himself is highly enthusiastic about honor and glory. He needs no religious mitigation for, nor lilitation of it. He only dares, through the lips of Sviatoslav, to point at the fatal consequences of Igor's bold imprudence for the Russian land.

Coming back to the poet's warlike ardor one finds another restraint for its display - and this not of a social, but rather of an emotional, nature. The poet manifests such a degree of kindness, sensitivity, and delicacy that it is positively incompatible with joy in killing. He likes the audacity, the impetus, even the intoxication of a fight **[in other words, he was what we would today call an adrenaline junkie, something which I understand very well because it is a tendency which I have to repress in myself]**. But he obviously dislikes the act of killing, of bloodshedding. This can easily be seen in his treatment of combat. The fatal battle at the Kaiala river is the main subject of his epic. It forms the first, the longest part of it. But the battle itself is depicted rather indirectly. At first a series
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of omens, presentiments, forebodings. After follows the mourning, the picture of the fatal consequences of the defeat. Concerning the fighting itself, a few lines suffice. The first act, successful for the Russians, is told in one simple sentence:

"From dawn on Friday they trampled the heathen hosts of the Polovtsi."

The second, with tragic issue, is embodied in the exploits of Vsevolod - already quoted:

"There the heathen heads heads of the Polovtsi lie, their Avar helmets are split by

tempered sabres."

To this may be added the third passage depicting the general horror of the combat:

"Tempered arrows fly, sabres thunder upon the helmets, lances crack in the foreign field. ... The black earth beneath the hooves was sown with bones, and was watered with blood; and it came up a harvest of sorrow upon the Russian land."

Indeed, there is very little about the fury of the battle which is the climax, or the first climax, of the poem. The joy of killing, the sensual delight in running blood is common to primitive epics in most national literatures. But nothing can be found in Igor's Tale recalling the familiar image of the Iliad (xx, v. 482-483) or these verses of the Chanson de Roland:

*La bataille est merveilluse et hastive,
Franceis I ferent par vigur e par ire,
Trenchant cez points, cez costez, cez eschines,
Cez vestementz entresque as chars vives,
Sur l'herbe verte li cler sancs s'en afilet.*
(v. 1610-1614)

The mildness and gentleness of the Russian poet can be tested by still other criteria. The whole composition with its tragic tension and joyful solution seems to require, after the hell of a dark defeat, the compensation of revenge or, at least, the final victory. But the poet - and the reader as well - is satisfied with the escape, the flight. From the point of view of strict feudal honor, that is not compensation. Without revenge the hero would feel dishonored. But for some reason the idea of revenge
(3013)

does not come into the reader's mind. It was Igor, not the Polovtsi, who began the fighting, in the frame of the epic, and Igor himself caused his misfortune. The Polovtsi committed no cruel deeds and one of the heathen helps the prince in his escape. From the lips of the pursuing khans we are informed of the plan to marry young Vladimir, Igor's son, to a Polovtsian princess. So, the Polovtsi may not be so bad, after all. The poet seems to have pardoned them from the joy of seeing his prince free again.

It is remarkable that in the Tale even the word "revenge" is used only once, and that in speaking on behalf of the enemies:

"The fair maidens of the (Crimean) Goths

cherish vengeance for Sharokan" (one of the Polovtsian khans).

In analyzing the chronicles we have seen that, through the best times of Russian historiography, the word "revenge" was used in speaking of pagan times and heroes. Only since the middle of the twelfth century does it become fitting for a Christian prince. The poet of Igor had a milder temper than many an ecclesiastical writer among his contemporaries.

With this tenderness of heart is linked the particular attention paid by the poet to women. He is certainly not a poet of love, least of all of romantic or chivalrous love. Though he likes the epithet "fair" applied to the maidens, even to those of enemy nations: "fair maidens of the Polovtsi", "fair maidens of the (Crimean) Goths". He likes the words designating different nuances of love and friendship: *lado*, *khot'*, (lover, beloved. Espoused, friend, and so on) but he uses them mostly in metaphors. "The beloved maiden" of Vseslav in his ambitious dream: the principedom of Kiev. But where the poet really appreciates women is in the beauty of her suffering. If the whole Tale of Igor is a poignant lament its best organ is the voice of woman. A the Russian women share in the lament over Igor and his warriors:

"Now we can no longer imagine our dearests in our thoughts, nor see them with our eyes, nor play with gold or silver."

The climax of the Tale - the second one - is the lament of Iaroslavna, Igor's wife. Poetically it has always been considered the best part of the epic. We are acquainted already with her impressive incantations addressed to the elements of nature: Wind, Dniepr
(3014)

River, and Sun. Is it mere chance that, immediately upon the half-magical incantations of Iaroslavna, the poet shows prince Igor in the midst of flight? It is as if the incantations of the woman wrought their effect upon the elements, which return to the princess her deplored husband. Indeed, the next part - the flight - begins with the stir of elements:

"The sea spurted at midnight; waterspouts move in mists. God shows the road to Prince Igor from the land of the Polovtsi. "

By this artistic effect the poet gave the woman - side by side with old Sviatoslav - a predominant place in his Tale. She is, or can be, the savior. Sviatoslav tried to save Igor with political speeches. His call sounded in

vain. Yaroslavna - with cries from her heart and with the power which a passionate desire gives over the elements - succeeded.

Mildness and tenderness of heart, limiting warlike ardor, do not yet exhaust the sensibility of Igor's poet. There is in him a trait which perhaps gives a key to the deepest strata of the Russian soul. It is linked with the general tragic tone of the poem; yet it needs a closer examination.

Tragic is almost every great epic of any historical nation: the Iliad, the Chanson de Roland, the Nibelungenlied. It is not irrelevant that the great epic poets, representing the deepest poetic tradition of a primitive nation, choose for their song of glory some tragic event: a defeat, the ruin of a realm, the death of a young hero. A general law of moral life as well as of artistic creation reveals that the greatest in man is awakened not by happy life but by heroic death (every Shi'a should understand this very well). Igor's Tale is not an exception. Yet in it there are some particular traits which are uniquely Russian. First, one can easily notice that the accumulation of tragic impressions is not sufficiently motivated by the subject. Igor's Tale is a drama with a happy ending. Thus, the richness of ominous spells is somewhat gratuitous. Secondly, the tragic effect is achieved not by the death of a struggling and doomed hero (the idea of Achilles, Roland, Siegfried [and also King Arthur, Tristan, Cuchulainn, Sohrab and Siyavush]) but by suffering and humiliation: in Igor, the suffering and humiliated being is the Russian land itself, oppressed by the Polovtzi.

Especially striking and unexpected is the return of the tragic theme before the happy end. Prince Igor is riding to his homeland; escaping from captivity, he
(3015)

praises the Donets River for his salvation; and just at this moment, by a strange association the poet remembers another evil river, the Stugna, which drowned in its waves the young prince Rostislav. This event has nothing to do with Igor. It took place about a hundred years before. But the poet dedicates the whole stanza to this irrelevant association. He introduces - a favorite device of his - a lamenting woman, the prince's mother, and lets all nature participate in the mourning:

**"the flowers drooped for pity and the trees
bowed low to earth in grief."**

The poet repeats one of his best refrains, used previously for Igor's defeat, in this passage where it is out of place from the point of view of composition. The poet simply could not help pouring some drops of

sorrow into the final cup of triumph. Both the absence of final revenge or its promise, and the insertion of the superfluous theme of mourning are highly revealing. The evaluation of suffering as a superior moral good, as almost an end in itself, is one of the most precious features of the Russian religious mind. Here, it is found, in an aesthetic transposition, with a bard of military valor and honor in whom one would least of all expect to find it: the poet who abhors Christian symbols and Christian vocabulary.

This discovery forces us to return to the question of religious elements in Igor's Tale, which so far we have gauged, at least for the Christian elements, by merely external expressions. If it was legitimate to trace the influence of (Slavic or Indo-European) paganism in the poet's sense of nature it is only fair to ask for the Christian influence in the general ethical attitude. The question is easier to pose than solve. In this domain one is guided by intuition rather than factual data.

As a rule, all deeper ethical or social norms and attitudes, even (those) merely secular in appearance, have some religious origin and are supported by religious beliefs or their survivals (as Richard Weaver said: "Ideas have consequences"). It is possible, then to suppose behind Russian clan ethics, with its strong and tender feeling of blood-kinship, the pagan roots, or pagan sanctification of primitive tribal institutions. In Christian times they were reinterpreted in terms of evangelical charity and remained forever one of the main bases of Russian social ethics. It is also legitimate to suppose some pagan connections for warlike ethics of bravery, though

(3016)

they were socially necessitated by the feudal institutions of Christian times. Here, however, the student of Igor's Tale is confused by the absence of any pagan Slavic god of war, like Perun, who would correspond to Dazhbog and other deities of nature. This recalls the theories of some modern scholars who see in the military cult of Perun but not in Perun himself, the reflection of the Scandinavian Thor. If Perun, as god of war, was an artificial creation of Vladimir or the Varangians (Vikings) of Kiev, he was likely to be dropped out of poetic memory after the Christian conversion. In this case one must admit that the Russians had no specific god of war and, consequently, no pagan Slavic sanctification of war ethics. Some religious support for it must have been brought from Scandinavian sources.

Conceding a place to the pagan (Viking) sway in war ethics, one is the more obliged to look for Christian influences in accounting for the mildness and tenderness of Igor's poet. Two centuries of

evangelization could not pass in vain; it had gradually transformed the general moral attitude of people, and even their sensibility. The poet of Igor feels no longing for revenge; but for a pagan Russian princess (Ste. Olga, or in Old Norse; *Ste. Haelga*), before her conversion, revenge, of a most cruel pattern, constituted an important part of her glorious tradition. It was related calmly and objectively by the monk-annalist and probably belonged to the epic store of ancient times.

Yet, while Christianity accounts for the mildness of the (Kievan) Russian epic, it may also have had its pagan antecedents. For all the scanty records of Russian paganism, it appears to have been much milder than that of many other tribes, for example, the Teutons (including the Vikings). The identity of The Gospel found a particularly favorable soil in Russia. Indeed, the Byzantine interpretation of Christian ethics was not marked by any particular mildness. Nor was the Western doctrine or life of the early Middle Ages. In Russia itself this charitable spirit is felt strongly in the literary documents which are less colored by the Byzantine culture; often in the laic, and rarer in official ecclesiastical works.

Yet, after all is said, one must keep in mind that the mildness of Russian paganism can only have been relative. Not only Princess Olga (or *Haelga*), but also Vladimir (both canonized saints) are depicted as cruel before their conversion (after all, they were Vikings). Acts of cruelty are reported of the pagan magicians in the eleventh century as well. And the pagan viatichi
(3017)

killed a Christian missionary, St. Kuksha, about 1100. So the Gospel really did transform, or was transforming, the coarse hearts of the heathen; and to it, in great part, are due the most touching and morally the finest features in the only preserved work of the ancient epic tradition of Russia." (127)

Before we leave the Slovo, The Song of Igor's Campaign, let us return to the poetess Marina Tsvetaeva and her poem Plaint of Yaroslavna, Yaroslavna being the wife of Prince Igor. In this case, Prince Igor is cast as a White Guard soldier:

PLAINT OF YAROSLAVNA

Hear Yaroslavna
Mourning her loved one
Ceaselessly-

From her bower, grievous she
Unmitigated:

Igor mine! Prince
Igor mine! Prince
Igor!

Raven, relent -
Leave me mine eyes -
To weep with!

Sun, dart those keen
Shafts in mine eyes -
To blind them!

Woe then is *Rus*!
Igor mine! *Rus*!
Igor!

Not so - the chronicler lies, saying Igor returned home
Like as the sunshine - the artful Boyan deceived us.
What are the facts? There, where Don and Donetz fall,
plashing,

In banners' midst, Igor found rest - for ever.

Off his white flesh did they feed - ravens untold.
Of his white excellent deeds - wind, thou hast told.

(3018)

Blow thou, wind, along those gorges yonder,
Blow thou, wind, along there where the plain lies.
Speed thee onward, wild my whirlwind-wanderer,
There above the white Don where the swans' desmesne lies!
Sweep up to the town-walls, to the ramparts,
Whence her wailing fills the wide world. Do not hearken,
Though her knees now quake, whom grief has sorely hampered,
Though her sunlike countenance is dulled and darkened...

-Wind, wind! - Princess,
Behold thy fate!
Thy prince lies lifeless -
For honor's sake!

Hear Yaroslavna
Mourning her loved one
Ceaselessly -
Grief so impassioned,
Sighing - her sighs
Plaintive:

Who dashed the fair cup of health then

From my fingers?
Not mine to grow old but
Under cold stone, unto mold,
Igor!

Seal my red lips with clod and clay,
Now - and for ever.
It is over,
The White Crusade. (128)

Notes by Robin Kemball:

"...Though forming a whole and grouped under one title, the "Plaint of Yaroslavna" clearly consists of three parts, the central one of which differs metrically as well as thematically from the two enclosing ones. ... The theme is taken over directly from The Lay of Igor's Campaign, the greatest treasure of mediæval (Kievan) Russian literature and, indeed, one of the great heroic poems of all time. The Lay tells the story of the campaign undertaken in 1185 by Prince Igor (Old Norse: *Ingvar*) without the permission of his sovereign, the prince of Kiev., against the Polovtsy (or Cumans), Turkic tribesmen from Asia whose raids up the Dnieper valley constituted a permanent threat to the survival of old Kievan Rus' in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. The narrative thread - the tale of Igor's defeat, captivity, escape, and safe return - is periodically interrupted by historical digressions, lyrical invocations, panegyrics, and laments. Among the latter, pride of place
(3019)

belongs to the plaint of Yaroslavna, Igor's consort, many echoes of which as the following extracts serve to show: "On the Danube, Yaroslavna's voice is heard: like a desolate cuckoo she cries early in the morning, 'I will fly', she says, 'like a cuckoo along the Danube, ... I will wipe the Prince's bleeding wounds on his strong body.' Yaroslavna, early in the morning, laments on the rampart of Putivl, saying: 'Wind, O Wind! O Lord, do you blow so hard? ... Why, O Lord, have you scattered my happiness over the feather grass?' Yaroslavna, early in the morning, laments on the rampart of the city of Putivl saying: '... Carry, O Lord, my beloved back to me, that I may no more send him my tears down to the sea, early in the morning.' Yaroslavna, early in the morning, laments on the rampart of Putivl, saying: "O bright and thrice bright Sun! You are warm and beautiful of all. Why, O Lord, did you dart your burning rays against the warriors of my beloved? In the waterless steppe why did you shrivel their bows with thirst and stop their quivers with sorrow?" In the end, after many adventures, Igor returns home: "The sun shines in the heavens: Prince Igor is in the land of Rus'. Maidens sing on the Danube, their voices twine across the sea to Kiev. Igor rides up by Borichev to the church of Our Lady of the Tower. The countryside is happy,

the cities are joyful." Just so, Tsvetaeva sees herself in the role of chronicler, so in these three poems she sees the True Russia (including herself and the remnants of the White Guard) in the role of Yaroslavna. With the rout of the White Guard virtually complete, she also disputes the "authenticity" of the account of Igor's safe return as originally handed down by Boyan, and eleventh-century bard, the "nightingale of olden times", whom the author of the Lay cites with approval and evidently holds in high regard. The parallel between the conditions obtaining during the Civil War of 1917-1921 and the plight of Kievan Rus' in the face of medieval invasions from the East was later developed by Tsvetaeva in her collection Romesio, particularly in the four poems grouped under the title In the Khan's Bondage (*Khanskii Polon*).

'From her bower she sobs'-: The Russian text (*S bashennoi vyshechki...* - "from her little garret in the tower") is virtually the equivalent of the word *terem*: the small room or small apartment set aside for women, usually situated high up in the tower of a castle - in effect, the Russian counterpart of the *gynaecium* of Greek and Roman antiquity. The choice of the word "bower" for this essentially untranslatable word was prompted by the only remotely equivalent setting from English poetry that come to mind - Tennyson's "Lady of Shalott":

(3020)

Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

And, more especially, the opening lines of part III:

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley sheaves." (129)

Marina Tsvetaeva continues:

Happy New Year, Swans' Demesne! - poor lone
Remnant - valiant soldiers!
Happy New Year - warriors far from home -
Pack upon your shoulders!

Reds, in vain pursuit, foam at the mouth,
All their hopes now blunted!
Happy New Year - beaten - in full rout -
Handful - of my country!

Bow to earth - and all earth hymns its pleas
For her weal and comfort.

Thus does, Igor, *Rus'* across the seas
Mourn like Yaroslavna.

Grief makes weary with its weight of sighs:
-My son! - My Prince! - My Brother!
-Happy New Year, you - young *Rus'* that lies
Beyond the wide blue waters! (130)

Comments Robin Kemball:

"Under the title: "*Tem, v Gallipoli*" (To Those in Gallipoli). This farewell poem marks the end of the road - but, at the same time, the tentative beginnings of a new one: the defeat, rout, and dispersal of the White Legions, only a *handful* of whom (symbolizing Tsvetsaeva's country) remain to carry on the defence of Russian values, of the "Russian idea," from *across the seas*. It is this young *Rus'* that *mourns like Yaroslavna*.

Beyond the wide blue waters!: The poem - and with it the cycle - ends on a characteristic note, with a line that incorporates stylistic device typical of Russian folk poetry (and, indeed of Slav folklore generally): the repetition of a preposition before *both* the noun it modifies and the adjective that qualifies that noun. The Russian line reads: *Za morem za sinim!* - a word-for-word translation of this would give: "Beyond the sea, beyond the blue-[one]!" Other instances of this device in the poems of this cycle occur: No (3021)

za zhizn' ego za temnuu - "But, for his life, for [his] dark-[one]" and *Doletai do gorodskoi do stenki* "Fly up to the town-[one], to the wall"). Karlinsky quotes a "triple" model (i.e., including two adjectives) from a poem in Tsvetaeva's collection *Versty I: po staroi, po doroge po kaluzhskoi* ("along the old, along the road, along the Kaluga-[one]").

31st of Russian December 1920: True to herself to the last, Tsvetaeva pens her New Year greetings to the remnants of the White Guard on New Year's Eve according to the Old Style (January 13, 1921, New Style), and underlines this by stressing the *Russian* nature of this date.' (131)

Below are accounts of selected aspects of Russian Orthodoxy in the Kievan Period:

NATURE and RELIGION

First a comment by Pierre Pascal:

"It is by no means easy to say to what extent this belief in the sanctity of the earth is present in the consciousness of the Russian (and Ukrainian) people today. But some evidence on various related points has been collected since the beginning of the century. Have we here a case of paganism and 'double faith' (i.e.,

Christianity and Slavic paganism)? I believe rather that what we are dealing with here are certain authentically Christian features of popular religion.

The (Russian or Ukrainian) peasant, together with Genesis and St. Paul, (all of whom were blessedly and providentially free of the satanic contamination and taint of Manichaeism and Calvinism) believes that the whole creation, which the earth represents, is affected by man's sin and is called to renewel with him. His religion has hardly any conception of individual fall and individual salvation: it is more collective, cosmic, never forgetful - as the West has (at times) tended to be - of the great visions of the Apocalypse.

It is on that level that it exists. It is powerfully aware of a mystical communion between man and nature, both alike the works of a good God. Nature is always pure. Man, when he sins, separates himself from it and sees no more than what can be seen from the outside. But the pure man perceives its beauty, its oneness with God and his own oneness with it. The pilgrim, once he has entered the state of perpetual prayer, sees everything around him in a fresh and wonderful light - trees, plants, birds, earth, air, sunlight, everything proclaims prays and sings the glory of God. The missionary too, in his childlike purity, receives his earliest call to prayer from nature. Makar Ivanovich

(3022)

who, in The Adolescent, stands for popular religion at its highest levels, sees the mystery of God in all its fullness, an indescribable beauty, shining in every blade of grass, in the singing of the birds and in the stars. After the accusation of paganism should we now press the charge of pantheism? The Russian (and Ukrainian) believer would be surprised if we did; for, if nature puts him in contact with God, it is not through any confusion with God, but because nature is His creation."(132)

Says George Fedotov:

"It is a commonplace among historians of religion that Eastern Christianity stresses the cosmological aspects more strongly than the Christian West which puts unquestionable emphasis upon anthropology. This is, beyond doubt, the Hellenistic legacy to Eastern (Orthodox) theology, clearly discernible from Origen to St. John of Damascus. A symbolic expression of this tendency can be found in the representation of the Cosmos on Grek icons of the Pentecost. Around the Blessed Virgin the twelve Apostles are depicted receiving the fiery tongues of the Holy Ghost; but beneath their seats the half-figure of a bearded man with a crown on his head is seen as if coming from under

the earth. This is the "King Cosmos" also participating in the outpouring gifts of the Holy Ghost. The same cosmological motive is strong in Greek hymnology as well, especially in the hymns dedicated to Our Lady. She is always thought of and venerated in connection with the Cosmos which stands under her protection.

It is true that, compared with the Hellenistic age, the Byzantine attitude to nature seems cold, abstract, and rational. Cosmos became an idea rather than a feeling of man's ties with nature. On the other hand, the medieval West, particularly Celtic and Teutonic, also possessed a very strong religious feeling for nature and tried to graft it upon the old Roman stem. But Russia (and Ukraine), taking over Byzantine cosmology, imparted to it a warmth, spontaneity, and even poignancy which went far beyond the western medieval sense of nature.

The most beautiful expression of the Russian sense of nature is in Igor's Tale; here it is religious, though not (specifically) Christian. Together with numerous remainders of naturalistic heathen cults Igor's Tale points to a pre-Christian source of Russian (and Ukrainian) cosmology. But we do not lack instances of its Christian transformations.

(3023)

Cyril of Turov had the reputation of being the most eloquent poet of nature in Russian theological literature. As we have seen, this reputation was hardly a deserved one. The learned bishop simply adapted for his own use one of the paschal homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus. The Byzantinist school in Russia, with its pursuit of abstract symbolism, was the least favorable setting for a strong and sincere sense of nature. It is true that St. Gregory's description of a Hellenistic spring, completely lacking local Russian features, had a long and notable career in Russia. It was transcribed and imitated until the seventeenth century, as has been shown in a recent study of the landscape in ancient Russian literature by A. Nikol'skaia. The slavish (**NOT Slavic**) dependence upon the Greek original and the lack of any ingenious approach to nature shows how extremely difficult nature-painting is for any primitive literature. Against this barren background Igor's Tale stands out as a work of genius, nourished, besides, by quite a different tradition of folk poetry.

Vladimir Monomach (prince of Kiev) [note: the word *manomach* in Greek means "single combat"] strikes a more intimate and deeply Christian note when he speaks of nature as the manifestation of God's loving kindness. He knows hardly more than to name all the wonders of God's creation, the sun, the moon, the stars, and the different animals and birds, but his unfeigned

admiration throbs with joy and tenderness. It is one of the foundations of Vladimir (Monomach's) religious optimism, of his confidence in God's wisdom and love.

In the eschatological Sermon on the Celestial Powers the anonymous Russian author concludes his picture of the Last Judgement by the vision of a new earth in all its beauty and magnificence. The redemption of nature is, for the author, the major feature of the eschatological hope and even makes him forget about the bliss of the saints.

In the most popular and artistic hagiographic monument of Kievan Russia, the Legend of Saint Boris and Saint Gleb (the *Skazanie*), warm and touching images of the life of nature unexpectedly enhance the tragedy of slaughtered innocence. One reads among the supplications of Gleb addressed to his murderers: "Do not reap the unripe ear. ... Do not cut down the vine-shoot which is not yet grown."

The Russian Chronicles, even those composed by the monks of the Caves Cloister (near Kiev), sometimes reflect a sympathetic feeling for nature, perhaps under the influence of folk traditions and legends. Such is

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the description of the battle between Saint Vladimir's sons Iaroslav and Mstislav in 1024. "When night fell, there was darkness with lightning, thunder, and rain. The combat was a violent one. As the lightning flashed, the weapons gleamed and the thunder roared, and the fight was violent and fearsome." Here it is obvious that the thunder, accompanying the fight, is mentioned not simply as a detail of setting, as a mere weather phenomenon, but serves to enhance the impression of the fierceness and rage of the battle. Its function is the same as that of the thunderstorm in Igor's Tale." (133)

Notes Pierre Pascal:

"As soon as we begin to consider the religion of the (Russian) people, we at once come up against a traditional and categorical assertion: this religion is a 'double faith' (in Russian, *dvoeverie*), a mixture of Christianity and pagan survivals,

There seem to be several which support such an opinion. There are, in past centuries, the condemnations repeatedly issued by the Church aimed at superstitions, 'vain observances', 'diabolical' festivities, and seasonal rituals: these begin, naturally, with the conversion and are codified by the Stoglav council in 1551. In the seventeenth century they are intensified around the time when efforts at reform are being made, and they have persisted, sporadically, until the present day.

These survivals are, in effect, the spring

festivals, with their songs and carols in which a god of the sun, or of light, or fertility, Yarilo, seems to be invoked, and even represented; then, later, towards the end of the summer, there is the symbolic burial of this god in the form of an effigy known as Kostroma.

There are traces, too, of a tree-cult. That these survivals are now attached to Easter, Petertide or Whitsun does not, it is said, alter the fact of their pagan origins. There are yet more clearly defined beliefs in evil spirits inhabiting the woods, the waters, and the house; the Rusalky are spirits of water and death; the twelve sisters called Trysavitsy are the fevers which (as the name suggests) make men 'shudder'. The 'Unclean Power' walks evertwhere, in diverse shapes, all of them terrifying. The feasts of the dead in Spring and Autumn - banquets at the tombs, to which the dead are bidden - suggest a pagan conception of survival after death.

Certain individuals, sorcerers and sorceresses, are in regular contact with these other-worldly beings: they know certain words, certain whispered charms,

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certain actions capable of affecting them. Their power is transmitted from father to son. But, up to a point, any man can do as much: thanks to spells and amulets, he too can summon or avert ill-fortune, can stop the flow of the blood, call down sickness on animals or humans, or drive it away. By certain procedures, or by observing this or that chance occurrence, he can predict events in which he has an interest - marriages, outbreaks of fire, deaths, the success or failure of various undertakings.

One might ask: all these practices, and a good many other analogous ones, of the sort folklorists are so fond of - do they not suggest beliefs which have nothing to do with Christianity, but which coexist with it, in the consciousness of the Russian peasant, and adulterate it? Are they not as typical instances of dvoeverie as the magical recitations disguised as exorcisms which we find, for example, in the story of St. Tryphon?

We may note, to begin with, that [St.] Tryphon's exorcism has a Greek, not a Russian source, though the source is hardly important. What must be determined is the place occupied by these superstitions in the life of the Russian people, not five hundred years ago but today, and, further, the kind and the degree of belief accorded them. It is certainly noteworthy that, even in the seventeenth century, a man like Archpriest Avvakum, coming from a township (now vanished) in the Nizhni-Novgorod district, an area then only recently colonized, presents to us in his writings, his life, and [his] sermons, an absolutely pure form of Christianity,

without the least trace of 'vain observance' or the faintest reflection of paganism. It is true that he was an extraordinary man; but his education and his life had been entirely among the people. Would he not have preserved some shadow of 'double faith' if it had really existed? The abuses which he fought among his parishioners were failures in devotion or morality - the obscene performances of the bear-wards, or the masquerades of Carnival time: they are characterized as devilish and pagan, but the good folk who enjoyed them did not see their faith as being in any way involved.

Similarly, in all the scenes which Melnikov-Pechersky relates with such delight, scenes of divination, garlands hung in trees, effeigies drowned to the accompaniment of carols and songs, the part played by pagan belief seems to be completely submerged in the dominant feeling of sport, play. After all, do the young peasant girls - not to mento the young ladies of the towns as well who, on the night of 31 December, read their fortune for the coming year in the grotesque

(3026)

patterns made by wax in contact with boiling water - do these show any more 'double faith' than the Frenchwoman who goes to have her fortune read in the cards or is afraid of seeing three lamps burning together?

The only pre-Christian element which long remained alive in the faith of the Russians (and still remains so, at an implicit level) was the belief in the power and sanctity of the earth. And this, properly speaking, is a feeling which is "natural" rather than strictly pagan: the earth which nourishes, the earth, whose inexhaustible energy spends itself and is mysteriously renewed year by year, the earth which sustains man, and in which at the end he comes to rest - how could this not be, for an agrarian folk, "the moist Earth our mother"? It is not personified nor divinized, neither surrounded with legends nor honored with worship: that would truly be paganism. But it is felt that it is pure and that nothing unclean should tarnish it. This is why the boyarina Morozova, an educated Christian lady and a rigorously observant spiritual daughter of Archpriest Avvakum, when she thought that she was going to die in prison, requested a soldier to wash the one shift she possessed, because "it would not be fitting for this body to go down in an unclean garment into the bosom of its mother the earth". Out of respect for the earth, every peasant keeps throughout his life a costume for death: a white shift and slippers of bast. Even working on the land should only be done in a state of physical and moral purity. The earth is taken as witness to an oath. ...

...It is by no means easy to say to what extent this belief in the sanctity of the earth is present in

the consciousness of the Russian people today. But some evidence on various related points has been collected since the beginning of the (twentieth) century. Have we here a case of paganism and 'double faith'? I believe rather that what we are dealing with here are certain authentically Christian features of popular religion. The peasant, together with Genesis and St, Paul, believes that the whole creation, which the Earth represents, is affected by man's sin and called to renewal with him. His religion has hardly any conception of individual fall and individual salvation: it is more collective, cosmic, never forgetful - as the West has tended to be - of the great visions of the Apocalypse. It is on that level that it exists. It is powerfully aware of a mystical communion between man and nature, both alike works of a good God. Nature is always pure. Man, when he sins, separates himself from it and sees no more than what can be seen from the outside. But the pure man perceives its beauty, its

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oneness with God and his own oneness with it. The Pilgrim, once he has entered the state of perpetual prayer (as the Orthodox liturgy says, "pray without ceasing"), sees everything around him in a fresh and wonderful light - trees, plants, birds, earth, air, sunlight, everything proclaims God's love for man, everything prays and sings of the glory of God. The missionary too, in his childlike purity, receives his earliest call to prayer from nature. Makar Ivanovich who, in The Adolescent, stands for popular religion at its highest levels, sees the mystery of God in all its fullness, an indescribable beauty, shining in every blade of grass, in the singing of the birds and in the stars. After the accusation of paganism should we now press the charge of pantheism? The Russian believer would be surprised if we did; for, if nature puts him in contact with God, it is not through any confusion with God, but because nature is his creation. ...

...Before she goes to the church to make her confession, a [Russian] peasant woman of whom S. Smirnov tells us discharges herself of a number of preparatory actions. She makes her peace first with her family, and then addresses the whole of nature: the fair sun, the clear moon, the numberless stars, the dark nights, the soft showers, the raging wind, and then, at greater length, the earth. She recites these lines:

Moist mother earth, I shed my tears upon you,
Moist earth that nourishes me and gives me drink,
I am a worthless foolish sinner,
For my legs as they walk trample you down,
And I have spat sunflower seeds upon you....
My arms in their vigor have tossed you away.

My eyes have rested their gaze on you.

She stops to purify her hands by rubbing them with earth - or, in winter, snow, but a handful taken from deep down - and resumes her recitation with a deep bow:

One further blow, my foster-mother,
I wish to touch you with my head,
To beg your blessing,
Your blessing and your pardon.
I have torn up your breast
Cutting with the iron ploughshare.
Never have I smoothed your surface with a roller,
Never combed your locks with a comb:
I have bruised you under the harrow
With its teeth of rusty iron.
Foster-mother, pardon me,
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In the name of Christ our Saviour,
Of the Holy Mother of God [Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek:
Theotokos; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or
Bozhii Mater]
Of [St.] Blaise our intercessor,
Elias the wise, the prophet.
And the knightly [St.] George.

When we have come to this point, it is surely legitimate for us to interpret these seasonal rituals which have caused us some uneasiness, as being, from a very long time back, no more than an expression of this same communion which the country people felt to exist between them selves and that 'nature' which the good God had made. Among Melnikov-Pechersky's Old Beleivers [more accurately, "Old Ritualists"], it is quite clear that it could be nothing else." (134)

Notes Michael Oleksa:

"The ancient Church affirmed and the Orthodox continue to celebrate this positive spiritual vision of the created universe, as the examples cited in the previous chapter indicate. Here it is important to mention an essential point of divergence between eastern and western Christianity: the definition of "symbol". Since the late (note the qualifier "late"; would be more accurate to say "since the Protestant Reformation, or, rather, "Deformation") Middle Ages, this term has been radically reinterpreted in the West in a way that has contributed to a tragic misunderstanding of the Gospel, and the subsequent division of the Western Church into hundreds of competing and conflicting denominations.

The Greek word "*symbolon*" means "to hold together." To the ancient Church, this meant that a

symbol, while not fully encompassing the reality it "symbolizes:, nevertheless participates in and communicates that reality. A symbol, in other words, does not "represent" an absent "thing" or stand in place of it, as a mere substitute or reminder. It is what it symbolizes, without totally manifesting or revealing it. It was in this sense that the ancient (Church) fathers wrote that the entire cosmos is the "symbol" of God."

Father Alexander Schmemmann explains this as follows:

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In the early tradition, the relationship between the sign in the symbol (A) and that which it symbolizes (B) is neither a merely semantic one (A means B), nor causal, (A is the cause of B), nor representative (A represents B). We called this relationship an *epiphany*. A is B means that the whole of A expresses, communicates, reveals, manifests the "reality" of B, (although not necessarily the whole of it) without, however, losing its own ontological reality, without being dissolved into another "res" (thing). (For the Life of the World, Alexander Schmemmann, Crestwood, New York, 1973, p. 141.)

It was precisely this relationship between A and B, between the sign and the signified, that was changed in medieval ("post-Protestant Reformation") would be more accurate.) Latin theology.

"The symbol may still be a means of knowledge, but as all knowledge, it is knowledge about, and not knowledge of. It can be a revelation about the "res" but not the epiphany of the "res" itself. A can mean B or represent it, or even in certain cases be the "cause" of its presence; but A is no longer viewed as the very means of "participation" in B." (Schmemmann, op. cit., p. 142.)

Knowledge and participation became two different realities, two different orders. Within this framework, the created universe lost all "religious" value in the West. Yet in the East, it was precisely the maintenance of this original vision within the life of the Orthodox Church that made the gap between the pre-contact worldview of the Unangan, Sugpiaq, and Yup'ik peoples (all Eskimos or Inuits of Alaska) and the Christian worldview a relatively narrow one." (135)

In the attitude of Russian Orthodoxy towards nature, we find it virtually identical to that of Irish Catholicism, also called "Celtic Christianity", particularly that of Early Christian Ireland and in the literature written in Gaelic rather than Latin. Note that the early Irish monks borrowed their tonsure from the Druids.

Of course the trobadors also reflect a reverence for nature.

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We see this same reverence for nature in much of the poetry of St. John of the Cross. We also find this in St. Francis of Assisi.

I am also reminded of an incident in the novel Destiny of Fire by Zoe Oldenbourg in which a young man in late eleventh or early twelfth century Languedoc hears the preaching of a Cathar, Albigensian or Manichaean preacher and at first admits that some things do appear to have been created by Satan. But then he sees an humble wild flower and refuses to believe that it could be a creation of Satan. It is the young man's reverence for nature which causes him to angrily reject the teachings of the Cathars.

In summary in Russian Orthodoxy we find the very antithesis of the teachings of the Manichaeans and their later manifestations, the Bogomils, Cathars or Albigensians, as well as the teachings of the Protestant Calvinists, most particularly the English and New England Puritans, and also those known as the "Puritans of Islam", i.e., Wahhabis, Taliban, Salafis, Takfiris, Deobandis, al-Qaeda, et cetera. To the English and New England Puritans, nature was the kingdom of Satan. The difference between the Manichaeans on the one hand and the English and New England

Puritans on the other is purely verbal, not substantive. The Manichaeans believed that nature was the creation of Satan; the English and New England Puritans believed that nature was "fallen" and was therefore the kingdom of Satan. In substance and in practice there is no difference between the Manichaeans on the one hand and the English and New England Puritans on the other. The French Calvinists, known as *Huguenots*, openly

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proclaimed the Cathars or Albigensians to be their forerunners; a more blunt confession of Manichaeism would be difficult to imagine. Later we shall see that Nathaniel Hawthorne, himself a descendant of New England Puritans, considered the Puritans to have been Satan worshippers: see his short novel Young Goodman Brown. It is not difficult to see how Manichaeism or Puritanism can easily lead to Satan worship.

THE ROLE of BEAUTY

As a brief prologue, below is an essay by Karl W. Stukenberg, a professor at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio which appeared in the February 10, 2012 issue of the daily newspaper "The Cincinnati Enquirer". Prof. Stukenberg is meditating on an exhibit of the paintings of the French impressionist Claude Monet at the Cincinnati Art Museum. Prof. Stukenberg in particular refers to Monet's famous painting "Water Lilies":

"Monet's primary stated intent was, I think, to convey his emotional experience more directly. And his medium was, indeed, just paint on canvas. Up close, that paint looks, especially in the [painting titled] "Water Lilies", like crayons childishly applied to paper by a kindergartner. As we move back from the canvas, a magical transformation occurs. The seemingly random and even clashing colors dissolve into a shimmering, three

dimensional space, and the [water] lilies are floating on water - water that is reflecting the colors of the sky and the trees in the background, and the flat canvas is transformed into a three dimensional window into Monet's France, but also, I think, into his mind.

We are wowed by his technical command - his ability to transform those seemingly random squiggles into something beautiful but that serves to deepen our experience of awe at the beauty of the painting itself which, in turn, helps us appreciate the awe that I think Monet felt as he was looking at something he found profoundly inspiring: nature itself. We are

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invited, for just a few moments, to reflect on something that was central to Monet's experience: wonder at the aesthetics of the world around us. That something as simple as water lilies floating on a pond could open up inside of us an experience as profound as his paintings do is truly miraculous. Further, that he was able to share that miracle - so that we, a hundred years later and on a different continent, can experience something of what he felt - is a miracle, too.

We are bombarded by thousands of images daily. They cry for our attention. We see nature, whether it is the grass growing through the cracks in the sidewalk or the clouds scudding across the sky, as we hustle back and forth in our very busy lives.

Spending a few minutes with a few squiggles of paint on canvas can help remind us that there is, indeed, beauty all around us and that we are able to experience and to communicate it. ...

... My wife preferred the landscapes - something about the motion of the wind-blown trees that Monet was able to capture."

Says Michael Oleksa:

"By the time Vladimir invited Byzantine missionaries to Kiev to teach and baptize his people in 988, the Eastern (Orthodox) Church had articulated its doctrine and developed its liturgy as outlined in the preceding chapter. It remained for the Slavic people, therefore, to accept and deepen their apprehension of this faith, and to develop expressions of it according to their own cultural genius. The Bible, the writings of the (Early Church) Fathers, and the entire treasury of liturgical texts were translated into Old (Church) Slavonic, and an indigenous clergy were trained in the performance of the various rites. The translation of the word "Orthodox" as *Pravoslavni* testifies to the centrality of worship as the essential expression of the Faith: *pravo* means "correct" or "true", *slava* means

"worship", or literally, "glory". It is not insignificant that one of the most popular legends about the initial encounter with Orthodoxy describes a delegation from Kiev attending services at Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and reporting to their prince. Says the Kievan Chronicle:

We knew not whether we were in heaven or earth, for we cannot forget that beauty: only this we know: that God dwells there among men.

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This emphasis on beauty remains a characteristic feature of Russian piety, and, in fact, the rich décor of eastern churches exists precisely to evoke the presence of the image of the Kingdom which is to come. (136)

Michael Oleksa continues:

"The presence of the holy is not, in the Orthodox perspective, limited to the church building, but made visible and tangible in beauty everywhere. Every home has its "beautiful corner" where the family icons hang, and before which the faithful pray." Pierre Pascal writes:

The Russian peasant greets the icons on rising. When he leaves his house in the morning, he signs (crosses) himself three times, looking first toward the church or chapel, then towards the east, then the three other points of the compass to give thanks to the Creator. He takes no food without making the sign of the cross. From time to time he will murmur the ejaculatory prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us [Lord have mercy on us: Greek: *Kyrie Eleison*; Russian: *Gospodi Pomiluy*; Church Slavonic: *Hospodi Pomiluy*. In the Roman Catholic Latin Mass, "*Kyrie Eleison*" is not translated, but rather left in the original Greek] or, simply, "Lord Jesus Christ".

He multiplies his signs of the cross, genuflections, invocations, and all such exterior manifestations, untroubled by the least consideration of human respect, to the point of giving the impression that these are mechanical exercises without interior reality. However, it would be a mistake to think this: while they may or may not necessarily express authentic devotion, they do correspond to an habitual disposition." (137)

Notes Nicolas Arseniev:

"The aesthetic charm of the cult and of the whole

atmosphere had a profound effect on the distant ancestors of present-day Russians. The story of the conversion of St. Vladimir ["the Russian Viking"] toward the end of the tenth century, bears witness to this. According to the legend, Vladimir had sent emissaries to different lands in order to find the best religion. They came to the Volga Bulgars (who were Muslims) and saw their cult, 'but there was nothing joyous about it; on the contrary, everything there was sad and gloomy, and their religion was not good'. What
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they saw among the Germans (who were Catholics) pleased them no more. 'We came to the Germans and saw them worship at length in their churches, but we saw no beauty there.' They went to the [Byzantine] Greeks, and the Greeks took them to the place where they worshipped their God.:

'And we did not know if we were in heaven or on earth, for on earth there is no Such beauty. Nor do we know what we ought to say. One thing only do we know: that God was Living there with men, and that their form of Worship is the best of all. We cannot forget This beauty. Just as a man refuses to eat what is bitter after having tasted what is Sweet, so we cannot remain with you here.'

The ancient documents of Russian history are full of moving descriptions of this cultic beauty. Thus in the middle of the eleventh century, in a sermon commemorating the late Prince Vladimir, Metropolitan Ilarion says:

'Behold the city gleaming in majesty, behold the churches flourishing, behold the Christian faith increasing, see how the city is sanctified by the holy icons, illuminated, perfumed with incense and resounding with hymns of praise and divine canticles. ...'

A thrill of enthusiasm can be felt running through the chronicler's tale when he speaks of the construction, by Prince Andrei Bogoliubsky (in 1159) of the celebrated Cathedral of the Assumption in Vladimir. This was a temple:

'Such as never has been in Russia and never will be. The most pious Prince Andrei is to be compared with King Solomon. He erected a cathedral of beauty in Vladimir, he decorated it with gold, silver, precious stones and pearls, and made it magnificent

with mosaics and bas-reliefs. He had the domes and the great entrance doors gilded, he made it like the temple of Solomon in its splendor.'

A series of old texts, especially from the fifteenth century on, speak with enthusiasm of the beauty of the cult, and of the flashing blaze of countless church domes throughout the whole Russian
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land. Thus in one of the variations of the story of the Council of Florence, dating from the fifteenth century, we find the following words addressed to the Grand Duke Basil the Blind:

'It is right that you should rejoice with all the people in the true Orthodox faith, which shines throughout the world. The grace of God is upon us as a shining mantle, and the churches of God are as flowers, as the stars of the sky, as the gleaming rays of the sun, magnificently adorned, and resounding with holy songs.'

Cultic beauty became one of the sources of Russia's national consciousness, one of the constituent elements of the concept of 'Holy Russia'. This love of cultic beauty has remained as one of the distinctive characteristics of popular Russian psychology throughout the centuries. It is often in these external forms of liturgical beauty that the soul of the people feels itself seized by an inexpressible Presence. Here is a recent incident, which I heard about from an eye witness. At the beginning of the German-Russian war [World War II], in 1941, an Orthodox Liturgy was authorized by the Germans in a camp of Russian prisoners not far from St. Petersburg. Almost all the Russian war prisoners expressed the desire to be present - most of them probably out of curiosity. A native of the Baltic districts who is an acquaintance of mine, whom the Germans had seized and compelled to act as interpreter, was also there. Not far from him there stood a young Russian peasant, about eighteen years old, a prisoner of war who since infancy had no opportunity to see the cult of the Church. The Orthodox priest of the village church (which the Germans had just reopened) celebrated the Liturgy with feeling, in the open air. There was snow on the ground. A little choir of five women who had come from the village with the priest sang the responses and the canticles. Suddenly this lad exclaimed in an undertone:

'My God, how beautiful that is.'

His heart had been touched by this liturgical beauty. This is one of the paths along which grace encounters the soul of the people.

Let us recall, also, this typical passage from an old Russian text of The Legend of Peter, Son of the Tartar King.:

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'Now this young man came with the Bishop of Rostov and saw the church all decorated with gold, pearls and precious stones, decked like a bride, and heard harmonious chanting - one choir in the church of the Holy Mother was singing in the Greek tongue, the other in Church Slavonic. Having seen and heard all this, the young man felt a fire kindled in his heart, and though he was not of the true faith his soul was illumined y the rays of the divine sun, and he fell at the feet of the holy bishop.' In the Russian prisoner [of war] camp there was no gold, nor pearls, nor gems, nor choirs singing antiphonally, but the beauty of the cult was present, even under the most austere external conditions, and it had 'melted' this young man's soul.

The very words of the Church's hymns, which with the liturgical melodies are often known by heart, were also full of great spiritual beauty for the religious mind, and profoundly 'moving'. The great writer [Anton] Chekhov has described this for us with keen perception and love in his well-known story Holy Night:

You will recall how the monk Heironymus is operating the ferry which is carrying pilgrims from one bank of the river to the other on Easter night [Holy Saturday], and how he speaks of his best friend, the Heirodeacon Nicolas, who had just died, and who used to write such fine 'akathists' [akafist in Church Slavonic] or poems of religious praise.:

'Now it is a great gift to know how to compose akafists. ... They must be written in such a way that the one who is praying will rejoice and weep in his heart, that he will shudder, and be seized by a spirit of reverence. In the poem of praise dedicated to the Mother of God [Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*], there are these words: "Hail O Highness inaccessible to the thought of men!

Hail O Depth unfathomable even for the sight of

angels!" And in another place in this same hymn it is said: "Hail, Tree of shining fruit which nourish the faithful. Hail, Tree whose leaves are a blessed shelter and by whom many are defended." Heironymus was as it were suddenly frightened by something, and intimidated, and covered his face with his hands and shook his head. 'Tree of shining fruit, Tree whose leaves are a blessed
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shelter..." he murmured, "You have to be a real expert to find such words. You must have a special gift from God!"

This impulsive feeling for liturgical beauty, for religious beauty, is revealed too in the phenomenon of pilgrimage so intimately connected with these aspirations of the soul of the people. The pilgrims speak enthusiastically of the magnificence, the moving beauty of the divine services [which] they attend. Here is the testimony of the monk Parthen. The story of his pilgrimage to Mount Athos in the '30s of the last [19th] century was one of Dostoevsky's favorite books. Some of the features of his starets Zossima were inspired by this figure. With profound emotion the naïve and pious monk tells of one of his first impressions of Mount Athos - the solemn vespers in the Monastery of Hilendar:

"Truly this Vespers was a blessing for me. It was the first time that I had seen a service of such beauty. When I was in the church I really felt as if I were in heaven, so filled was I with dread and joy."

Everything that he saw amazed him:

"The beauty of the ancient icons on the great iconostasis, the mosaics and slabs of colored marble..."

After the service he returned to the monastery quarters where his traveling companion was waiting for him. His companion asked him what he had seen, and he answered:

"I can't tell you whether I was on earth or in heaven. I have never seen nor heard anything to compare with what I have just seen and heard, nor can I express it to you.

... There is only one thing [that] I can say: Happy are we to have come here. ..."

This naïve story reminds us a little of the words of Prince Vladimir's envoys. The fact that popular religious experience was strongly impregnated with

aesthetic elements carried with it, however, some genuine spiritual dangers. We have already spoken of this in the preceding chapter. The religious feeling could become shallow and attached primarily to the
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forms of the cult, and this could at times give rise to an excessive and intolerant ritualism. [*Do I detect a Protestant, Calvinist or Puritan infection or contamination here?*]

* * *

And yet liturgical beauty serves only to indicate the nearness of another world - the divine world that is so far superior to ours and is filled with an overpowering Presence. Beauty serves only to prepare the soul for this encounter with God. Thus it is the nearness of the Divine, the contemplation of heavenly beauty and of one's own unworthiness which has inspired this moving canticle sung during Holy Week:

"I behold, o my Lord, Thy banquet chamber magnificently arrayed, but I have no garment to put on that I might enter in. ..."

[Compare this with the words of the Catholic Latin Mass of the Gregorian Rite: "*Domine non sum dignus, ut intres sub tectum meum, sed tantum dic verbo, et sanibitur anima mea*" - "Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof, but say but the word, and my soul shall be healed."]

It is especially in the Sacrament of Holy Communion, the Sacrament of God's boundless condescension, that the presence of God Most Holy is revealed to the believer's heart with incomparable power, and also the sense of his own littleness and unworthiness in the face of God. We have already spoken of this, and will dwell on it again here only for a moment. The soul is shaken by the grandeur of this experience: the coming of the Lord and His presence in the midst of the faithful. Here the King of kings, the Master of all Creation, the Living Lord, He who suffered and was glorified, is present in the midst of us, in all His Glory, surrounded by the Heavenly Powers.

"For this is the King of Glory who comes in, this is that which has been accomplished by the mysterious Sacrifice ...

...We who represent in a mysterious way the cherubim - let us now lay aside all earthly thoughts, that we may receive the

Lord of All."

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This magnificent Liturgy of the Orthodox Church and the holiness of the Eucharistic mystery have spoken to the Russian religious soul, and have profoundly influenced it, have nourished the spiritual life of Russia's holy and righteous men. In a letter to Prince Andrei of Mozhaysk (1408-1413) St. Cyril of Belo-ozero once wrote:

"My Lord, conduct yourself in church with fear and reverence, as if you were in heaven, for the church is called 'heaven on earth', because the Sacraments of Christ are celebrated there.'

St. Sergei of Radonezh, his spiritual master and one of the great Russian saints, had the gift of special fervor in the Eucharist. In the account of his life written by his disciple Epiphanius we are told that he was seen surrounded by celestial fire as he celebrated the Holy Eucharist.

The Lord comes and enters our souls, as they tremble in their depths and lie prostrate before Him.

"Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under the roof of my soul, for it is all in ruins, and there is no place in me worthy enough for You to lay Your head. But come! Enlighten and heal my darkened thoughts, my afflicted soul."

These words from the ancient Eucharistic prayers - from the prayers of St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil, St. Ephraim and other Fathers of the Eastern [Orthodox] Church - find their echo in the soul of the Russian believer. Here is the way in which a great Russian saint, Dmitri of Rostov (a contemporary of Peter the Great), expressed the joy of the Eucharistic union or encounter with God:

"Enter, O Light, and enlighten my darkness! Enter, O Life and enliven my soul, which is spiritually dead. Enter, O my healer, and heal my sores! Enter, O Fire Divine, consume the thorns of my sins and enkindle my heart with the flame of Thy Love! Enter, O my King, and take Thy place upon the throne of my heart, and reign over it, for Thou alone are my King and Savior!"

And after receiving the Sacrament:

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"O Exaltation of my soul, O joy of my spirit and Balm of my heart, O merciful Jesus - do Thou remain with me always, and by Thine almighty hand keep me with Thee and in Thee. Let me be united to Thee in one spirit and let all my thoughts and all my words and all my acts be in Thee, for Thee and by Thee, for without Thee I can do nothing. Henceforth let me live no longer for myself, but for Thee, my Lord and Benefactor. Let all the feelings, all the motions of my soul and body be henceforth not in the service of self, but in Thy service, my Creator, that I may live and move in Thee, O my Savior, and let my whole life, until my dying breath, be consecrated to the glory of Thy Holy Name, O my God. Amen."

It was near the beginning of the [20th] century that [*Prince Eugene Trubetskoy*], a great Russian layman, an ardent Christian and an eminent religious thinker, spoke these words as he lay on the point of death:

"The royal doors [*the central doors of the iconostasis*] are opening! The great Liturgy is about to begin" (138)

Says George Fedotov:

"The Russian sense of nature has two aspects, both of which can acquire a religious significance. The first is the consciousness of belonging to nature, of being deeply rooted in it. This consciousness brings with it the religious acceptance or rejection of the human body and the physiological processes. Traces of such religious physiology can be found in the canonical ritualism of Kirik and his fellow priests among the Russian clergy.

The other aspect of nature is beauty. The above-mentioned instances of the religious appreciation of nature involve a sense of beauty. But the sense of beauty finds its way not only into nature but also into art. There is no doubt that the Russians are and always were gifted for the arts, although in different epochs different arts rose to the top in the national esteem. Thus in ancient Russia poetry and music, at least secular poetry and music, were thwarted by ecclesiastical condemnation. The pictorial art, however, was not only protected, but created by the Church, at least in its higher forms.

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The influence of the religious art upon the Russian religious soul was extremely great. The Kievan Chronicle, in its legendary account of the conversion of Saint Vladimir, ascribes the choice of the new religion to the overwhelming impression produced by the beauties of the Greek (Byzantine) liturgy upon Vladimir's envoys.

According to this account the Kievan prince, having made up his mind to change his religion, sent his envoys to the centers of different confessions, Muslim, Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Greek Orthodox to investigate whose faith was the best. The envoys performed their task in the only manner available to them - by observing the liturgical rites of the respective nations. They were deeply disgusted by the Jewish and Muslim worship and not affected by that of the Roman Catholics.

But their enthusiasm for the Greek service was immense. In Constantinople the Emperor sent them to a solemn celebration in Saint Sophia, organized especially for their benefit. They hardly could understand the words of the Greek liturgy or its religious meaning, but its beauty was the decisive factor in their final choice. They reported to Vladimir in the following words:

We went on to Greece, and the Greeks led us to the edifice where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty and we are at a loss to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty. Every man, after tasting something sweet is afterwards unwilling to accept that which is bitter.

Certainly this is no more than a legend. Prince Vladimir had other reasons to embrace the Greek form of Christianity besides its aesthetic values. But the legend is characteristic of the mood of the religious elite in Kiev at the end of the eleventh century. Apparently, the chronicler, a learned monk of the Caves Cloister (near Kiev), considered the beauty of the cult a normal and not unworthy motive for the choice of a religion (I can think of worse ones). His is not an isolated reaction. At all times the liturgical beauty of the Orthodox Church was considered by the Russians as the best missionary argument in the conversion of the heterodox. In the panegyric entry on Prince Andrew

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Bogoliuskij, the chronicler recalls his pious custom:

In former days when a merchant came to him from Constantinople or from other countries, from the Russian land or from the Latin, from the whole of Christendom and even from all heathen lands, he led them into the galleries of the church, that they might see the true Christianity and be converted.

The same missionary device was employed in the fourteenth century by Saint Stephen for the conversion of the heathen Zyrian, and in the Muscovite period the appreciation of the aesthetic side of worship went still further. It remains one of the most constant features of Russian religion. Very seldom is kenotic poverty extended into this sphere of the cult. In the Kieven period not a single instance is known of ascetic denial or neglect of temple beauty. The chroniclers do not omit to mention and even to describe in detail the magnificence of new churches or richly-ornamented icons. Because of the poverty of their means of expression their descriptions stress not so much the beauty of forms as the luxury of ornamentation. Gold and silver pearls and precious stones, silks and embroideries take the major place in these descriptions. They fill, in a rather monotonous enumeration of sacred objects, no less than two columns in quarto in the Ipatiev Chronicle, in depicting the glory of the ecclesiastical buildings of Prince Andrei Bogoliubsky. Certainly this prince had every reason to display proudly his gorgeous churches to foreign guests, even if one might doubt the effect of this show upon their religious sentiments.

To give up all one's substance for the adornment of a church was considered a God-pleasing deed, even in the Kievan period. Among others this was done by Erasmus, one of the Kievan monks, but the *Patericon* tells us that this did not save the future saint from temptation and temporary moral laxity. The story shows a fine understanding of religious psychology among the Kievan hagiographers: of all Christian virtues the devotion to beauty of ritual is the least secure way to salvation. How different is the creative work of an artist if inspired by high religious spirit! One of the most attractive figures of the same *Patericon* is Alypius, the icon painter, the first in a series of canonized religious artists in Russia. All his works are lost, but if his style can be reconstructed in accordance with the legend of his life, it must have been a light, spiritual art, almost

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dematerialized and transparent with the vision of celestial beauty. (139)

The Testimony of the Icons

In the present book only literary material has been used for the reconstruction of the Russian religious mind. Yet it often has been affirmed that the deepest religious experiences and ideas of ancient Russia were expressed not in words but in colors: in her religious painting. What have icons to teach us about the Russian religious mind of the first Christian centuries?

Unfortunately this source of information for the Kievan period is very scanty. Besides mosaics and the frescoes of some churches (Saint Michael monastery in Kiev, Saint Savior in Nereditza near Novgorod), hardly more than a score of Kievan icons, that is, separate paintings on wood, are extant. The second, and the major reason for their inadequacy is their imitative character. In the first centuries of its development, Russian religious art followed Byzantine patterns strictly. Russian icons of that period are, in most cases, copies of Greek originals. There are some good copies among them promising a great future, but still lacking in original spirit. Sometimes, it is impossible to tell the Russian copy from the Greek original.

It is likely that these difficulties will be partly overcome with the progress of studies in this field, only recently opened to research. Perhaps it will at length be possible to speak of the particular features of Russian style in the Russian iconography of this period. So far we can make some general observations not limited to the early times alone.

The fundamental religious dualism in the worship of Christ does not find its iconographic expression in different treatments of Christ, The Lord on the icon is always the Pantocrator, never a humiliated Christ. Yet, His countenance is liable to slight changes, from severe and wrathful to mild and sorrowful. Sometimes these nuances were almost imperceptible; sometimes, in later time, they were grasped even by contemporaries who gave particular names to the types of the most venerated icons. In Kievan art it is sufficient to state that both types derived from Byzantium are represented, but not yet strongly differentiated,

The corresponding dualism is also observed in the Madonna types. Apart from the Orante, with the Infant represented in a medallion on her waist (the patroness of Novgorod), all Russian icons of Our Lady can be traced to the two Greek patterns: in one Mary is

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represented as the heavenly Queen, in the other as God's Mother (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*). The idea

is indicated by the mutual situation of the two heads, Mother's and Son's. The head of the Queen is erect, facing forward, as well as that of the Infant; both look ahead without any relationship to one another. On the icons of the Mother her head is bent toward the Son in a token of tenderness. Very often the feeling of motherly love is indicated, slightly and reservedly, in the expression of the eyes - always marked with sorrow as if foreseeing Golgotha. The Queen type is called in Greek *Hodegetria*, after the famous miraculous icon of Constantinople. In Russia, Our Lady of Smolensk, a Greek icon, is the main representative of this type. The best presentation of motherly tenderness is found in Our Lady of Vladimir, also brought from Greece - perhaps the most beautiful example of all Greek icons extant. In Russia this type is called by the familiar name of *Umilenie*. There was a time when the art historians believed that the *Umilenie* type was a Russian creation. We know better now, but the very possibility of this error is the proof of the rareness of the Madonna type in Greece. The Russians took over both iconographical patterns from Greece; but they gave their preference to the less common one, revealing by this choice the prevailing leaning of their minds.

We know that in the cult of Our lady on Russian soil divine motherhood and not Virginity is emphasized. A corollary of this devotional trend was that, in contrast to the West, beauty was not the main feature of her image (in Seville, Spain, it is said that male Spaniards give *piropos* [compliments] to the image of the Virgin of the Macarena during the Holy Week processions, such is the unearthly beauty of the image). That means that the strong Russian need for the worship of beauty had to find its gratification elsewhere (Spaniards, who also have a strong need for the worship of beauty, have no such problem, as we have noted above). Since icons of holy women and virgins were rare or even absent, the Russian religious artist found the embodiment of the idea of the beautiful in the icons of angels. Their icons are preserved from all periods of Russian art - angels in general, or (the Archangels) St. Michael and St. Gabriel in particular (memories of Andalusia: the Archangel St. Raphael, patron of Cordoba, the Archangel St. Gabriel, patron of Granada, and the Archangel St. Michael, patron of Seville), always extremely refined and enchanting. The antique model of a young god or genius is still conspicuous. But the beauty of the human face is here

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purified of all sexual fascination and sublimated into celestial spirituality.

In spite of the infancy of Russian art, its refinement is characteristic not only of the angels'

icons. The whole school of Suzdal-Vladimir is marked by aristocratic elegance in lines and colors; a certain rudeness of Novgorodian primitives, more popular and plebian, is the opposite of Vladimir Aristocracy. (140)

Eschatology

"For a complete appraisal of the Russian historical sense one has to keep in mind its eschatological trend. For a Christian, history is not an endless circle of repeated developments, as it was for Aristotle or Polybius, nor is it an endless straight line of progress, as it is for the moderns, but a finite and closed process having both a beginning and an end. In this historical outlook the Russian annalist is not different from the chronicler of the Christian West. One is entitled, however, to speak of a particular eschatological interest in Russia judging by the great number of translated apocryphal apocalypses and the works, also half apocryphal, of the Greek fathers - Hippolytus, Methodius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ephraim [*really one of the Syriac fathers*] and "Palladius". There are no signs, however, that in Russia the interest took the morbid character of an immediate expectation and fear of the End. It could, in a particular case, deeply impress the sensitive religious mind of a monk like Abraham of Smolensk, and direct his way of devotion and preaching along the line of repentance. It could produce a work, like The Sermon on the Heavenly Powers, of severe and gloomy prospects. Yet, this gloomy vision never was a prevailing feature of Kievan Christianity. The last fulfilling event of history, the coming of Christ, could be envisaged not only as retribution, as "Terrible Judgement", but also as salvation, the end of the suffering of the innocent, the "apocatastasis" of creation. We have seen that even the gloomy Sermon on Heavenly Powers ends upon a jubilant note of the transfiguration of the Earth.

Still more interesting is the eschatology of Hilarion of Kiev. He gives only short allusions, but they are precious. For him the end and fulfillment appears not in the aspect of Judgement but of the "world to come" and of the "incorruptible life". It is a new, third world eon following the Church of the New Testament.

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Law was precursor and servant to Grace and Truth, but Grace and Truth are servants of the World to come, to the incorruptible life. ... Moses and the prophets had preached the Christ's coming. Christ and His apostles, the Resurrection and the World to

come.

At least one can say that Russian eschatological consciousness was divided between the negative and positive sides of the expectation, or putting it in other terms between the medieval image of Judgement and the ancient Church expectation of eternal life. The last trend is perhaps responsible for the strange popularity in Russia of some pre-Nicene fathers, commonly neglected or "superseded" by the classical and post-classical patristic thought." (141)

Religious Nationalism

"Life within the oecumenical organism of the (Orthodox) Church favorably shaped young Russia's national consciousness. Russia as a nation was born out of the mixture of Slavic and non-Slavic (*Iranians, probably Celts, Lithuanians or Balts, Germanic [Goths and Vikings], Ural-Altai*) tribes simultaneous with her conversion. In meditating about the destiny of their people, baptized "after all others", the authors of the eleventh century inspired by the Slavic tradition of Saint Cyril and St. Methodius created a doctrine of national calling of Russia which is much more orthodox, because it is more Christian than later Muscovite messianism.

In Kiev one cannot speak of Russian messianism in the sense of uniqueness or exclusiveness of national religious calling. All peoples are called by God, and Russia among them. It is a view taken from a universal, oecumenical standpoint, and not from a national one. On the other hand, the nation is not an indifferent category in the kingdom of God. As man stands before God, responsible for his own life, so stand all nations, as spiritual entities, with their sins and their holiness, in the earthly Church and in eternity. This religious idea of the nation could not be born in the medieval West, with its [very relative] unity of Latin culture. It has its natural origin within the Eastern (Orthodox) Church, with its plurality of languages and cultures: oriental [*Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Georgian*], Greek, Slavic. Let us not forget that the Latin world, in the mind of eleventh century Russia, also entered into this Christian Universe,
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though not as its center.

The later Jewish belief that every nation has its celestial patron in the person of an angel (Daniel 10) was familiar to Russians, especially through the intermediary of Epiphanius of Cyprus. But more widespread was the idea that each Christian nation is headed in the kingdom of God by her holy founder in

Christ.

"The Roman [Byzantine] country praises with laudatory words Peter and Paul by whom she was led to believe in Jesus Christ, son of God; Asia - Ephesus and Patmos, John the Theologian (Evangelist); India, Thomas; Egypt, Mark. All countries, cities, and nations venerate and glorify each their own teacher who had taught them the orthodox faith."

These are the famous words of Hilarion of Kiev repeated by Russian hagiographers through the centuries. The Russian Church cannot claim an apostolic origin; at least, this was clear to the first Christian generations in Russia. The Russian heathens "heard from no one the word on Jesus Christ, our Lord, for the apostles did not come to them," admits Nestor in his Lection of Saint Boris and Saint Gleb. In place of the great apostolic names of other church founders Hilarion [[of Kiev] suggests that they exalt the name of Prince Vladimir [the Russian Viking], the "Baptiser", a not-yet-canonized father of Russian Christianity. Nevertheless, this comparison with other nations is far from inspiring Russian society with pride; certainly they have no claim to the first place in the hierarchy of the earthly Church. The only ground for their national self-respect is the Christian reversal of all human values; and Nestor actually proceeds on this way.

In his prologue to the Lection of Saint Boris and Saint Gleb he tells at length the Gospel's parable of the workers in the vineyard. The Lord of the vineyard equalizes the reward of the workers in spite of the difference in their working hours. The Russians are not the first, but the last ones, the workers of the eleventh hour. "Indeed, they had been idle, serving idols and not God ... but in the last days God had mercy on them and did not let them perish to the end in the error of idolatry."

This salvation is the act of God's mercy and implies no merit on the side of the heathen people. "God had mercy toward all countries, and we also were not neglected by Him," says Hilarion. But the last called

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can yield greater fruits in the Church. "Many last ones will be first, if these last are better than the first fathers." This is the reflection of Nestor on the virtues of the great Theodosius. This recent Russian saint has refuted the prediction of an ancient *Patericon*: "Weak will be the last generation."

The same national idea underlies the cult of the "sufferers". Boris and Gleb "took off the shame from the

sons of Russia", the shame of inveterate heathendom. The authors of their Lives insist, with obvious exaggeration, that the veneration of those first saints of Russia is not limited to their mother country but already has become universal.

According to Hilarion, James, and others, it was Prince Vladimir himself who saved the Christian honor of Russia. But no one yet seriously claims first place for her: "Not the worst, though the last," is the dominant tone: "Lo, we also with all Christians already praise the Holy Trinity", said Hilarion.

In comparison with the Christian present the recent heathen past appears in the darkest colors. "Formerly we lived like beasts or animals", asserts Hilarion, "not knowing the right from the left, heeding the earthly things and having no thought of the heavenly." That the Slavic ancestors lived "in a beastly manner" is a common idea of Russian chroniclers who apply it either to all Russian tribes or to particularly backward ones like the Drevliane and Viaticchi. But in Hilarion one already meets the first attempt at the rehabilitation of pre-Christian Russia. Hilarion here contradicts himself. Embarking on the panegyric of Prince Vladimir [the Russian Viking], he cannot stop before the honor of his dynasty [the *Rurikovich*, or, in Old Norse: *Hroerkrson* and his country:

"Let us praise the great *kahan* (prince) of our land, Vladimir, the grandson of old Igor [Old Norse: *Ingvar*), the son of glorious Sviatoslav who, reigning in their times, were famous in many countries for their valor and gallantry. ... For they had reigned not in a small or unknown country but in Russia which is known and heard of in all ends of the earth.

Historical appreciation in two directions is also found in the Chronicles. The annalist depicts with obvious satisfaction the warlike exploits of pagan princes, even when directed against the Christian [Byzantine] Empire, forgetting in this case his own
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disparaging characterization of Russian paganism. Obviously the natural national feeling and the new Christian idea of national dignity based upon Christian calling and self-denial are not yet fully reconciled. But the pagan nationalism is relatively harmless and the Christian one still modest.

One small step forward (or backward) was made at the end of the eleventh century when the legend of the travel of Saint Andrew, the apostle, to Russia was

created. It was an attempt at the ennoblement of the Russian Church by the way of obliterating its late origins. In spite of the contradiction of this legend against the ancient tradition, it took root. In the Novgorod province the wanderer's staff of Saint Andrew was shown; later on in Rostov appeared the staff of Saint John the Evangelist. Rostov did not want to stand behind Novgorod. All these are harmless features of religious patriotism with parallels in nearly all Christian countries.

No one in Russia in those centuries conceived of their country as the center of The Christian world, or the land of the truest faith, or of the greatest saints. A filial reverence tied Russia to the (Byzantine) Greek mother Church. They did not compose eulogies in honor of "Holy Greece," (or "Holy Byzantium") but in all practical issues they conformed to her. Greece (or Byzantium) gave the norms for all canonical, liturgical, and ritual orders. Although Russia began to develop some national peculiarities in all these spheres of religious life, the supreme authority of the Greek (or Byzantine) Church arbitrated in every disagreement, such as the one concerning fast days.

Nobody was shocked in Russia when the Church calendar marked a feast celebrating the victory of the (Byzantine) Empire over the pagan Slavs, ancestors or kinsmen of the Russians (for example, the Bulgarians). Saint Demetrius of Salonika, the great protector of his city against the Slavic invaders, became one of the most venerated saints of the Russians. They went still further on the path of Christian humility. Kieven Russia created a new feast, unknown in the Greek (or Byzantine) Church; that of the "Veil" or "Protection" of Our Lady (*Pokrov*) which commemorated the rescue of Constantinople by the prayer of the Holy Virgin from the besieging Slavs. The origin of this Russian feast is not clear. Strangely enough, it became one of the most venerated and favorite with the people. Nobody was ever offended by the fact that the historical nucleus was the triumph of the Greeks over the Slavs. One may

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safely conclude then that under the rule of Greek Patriarchs and Metropolitans, the young Russian Church was able to develop a deep and sincere national consciousness which remained quite free from venomous nationalism.

Some of the modern Russian historians, such as M.D. Priselkov, tried to discover, by a violent interpretation of sources, the traces of the mighty anti-Greek (or anti-Byzantine) current within the Kieven Church. These artificial constructions,

reflecting modern trends of mind, have little ground in historical facts.

Looking back upon their recent heathen past and comparing it with the happy present state of grace the Russian Church leaders, during the reign of Yaroslav (1020-1054), were filled with pious joy and exaltation. This triumphant feeling pervades the most ancient documents of Russian literature, gradually waning towards the end of the (eleventh) century. The most eloquent spokesman of this national exultation was Hilarion.

"The darkness of the demonic cult perished and the sun of (the) Gospel shone over our land. The temples of idols were destroyed, and the churches were built, the idols were broken and the icons of the saints appeared. Demons fled away, the cross sanctified the towns; as shepherds of spiritual lambs, came bishops, priests and deacons, offering the immaculate sacrifice. They adorned all the sanctuary and vested holy churches with beauty. Angel's trumpet and (the) Gospel's thunder sounded through all the towns. The incense rising towards God sanctified the air. Monasteries stood on mountains. Men and women, small and great, all people filled holy churches."

It is easy to discover in this piece of oratory some specific Russian features: the religious emphasis on beauty and the sanctification of nature symbolized by incense rising through the air. Yet, it would be misleading to interpret this and similar oratorical expressions of grateful joy for national salvation as signs of general religious optimism. Some recent historians, such as N.K. Nikol'sky and M.D. Priselkov, misled by the contrast of these joyful panegyrics of the eleventh century with the subsequent literature, went so far as to construe a dualism in Russian

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Christianity; a joyful, this-worldly, easy-going religion of the first generations and the ascetic, gloomy, other-worldly religion of a later time.

As a matter of fact, the cave life of Anthony and his disciples falls precisely into the time of Yaroslav and precedes the more humane and social life under the rule of Theodosius. On the other hand the kenotic trend of the very first Russian saints, Boris and Gleb, as well as Theodosius, is by no means an easy or joyful way of salvation. The imitation of Christ, though different from classical monastic asceticism, leads through self-humiliation to sacrificial death. The same

Nestor who doubted the heroic life of the first Russian saints exults in his prologues with the joy of national triumph. Likewise, the "joyful" Hilarion also began his ecclesiastical career with a solitary cave life. In fact, the triumphant feeling of national salvation gives no key to the way of personal salvation. It is found in men of opposite spiritual tendencies: in Hilarion, Nestor, and Cyril of Turov alike.

It is still greater error to see, as Nikol'sky does, the origin of the ascetic tendency in the dualistic (Manichaeism, Bogomil, Cathar, Patariene) heresy of the Bogomils.

[I cannot imagine anything more antithetical to the emphasis on beauty and the sanctification of nature than the dualism of Manichaeism, Bogomils, Cathars, Patarienes, and, later, the English and New England Puritans and the Covenanters of the Scottish Lowlands; I have made the same criticism concerning those who relate the art of the Provençal troubadours to the Cathars, as we have seen in Chapter 3.]

Byzantium and Christian antiquity supplied the ascetics with enough patterns and inspiration. What demands and explanation is the kenoticism specifically Russian, way. It is most strikingly represented in the first Christian generations of Russia. Its origins are evangelical. The early time of its appearance in Russia can be explained by the freshness and receptivity of the newly awakened religious mind which, like the first gropings of a child's art, reveals its most intimate and deepest aspirations.

However rich and multiform was the blossoming of Russian Christianity in the Kievan period, one has to be cautious and not believe that it exhausted all the possibilities of the Russian religious mind. There were strata in it which awaited a more elaborate cultivation; others which had to be first opened into the light of conscious life. One does not see in Kiev
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the "holy fools" (Greek: *Salos*; Church Slavonic: *Yurodivye* or *Urodivi Khrista Radi*)

[As we shall note below, it seems to me that no one who has read the Paterik of the Kievan Caves Monastery can doubt for a moment that the Yurodiv or Urodivi Khrista Radi appeared almost full blown in Kievan Russia]

a specific form of Russian kenoticism found in the Greek (Byzantine) tradition but typical of later, Muscovite Russia. Contemplative mysticism was awakened only in the fourteenth century and made the Russian

middle ages (the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) the "golden age" of holiness.

[once again, one must be careful not to fall into what the Spanish call *positivism atontado*, i.e., "idiotized positivism": the fact that no written sources have survived from the Kievan Period concerning contemplative mysticism cannot, under the circumstances, be taken as conclusive proof that it was absent; as we have seen and will see below, there are at least subtle hints that contemplative mysticism was indeed present in Kievan Rus']

The same age saw the highest development of religious art in which the Russian mind expressed its most sublime theological intuitions. Muscovy in the Sixteenth and seventeenth centuries emphasized social ritualism and the strength of duty in order to build upon it a mighty Empire. In the Petersburg period, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the ancient religious tendencies revived under the touch of western culture, partly refined and enriched, partly secularized and deformed in radical and revolutionary disguise. At the same time ancient Christian and semipagan religious trends in the life of the people came to light and were traced for the first time by ethnographical and folkloric research.

Yet, Kievan Rus', like the golden days of childhood, was never dimmed in the memory of the Russian nation. In the pure fountain of her literary works anyone who wills can quench his religious thirst; in her venerable authors he can find his guide through the complexities of the modern world. Kievan Christianity has the same value for the Russian religious mind as Pushkin for the Russian artistic sense: that of a standard, a golden measure, a royal way." (142)

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We continue with the history of Kievan Rus'. Above we have dealt with Vladimir, "the Russian Viking", who converted Kievan Rus' to Christianity, and with his sons, by ethnically distinct mothers, firstly, the brother martyrs Boris and Gleb, son a a Bulgarian mother, then Sviatopolk, son of a Greek mother, and finally Yaroslav, known as *Mudryi*, the Wise, son of a Viking mother, and therefore a pure Viking. We continue with the history

of Kievan Rus'.

"In 1054 Prince Yaroslav, sovereign of (Kievan) Russia, dies near his capital, Kiev. His reign (1019-1054) had brought (Kievan) Russia a new political stability, cultural achievement, and international prestige. His victory in 1036 over the Turkic Pechenegs, who for more than a century had controlled the steppelands north of the Black Sea, removed for a generation the military threat from the Eurasian nomads to (Kievan) Russia's southern border. Kiev became in Yaroslav's reign a major European metropolis, whose buildings excited the wonder of visitors from the West. Medieval chroniclers extol Yaroslav as a patron of learning: he is said to have assembled in Kiev a group of scholars who translated books from Greek into (Church) Slavonic, and the first independent works of Russian literature were written in his reign. Russia's international status was assured by the matrimonial ties which bound the princely house of Kiev to some of the greatest dynasties of Europe. Yaroslav's family tree exemplifies these links: his wife was the daughter of the king of Sweden; one of his sons married into the imperial family of Byzantium; his three daughters were wives of the kings of Norway, Hungary and France. It is no wonder that Yaroslav's reign appeared to later generations as a golden age; alone among (Kievan) Russian rulers, he came to be styled *Mudryi*, "the Wise".

The year before Yaroslav died, a grandson was born to him from the marriage of his son Vsevolod to a Byzantine princess. A contemporary Russian chronicler records that she belonged to the imperial house of Byzantium; and her son, known to his contemporaries and to posterity as Vladimir Monomakh, tells us in his autobiography that he inherited his surname from his mother [note: *Monomachos* in Greek means "Single
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Combat"]. There is little doubt that she was the daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1055): and it is virtually certain that the name Monomakh was, in a Russian form, that of Vladimir's imperial grandfather. The Monomachoi were a distinguished Byzantine family, whose high standing is attested in the sources of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Constantine, a wealthy senator who belonged to the Byzantine civil aristocracy, became emperor in 1041, on his marriage to the elderly Empress [*Basilissa*] Zoe. At sixty-four, Zoe was clearly too old to bear children. But Constantine had been married twice before, and, although we lack conclusive evidence, it is likely that Vladimir's mother was a child of the second of these marriages.

The eleventh century Byzantine scholar (Michael)

Psellos has left us a vivid portrait of Vladimir's putative grandfather. He describes him as handsome, athletic, kindly, pleasure-loving and fickle, and something of a womanizer. He was in no way a remarkable ruler, though his reign witnessed several memorable events; among them the establishment of the Imperial Law School and the schism (in 1054) between the Byzantine and the Roman Churches. In 1043 his navy repelled a major attack on Constantinople by the (Kievan) Russians, planned by Yaroslav of Kiev. The Byzantine victory was followed by a peace-treaty and by the marriage between Vsevolod Yaroslavich and the relation (almost certainly the daughter) of the Emperor Constantine IX. The child of this marriage, born in 1053, in whom - as his contemporary, the Byzantine primate of the Russian Church, later put it - God compounded "imperial and Princely blood", is the subject of this chapter. He became one of the leading figures in Russia's medieval history.

Yaroslav's death was followed by a national crisis which threatened the security of the Kievan state and jeopardized the achievements of the preceding age. During the next half century the rulers of (Kievan) Russia were faced with two intractable problems. The first was political. The princes of Kiev had so far maintained a real, if precarious, ascendancy over most of Russia by appointing their close relatives as rulers over the different principalities and city-states into which the country was then divided. This centralizing policy clashed with another, equally potent, force which worked to secure the right of all members of the princely family to exercise authority in the land and to draw revenues from it. This tension between the efforts of the Kievan princes to secure monarchical hegemony on the one hand, and the principle

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of shared authority invoked by other members of the ruling clan on the other, was a source of constant political instability during the second half of the eleventh century and the early years of the twelfth. An attempt to restore some balance between these two opposing impulses appears to have been made by Yaroslav before his death. He divided his realm among his five sons, stipulating that the eldest, Izyaslav, was to have authority over his brothers and reign in Kiev. All were urged to avoid feuding and to live in amity with one another. The next two brothers in order of seniority, Svyatoslav and Vesvolod, were given respectively - together with their adjoining lands - Chernigov and Pereyaslavl', the two cities which, after Kiev, ranked highest in importance in south Russia.

The nature and aim of Yaroslav's Testament have long been debated by historians; and there is still no

agreement whether it inaugurated a new method of succession to Kiev and to the other principalities, or whether its more limited purpose was to reconcile seniority within the princely family with the equally compelling need to partition the common domain. It seems, however, that the dispositions of 1054 were essentially a compromise between Kiev's claim to hegemony and the local interests of other principalities. The compromise, whatever its precise motives, did not work for very long. The "triumvirate", instituted *de facto* after Yaroslav's death, was disturbed by a popular uprising in Kiev in 1068, interrupted for three years in 1073 by a conspiracy hatched by Svyatoslav and Vsevolod against Izyaslav, and came to an end in 1078 when Izaslav, restored to the Kievan throne in the previous year, was killed in battle in one of the chronic bouts of internecine strife. Civil war was becoming a threat to the very survival of the state.

The second problem facing the Russian rulers was a military one. The Pechenegs had been decisively defeated by the armies of Yaroslav in 1036. Twenty-five years later they were succeeded as overlords of the steppe by another Turkic nomadic people, called *Kipchak* in their own language, *Komanoi* by the Byzantines, and *Polovtsy* by the Russians. They proved to be an even more dangerous and determined foe than the Pechenegs. Their first recorded attack took place in 1061. For the next century and a half they were seldom at peace with the Russians, and even the great southern cities - Kiev, Chernigov, and Pereyaslavl' - which lay in the exposed area of the wooded steppe, at times endured siege conditions. The raids and invasions of the Polovtsy are chronicled in contemporary sources, often

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with pathetic or gruesome details. One example out of many is the account in the Russian Primary Chronicle, written in the early twelfth century, of the burning in 1093 of a town south of Kiev, its citizens, "great numbers of Christian folk", were led into captivity, "wretched, tormented numb with cold, tortured by hunger and thirst, with haggard faces and blackened bodies; [prisoners] in an alien land, their tongues swollen, made to walk naked and barefooted, their feet lacerated by thorns; tearfully they replied to one another, saying: 'I am from this or that town', others said: 'I am from this or that village'. Thus they questioned each other with tears, speaking of their origin and sighing, eyes raised to heaven."

Such pictures of human misery alternate in the contemporary records with another, more optimistic, theme: that of national resistance. War against the pagan Polovtsy was waged, with varying success, by most

Russian princes of the time. Its episodes, tragic or victorious, are chronicled in Russian historical and epic works, often with strong emotional overtones, and are seen as a defence of the national heritage and a holy war for the Christian faith. These medieval writings extolling personal valor and skill in warfare, contributed to the image, which has survived into modern times, of the Kievan Period as Russia's heroic age.

Vladimir Monomakh, the subject of this chapter, was to play a leading role in devising and implementing policies designed to achieve the two main tasks facing Russian society of the time: political unity and military defence.

His childhood passed in the relatively peaceful conditions that prevailed in Russia immediately after the death of Yaroslav and during the early years of the "triumvirate". His father, Vesevolod, had been given the principality of Pereyasavl'. There, we may assume, Vladimir spent his childhood and early teens. He was later to rule for eighteen years in that city, one of the most prestigious in Russia, the center of an important principality which extended south and east of Kiev, and as far west as the left bank of the Dniepr. Of all the Russian lands this was the most exposed to attacks from the steppe. Vladimir was probably in Pereyasavl' during the first Polovtsian invasions of the 1060s; in 1066, as a boy of thirteen, he must have seen Halley's comet, which the Russian Primary Chronicle describes as an augury of coming disasters. And it was probably in Pereyasavl', under his father's tutelage, that he learned the technique of border warfare against the mounted Polovtsian archers, in

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which he in his later years became so proficient.

The first recorded event of Vladimir's life, after the chronicle's brief reference to his birth, was a journey that took him from Pereyasavl' to the other end of Russia. He tells us in his autobiography that he "was sent" by his father to Rostov. This is doubtless a reference to his appointment as prince of this city, probably in 1068. He was then fifteen. The journey, he notes with evident self-satisfaction, took him across the land of the Vyatichi: these were a Slav tribe who lived in the vast and still partly impassable forests of central Russia and along the banks of the Oka. Rostov, a town of venerable age, situated not far from the upper Volga, was then the political center of a huge territory which stretched northward almost as far as Lake Onega, and was then part of Vesevolod's patrimony. Much of it was occupied by aboriginal Finnic tribes, though Rostov itself, a center of vigorous Russian colonization, was probably by then a largely Slav city. Two centuries later this area, between the upper Volga and the Oka,

became the nucleus of the Muscovite state. In the second half of the eleventh century, however, this north-eastern borderland of Kievan Russia, mostly covered by dense forests, was still a political and cultural backwater. Vladimir's journey from Pereyaslavl' to Rostov was long and no doubt hazardous. The contrast between the two regions could scarcely have been greater: he had left behind a country of open horizons, with close commercial and cultural links with Byzantium, and constant concern with military defence, and exchanged it for a land at once more primitive and more secure, enclosed by forests, lakes and swamps, in whose countryside Christianity was barely beginning to make headway in the teeth of strong pagan resistance. To strengthen the new faith Vladimir had a church built in Rostov, modelled on the main church of the monastery of the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev.

Vladimir's period of rule in Rostov was brief. By 1070 he was probably transferred by his father to Smolensk. His reign in Rostov, and perhaps his transfer to Smolensk as well, coincided with dramatic events in south Russia. In 1068 the Polovtsians attacked in force: the Russian army, jointly commanded by the *triumviri*, was routed not far from Pereyaslavl'. Izyaslav, accused by the Kievans of failing to give them adequate protection, and faced with a popular revolt, fled to Poland. Meanwhile the Polovtsians, thrusting northward, had reached the neighborhood of Chernigov. Its prince Svyatoslav, Izyaslav's younger brother, hastily assembled a force of some three

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thousand men and defeated a Polovtsian army numbering, according to the Russian chronicler, twelve thousand. The next year (1069), with Polish assistance, Izyaslav regained his throne, expelling an intrusive cousin, who had usurped his authority in Kiev during his absence abroad.

In Smolensk, his new residence, Vladimir was much closer to the events of south Russia than he had been in far away Rostov. Standing on the Dniepr, at a key point on the water route from Scandinavia to Byzantium [pioneered by the Goths, later followed by the Vikings], close to the watershed between the Baltic (down the Western Dvina), the Black Sea (down the Dniepr) and the Caspian (down the Volga), Smolensk, one of the oldest cities in Russia [likely founded by the Goths], was an important commercial center. By 1070 it played a major role in Russia's relations with Byzantium and with central and western Europe. Vladimir's connection with the city was to last long: he may well have ruled there continuously from 1070 to 1078, and he is recorded as laying the foundation of a stone church in that city as late as 1101.

Some time before 1076 - perhaps in 1074 or 1075 - Vladimir married Gytha, daughter of King Harold [Godwinson] of England. The marriage is recorded in two medieval Scandinavian sources, Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla and Saxo Grammaticus' Gesta Danorum. After the battle of Hastings, Gytha, together with other members of her family, sought refuge in Exeter; whence, in 1068, shortly before the city fell to William the Conqueror, she escaped to Flanders, and from there moved to Denmark. The Danish King Sweyn, her cousin, is said to have arranged her marriage to Vladimir. In Russian sources Gytha appears curiously insubstantial: she is mentioned only twice, both times casually, on the occasion of her death in 1107. In 1076 she bore her husband a son, Mstislav, who began to play an important role in the affairs of Russia at the turn of the century, and in 1125 succeeded his father as prince of Kiev. In Scandinavian sources he is called Harold: which allows us to assume that, alongside his Russian name, Vladimir's eldest son bore another, in honor of his English grandfather.

In the year of Mstislav's birth Vladimir was sent by his uncle Svyatoslav, the prince of Kiev, on a distant campaign to the west. Its aim, ultimately conditioned, as we shall see, by Russia's internal politics, was to give military assistance to the Poles against the Czechs. King Boleslav II of Poland, an ally of the Russians, supported the cause of Pope Gregory VII. Boleslav's enemy, the duke of Bohemia Vratislav (3059)

II, was an ally of the Emperor Henry IV. Gregory VII, who sought to encircle and isolate Henry, used his Polish ally in an attempt to coerce the Czechs. In the summer of 1076 the Polish army faced the combined forces of Henry IV and Vratislav of Bohemia near Meissen. The role played in this apparently abortive military encounter by the Russian expeditionary force is not clear: its presence is mentioned neither in Polish nor in Czech documents. All we have by way of evidence are two brief sentences, the one in the Russian Primary Chronicle and the other in Vladimir's autobiography. It seems that the Russians advanced into Silesia, and remained on Polish territory for five months. This episode in Vladimir's career affords us a glimpse of the role - admittedly a marginal one - played by the Russians in the great contest between Empire and Papacy. Its first round was fought between Gregory VII and Henry IV in the very year (1076) when Vladimir's troops advanced deep into central Europe to assist the allies of the Pope against those of the Emperor. While the Russians, apparently without having struck a blow, were returning home from the Polish-Bohemian border, Henry IV was setting out across the Alps to his historic journey

to Canossa.

Vladimir's expedition to central Europe in 1076 is of interest to his biographer for another reason. The Russian chronicle tells us that the expedition was commanded jointly by him and his first cousin, Oleg Svyatoslavich. This is the earliest mention in the sources of a man whose life was to become closely involved with Vladimir's own. For the next forty years the two cousins will appear together in contemporary records with growing frequency, in a relationship lacking neither tragedy nor depth, sometimes united by family bonds, more often pitted against each other by dynastic rivalry and conflicting ambitions.

The precarious triumvirate of Yaroslav's sons, it will be recalled, broke up in 1073. In that year Svyatoslav and Vsevolod conspired against their elder brother Izyaslav, who, once again sought refuge in Poland. From there he appealed for help to the Emperor Henry IV. Svyatoslav, who had taken over the principality of Kiev from his exiled brother, countered this move by an attempt to support the Poles, Henry's enemies. It was for this purpose that he dispatched, in 1076, his son Oleg and his nephew Vladimir on the military expedition to Poland noted above. Izyaslav's diplomatic manoeuvres at Henry IV's court in Mainz came to nothing; nor was he more successful in his attempt to switch sides in the Investiture Contest by sending his son to Rome to solicit the help of Pope Gregory

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VII. Only Svyatoslav's death enabled him, on 15 July 1077, to return to Kiev and reclaim his principality.

Izyaslav's return did not restore stability to Russia. His brothers' plots had raised a political spectre that was to haunt the country for the next twenty years: the question of who was to reign in Chernigov. Since 1054 this city had been Svyatoslav's patrimony. But when in 1073 he became prince of Kiev in the place of the exiled Izyaslav, Chernigov was assigned to Vsevolod, Vladimir's father. This arrangement continued after Izyaslav's return in 1077. There were, however, other powerful claimants to the throne of Chernigov: Svyatoslav's sons considered that, on their father's death in December, 1076, they were the legitimate heirs to that principality. Whether or not they were legally entitled to hold this view, it was clear that Izyaslav had no intention of allowing any of them to rule the land which had belonged to the treacherous Svyatoslav. This policy of revenge created a quasi-permanent opposition led by the dispossessed Svyatoslavichi, who were the source of much trouble until the end of the century. The most active and politically successful of them was Oleg.

In April, 1078 Oleg was invited by Vladimir to dine

with his father Vsevolod in Chernigov. He had recently been expelled (doubtless by Izyaslav) from the west Russian principality; and Vladimir, by arranging this dinner, was probably trying to bring about a reconciliation between his cousin and his father. Their joint expedition to Poland in 1076 had no doubt cemented a friendship between the two kinsmen: a link that was strengthened when Oleg became, probably in the same year, the godfather of Vladimir's first-born, Mstislav.

We do not know what passed between Oleg and Vsevolod at this fateful dinner in Chernigov. Very probably Oleg declared that the city was rightfully his, and his uncle rejected the claim. Whereupon, according to the Russian chronicle, Oleg "fled from Vsevolod" to Tmutorokan". This city (whose Greek name was Tamartarcha) was the capital of a small Russian principality facing the Crimea, on the eastern side of the Straits of Kerch. Though separated from Kievan Russia by three hundred miles of steppe-land, mostly controlled by the Polovtsians, it had close political links with Chernigov which went back at least to the early eleventh century. It was to Tmutorokan that the dispossessed Svyatoslavichi and other princely malcontents retired to nurse their grievances and hatch their plots to regain Chernigov. In the summer of 1078 they very nearly succeeded. Oleg and his cousin Boris,

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supported by a Polovtsian army, advanced from Tmutorokan, defeated Vsevolod's forces on the borders of Russia, and entered Chernigov. Vsevolod fled from the city, and found refuge with his elder brother in Kiev.

Vladimir was in Smolensk when the news of the invasion reached him. Vsevolod had no doubt urgently called for his help. Vladimir's loyalty to his father seems to have been unbounded, to judge from his readiness at all times to act as his military and political agent, and from the respectful terms in which he refers to him in his autobiography. The price of his loyalty now was a break with Oleg, his friend and former companion in arms. Vladimir hastened south at his father's call, cut his way through the Polovtsian army, and - his earliest recorded military success - helped Vsevolod and Izyaslav to recapture Chernigov. A decisive clash between the rival Russian princes could no longer be delayed. It took place on the field of Nezhatá, near Chernigov, on 3 October, 1078. The armies of Izyaslav and Vsevolod were victorious, and Oleg was forced to return to Tmutorokan. Izyaslav, however, was killed in battle; the vacant throne of Kiev now passed to Vsevolod, and Vladimir, who took part in the fateful encounter, was given Chernigov.

The city in which Vladimir was to reign for the next sixteen years ranked second in Russia. Situated on

the lower Desna, not far from its confluence with the Dniepr, Chernigov was the capital of a principality which stretched from the middle Dniepr to the upper Oka. Drawing its wealth from the large landed estates and its share of the Baltic - Black Sea trade, the city had by the second half of the eleventh century become a major cultural center, with a nascent literary school and a fine stone cathedral. The Svyatoslavichi, its local dynasty, entrenched in far-away Tmutorokan, were licking their wounds and acquiring a taste for local autonomy that grew, later in the century into a studied indifference to the interests of Kiev. Chief among the protagonists of this *sacro egoism* was Oleg Svyatoslavich. However, his claims to Chernigov posed no immediate threat to Vladimir. In 1079 he was arrested in Tmutorokan by the Khazars, and exiled to Constantinople. It is generally believed that this move was instigated by the Byzantine government, with the aim of aiding Vsevolod, prince of Kiev and the husband of an Imperial Princess, against his troublesome nephew. Oleg remained on Byzantine territory for four years, two of which he spent on the island of Rhodes, and did not return to Tmutorokan before 1083.

The first years of Vladimir's reign in Chernigov
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were marked by a series of victories over the steppe nomads. During his first winter (1078-1079) in the city he repelled a Polovtsian invasion, and in 1080, on his father's orders, defeated the Torki near Pereyaslavl'. These Turkic nomads who, like the Pechenegs and the Polovtsians, came from western Asia, had recently devastated (Byzantine) imperial lands in the Balkans, thrusting south as far as the environs of Salonika. The Byzantines knew them as *Ouzoi* (Uz). Fortunately for the empire, their horde was decimated by the plague, while some of the survivors recrossed the Danube and returned to the Pontic steppes. In 1080, facing Vladimir's army, they must have posed a far lesser threat to the (Kievan) Russians than they had to the Byzantines.

In 1085-1086 the Polovtsians were again active in the region of Pereyaslavl' and Chernigov. In his autobiography Vladimir tells us how he repulsed them, "with the help of God and of Our Lady".

In 1093 Vsevolod died in Kiev. The handsome panegyric which Vladimir's father receives in the Russian Primary Chronicle may well point to an early twelfth-century redactor devoted to him and his family; we should note, however, that Izyaslav, his elder brother, is accorded an equally glowing panegyric in the same document: only Svyatoslav, the usurper, receives no encomium, the chronicle recording his death without comment.

With the demise of the last surviving son of

Yaroslav and the advent to power of the next princely generation, the problem of the succession to the thrones of Kiev, Chernigov, and Pereyaslavl' had to be resolved afresh within the family. If we can believe the chronicle, Vladimir was tempted to claim his father's throne, but in the interests of peace decided to stand down in favor of his cousin Svyatopolk Izayaslavich, his senior. Svyatopolk was duly enthroned in Kiev while Vladimirm after attending his father's death, returned to Chernigov. Oleg, still deprived of his patrimony, remained in Tmutorokan.

Much of Svyatopolk's reign (1093-1113), as described by the Russian Primary Chronicle, was spent in wars with the Polovtsians. In May, 1093 the combined forces of Svyatopolk and Vladimir were routed by the river Stugna, south of Kiev. The chronicler hints at serious disagreeemnst of strategy and some personal enmity between the two cousins. In full flight, the forces of Vladimir and his younger brother Rostislav were crossing the river when the latter, despite his brother's efforts to save him, was drowned. The death of the young prince shocked his contemporaries and inspired several popular laments. Nearly a century

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later, one of these was incorporated into the Song of Igor's Campaign, Russia's greatest heroic poem.

Sadly, we know virtually nothing of Vladimir's reign in Chernigov. There may well have been among the townsfolk and the landed aristocracy residual loyalties to the exiled branch of their princely family, and particularly to its most prominent representative, Oleg Svyatoslavich. These loyalties, if they existed, were soon put to the test. In 1094, escorted by a Polovtsian army, Oleg rode out from Tmutorokan to claim his patrimony, Chernigov. The events that followed are described by Vladimir in his autobiography:

And then Oleg came against me to Chernigov together with the Polovtsians, and my forces did battle with them for eight days over a small rampart, and refused them entry into the fortress. Having pity on the souls of Christians, and on the burning villages and monasteries, I said: "The pagans must not be allowed to boast". And I gave my brother (i.e., cousin) his father's domain, and retired myself to my own father's domain of Pereyaslavl. And we moved out of Chernigov on St. Boris' day, and we rode through the Polovtsian troops in an armed company of some hundred men, and also women and children. The Polovtsians licked their lips as they looked at us, standing like wolves at the river ford

and on the hills; but God and St. Boris did not deliver us to them, and we reached Pereyaslavl safely.

This vivid account deserves a brief comment. It is one of the few passages in Vladimir's autobiography in which the narrative rises above a homely and matter-of-fact style, and patently strives for literary effect: a sign, we may surmise, that the memory of this frightening experience continued to haunt him in the years to come. The repeated references to St. Boris, his great-uncle and one of Russia's (and Ukraine's) patron saints, is consistent with the religious outlook that permeates Vladimir's writings. Yet the passage does raise the awkward question - which will be discussed later in broader terms - of the author's truthfulness and reliability. Can we believe that Vladimir yielded Chernigov to his rival solely for the high-minded motives he cites? The length and fierceness of the fighting, and his somewhat inglorious departure from the city, suggest that Oleg imposed a military solution, and that Vladimir in the end bowed to naked

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force. It would be rash, however, wholly to dismiss his own explanation: and there seems no adequate reason to doubt that, in deciding to evacuate Chernigov in 1094, Vladimir - apart from military reasons - was moved by the sight of the suffering population, and repelled by the thought of the Polovtsians gaining comfort from the sight of Russian princes fighting one another.

In Pereyaslavl, where he had probably spent his childhood and early youth, Vladimir reigned from 1094 to 1113. In his autobiography he complains of the hardship of those years: "together with my retainers I suffered much from war and hunger". These difficulties were caused by the Polovtsians and by Oleg. In 1096, in alliance with Svyatopolk, Vladimir repelled an invasion of the Polovtsians provoked, no doubt, by the treacherous murder of their envoys, committed on his orders. So great was the Polovtsian threat in that year that their army, under the redoubtable Khan Bonyak, nearly captured Kiev in a surprise raid, and plundered the Monastery of the Caves on the outskirts of the city.

With Chernigov firmly in his grasp, Oleg was able, in the closing years of the (eleventh) century, to play an active part in Russian politics. His activities are severely condemned by the chronicler. In 1096, as he refused to come to Kiev to discuss a common strategy against the Polovtsians, Svyatopolk and Vladimir declared war on him. Oleg fled from Chernigov to north-east Russia, where he attacked several towns belonging to Vladimir. In a battle outside Murom, Vladimir's second son Izyaslav was killed while defending the city

against Oleg's forces. It is a mark of the chronicler's objectivity that, for all the harshness with which he condemns Oleg's actions, he admits that in claiming Murom, which had belonged to his father, he had right on his side.

In the midst of this family tragedy Vladimir's eldest son Mstislav, then prince of Novgorod, emerged as a man of peace. He offered - subject to certain conditions - to mediate between Oleg and Vladimir. Oleg, in turn arrogant and deceitful, attacked the town of Suzdal, but was defeated, and forced at last to cooperate with his cousins.

Mstislav's willingness to act as a peacemaker between his father and Oleg is understandable: he was, it will be recalled, Oleg's godson. Vladimir's reaction to the death of his son, for which Oleg was largely responsible, is more remarkable. At Mstislav's request he sent Oleg a letter, offering him the hand of reconciliation. The contents and tone of this letter will be discussed later. For the present we may note

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that it halted the civil strife in Russia. In 1097, faced with what seems to have been a military stalemate, Svyatopolk, Oleg, Vladimir, and several of their cousins met a Lyubech on the Dniepr to conclude peace. The chronicler, summing up the sense of the meeting by what is doubtless a fictional speech, makes the princes declare: "Why do we ruin the land of Russia by continual strife against each other? The Polovtsians meanwhile create dissension in our land and rejoice that there is warfare among us. From now on let us be of one heart, and defend our land."

The conference of Lyubech, at which representatives of all branches of Yaroslav's descendants "sat on the same carpet" and "in the same tent" (Russian medieval equivalents of the round-table conferences of today), attempted to bring political stability to the land. The princes decreed that each branch of the family should retain its own "patrimony": Kiev, Izyaslav's city, would be held by his son Svyatopolk; Oleg and his brothers were to rule in Chernigov, the patrimony of their father Svyatoslav; while Vladimir was to retain Pereyaslavl, his father Vsevolod's domain. To mark the binding nature of this agreement, each of the princes kissed the cross.

It has been observed that the decisions of the Lyubech conference contain no reference to the principle of seniority within the princely family. This principle, which gave a real, if tenuous, sense of unity to the different territories of the realm, was enshrined in Yaroslav's "testament". In its place the conference of Lyubech proclaimed the right of each branch of the ruling family to its territorial "patrimony". A significant step had been taken towards a new political

regime - that of the sovereign existence of virtually independent principalities.

The Lyubech conference was the first of several at which the princes met to settle their political differences and plan their war strategy. Increasingly, as the eleventh century gives way to the twelfth the chronicle attributes the initiative for the anti-Polovtsian campaigns to Vladimir. It is indeed probable that his qualities of leadership were by then widely recognized by his peers and subjects. From his capital in Pereyaslavl he ruled over regions as diverse and strategically vital as Smolensk, Novgorod, and the upper Volga.

In all the principal events of Svyatopolk's reign Vladimir is portrayed by the Chronicle as playing a leading role. After the horrifying blinding of Vasil'ko, a west Russian prince (1097), we see him - in agreement, this time, with Oleg - avenging the crime;

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In 1103, in association with Svyatopolk, conducting a campaign deep into the steppe, and defeating, south of the Dniepr rapids, a Polovtsian host, vast, the chronicler asserts, as a forest; and in 1107, this time in alliance with Svyatopolk and Oleg, gaining a further victory, followed by yet another in 1111. These three campaigns removed the Polovtsian threat from Russia's southern borders for several decades and established Vladimir's considerable military reputation.

In 1113 Svyatopolk, prince of Kiev, died. For the second time Vladimir drew back from the prospect of becoming the ruler of the first city in Russia. Its citizens, however, sent him a message inviting him to mount the throne, an offer Vladimir declined. The motive ascribed to him by the chronicle - the fact that he was in mourning for his late cousin - is unconvincing. It is more likely that he felt reluctant to accept the Kievan throne without being empowered to do so by an inter-princely conference, and that he was aware that there were other, senior, candidates, one of whom was Oleg. But riots broke out in Kiev against the city authorities and the Jews, who seem to have enjoyed Svyatopolk's favor. The Kievans then sent a second, and more urgent, message to Vladimir warning him of an impending attack on local nobles and monasteries, and stating that he would bear the responsibility for further violence. To avert what seems to have been an incipient social revolution, Vladimir accepted the throne. He was met at the gates of Kiev by the primate of All Russia, the Metropolitan Nicephorus, and a deputation of bishops and citizens.

De jure as well as *de facto*, Vladimir was now the leading prince in Russia. Partly due to the growth of local separatism, Kiev since Yaroslav's death had

gradually lost some of its former commanding status in the land. But it still possessed great wealth and prestige. Its geographical position, astride the main commercial routes of eastern Europe, made it an emporium for the products of Byzantium, Germany, and central Europe. The renown it still enjoyed, at home and abroad, as "the mother of Russian cities" was enhanced by the presence within its walls of the primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, the "metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia". The city's appearance owed much to Yaroslav's building activity. The five major buildings erected in his capital at his behest included a new cathedral with a monumental entrance (the Golden Gate) and the churches of the Annunciation, St. George, and Ste. Irene. Among them the cathedral of Ste. Sophia held pride of place. Its

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very name, and its triple status of court church, the main cathedral of the land, and seat of the Russian primate, show that Yaroslav intended it to be, in function if not in appearance, a copy of the great church of Ste. Sophia in Constantinople. Its mosaics, which date from the 1040s, were almost certainly executed by Constantinopolitan artists; while a group of frescoes on the tower staircases leading to the galleries of the church have been dated authoritatively to Vladimir's reign in Kiev. No less remarkable was the mosaic decoration of the Church of the Archangel Michael, built by Svyatopolk between 1108 and 1113. Two famous monasteries stood on the outskirts of the city: the Monastery of the Caves, the leading monastic house of early medieval Russia, and the Monastery of St. Michael at Vydybichi, the latter founded by Vladimir's own father. Both monasteries, especially the former, were closely associated with the compilation of successive versions of the Primary Chronicle. Kiev, the cradle of the Russian (and Ukrainian) nation, thus became the mother of Russian letters. Its outward appearance made a powerful impression on foreign visitors: the Saxon chronicler Thietmar of Merseburg, writing in the early eleventh century, described Kiev as a city of over four hundred (!) churches and eight public squares; and another eleventh-century chronicler, Adam of Bremen, called it Constantinople's rival and "the most brilliant ornament of Greece". There is manifest exaggeration in these western accounts, yet twelfth-century Kiev, with its numerous stone buildings which stood on a hill overlooking the Dnieper spanned by the bridge built by Vladimir in 1115, must have been an imposing sight.

If we can believe the Primary Chronicle, Vladimir's enthronement in Kiev brought the city immediate peace: "all the people were glad, and the rioting stopped". One of his first measures was to summon a meeting of two

officials from south Russia (including a representative of Oleg in Chernigov) to deal with the causes of the riots. The result was a new statute concerning loans at interest, which was included in the Pravda Russkaya, the earliest known Russian legal code, originally promulgated by Prince Yaroslav. The precise nature and purpose of this "Statute of Vladimir Vsevolodovich" are debatable. It seems that its principal aims were to prevent abuses connected with loans and safeguard the interests of the ruling classes, threatened by a recurrence of the disorders of 1113.

The chronicles do not tell us much about Vladimir's reign in Kiev. His authority over Russia

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unchallenged, except in the western regions, where he repeatedly intervened in order to bring rebellious cousins to heel; he ruled partly through his sons, who represented him in the principal cities of Russia: Pereyaslavl, Smolensk, Novgorod, Suzdal, and Vladimir in Volhynia. The Polovtsians caused no trouble during his reign, except for a brief attack in 1113 which Vladimir repelled with the help of Oleg. The two princes now lived at peace with each other. In the world of twelfth-century Russia, Oleg's patrimony, the principality of Chernigov, was politically going its own way; and it was there, in the city he had fought so long and fiercely to regain and to hold for his house, that Oleg died in 1115.

In the year of his death Oleg took part, together with Vladimir, in a religious ceremony of national importance. In Vyshgorod, a town on the Dniepr twenty kilometres upstream from Kiev, amid a large concourse of clergy and people, the relics of (Sts.) Boris and Gleb, the first Russian saints to be canonized, were transferred from the wooden church where they had lain since 1072 into a stone one, built for the purpose by Vladimir and Oleg. (Sts.) Boris and Gleb were the sons of St. Vladimir and the brothers of Yaroslav, and in 1015 had been assassinated by order of an elder brother (Svyatopolk). The manner of their death, and especially their acceptance of it in a spirit of Christian resignation, made a powerful impression upon their compatriots. Russians of all classes and stations in life became convinced that the two murdered princes were numbered among the saints of God. This popular cult, centred on Vyshgorod, the place of their burial, was encouraged by the ruling dynasty, which led to a formal recognition of the brothers' sanctity, first by the Russian Orthodox Church and then, in 1072, by the Byzantines. The three accounts of their death written in Russia during the hundred years that followed show that (Sts.) Boris and Gleb were regarded as martyrs, not in the sense that they were killed for the Christian faith,

but because by their act of non-resistance they chose to die as innocent and voluntary victims, in imitation of Christ's sacrificial death. These holy princes became their country's earliest patron saints; and, by a curious paradox, the devotees of meekness and non-resistance came to be seen as military champions and supernatural defenders of the Russian Land. Vladimir Monomakh on many occasions showed his veneration for the memory of his two great-uncles. Their cult could still act as a force for unity in the land. And it is significant that the long and bitter enmity between Vladimir and Oleg, which not even

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the spiritual bond created at the baptism of Vladimir's son had been able to exorcise, was in the end soothed in the common act of homage which they paid at the grave of their sainted kinsmen. Describing this ceremony, the Russian Chronicle admits, however, that there was still some rivalry between them: Vladimir wished the tomb containing the bodies of (Sts.) Boris and Gleb to be placed in the center of the church, while Oleg and his brother had chosen as the relics' repository their own family vault to the right of the nave. The issue was decided by lot: and Oleg won. The consecration of the new church was followed by a banquet, at which Oleg acted as host, and by festivities lasting three days. The crowds, the chronicler tells us, were huge; and, on Vladimir's orders silken fabrics, woolen garments and squirrel-skins were distributed to the people. This last recorded meeting between Vladimir and Oleg breathes an air of peace and reconciliation.

Vladimir died on 19 May 1125, at the age of seventy-two. In one manuscript of the Primary Chronicle he is called "a good champion of the Russian Land", and praised for "wiping away much sweat for the land of Russia". Another version of the Chronicle gives him a more extended obituary, with religious overtones:

He had great faith in God and in his kinsmen, the holy martyrs (Sts.) Boris and Gleb ... He was very compassionate and had received a special gift from God: whenever he entered a church and heard the singing, he would begin to weep ... He died on the L'ta [or Al'ta, a river near Pereyaslav] close to his beloved church [of Sts. Boris and Gleb] which he had founded with much care. His sons and boyars carried his body to Kiev, and he was laid to rest in Ste. Sophia, beside his father.

It was probably in 1117 that Vladimir wrote his autobiography, entitled in the only manuscript in which it has survived - the so-called Laurentian text of the

Primary Chronicle, copied in 1377 - Pouchenie, literally "Intruction". The work, incomplete in its extant form, consists of three loosely connected parts: firstly, a didactic passage concerned with man's religious and social duties and addressed in the first place to his sons, but aimed too at a wider circle of readers; secondly, an autobiographical section - mostly a list, with occasional comments, of Vladimir's journeys and campaigns; and thirdly, the text of his letter to Oleg, written in 1096. In all three sections,

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the author speaks of himself and reveals something of his character, life-style and beliefs. It thus seems right to describe the Pouchenie as an autobiography, a form of writing perhaps familiar to Vladimir from his mother's world: self-portraiture at the time was becoming increasingly common in Byzantine literature.

The opening passage contains several clues both to Vladimir's state of mind and to the circumstances which led him to write it. On two occasions he refers to his advanced age, although if he wrote in 1117 he would have been only sixty-four. Because of his age, he fears, his readers may be tempted to make fun of him. This remark is perhaps more than mere literary convention, and we may suspect that Vladimir's anxiety stemmed less from an awareness of his age than from a feeling that the moral precepts he was about to offer would be more appropriate coming from a cleric than from a layman.

In the same opening section Vladimir relates an episode from what seems to have been a fairly distant past. It probably occurred in 1099, and its importance lies in the fact that it inspired Vladimir to look up, and copy, a number of scriptural passages which he later incorporated into his Autobiography. This is how he recalled it.

Envoys from my brothers [i.e., first cousins] met me on the Volga, and said: "Hasten to join us, that we may drive out the two sons of Rostislav and take their land; if you do not come with us, we will go our way, and you yours." And I said: "Even if you are angry with me, I cannot go with you, nor break my oath."

The sons of Rostislav were relatives of Vladimir, and ruled in western Russia. One of them was the hapless Vasil'ko who was blinded in 1097. Vladimir's cousins, who were plotting against them, almost certainly included the prince of Kiev, Svyatopolk. Their message to Vladimir contained an open threat. He seems to have been in no position to risk an armed conflict with his powerful cousins; yet their proposal for joint action

against the Rostislavichi was a direct challenge to the policy of inter-princely cooperation, recently defined at the conference of Lyubech, and to which Vladimir was personally committed. He too on that occasion had sworn an oath on the cross.

The moral predicament which provides the overture to the Autobiography was not unfamiliar to Vladimir. In 1094, when Oleg challenged him for the possession of
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Chernigov, and again in 1096, when his son was killed in battle against Oleg's forces, he had been faced with a similar choice between personal and national interests. This time too the dilemma was a painful one. "In sorrow" he sought solace in Holy Writ. He opened the Book of Psalms at random and read these words: "Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God: for I shall yet praise Him" (Psalm XDIII:5).

Vladimir found these words well suited to his mood. He later decided, he tells us, to commit them to writing, together with a number of other passages from the Psalms which sustained his belief that man's surest refuge is trust in God who will protect him in the hour of trial, when danger threatens or his principles are put to the test. These quotations, no doubt chosen to echo the predicament in which he found himself in 1099, provided the stimulus for the writing of his Autobiography.

A string of further quotations from scriptural, Patristic, and liturgical texts - all no doubt available to him in Old Church Slavonic translations, and some perhaps dredged up from memory, serve as an introduction to the first of Vladimir's moral precepts. It draws its force from the belief in God's merciful nature and His fatherly concern for man. To attain salvation his sons need not engage in severe ascetic training: "repentance, tears, and works of mercy" are sufficient to gain the Kingdom of Heaven. Vladimir is obviously thinking here of those members of the ruling class who have neither the time, nor perhaps the inclination, for elaborate religious practices: if you are on horseback, he says and have nothing else to do better than harbor idle thoughts, repeat in your mind the prayer "Lord have mercy", if you know no other [this is obviously Hesychasm, with which Vladimir was certainly familiar].

This injunction is followed by more quotations from the Psalms, leading to a passage of lyrical description, which provides a contrast to the rather stark prelude of the Pouchenie.

Who would not praise and glorify your power
and your great wonders and bounty, arranged
in this world? How the sky is ordered, how

the moon and the stars, darkness and light,
and the earth laid upon the waters. O Lord,
by your providence! Diverse animals and birds
and fishes all adorned by your providence, O
Lord! And we marvel at this wonder: how you
created man out of the dust of the ground,
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and how diverse are the images in human faces
- if one were to gather together the whole
world they would not be of the same image,
but each by God's wisdom would have its own
image. And we marvel at how the birds of the
skies come from the land of spring, and fly
first of all into our hands and stay not in
one land but, whether strong or weak, fly
over all lands, by God's command, that the
forests and fields may be filled. And all
this God has given for the good of man for
his food and joy ... and those birds of the
skies are taught by you, O Lord; when you
command they begin to sing, and make men glad
in you; and when you will they fall silent,
though they have tongues.

Many attempts have been made to discover the source
of this remarkable passage. The idea that the variety in
human faces is one of God's most wonderful works was not
unknown in western medieval literature. But Vladimir's
almost ecstatic contemplation of the manifold marvels of
the created world finds its closest parallel in the
Shestodnev ("Six Days of Creation") by the Bulgarian
churchman John the Exarch. This work, written in Old
Church Slavonic during the reign of the Bulgarian Tsar
Symeon (893-927), was a part-translation, part-
adaptation - with additional material - of St. Basil's
Hexaemeron, a Greek commentary on the account of the
creation of the world in the first chapter of the Book
of Genesis. The Shestodnev seems to have been read in
early medieval Russia, and it is probable that, in the
passage cited, Vladimir modelled himself, at least
partially, on the work of John the Exarch. However, the
similarities of form and content are not all that close,
and hardly amount to direct paraphrase; so that, in
default of any other persuasive textual parallel, we may
assume that at least the wording of the passage is
Vladimir's own. But even if a more convincing prototype
of this passage were to be found one day in Byzantine
(Greek) or Old Church Slavonic literature, the value of
this lyrical excursus as a guide to its author's mind
would scarcely be diminished. When all is said about the
textual pedigree of the "nature" passage, it still
provides first-hand evidence of Vladimir's ability, in a
life filled with strenuous activity, to pause in wonder

before the beauty and variety of the natural world.

Following the "Mirror for Princes" tradition, the didactic section of the Pouchenie is concerned with man's duties to God, his fellow men, and himself. His
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social obligations, if he belongs to the ruling class, are to dispense justice, protect the weak, cooperate with the church, be efficient in the conduct of war, control his troops, preside with love and authority over his family, and seek good repute abroad by hospitality shown to strangers. Towards himself the ruler is urged to be strict counting his public actions as "labor", requiring discipline and training. Some of this certainly reflects Vladimir's own leanings: thus he writes with manifest admiration of his father who, without leaving Russia, learned five languages - clearly an unusual achievement, even in the cosmopolitan society of eleventh-century Kiev; and he advises his sons to follow a regular daily routine dividing their time between consulting their retainers, dispensing justice, hunting, riding and, somewhere in this busy round of occupations, lapsing into "God-appointed" midday siesta.

The autobiographical section which follows, and forms about one-third of the Pouchenie, is mostly an artless catalogue of Vladimir's "travels" (*puti*) - military campaigns and politically motivated journeys - from *circa* 1068 to *circa* 1116. He recalled eighty-three major ones, "and the lesser ones I cannot remember". Some of the more important have already been mentioned. The overall impression is one of frequent movement and strenuous activity. With manifest pride he records that during the sixteen years of his reign in Chernigov he travelled some hundred times to Kiev to see his father: and he covered the distance - about eighty-five miles - on horseback in a day, before the beginning of vespers. His very language echoes this restless activity. Verbs of action abound: "I went", "I came", my father "sent me", "I campaigned", "We vanquished" (a common variant is "God helped us"), "We pursued", "We scattered them".

Vladimir's zest for strenuous activity can also be seen in his account of his hunting exploits: here too he seems to have followed the new conventions of Byzantine (Greek) literature which, in the twelfth century especially, began to extol hunting as part of the imperial image. As elsewhere in his autobiography, his pride in his physical attainment is tempered by the belief that his exploits in the chase were due to divine aid:

This is what I did in Chernigov; I captured ten and twenty wild horses with my own hands ... Two bison tossed me and my horse on their horns, a stag gored me, an elk trampled me

underfoot, another gored me with his horns, a
(3074)

wild boar tore my sword from my thigh, a bear
bit my saddle-cloth next to my knee, and
another wild beast jumped onto my flank and
threw my horse with me, And God preserved me
unharmd. I often fell from my horse,
fractured my skull twice, and in my youth
injured my arms and legs, not sparing my head
or my life.

The existing text of the Pouchenie ends with
Vladimir's letter to Oleg, written in all probability in
1096, as a peace offering at the end of the civil war in
which Vladimir's son was killed, fighting Oleg's forces.
It was probably the presence of this letter in some
collection of Vladimir's writings that led the medieval
copyist to group them together in the Chronicle under
the year 1096, although the didactic and
autobiographical sections of the Pouchenie were probably
written some twenty years later. The letter draws its
quiet dignity from the sincerity of Christian
forgiveness, from Vladimir's awareness of his spiritual
bond with Oleg, the godfather of his dead son, and from
his acceptance of the need to subordinate personal
feelings to the overriding cause of national unity:

Oh, long-suffering and wretched man that I am
... Look, brother, at our fathers. What did
they carry away with them [into the grave]
... except what they did to their sons? You,
my brother, should first have written these
words to me. When my child - and yours - was
killed before your eyes, and when you saw his
blood and his body, as he lay like a newly
blossomed and withered flower or as a
slaughtered lamb, you should have said,
standing over him and reading the thoughts of
your soul: "Alas, what have I done?" ... You
should have repented before God sent me a
letter of consolation, and let my daughter-
in-law come to me. ... that I might embrace
her and mourn her husband and their marriage,
in the place of wedding songs: for I did not
witness her joy of former times, nor their
wedding, because of my sins. For God's sake
send her to me with your first envoy that I
might weep with her, and give her a home, and
she might sit like a turtle-dove upon a dried
up tree, and I may be comforted in God ... Is
it strange that a man should have perished in
war? The best of our forefathers died in this
way ... Send me your envoy, or a bishop, and

write me a letter in truth ... Then you will
turn our heart towards you, and we shall live
better than before.

Several critics have tried - not very successfully - to show that some of the imagery of this letter was borrowed from written sources or from oral laments. The overall effect remains powerful and moving: a testimony to its author's command of language, personal sincerity, and generosity of spirit; a witness, too, to the strength and maturity of his Christian faith.

The question of Vladimir's sincerity raises a problem of great importance to his modern biographer. How far can we trust the picture of his character and achievements that emerges from his writings? It should be clear at the start that, despite a manifest intention to cut a figure in the eyes of his sons and perhaps of posterity as well, Vladimir does not conceal several actions which, even by the standards of his contemporaries, could be judged discreditable. Thus he mentions the treacherous murder, which he sanctioned, of two Polovtsian chieftains who had come to Pereyaslavl' in 1095 to offer peace; and the massacre of the inhabitants of Minsk, for which he admitted responsibility. And he confesses to a sense of guilt for having attacked Oleg in Chernigov in 1096. His Autobiography, to be sure, lacks any hagiographical features; nor did his contemporaries regard Vladimir as a saint, as his son Mstislav was later regarded. Nevertheless, the impression of his personality which we gain from his writings is a highly favorable one. Is it credible?

For many years this question had been bound up with the complex problems of Russian chronicle writing in the second decade of the twelfth century. Most present day scholars accept the general conclusions of A.A. Shakhmatov (died 1920), the foremost authority on medieval Russian chronicles. He argued that the Primary Chronicle (*Povest' vremennykh let*) acquired its present form in three successive stages. Its first redaction was compiled in 1112 by the monk Nestor in the Kiev Monastery of the Caves, during the reign of Svyatopolk. Early in his own reign Vladimir Monomakh commissioned Sylvester, abbot of the Monastery of St. Michael at Vydbichi on the outskirts of Kiev, to prepare a revised version. Sylvester, who completed his work in 1116, introduced important changes into Nestor's account of Svyatopolk's reign. Nestor's version has not come down to us: Shakhmatov believed that it might have been lost or hidden at that time. Finally, in 1118 the rivalry between the Monastery of the Caves and that

of St. Michael was resolved in favor of the former, and an unknown monk of this community was given by Vladimir the task of preparing a third version. He based it on Sylvester's text of 1116, adding some new material, concerned particularly with Vladimir Monomakh and his family.

Each of these successive versions of the Chronicle, according to Shakhmatov, was politically biased. In Nestor's version the events of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries were described in a manner flattering to Svyatopolk. Sylvester, at the behest of his patron Vladimir, whose father had founded the monastery of which he was abbot, edited the end section of Nestor's text, presenting Vladimir in a more favorable light, and stressing his double role in fighting the Polovtsians and working for national unity. In the third and final version Vladimir's achievements are extolled even higher, and the author, who seems to have greatly admired him and his family, inserted the Autobiography into the text of the Chronicle.

This is no place to discuss Shakhmatov's reconstruction of the intricate genealogy of the Russian Primary Chronicle. Two general points should be made, however. Firstly, for all his unparalleled knowledge of Russian chronicles and sophisticated technique of textual criticism, his conclusions remain hypothetical. Secondly, the partiality and at times deliberate falsification which his theory assumes in the compilers of the Primary Chronicle, and the monasteries to which they belonged, sometimes taxes one's credibility. To be sure, these compilers did at times show some personal bias in the selection and presentation of their material, a bias which often stemmed from loyalty to a particular person or institution. Nevertheless, it seems hazardous to regard them as wholesale forgers, playing an elaborate game of hide-and-seek with their medieval readers (and with modern scholars as well). In fairness to Shakhmatov, it should be said that he stopped short of such extreme conclusions, though unfortunately not all his disciples were to show the same restraint.

It is likely enough that the Chronicle has exaggerated Vladimir's wisdom and achievements. This, one suspects, is particularly true of its somewhat disparaging account of Svyatopolk's reign in Kiev, in which Vladimir clearly overshadows him: for Vladimir's immediate predecessor seems to have been a distinguished soldier, and probably played a larger role in planning and leading the anti-Polovtsian campaigns than the Chronicle gives him credit for. Yet

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it is hard to believe that in depicting Vladimir's character than the Chronicle gives him credit for. Yet

it is hard to believe that in depicting Vladimir's character the chronicler (whether Nestor, Sylvester, or the anonymous author of the 1118 version) could have allowed himself seriously to diverge from the truth. He was, after all, writing in the first place for his contemporaries who had some knowledge of the facts, derived from memory, experience, or hearsay. To distort Vladimir's true image would have been pointless, and perhaps counter productive. Rather than imagine that this image was falsified by an elaborate conspiracy to suppress the truth, is it not better to accept the evidence at its face value and to recognize that his contemporaries admired Vladimir for his qualities of heart, body, and mind.

Few of these were better placed to assess Vladimir's character than Nicephorus, metropolitan of Kiev from 1104 to 1121, the head of the Russian (Orthodox) Church. Two letters written by this Byzantine prelate to Vladimir have survived in a Church Slavonic translation, in one of them, whose ostensible subject is the importance of fasting as a means of mastering human passions, Nicephorus warns Vladimir against listening too readily to informers, and urges him to show leniency to those he has banished or otherwise punished. We do not know why the metropolitan thought it necessary to utter these mild rebukes; but the importance of his letter lies in the brief though vivid sketch of the addressee. Vladimir is described as a man seldom to be found at home, content to sleep on the ground, who dislikes fine raiment, wears a poor man's clothes while travelling through the forest, and dons his princely apparel only when about to make an entry into a town. His entertainment is lavish, yet at table he likes to serve his guests himself. This does not sound like a conventional eulogy; and it is easy to imagine the surprise of this prelate from Constantinople at finding such rustic manners in a ruler, who, through his mother, was descended from an emperor of Byzantium; the details he gives of Vladimir's simple tastes and out-of-doors activity sound the more authentic for the parallels they offer to several passages of the Pouchenie. Nicephorus' letter is an independent testimony of great value to Vladimir's character and life style: it corroborates the positive picture painted of him by the Russian sources; and, by suggesting that the relations between the prince of Kiev and his Greek metropolitan were friendly and close, it adds to our knowledge of Vladimir's affinity with the society and thought-world of Byzantium.

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Of Vladimir Monomakh's political relations with Byzantium we know surprisingly little. The Russian Primary Chronicle states obscurely that in 1116 a

conflict broke out between him and the Emperor Alexius Comnenus over the control of several cities on the lower Danube. Its outcome is unknown, but its effects are unlikely to have been lasting: by 1122 at the latest peaceful relations were restored between (Kievan) Russia and Byzantium, and Vladimir's granddaughter Irene married a son of the Emperor John II Comnenus.

Besides the Pouchenie, which, we have seen, was probably written in part under Greek literary influence, there is another field - the visual arts - in which a direct connection between Vladimir and his mother's Byzantine homeland can be traced, with some likelihood if not perhaps always with complete certainty. Three instances are worth citing.

The first comes from the study of Vladimir's leaden seals, some twenty-five of which have been found. The early ones, dating from the eleventh century, follow the conventions of Byzantine sphragistics: the legends are Greek, Vladimir's Christian name Basil is dignified by a high-sounding imperial court title, and is followed by his Byzantine family name. Only gradually, at the end of the century, were the Greek inscriptions on Vladimir Monomakh's seals replaced by Slavonic ones.

The second example is particularly curious and, in several respects, mysterious. In 1821 a gold medallion was discovered near Chernigov. It is an amulet, presumably intended to be worn around the neck. On the obverse side is a representation of the Archangel Michael, holding the labarum in his right hand and the orb in his left, and a circular inscription in Greek, with the words "Holy, holy, holy Lord of Sabaoth. Heaven and earth are full [of your glory]." On the reverse side is depicted the naked bust of a woman, from which ten serpents radiate in all directions. This Medusa-like design is surrounded by two concentric inscriptions, one in Church Slavonic, the other in Greek. The Slavonic one reads: "Lord, help your servant Basil, Amen". The Greek one, incomplete, has been tentatively reconstructed as follows: "O Womb, dark and black, you have coiled like a serpent, hissed like a dragon, roared like a lion: [now] sleep like a lamb".

Both the female bust with the snakes, and the Greek invocatory inscription, are far from unique. They are found fairly commonly on similar objects of late antique or Byzantine workmanship. They are uterine amulets, whose purpose was to relieve pains of the womb

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and diseases affecting it, to bring about conception, and to ensure that the baby was carried to full term. The design of the female bust with radiating serpents is believed to derive from the figure of the Graeco-Egyptian god Chnoubis, whose gem-amulets were used in late antiquity as a remedy for pains and diseases of the

stomach; as for the inscription, it is a magical charm addressed to the womb, which is admonished to cease its restless movements, compared to those of noisy wild beasts, and to resume a quiet and motionless position. The belief that pains of the womb are caused by disorderly movements of that organ is ancient: we find it already in Plato and in Hippocratic treatises.

The Slavonic inscription on the reverse side of the amulet follows the conventional wording of the Byzantine invocatory formula *kyrie Boethei to so doulo*, of which the equally common Church Slavonic equivalent is *Gospodi pomozí rabu avoemu*.

There has been some speculation about the identity of the Basil on whose behalf this Christian prayer was offered, and who must be presumed to have owned and worn this medallion. A number of clues point to Vladimir Monomakh. Firstly, Basil was his baptismal name. Secondly, Chernigov, near which the medallion was discovered, was his residence for sixteen years, from 1078 to 1094. Thirdly, the size (7.2 centimetres in diameter) and the value of this solid gold object - gold is a material almost unique in these amulets - suggest that its owner was wealthy and high-ranking. Fourthly, Vladimir, with his Byzantine family connections, could more easily than anyone else in Russia have obtained it, perhaps from Constantinople. Finally, the Slavonic inscription on the medallion has been dated on palaeographical grounds to the eleventh or twelfth century. Iconographically, too, the association of these amulets with the Gorgon-like figure is typical of this period. All these arguments are circumstantial: yet they point in the same direction, and some have already been used to support the prevalent view that Vladimir was the owner of the talisman, which provides a curious example of Christian-pagan syncretism and of Graeco-Slav bilingualism in Russia in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.

The third piece of evidence pointing to a direct link between Vladimir and Byzantium comes from the field of monumental painting. It was probably during his reign in Kiev (1113-1125) that a cycle of paintings was executed on the walls and vaults of two tower staircases in the Church of Ste. Sophia. These staircases lead to the galleries where the prince, his

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family, and his courtiers attended divine service. Several of these paintings represent scenes enacted in the hippodrome of Constantinople. Acrobats, jugglers, and joustiers disport themselves in the arena, while the charioteers are poised to begin the race. The emperor, who appears in three of the paintings, is shown wearing the crown and the *chlamys*, seated in the imperial box and presiding over the games. The setting is the

Kathisma Palace, on the eastern side of the hippodrome, facing the arena: the palace is depicted here as a three-stroeyed buiding, with open galleries occupied by courtiers and other spectators. In another fresco the emperor is seated on his throne, flanked by two officials, while a third showshim wearing the crown and mounted on a white horse, riding in triumph. In all three portraits the emperor's head is haloed, in accordance with the conventions of Byzantine imperial iconography.

The depiction of these ceremonies of the Byzantine court on the walls of Russia's principal cathedral church is a striking illustration of the political links between Kiev and Constantinople. For the games of the Byzantine hippodrome, and the ceremonies of the palace generally, were regarded as a symbolic exaltation of the emperor's sovereignty and part of the "imperial liturgy" which visibly expressed it. The frescoes in the tower staircase of Ste. Sophia not only illustrate the spell cast on the imagination of the Russians by the distant glories of Constantinople; they remain as visible evidence of the attempt made by the princely patron of the church - most probably Vladimir Monomakh - to bring home to his subjects the basic principle of Byzantine political philosophy: the belief that, at least in an ideal and "metapolitical" sense, the emperor's authority extends over the whole of Orthodox Christendom. A distinguished art historian has suggested that the details of the hippodrome and of the Kathisma Palace in Constantinople may have been described to the painters of those frescoes - if they were Russians - by Vladimir's mother. She was, as we have seen, very probably the daughter of the Emperor Constantine IX. Her son, sovereign ruler of Russia and the new patron of the cathedral church built by his paternal grandfather, may well have taken this initiative, in the realm of the visual arts, to bring Constantinople closer to Kiev." (143)

So, for the moment at least, we take leave of Kievan Rus'. As we shall see, in the Kievan Period characteristics of Russian

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Orthodoxy appear full-blown, in an uncanny, almost miraculous or magical way. Indeed, all the particular characteristics of Russian Orthodoxy are present in the Kievan Period, some full blown, some in still an embryonic state. Kievan Rus' was, indeed, already "Holy Russia". It was not only a standard or a golden measure, it

was also a pattern on which one could build, but not diverge from, and, in truth, only rarely equal, and in many aspects could not be equalled, much less improved upon. We shall have much to say concerning the particular characteristics of Russian Orthodoxy, all of which have their origin in the Kievan Period.

When I was finishing my military training at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, near Boston, an informal class in Russian was organized. The instructor, was a lady in her 50s who had obviously once been a great beauty, and was still very attractive. She said that she was an ethnic Russian who had lived most of her life in Kiev, and so spoke both Russian and Ukrainian. One of my fellow students asked her if there is much difference between Russian and Ukrainian. The lady answered:

“Quite a lot. Ukrainian is more conservative, more like Old East Slavic and Church Slavonic. Ukrainian is definitely not a mere dialect or variant of Russian, but is a language in its own right.”

I was not able to attend this class for long, because I was shipped to Europe to join the NATO forces.

The Slavic branch of the great Indo-European family of languages is, basically, divided into three branches: West Slavic, i.e., Polish, Czech and Slovak; South Slavic, i.e., Bulgarian,

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Macedonian, Church Slavonic, Serbo-Croatian and Slovenian; and, finally, East Slavic, i.e., Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian. In Kievan times, there was no Russian nor Ukrainian language, there was only East Slavic. Later, for historical reasons summarized above, Russian and Ukrainian diverged and began to

follow different paths, so that today they are two quite different languages. Thus, Ukrainian is not a variant of Russian, nor a dialect of Russian, nor is it derived from Russian, as Russian and Ukrainian both derive from a common source, i.e., Old East Slavic.

Lithuanian is not a Slavic language, but rather belongs to the Baltic branch of the Indo-European language family.

It was the year 1584. Kievan Rus' was no more, crushed under the hooves of Mongol ponies. The center of East Slavdom was no longer sun-drenched, song-filled Ukraine, but colder and darker Muscovy, where, however, the dynasty of the *Rurikovichi* (Old Norse: *Hroerkrson*), the 'sons of Rurik (or *Hroerkr*) still reigned.

In 1584 Tsar Ivan IV "the Terrible" died, leaving two sons: Feodor, the elder, was hopelessly feeble-minded, while Dmitri, the younger, was an infant of two years. This meant that the real ruler of Muscovy was Boris Gudonov, brother-in-law of Feodor and a man of considerable ability, boundless ambition and a complete lack of scruples and inhibitions.

After he had reined for seven years, it was obvious to all that Feodor was not only feeble-minded, but was most unlikely to produce an heir. Boris Gudonov saw his opportunity to not only become tsar in name as well as in practice, but to found his own

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dynasty. There was one obstacle to the ambitions of Boris Gudonov: the Tsarevich Dmitri, who showed every sign of being a handsome, healthy, intelligent and pious child.

In 1591, the Tsarevich Dmitri died, though not of natural causes. Boris Gudonov dispatched a Commission of Inquiry to

investigate the circumstances of Dmitri's death. Said commission was headed by the craven syncophant Vasily Shuisky. To no one's surprise, this commission reported that Dmitri's death had been an accident, that he had stabbed himself during an epileptic seizure (though he had never had an epileptic seizure prior to this, and was a most healthy child). For many reasons, the findings of this commissioned, this obvious "cover-up" and "whitewash", convinced very few people: not the great historian Nikolai Karamzin, nor the poet Alexandr Pushkin, nor the composer Modest Moussorgsky, nor myself. In the minds of the Russian people, Boris Gudonov was a regicide who had murdered an innocent child. Indeed, he was worse than Sviatopolk Vladimirovich (son of Vladimir) who at least had a legitimate claim to the throne of Kiev, while Boris Gundonov was a usurper with no right nor claim whatever to the throne of Muscovy.

Boris Gundonov did not dare to do away with Feodor, who was loved by many of the people. Feodor's death with no heirs in 1598 marked the end of the dynasty of the Rurikovichi, or, in Old Norse, *Hroerkrson*, which had ruled Russia for more than seven centuries. Feodor's death also marked the beginning of that complex and tragic period in the history of Russia known as the

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"Time of Troubles".

The "Holy Fool", or, far more accurately "Holy Innocent" or "Fool for Christ" (*Yurodivye* or *urodivi Khrista radi*) is well-known in Russia. "Holy Innocent" is a more exact translation than "holy Fool", because as we shall see, these people are not really feeble-minded. The "Holy Innocent", "Fool for Christ" or

"Yurodivy" is the inspiration for Prince Myshkin, the title character of Feodor Dostoevsky's novel The Idiot.

In the play Boris Godonov by the 19th century Russian poet Alexandr Pushkin, the "Fool for Christ", "Holy Innocent" or *Yourdivy* confronts Boris Godunov, who has recently had himself proclaimed and crowned Tsar:

THE PEOPLE

The Tsar, the Tsar is coming!

THE FOOL FOR CHRIST

Boris, Boris! The bad boys hurt Nicky!

TSAR BORIS GODONOV

Give him alms! What is he crying about?

THE FOOL FOR CHRIST

The bad boys hurt me. Have their throats cut, like you cut the throat of the Tsarevich (*Dmitri*)."

BOYARS (Syncophantic Nobles)

Go away, fool! Seize the fool!

TSAR BORIS GODONOV

Leave him alone. Pray for me, poor Nicky!

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THE FOOL FOR CHRIST

No, I cannot pray for a Tsar (*who is*) like Herod. The Virgin (*Mary*) will not let me.

The "Herod" mentioned above is, of course, King Herod; see

Gospel According to St. Matthew II: 16:

"Then (King) Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men (Magi), was exceedingly angry, and he ordered that all the male children who were in Bethlehem and its districts, from two years old and under, should be put to death, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men".

Below is the text of a medieval Christmas song known as "The Coventry Carol":

Lully, lullay, Thou little tiny Child,
By, by, lully, lullay.
Lullay, thou little tiny child,
By, by, lully, lullay.

O sisters too, how may we do
For to preserve this day,
This poor Youngling for whom we do sing,
By, by, lully, lullay?

Herod the king in his raging,
Charged he hath this day,
His men of might, in his own sight,
All children young to slay.

Then woe is me, poor Child, for Thee,
And ever mourn and say,
For Thy parting nor say, nor sing,
By, by, lully, lullay.

In his opera Boris Godonov, the composer Modest Moussorgsky has an unnamed "Holy Innocent", "Fool for Christ" or *Yurodivye*, who is most obviously not feeble minded, foresees the coming "Time of Troubles" and says:

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Tears are flowing, tears of blood flowing
Weep, weep oh soul, soul of poor Russia
Soon the foe will come and the darkness nears
Shadows hide the light, dark as the darkest night.
Sorrow, sorrow on earth;
Weep, weep Russian folk, poor starving folk.

It is important not to confuse the "holy fool" or "fool for Christ", *yurodivye*, one of whom appears in Pushkin's play and Moussorgsky's opera, with the *staretz*, the "mystic" or "holy man" known for his sanctity, wisdom and often learning. The *staretz* is a well known figure in Russian literature. The Fr. Zossima of

Dostoevsky's great novel The Brothers Karamazov, is a well known example. Fr. Zossima is a composite of several real life *startsi* (plural of *starets*), though he is mainly based on St. Tikhon of Zadonsk. The *starets* was, or is, a mystic, an initiate, similar in many ways to a sufi *pir* or *sheikh*. The *Starets* Silouan was the *pir*, *sheikh*, guide and inspiration of the great philosopher and theologian the Archimandrite Soprony. The Archimandrite Soprony and his great nephew, expositor and biographer Nicholas V. Sakharov have noted parallels and affinities between the teachings of the *Starets* Silouan on the one hand and St. John of the Cross on the other. Very similar parallels between *Starets* Silouan on the one hand and Ibn Abbad of Ronda on the other are also present.

Thanks to Russian Orthodox publishing houses, numerous works on the *startsi* in general and on individual *starets* are now available in English. For a general overview of the *startsi*, see: Russian Mystics by Sergius Bolshakoff.

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Vladimir Lossky has given a very brief definition of the *starets*. Lossky's definition is somewhat oversimplified, as its extreme brevity makes inevitable; for example, many *startsi* were pilgrims or wanderers (*stranniki*) for at least a great part of their lives. The unknown author of the anonymous The Way of the Pilgrim and The Pilgrim Continues on His Way or The Pilgrim's Tale is an example of a *starets* who was a pilgrim or wanderer for much of his life. Also, many *startsi*, like St. John of the Cross, were pure mystics who renounced all sorts of charismatic gifts. Below

is Lossky's definition of a *starets*:

"Union with God sometimes manifests itself through charismatic gifts, as, for example, in that of the spiritual direction exercised by the *startsi*. These latter are most frequently monks who, having passed many years of their lives in prayer and secluded from all contact with the world, towards the end of their lives throw open to all comers the door of their cell. They possess the gift (charisma) of being able to penetrate to the unfathomable depths of the human conscience, of revealing sins and inner difficulties which normally remain unknown to us, of raising up overburdened souls, and of directing men not only in their spiritual course, but also in all the vicissitudes of their life in the world." (144)

Ellis Sandoz defines the "holy fool" or "fool for Christ" in the following manner:

"He is the familiar pilgrim who lives by faith as one of the "fools for Christ" (*urodivi Khrista radi* or *yurodivye*) who spurns the glory of the world in feigned imbecility." (145)

Vladimir Lossky defines the "fools in Christ" thusly:

"It (Eastern Christian hagiography) knows also strange and unwonted paths of sanctification: that, for instance, of the "fools for Christ", committing
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extravagant acts so that their spiritual gifts might remain hidden from the eyes of those about them under the hideous aspect of madness or imbecility; or, rather, that they might be freed from the ties of this world in their most intimate and most spiritually troublesome expression, that of their social *ego*." (146)

From the very beginnings of the Russian Orthodox Church there have been read during Lent homilies attributed to St. John Chrysostom, but probably of Old Bulgarian origin; hence, the unknown author of these homilies is usually called the "Pseudo-Chrysostom" or, more rarely, the "Bulgarian Chrysostom". In one homily commenting on Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Gospel [*injil*] According to St. Luke, XVIII: 9-14) the

pseudo-Chrysostom said: "Justice falls by arrogance; sin is destroyed by humility."(147)

Gospel (*Injil*) According to St. Luke XVIII: 9-14:

He (Jesus) also spoke this parable to some who trusted themselves as just, and despised others. "Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, the other a publican. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thusly: 'O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, nor such as this publican. I fast twice in the week: I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift his eyes toward Heaven, but struck his breast, saying: 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.' I (Jesus) say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other, because every one that exalts himself shall be humbled; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted."

The tradition of the "fool for Christ" appears very early in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church. The monk Isaakji (Isaac), was tonsured by St. Anthony (died 1073), founder of the famed Monastery of the Caves in Kiev. George P. Fedotov says of

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Isaakij:

"He is the first Russian (or Ukrainian) to take upon himself the sham folly of a Greek (Byzantine) *salos*, - the "holy fool in Christ."(148)

However, there is a difference between the *yurodstvo* or "fool for Christ's sake" of the Russian and Ukrainian *yurodivye* on the one hand and the conduct of the Byzantine *salos* on the other. The first detailed and well documented account of a *salos* is the life of St. Symeon of Emesa (today "Homs" in Syria), written in the early 7th century by Leontios, bishop of Neapolis on Cyprus.(149)

Firstly, some information about the famed "Monastery of the

Caves" in Kiev, where dwelt the monk Isaakij: (Isaac). Says Muriel Heppell:

"No single institution was more important for the development of a Christian society among the East Slavs than the Monastery of the Dormition of the Theotokos (Church Slavonic: *Bozhii Mater* or *Bogoroditsa*) in Kiev, more commonly known by its traditional name - the Kievan Caves Monastery (Church Slavonic: *Kievo-pecher' skuja lavra*). It was not the plodest formal monastic community in medieval Rus'. According to a twelfth-century chronicle, during the reign of Prince Yaroslav Volodimirovich (Russian: *Vladimirovich*) of Kiev (1019-1054) endowed two monasteries, one dedicated to St. George and another to ste. Irene. Yet even then a small monastic community was coalescing on the southern outskirts of Kiev around the figure of Antonij, a native of Rus' who had lived on Mount Athos but had returned to Kiev and taken up residence in a cave above the Dnieper. By the end of the century, thanks largely to the organizational ability of a series of dynamic superiors, and the patronage of several generous Kievan princes, the Caves Monastery had become the leading monastery of the Middle Dnieper region.

The Caves Monastery deserves the prominent role in the mediaval East Slavic world which modern scholars ascribe to it. Not only was it a leading center of intellectual and spiritual activity, but its superiors

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and monks also exerted a strong influence in the social and political life of the Kievan region. Moreover, its reputation and prestige were extended throughout Rus' by the many bishops who came from the monastery's ranks. Yet perhaps the most important reason why the Caves Monastery looms so large in our conception of medieval Rus' is quite simply, that it is the only monastery from the pre-Mongol period about which detailed information has survived. By one scholar's reckoning, at least seventy monasteries had been founded in Rus' before the Mongol invasion of (1238-1240), but in most cases only the monastery's name, the date of its foundation, and sometimes the identity of its founder are known. For the Caves Monastery, however, we possess the *Paterik*, a thirteenth-century work drawing on both contemporary and ancient sources to narrate the monastery's origins and to relate the exploits of its holy men. Concerned mainly with the spiritual struggles and aspirations of the monastery's inhabitants, the *Paterik* provides a wealth of details about the monastery as a religious institution, but because its monks were intimately involved in the political and social life of the city of Kiev, it also

furnishes interesting glimpses of life beyond the monastery's walls. As such, it is one of the most crucial sources for reconstructing medieval Rus' history," (150)

Discourse 7. An account of why the Cave Monastery Is so-called by Nestor, a monk of the Caves Monastery.

"In the reign of the pious prince Volodimer (Russian: *Vladimir*) Sviatoslavich, the sole ruler of the land of Rus', it pleased God to reveal for the land of Rus' a beacon and preceptor for those practicing the monastic life; our present account concerns this.

There was a certain pious man from the town of Liubech in whom the fear of God dwelt from his youth and who wished to be clothed in the monastic habit. Now the Lord, Who loves mankind, inspired him to go to the land of the (Byzantine) Greeks and be tonsured there. He at once set out on his journey and after traveling in the steps of our Lord, Who labored for our salvation, he arrived at Constantinople. Then he came to the Holy Mountain (Mount Athos) and went round to the holy monasteries on (Mount) Athos, and he saw the monasteries on the Holy Mountain (Athos) and the manner of life of the fathers., higher than human nature; for while still in the flesh they imitated the life of the angels. An even stronger love for Christ burned in him, and he wished to emulate the life of those fathers. He

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came to one of the monasteries there and begged the superior to place on him the Angelic Habit of the monastic rank. The superior, foreseeing the virtues which would develop in him, acquiesced, and after teaching and instructing him about the monastic life, he tonsured him and gave him the name of Antonij. Antonij pleased God in all things, laboring for others in meekness and humility so that all rejoiced in him. The superior said to him, "antonij, go back to Rus', so that you may strengthen others there by your success, and may the blessing of the Holy Mountain (Athos) be with you."

Antonij came to the town of Kiev and considered where he should live. He went round the monasteries, but felt no desire to spend his life in any of them, for this was not God's will. He began to go everywhere round the woods and hills, and he came to Berestovo and found a cave which the *Varangians* (Vikings) had dug. In this (cave) he settled and remained there, living in great austerity.

Some time after the great prince Volodimer (Russian: *Vladimir*) died, and the godless, accursed Sviatopolk settled in Kiev. He began to kill off his brothers and murdered the holy Boris and Gleb. Antonij, seeing what bloodshed the accursed Sviatopolk was

causing, fled again to the Holy Mountain (Athos). When the pious prince Yaroslav defeated Sviatopolk and settled in Kiev, [he (Antonij) came back.]

The God-loving prince Yaroslav liked Berestovo and its Church of the Holy Apostles and had many priests under his care. In it there was a priest named Ilarion, a devout man, knowledgeable about the Scriptures and an ascetic. He used to go from Berestovo to a hill above the Dnieper, where the old Caves Monastery is now, and pray, for there was a thick wood there. Here he dug a small cave, fourteen feet deep, and he used to come there from Berestovo and sing the Psalter and pray to God in secret. After some time it pleased God to inspire the pious great prince Yaroslav to assemble the bishops in the year 1051, and he appointed [Ilarion] metropolitan in Ste, Sophia and he abandoned his cave.

Antonij was then in the monastery on the Holy Mountain (Athos), where he had been tonsured. The superior received a message from God, saying "Send Antonij back to Rus', as I need him." The superior summoned Antonij and said to him; "Antonij, go back to Rus', for God wishes it, and may the blessing of the Holy Mountain (Athos) be with you, for many shall become monks through you." He blessed him and dismissed him, saying, "Go in peace."

Antonij arrived in Kiev and came to the hill where
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Ilarion had dug his little cave, and as he liked the place he settled in it. He began to pray to God with tears, saying, "O Lord, strengthen me in this place, and may the blessing of the Holy Mountain (Athos) and of my father who tonsured me rest upon it." And he began to live there, praying to God. His food was dry bread, and he drank water in moderation. He dug the cave, giving himself no rest day or night and continuing in labors, vigils, and prayers. After some time people learned of him and would come to him, bringing what he needed. He became famous, like the great Antony (St. Antony of Egypt or St. Antony of the Desert), and those who came to him asked for his blessing.

After some time the great prince Yaroslav died, and his son Iziaslav assumed power and settled in Kiev. Antonij was then renowned throughout the land of Rus'. When Prince Iziaslav learned of his life, he came to him with his retinue and asked for his blessing and prayers. The great Antonij became known and honored by everyone. Some God-loving people began to come to him to be tonsured, and he received and tonsured them. A brotherhood gathered around him, twelve in number. Feodosij also came to him and was and was tonsured. They dug a large cave and a church and cells, which exist to this day in the cave under the old monastery.

When the brothers had assembled [one day], Antonij

said to them, "See, brethren, God has gathered us together, and I have tonsured you by the blessing of the Holy Mountain (Athos) with which the superior on the Holy Mountain tonsured me. May there rest upon you first the blessing of God and the Holy Theotokos (Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa*), and second that of the Holy Mountain." And he said to them, "You live with each other, and I shall appoint you a superior. But I myself will go to yonder hill and settle there alone." As I said before, he was accustomed to live in solitude. He appointed there a superior named Varlaam and went himself to the hill, dug a cave, which is under the new monastery, and ended his life in it, having lived virtuously for forty years without going out of the cave in which his noble relics lie, performing miracles to this day.

The superior and the brethren continued to live in the cave. The brotherhood increased in numbers and could not be accommodated in the cave, and they decided to build a monastery outside the cave. The superior and the brethren came to the holy Antonij and said to him, "Father, the brotherhood has increased in numbers and cannot be accommodated in the cave. May God and the most pure Theotokos (Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa*) and

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your prayer ordain that we place a small church outside the cave." The venerable one so ordered them, and they prostrated themselves to the ground and departed. They placed above the cave a small church dedicated to the Dormition of the holy Theotokos (Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*).

Through the prayers of the most pure Theotokos (Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) and the venerable Antonij God began to increase the number of monks, and the brethren discussed with the superior about building a monastery. Again they went to Antonij and said to him, "Father, the brotherhood is increasing in numbers, and we would like to build a monastery." Antonij was glad and said, "Blessed be God in all things! May the prayer of the Holy Theotokos (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) and the fathers on the Holy Mountain (Athos) be with you." Having said this, he sent one of the brethren to Prince Iziaslav, saying, "O pious prince, God increases the number of brothers, and their place is small. We entreat you to give us the hill above the cave." Hearing this, Prince Iziaslav was very glad, and he sent one of his boyars to them and gave them the hill. The superior and the brethren had the foundations of a large church and monastery, surrounded it with a fence, built many cells, erected a church, and adorned it with icons. And henceforth it began to be called the Caves Monastery, because the monks first lived in a cave. And henceforth

it was called the Caves Monastery, which is under the blessing of the Holy Mountain (Athos).

When the monastery was completed and while Varlaam was superior there, as he wished to exalt it above the caves Monastery, relying on his wealth. For many monasteries have been built by rulers and nobles using their wealth, but they are not like those which have been built by tears and fasting, prayer and vigil. Antonij had neither silver nor gold, but attained his purpose by tears and fasting, as I have said.

After Varlaam's departure to the monastery of St. Demetrius, the brethren took counsel and went to the elder Antonij and said to him, "Father, appoint a superior for us." He said to them, "Whom do you want?" They said to him, "Whomsoever God wills and the most pure Theotokos (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) and you, honorable father."

And the great Antonij said to them, "Who is there among you like the blessed Feodosij? He is obedient, meek, and humble. Let him be your superior." All the brethren rejoiced and prostrated themselves before him to the ground, and they appointed Feodij as

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their superior. The brethren then numbered twenty.

When Feodosij took over the monastery, he began to practice severe asceticism, fasting and prayer with tears. He began to gather together many monks, assembling in all one hundred brothers. He began to seek a monastic rule. At that time there was an honorable monk from the Stoudios Monastery, named Michael, who had come from the (Byzantine) Greeks with Metropolitan George. He began to ask him about the rule of the Stoudite fathers, and copied down what he found out from him. He established in his own monastery how to sing the monastic offices, how to make prostrations, how to arrange the readings, where people should stand in church and all the rules of behavior in church; where people should sit at table, and what should be eaten on which days - all arranged according to rule. Having found this out, Feodosij established it in its monastery, and all the monasteries of Rus' received the rule from this monastery. Therefore, the caves Monastery became honored as the first of them all and the most prestigious of all.

When Feodosij was in the monastery, observing a virtuous life and the monastic rule and receiving everyone that came to him. I, the wretched and unworthy servant Nestor came to him, and he accepted me. I was then in my seventeenth year. I have set down in writing the year in which the monastery was founded and why it is called the Caves Monastery. Later we shall speak again of the life of Feodosij. (150)

Below is the biography of Isaakij given in The Paterik of the Kievan Caves Monastery, written in the 11th and early 12th centuries by the monks of said monastery Nestor, Simon (later bishop of Vladimir and Suzdal), and Polikarp. Note that Isaakij shows all the characteristics of the Russian *yurodstvo*, "folly for Christ's sake" typical of the Russian *Yurodivye*, the "fool for Christ":

Discouse 36. Venerable Issakij the Cave-Dweller

Just as gold is tried in fire, so men are tested in the crucible of humility. For if the tempter was not ashamed to approach our Lord in the wilderness, how much more does he wish to bring temptations to men? So it was with this blessed man.

Our venerable father Isaakij, while living a
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secular life, was a wealthy merchant, a native of Toropez. Thinking to become a monk, he distributed his property to those in need and to monasteries, and came to the great Antonij in the cave and begged him to make him a monk. Antonij accepted him, dressed him in the monastic habit, and gave him the name of Isaakij (his secular name was Chern'). Isaakij adopted a very strict way of life. He put on a hair shirt, told someone to buy him a goat and to skin it, and put the skin on his hair shirt, so that the raw hide dried on him. He shut himself up in a gallery of the cave, in a small cell four cubits wide, and there he prayed to God with tears. His food was a single piece of sacramental bread every day, and he drank a moderate amount of water. The great Antonij would bring this to him and give it to him through a small window, just big enough for him to put his hand in it; thus he received his food. He lived in this way for seven years, never going out into the daylight nor lying down on his back, but sleeping a little in a sitting position.

One day, as evening was drawing near, he began to prostrate himself and sing the psalms, according to his custom. He did this right up till midnight, and when he grew tired he sat on his chair. While he was sitting, he put out his candle, as was his habit. Suddenly a light shone in the cave, like sunlight, bright enough to blind a man. Two very handsome youths came up to him, with faces shining like the sun, and said to him, "Isaakij, we are angels, and there is someone coming who is Christ, with His angels." Isaakij got up and saw a

host of demons, whose faces were brighter than the sun. One of them was shining in their midst more than the others, with rays issuing from his face. They told him, "Isakkij, this is Christ! Fall down and prostrate yourself before Him."

Issakij did not understand that this was demonic activity, nor did he remember to cross himself. He came out of his cell and prostrated himself before the demons' handiwork as though before Christ. The demons shouted and said, "Isaakij, you are ours!" They led him into his cell and made him sit down, and they sat around him. The cell became full of demons, and the gallery of the caves too. One of the demons, the one they called Christ, said, "Take pipes and lutes and drums and strike them, and Isaakij will dance for us!" They struck their pipes and lutes and drums and began to play. Having exhausted him, they left him almost dead, and having mocked him, they went away.

In the morning, at daybreak, the time drew near for him to eat some bread, but as usual Antonij came to the window and said to him, "Give me a blessing, Father

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Isaakij!" But he heard nothing. Antonij spoke several times, but there was no reply, and he said to himself, "Can he have passed away?" he sent to the monastery for Feodosij and the brethren. The brethren came and dug out an opening where the entrance was stopped up, and took hold of him. Thinking he was dead, they carried him out and put him down in front of the cave. They saw that he was alive, and Feodosij said that this was the demons' work. They laid him on a bed, and the holy Antonij looked after him.

At that time it happened that Izjaslav returned from Poland and was angry with Antonij because of prince Vseslav. Svjatoslav of Chernihiv [Russian: Chernigov] sent for the holy Antonij by night. Antonij came to Chernihiv, and as he liked the place called Boldiny Hills, he dug a cave and settled there. The Monastery of the Theotokos (Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa*) on Boldiny Hills is there to this day near Chernihiv.

Learning that Antonij had gone to Chernihiv, Feodosij went out with the brethren, took Isaakij, carried him to his own cell, and looked after him there. For Isaakij was weakened in mind and body and could not turn over on his side, stand up, or sit down; he just lay there on one side, and often worms collected under his thighs from his excrement and urine. Feodosij washed and tended him with his own hands; he lay there for two years while the holy one cared for him. It is a remarkable miracle that for two years he did not taste bread or water, or any kind of fruit or vegetables, nor did he speak, but lay deaf and dumb for two years. Feodosij prayed to God on his behalf, and prayed over

him day and night, until in the third year he began to speak, asking to be stood up, and began to walk, like a child. He would not bother to go to church, and one could hardly drag him there by force, but after a while he began to go to church. After that he began to go to the refectory. They sat him down apart from the brethren and put some bread in front of him, but he did not want to take it, so they put it in his hand. Feodosij said, "Put the bread in front of him, but do not put it in his hand. Let him eat it himself." For a whole week he did not eat, but after some time he looked around and put the bread in his mouth and thus learned how to eat. In this way the great Feodosij delivered him from the devil's snares and trickery.

Isaakij once more adopted a very strict way of life. Feodosij dies, and Stefan succeeded him. Isaakij said, "Devil, you have already deceived me once, when I was sitting in a solitary place. Henceforth I shall not shut myself up in the ave, but by God's grace I shall

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vanquish you in the monastery." He again put on a hair shirt, with a light tunic over it, and he began to act like an idiot. He began to help the cooks and work for the brethren. At matins he would enter the church before everyone else and stand firm and motionless. When winter drew near and the frost was sharp, he would stand in sandals that were dropping to pieces, so that his feet often froze to the stone, but he would not move until the matins were over. After matins he would go to the kitchen, get the fire ready, and prepare food and water. Then the rest of the cooks would come from among the brethren.

One cook, also called Isaakij, laughed at him and said, "Isaakij, there sits a black crow! Go and catch it!" Isaakij prostrated himself to the ground, went out, caught the crow, and brought it back in front of all the cooks. They were terrified by what had happened, and told the superior and the brethren; henceforth the brethren began to honor him. As he did not wish to be praised by men, he began to act like an idiot and make mischief, sometimes to the superior, sometimes to the brethren, and sometimes to laymen. Some even beat him. He began to behave like an idiot outside the monastery. He took up residence once again in the cave where he had been before - Antonij had already passed away - and began to collect around him young men from the world and to clothe them in monastic dress. He was often beaten for this by the superior Nikon, and sometimes by the boys' parents. But the blessed one bore all this patiently - blows, nakedness, and cold, day and night.

One night he lit a fire in the cave. The stove was full of holes, and when the fire started to burn flames

began to come through the cracks. He had nothing with which to cover the holes so he put his bare feet against the flames until the fire burned out. Then he got down, quite unharmed. There are many stories told about him, and one other incident which I saw for myself.

Thus he gained victory over the demons and thought nothing of their terrors and fancies, as though they were no more than flies. For he said to them, "Although you deceived me at first, because I did not know about your tricks and your cunning, now I have the Lord Jesus Christ my God [to help me], and I place my hope in the prayers of my father Feodosij. I shall overcome you!" But the demons often harassed him and said, "You are ours, Isaakij, because you prostrated yourself before our elder." He would say, "Your elder is the Anti-Christ, and you are demons." And would make the sign of the cross over his face, and the demons disappeared.

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Sometimes they would come to him again, frightening him in a dream as a crowd of people with mattocks and spades, saying, "We are going to dig up this cave and bury this man here!" Others would say, "Come out, Isaakij! They want to bury you!" But he would say to them, "If you were men you would come by day, but you are [creatures of] the dark and come out in the dark." When he made the sign of the cross they disappeared. Sometimes they frightened him in the form of a bear, some other fierce beast, or a lion; sometimes they crawled like snakes or frogs, or mice, or reptiles of all kinds, but they could do nothing to him. They said, "You have beaten us, Isaakij." He replied, "When you deceived me in the form of Jesus Christ and the angels, you were unworthy of that rank. But now you appear in your true colors - as beasts and cattle and snakes and every kind of reptile. That is what you are!" Henceforth, as he himself said, he had no more trouble with them, although they had fought with him for three years. Then he began to live even more austerely, fasting and keeping vigils. While he was living thus, the end of his life approached. He fell ill in the cave and was taken to the monastery. He was ill for seven days and then departed to the Lord in the fullness of faith, without deviating from the path. The superior Ioann and all the brethren laid out his body and gave him an honorable burial in the cave with the holy fathers.

Such were the monks of Feodosij's monastery, who even after their death, shine like bright lights and pray to God for the brethren here in the monastery, for all those working in the house of the Mother of God (Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*), for laymen, and for all those who come and make gifts from their possessions to the monastery, in which, to this

day [the monks] live a virtuous life together in hymns and prayers and obedience, to the glory of Almighty God and His most pure Mother, preserved by the prayers of the holy fathers Antonij and Feodosij. May the Lord grant that we may be delivered by their prayers from the snares of the devil, who [continually] tries to trap us, and that we may find ourselves in the company of the fathers Antonij and Feodosij. Brothers, let us call upon these blessed fathers and miracle workers, our helpers and mediators, to intercede with Lord God, that we might not be separated from these venerable monks, nor be snatched away from this blessed and holy place, nor be deprived of the house of the immaculate and most pure Virgin, as she herself promised. Let us continue our efforts and spend the rest of our days repenting in a manner pleasing to God. May we all
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receive mercy and eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be glory and the kingdom with the Father and the holy and life-giving Spirit. (151)

Note that Isaakji obviously wants no part of the first characteristic of St, Symeon of Emesa and the Byzantine *salos* as mentioned by bishops Leontios and Ware, no doubt he considered it too close to antinomianism, but rather that he concentrates on the second characteristic. Though most of them were pilgrims or wanderers (*stranniki*), while Isaakji remained in the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev, the later Russian and Ukrainian "fools for Christ" or *yurodivye* otherwise faithfully followed Isaakji, rejecting the first characteristic of the Byzantine *salos*, concentrating on the second, and resorting to the third only in very extreme circumstances, as does the "fool for Christ" in Pushkin's Play and Mussorgsky's opera.

***Isaakij the Cave-Dweller
And the "Jurodstvo" Tradition***

"The account of Isaakji the cave -Dweller has aroused the interest of many students of Byzantine and East Slavic monasticism because of its connection with *jurodstvo*, or folly for Christ's sake, which became a widely practiced and highly venerated form of

monasticism in Muscovy and Imperial Russia. Like many distinctive elements in the East Slavic religious tradition, *jurodstvo* originated in Byzantium. There are signs of it in the earliest days of Christian monasticism in Egypt, but the first detailed and well-documented portrayal of a "holy fool" (*salos*) is the life of a sixth-century monk, Symeon of Emesa (today Homs in Syria), by Leontios, bishop of Neapolis in Cyprus, written early in the seventh century. In a recent analysis of this text, Bishop Kallistos Ware listed the specific characteristics of folly for Christ's sake as exemplified in the life of Symeon. First, an attitude of mockery towards the world: "The fool (*salos*) bears witness to the basic discrepancy between human and divine wisdom. Mocking all forms of

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conventional morality based on rules, he affirms the cardinal worth of the person." Secondly, in his desire to attain and preserve the virtue of humility, he deliberately behaves in such a way as to invite taunts and insults, and to become himself an object of mockery; at the same time he thus becomes more closely identified with the outcasts and rejects of society, and with the humiliated, kenotic Christ. Thirdly, the fool has a prophetic function, and a sense of mission to denounce where necessary the great and powerful people in his society. "By virtue of his utter poverty, his voluntary rejection of all outward status or security, the fool is free to speak when others, afraid of the consequences, choose to keep silent This freedom to speak plainly is often used to make savage fun of all kinds of pomposity and self-importance.

It is at once apparent that Isaakji the Cave-Dweller does not fit into this pattern, or only to a limited extent. Most of Discourse 36 (see above) is taken up with a detailed account of how Isaakji succumbed to the attacks of demons while he was living as a solitary in the cave. This left him completely shattered, mentally and physically, but he was gradually nursed back to a state of tolerably bodily and mental health by the devoted care of Antonij and Feodosij: during this time he lived with the rest of the community. As one recent study notes, "Although the story is ostensibly about Isaac, its real hero is Theodosius." In fact, the dominant theme of Discourse 36 is Isaakij's slow, difficult journey from spiritual arrogance to a state of true humility, of which his *jurodstvo* is simply an episode.

It is interesting to consider, however, how this episode fits into the whole story of Isaakij. It occurs immediately after one of the monks working in the kitchen tells Isaakij to go out and catch a black crow. "Isaakij prostrated himself to the ground, went out,

caught the crow, and brought it back in front of all the cooks." Clearly this was not the reaction which the monks working in the kitchen had expected. The story continues: "They were terrified by what had happened, and told the superior and the brethren; henceforth the brethren began to honor him." What evidently impressed them was Isaakij's immediate obedience in obeying this foolish order; obedience was a monastic virtue often in short supply in the Caves Monastery. However, Isaakij was by then well advanced on the path to humility, so "as he did not wish to be praised by men, he began to act like an idiot and to make mischief, sometimes to the superior, sometimes to the brethren, and sometimes to laymen."

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Thus we see that Isaakij's behavior in the latter part of his life does illustrate the second of the basic characteristics of *jurodstvo* mentioned above, but it shows no signs of the first and third, the mocking and prophetic elements. Moreover, both Symeon of Emesa and the later East Slavic *jurodstvo* were pilgrims and wanderers, *stranniki* as well as holy fools, whereas Isaakij never left the Caves Monastery; indeed it was thanks to its protective care that he was able to recover from the effects of demonic attacks and continue his spiritual progress. Thus he cannot be considered a "classic" *jurodivyi*, or holy fool (*salos*), in either the East Slavic or the Russian tradition, but he did grasp and put into practice one important aspect of this form of asceticism, and he was the first Rus' to do so. Hence, his claim to be considered a holy fool of Rus' has some validity." (152)

Like Sviatopolk Vladimirovich, Boris Gudonov did not long enjoy his ill-gotten power. Upon the death of Feodor, Boris Gudonov had himself proclaimed Tsar, but the people loathed him as a regicide and murderer of the innocent child Dmitri. Boris Gudonov died in 1607, many said by his own hand.

To the Russian people, the death of the Tsarevich Dmitri, murdered in such a foul, treacherous and cowardly manner, evoked Sts. Boris and Gleb, and in the popular mind the Tsarevich Dmitri was a saint and martyr. Here, once again, the people led and the Church reluctantly followed. For exactly the same reasons as were

true in the case of Sts. Boris and Gleb, the Russian Orthodox Church was hesitant to proclaim the Tsarevich Dmitri as a saint. However, the Church finally yielded to popular pressure. In the Russian Orthodox Church, May 15 is dedicated to the murdered innocent, the Tsarevich Dmitri. The Catholic Church has never recognized the Tsarevich Dmitri as a saint.

Keeping the above in mind, certainly it is no surprise that

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many Russians and Ukrainians consider Tsar Nicholas II and his family, his wife (*Tsarina*) Alexandra, his son (*Tsarevich*) Alexei Nikolaievich and his daughters (*Tsarovni*) Olga Nikolaiovna, Maria Nikolaiovna, Tatiana Nikolaiovna and Anastasia Nikolaiovna as saints and holy martyrs, though the Church has never officially recognized them as such. I have in my possession an icon which portrays Tsar Nikolai II and his family as saints. Most certainly, Tsar Nikolai II and his family were Devout Russian Orthodox Christians and were brutally and hideously murdered by Marxist atheists. Once again, as was true in the case of Sts. Boris and Gleb and the Tsarevich Dmitri, the people seem to be leading, but the Church is reluctant to follow. The Russian Orthodox Church has taken the first steps towards the canonization of Tsar Nikolai II and his family, but is obviously in no hurry. This is not meant as a criticism of the Church, which has a duty to maintain standards of all sorts, including standards for sainthood. After all, some people seriously believe that Grace Kelly, Princess Grace of Monaco, should be canonized as a saint. I have nothing against Grace Kelly, but a saint? Please!!!

We close this facet with another quotation from Charles A. Coulombe, a selection from "For the White Rose" cited previously:

The Jacobites for Royal James
And Bonnie Charlie as well
And Carlists fought with Spanish names
While Chouans tasted Hell.

The brave emerged from old Vendee
And died at Quiberon
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Or fought with great old Duke Conde
Or fell at bold Toulon.

And Hofer up in High Tyrol
Fought his (Habsburg) Emperor's foe
Feared not to pay the awful toll
Before they laid him low.

In far off Russia's blinding snows
The Whites fought for their Tsar,
And though their country's sunk in woes
Their glory none can mar.

I beg the King Who reigns above
That to me may be shown
How to fight with savage love
For altar, and for throne.

If Shi'as must be implacably hostile to Beni Umayya, it follows that the Umayyas of Cordoba were implacably hostile to Shi'ism, or at least to its political aspects. Does this mean that Shi'ism and/or Shi'a influence were absent in al-Andalus under the Umayyas? Not necessarily. As we shall see later, the ethnic, cultural and spiritual climate of al-Andalus was in fact very favorable to Shi'ism. Pious and learned men, the Umayyas of Cordoba were no doubt well aware of this. Here we may well have the explanation as to why the Umayyas of Cordoba were so fiercely and implacably hostile towards the Fatimids. The truth is that only for about ten years after they had taken Ceuta and Tangier and before their conquest of Egypt were the Fatimids a credible

military threat to al-Andalus. Even then, this military threat was more apparent than real. The fact is that the ambitions of the Fatimids were directed towards the East, and they had no intention of committing their army and especially their fleet to what promised to be a difficult, costly and perhaps disastrous

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campaign against al-Andalus. Yet until the end the Umayyads of Cordoba maintained an implacable hostility toward the Fatimids. One may suspect that the Umayyads of Cordoba were well aware that al-Andalus was fertile soil for Shi'ism, which once established could take on a political aspect and threaten the survival of the dynasty. Thus, the implacable hostility of the Umayyads of Cordoba toward the Fatimids was the result not of fear of invasion but rather of fear of subversion.

The successors of the Umayyads of Cordoba were also, in varying degrees, hostile toward Shi'ism. The North African dynasty of the Almoravides (al-Murabitun), those forerunners of Cromwell and his Roundheads, were indeed guilty of savage, violent persecutions against Shi'as, Sufis, Christians, Jews, followers of al-Ghazzali and a long et cetera. This was very exceptional and the Almoravides were detested foreigners, about as popular in al-Andalus as Cromwell's Roundheads would later be in Ireland. All post-Umayyad rulers of al-Andalus were hostile to the political aspects of Shi'ism, for reasons similar to those of the Umayyads.

However, with the exception of the Almoravides and a few other, local dynasties of Berber origin, these rulers, like the Umayyads, did not persecute other aspects of Shi'ism any more than

they persecuted Christians, Jews or Sufis.

From the above, it should be obvious why our sources on Shi'ism in al-Andalus are so scanty. Of course, this situation in which the ethnic, cultural and spiritual conditions were favorable to Shi'ism but the political conditions were not, is very

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conducive to *taqiyya* or "dissimulation", something permitted to Shi'as when there is grave danger of persecution.(153) In these circumstances it is hardly surprising that our sources on Shi'ism in al-Andalus are so scanty.

However, it should also be obvious that it would be unwarranted to draw any conclusions from this.

We have already discussed at some length the ethnic kinship between Celts and Iranians, the Iranian influences on the Visigoths and the many Persian influences in al-Andalus, which evidently found the ground already prepared. Travelers noted that the Muslims of the Nazirid Kingdom of Granada dressed in the Persian manner, and noted the presence of Persian Sufis in Granada.(154) As anecdotes, the very typical Andalusian *merienda* (afternoon snack), dessert or breakfast of bread, cheese and quince jelly is the typical Iranian breakfast.(155) Anyone who glances at an Iranian cookbook will notice that quinces are used a great deal. Andalusia is one of the very few areas of Europe (perhaps the only one) in which quinces are widely grown and used.

What is called "Indian Summer" in North America is called "Summer of the quinces" in Andalusia. Anyone who compares the non-Gypsy Andalusian guitar music with Arab music played on the

Oud and Persian music played on the *tar* or *setar* (156) will come to the conclusion that non-Gypsy Andalusian guitar music is of Persian rather than Arab origin. The *tar* is a long necked, fretted stringed instrument whose body is hour-glass shaped and is made of wood except that it is covered with a membrane of the sort

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used for drum heads. The *setar* is similar to the *tar* except that the body is smaller and pear-shaped rather than hour-glass shaped, thus reducing the volume of the sound, though not affecting the pitch or range. The guitar is like the oud in the sense of being made entirely of wood, but is like the *tar* in having a long neck and a body in the shape of an hour glass, while the oud has a body shaped like that of a lute.

The lute is obviously derived from the oud, even its name coming from the Arabic *al-oud*. *Tar* in Persian literally means "string". From all this, it would seem obvious that the Spanish guitar is derived from the Persian *tar*, not the Arab oud. The guitar could be quite precisely defined as a *tar* with the body covered with wood in place of a drum head membrane.

According to the poet Abu Bakr ibn al-Qutiyya (literally "Abu Bakr son of the Goth"), the three great holidays of the Hispano-Muslims were *Mihrajan*, *'Id* and *Nawruz*. Two of these are of special interest to us. The word "*Nawruz*" is Persian and means "New Year". In Iran it is celebrated on the date of the Spring Equinox, but in al-Andalus it was celebrated in the first days of January. Thus, the Persian New Year was confused with the Christian New Year and also with Epiphany. *Mihrajan* is also of

Persian origin. In Persia it is celebrated at the time of the Autumn Equinox, but in al-Andalus it was celebrated on June 24, or the time of the Summer Solstice.(157) Thus the Persian Mihrajan was confused with St. John's Eve, which, as we have said is a festival of Celtic origin. Thus, two of the three most popular
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holidays of Muslim Spain bore Persian names, though in practice one was confused with the Christian New Year and Epiphany, while the other was confused with a festival of Celtic origin, though long given a Christian name.

Though perhaps it leads to no firm conclusions, it is at least interesting to note that in India Nawruz and Mihrajan are celebrated on the same dates as in Iran, not being influenced by the Celtic and Christian heritage of Muslim Spain. In India Nawruz and Mihrajan are distinctly Shi'a observances, so much so that in his anti-Shi'a zeal the Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb abolished them.(158) Thus, the celebration of Nawruz and Mihrajan in Muslim Spain, though on different dates than in Iran, would seem to indicate the prevalence of crypto-Shi'ism or at least strong Shi'a tendencies in nearly the whole population of the country.

The typical Aragonese musical form is the *Jota*, of Hispano-Muslim origin, with its Celtic, Syro-Byzantine and Persian elements. The *Jota* is normally festive and happy, but it can be warlike as well, as these examples show, the first from the Carlist Wars:

"Los Requetes (Carlists) of Spain
When they go to Fight
Always pray a Salve (Salve Regina, Hail Hoily Queen)

To the Virgin of the Pillar"

and this one from the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39:

"The Virgin of the Pillar
Returns from Codos very pleased
Knowing that the Reds (Communists)
Will never take Sarragossa".

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The founders of the Falange were Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera, Onesimo Redondo and Alfonso Garcia Valdecasas. All three were Catholics above all and before all, though Jose Antonio, as an Andalusian, spoke glowingly of the Islamic heritage of Spain. Garcia Valdecasas, the only founder of the Falange to survive the Civil War of 1936-39, in 1942 wrote:

"Spain refused to follow the the general political trend in Europe, because the new movements were totalitarian in nature. Spain has always believed in immutable moral principles, and that the state is merely in service of these values. These are, for example, the liberty, the dignity and the integrity of man, and it is the strict duty of the state to respect them and to make them respected." (159)

As Onesimo Redondo said before he was killed at the battle of the Alto de Leon:

"The most constant profession of Marxism is lies. Lies for the Marxists are like water to a fish, an element necessary for life. With falsehoods they have lived and done harm; with falsehoods die those who speculate with the ignorance of the people."

Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera said:

"Why should the right have a monopoly on religion and spiritual values, and why should the left have a monopoly on social justice?"

Obviously Jose Antonio had a blood feud with the left in the Spain of his time, but did not much like the right either,

exception made of the Carlists, who were proof that the left did not have a monopoly on social justice. The blue shirt of the Falange was based on a work uniform.

In all regions of Spain it is common to say: "*Si Dios*

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quiere." (If God wills), which no doubt derives from the Arabic *Insha' Allah*, which means roughly the same thing. We have already mentioned the proverbial stubbornness of the Aragonese.

Here is an interesting an Aragonese folk tale which is said to go back to Muslim times:

An Aragonese peasant is going to Sarragossa when an angel appears and asks:

"Where are you going?"

"To Sarragossa", replies the Aragonese.

"To Sarragossa if God wills", the angel corrected him.

"To Sarragossa if God wills or not", answered the Aragonese.

So the angel turns the Aragonese into a frog. A year later the angel appears to the frog and asks:

"Where are you going?"

"To Sarragossa", replies the frog.

"To Sarragossa if God wills", the angel corrected him.

"To Sarragossa if God wills or not", answers the frog.

So, the Aragonese remains a frog. Still a year later the angel once again appears to the frog.

"Where are you going?", asks the angel.

"To Sarragossa or to the pond", answers the frog.

In Iran there is this folk tale referring to Isfahanis:

An Isfahani dies and two angels arrive to question him.

"Who is your God?", ask the angels.

"I know but I am not telling", replied the Isfahani.

"Why on earth not?", the angels say.
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"Because I am stubborn", replies the Isfahani.(160)

The special affinity between Traditional Catholicism and Shi'ism has been noted by many, indeed since the time of the Crusades, if not before.

In the 12th Century the Crusader Archbishop William of Tyre wrote:

"Muhammad's son-in-law Ali (ibn Abi Talib), was the best knight, braver and more valiant than any of the other caliphs had been. ...

The Shia is not so far from the true Christian faith as is the Sunna." (161)

Far more recently, the same sentiments were echoed in Roman Catholics and Shi'I Muslims, by James A. Bill & John Alden Williams, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 2002. As we shall see below, the great Spanish Catholic poet and mystic St. John of the Cross could in a very real sense be considered a spiritual master in the line of Hasan, second Shi'a Imam and son of Ali ibn Abi Talib.

The above is confirmed by the fact that these feelings are very much mutual. Says Mahmoud Ayoub, a Lebanese Shi'a:

"The problem of human freedom and divine sovereignty and will is as complex a theological issue in Islam as it is in Christianity. While both the broad emphasis and the more basic theological orientation are quite different in the two traditions, the Shi'i view is closer to the Christian position than it is to the strict Sunni Islamic view. God wills, knows and decrees; yet man is still responsible for his

choice, a choice which confronts him at every moment, as the earth would never be void of a proof or witness (hujjah) of God over His servants both to judge and to redeem them. The proximity of the Shi'i view to that of Christianity is perhaps due to the fact that both accept a mediator between man and God, one whose
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essential being and place in human history plays a determining role in the divine plan for creation, revelation and salvation. Thus we must agree with Henry Corbin that Shi'i Imamology is a kind of 'Islamic Christology'. In Christian piety, (Jesus) Christ is the eternal Logos, the divine Word; the agent of creation on one hand, and on the other hand the slain lamb standing before the throne of majesty both to save and to judge. The Imams, likewise, are at one and the same time the pivot of creation and reason for its subsistence, and the blood-stained martyrs whose death is a point of contention between God and their persecutors."(162)

Sayyid Musa al-Sadr, the Iranian-born former spiritual leader of the Lebanese Shi'as, illustrates this. He sometimes preached in Catholic churches, and showed himself a past master in touching Catholic hearts and evoking Catholic spirituality, very often moving the congregation to tears, as in his famous Lenten homily of February 19, 1975 in the Cathedrale Saint-Louis des Capucins in Beirut.(163) This is genuine ecumenism, not the debased, counterfeit variety of which religious "liberals" (pardon the oxymoron) speak, which is really a mask or code-word for nihilism, relativism and religious indifference. Though Sayyid Musa al-Sadr was certainly a brilliant man, this above-mentioned mastery, much greater than that of most Catholic priests who have studied for years at a Catholic seminary and have long experience in the Catholic priesthood, would be inconceivable if his training at Shi'ite centers in Qum and Najaf had not somehow prepared him to touch Catholic hearts and evoke Catholic spirituality.

It is a commonplace to compare Wahhabism to extreme Calvinist sects in Christianity, and to compare the Wahhabis to

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Cromwell's roundheads. In the first half of the 20th Century there was a school of theologians in Iran very slightly influenced by Modern Western thought but profoundly and directly influenced by Wahhabism. It is precisely this school and its followers who are the only Shi'ites who could conceivably be called "Islamic Fundamentalists" in the sense that their beliefs are vaguely analogous to Protestant Fundamentalism. The leading figure of this school was Shariat Sangalaji. Similar in many respects is the later figure Ali Shariati. However, Sangalaji was only very lightly touched by Modern Western thought and profoundly and directly influenced by Wahhabism. Ali Shariati, on the other hand, was profoundly influenced by Modern Western thought, while the Wahhabi influence, though most certainly present, was likely indirect rather than direct. Critics of Ali Shariati had valid motives for calling him "Marxist" and "Wahhabi". In 1983 was published in Qum a book by Ali Abul Hasani which is nothing less than a searing indictment of Sangalaji, Ali Shariati and their followers, whose doctrines and ideas Ali Abul Hasani contemptuously labels "Islamic Protestantism", which infects so many Iranian revolutionaries and would be "reformers" (or "deformers").(164) Obviously the parallel between Sangalaji and Calvin is very close indeed, while Ali Shariati would seem to be quite parallel to certain modern Protestant thinkers, who have

added elements from modern secularist thought and ideologies to the Calvinist base. Ali Abul Hasani contemptuously refers to

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Sangalaji, Ali Shariati and their followers as "Islamic Protestants", obviously using the term "Protestant" as one of disdain and opprobrium, (as does Ali Shariati at times) so he would at least seem to imply that traditional Shi'ites, such as himself, are in some sense "Islamic Catholics". Since it is most certainly true that a traditional Catholic feels closer to a traditional Shi'ite than to a Protestant, it would certainly be no surprise were a traditional Shi'a to feel closer to a traditional Catholic than to a Wahhabi or someone strongly influenced by Wahhabism and, perhaps, Modern Western ideas and ideologies. Certainly it would not be too much to say that Traditional Catholicism has far more in common with traditional Shi'ism than it does with Protestantism. Note that I said Traditional Catholicism. What I said above applies only to Traditional Catholicism, most certainly NOT to "Modernist", "progressive" "post Vatican II" etc. Catholicism, which is partly the ape of Protestantism and partly a surrender to atheism and materialism. Traditional Catholics are much closer to Traditional Shi'as than they are to either Protestants or "Modernist", "progressive" and "Post - Vatican II" Catholics.

The Catholic thinker Hilaire Belloc considered Protestantism to be the fountainhead of Modernity, and therefore something very near to "the source of all evils". However, he had considerable respect for Islam, and left no doubt that he believed Islam to be

far closer to Catholicism than is Protestantism.(165)

Frank Schaeffer goes so far as to have said in a speech

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titled "Understanding the Protestant Mind", that Protestantism is
"the engine of secularization in the Western World".

Herman Melville, author of the novels Moby Dick, Typee, and
Billy Budd, said of the New England Protestantism (direct
descendant of Puritanism or "The Puritan Demon") which he knew in
1876:

Rome (the Catholic Church) and the atheist have gained:
These two shall fight it out - these two;
Protestantism being retained
For base of operations sly
By Atheism

Said Rene Guenon:

"Actually, religion being essentially a form of
tradition, the anti-traditional spirit cannot help being
anti-religious; it begins by denaturing religion and
ends by suppressing it altogether wherever it is able to
do so. Protestantism is illogical from the fact that,
while doing its utmost to "humanize" religion, it
nevertheless permits the survival, at least
theoretically, of a supra-human element, namely
revelation; it hesitates to drive negation to its
logical conclusion, but, by exposing revelation to all
the discussions which follow in the wake of purely human
interpretations, it does in fact reduce it practically
to nothing; and when one knows that there are some who,
while continuing to call themselves "Christians", no
longer even admit the divinity of Christ, it is
permissible to suppose that such people, perhaps without
being aware of it, stand much closer to complete
negation than to genuine Christianity. Such
contradictions, moreover, should not cause undue
surprise since, in whatever sphere they may occur, they
are a symptom of the disorder and confusion of our
times, just as the incessant subdivision of
Protestantism is but one of the numerous instances of
that dispersion into multiplicity which, as we have
observed, is to be met with everywhere in modern life
and modern science. Furthermore, it is natural that
Protestantism, animated as it is by a spirit of

negation, should have given birth to that dissolving "criticism" which, in the hands of the so-called "historians of religion", has become a weapon of
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offence against all religion; in this way, while affecting not to recognize any authority except that of the Scriptures, it has itself contributed in large measure to the destruction of that very same authority, of the minimum of tradition, that is to say, which it still affected to retain; once launched, the revolt against the traditional outlook could not be arrested in mid-course.

The acceptance of individualism of necessity requires the refusal to acknowledge any authority superior to the individual, along with the denial of any faculty of knowledge superior to individual reason; the two are inseparable.

Consequently, the modern world view is bound to reject all spiritual authority in any true sense, i.e., authority which originates in the super-human order, as well to reject any traditional organization which bases itself on said authority, whatever the form that said organization might take, said form varying from one civilization to another. This has, in fact, occurred: as a substitute for the organization qualified to legitimately interpret the Western religious tradition, Protestantism claimed to establish "freedom of inquiry", i.e., interpretation left in the hands of private individuals, even the most ignorant, stupid and totally incompetent, and based only upon human reason.

...
... Protestantism, as also true of the modern world in general, is based upon nothing but a negation, precisely that negation of principles which lies at the base of all individualism, and, taking into account that there are some people (Protestants) who continue to call themselves "Christians", who do not even believe in the divinity of Christ, one may suppose that these people (Protestants), perhaps unconsciously, are much nearer to complete negation than to genuine, orthodox Christianity. However, these blatant contradictions should not greatly surprise anyone,

Because, wherever they may occur, they are merely one of the countless symptoms of the disorder and confusion typical of modern times, exactly as the never-ceasing divisions of Protestantism are only one of the countless examples of the dispersion into multiplicity which, as we have noted earlier, is found everywhere in modern life as well as modern science. Besides, it is most natural that Protestantism, possessed as it is by a spirit ("demon" would be more accurate; the "Puritan Demon", of which we shall have more to say, is one of its many manifestations) of

negation, has engendered that corrosive, dissolving "criticism", which in the hands of so-called
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"historians of religion", has become a weapon with which to attack all religion; thus, while pretending that it recognizes no authority save that of the Holy Scriptures, has itself greatly contributed to the destruction of the authority of said Holy Scripture, as well as of the bare minimum of tradition which it pretended to retain; once started, the revolt against the traditional way could not be halted in mid-course.

It is possible to object at this point that even though it separated from the Catholic ecclesiastical organization, could not Protestantism, because it has retained the Holy Scriptures, have preserved the traditional doctrine contained in said Holy Scriptures?

The answer is a resounding "NO", because the introduction of "free interpretation", "free enquiry" and "free criticism" eliminates any such possibility, because it opens the door to all types of individual stupidity, perversity and fantasy; the preservation of doctrine requires an organized traditional teaching ("Magisterium" in Catholic terms, "Sunnah" in Islamic terms [though it may appear to be an oxymoron or contradiction in terms, there most definitely is a "Shi'a Sunnah"; "Sunnah" simply means "Tradition": on the Shi'a Sunnah, see The Shi'a: The Real Followers of The Sunnah, by Dr. Muhammad al-Tijani al-Samawi, translated by Hasan Muhammad Najafi, Qum, Iran, 1995.]), by which means the orthodox interpretation is maintained; in the West this teaching is identified with (the Magisterium of) the Catholic Church (and in Eastern Christendom, with the Orthodox Church, which until 1054 was still united with the Catholic Church). ...

...In reality, as religion is in essence a form of tradition, the anti-traditional spirit (or, more accurately, "Anti-Traditional Demon", Satan's faithful minion, one of whose guises is the "Puritan Demon", of whom we shall speak later) cannot avoid being anti-religious; it begins by denaturalizing religion and ends by completely eliminating it, wherever it finds it possible accomplish this. Protestantism is illogical due to the fact that, while striving to the utmost limit of its powers to "humanize" (i.e., desacrilize) religion, it nevertheless permits the survival, in theory at least, of a super-human element, i.e., revelation; it hesitates to take this negation to its logical conclusion; however, by exposing revelation to all the dialogues and controversies which inevitably follow in the wake of purely human interpretations, it does in fact reduce it to practically and virtually nothing at all."(166)

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The brilliant Russian Orthodox priest Fr. Seraphim Rose very accurately defined Protestantism as an "**anti-tradition**".(167)

Another Russian Orthodox scholar, the Slavophile Aleksei Stepanovich Khomyakov, said:

"The Protestant world is by no means the world of free investigation. Freedom of investigation belongs to all people. Protestantism is one world negating another. Take away this other world (Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy) and Protestantism will die, since its whole life consists in negation."(168)

A.S. Khomyakov was one of the founders of the "Slavophile" or Traditionalist movement in 19th century Russia, and was a profound admirer of the French traditionalist and counter-revolutionary thinker Joseph de Maistre.

The epitomy or personification of "The Protestant Ethic", brilliantly described by Max Weber and Richard Henry Tawney, is the character Ebenezer Scrooge from the novel A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens.

It has been said many times that the definition of heresy is fixation on one facet to the exclusion of everything else, until it becomes an aberration, even a hideous caricature. One example of the this is Luther's *sola fide*, i.e., justification by faith alone, which means antinomianism and also affirming that ideas, including faith, have no real effect on life. The opposite of the above is the saying among some Protestants "deeds not creeds" and the so-called "(Protestant) Social Gospel" (sometimes called the "Socialist Gospel According to Karl Marx"). One can see that it

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is perfectly true that "Protestantism has gone from faith without works to works without faith". Mother Teresa was a traditional Catholic who found both "faith without works" and "works without faith" to be nonsense.

Both Traditional (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) Christianity and Traditional Islam affirm that God is both immanent and transcendent. To deny either, to become so obsessed with God's transcendence as to deny His immanence, or to become so obsessed with God's immanence as to deny His transcendence are among the most dangerous and malignant of heresies for the following reasons:

❖ 1.) To deny either God's transcendence or His immanence is to put limitations and conditions on God, which is blasphemy and sacrilege.

❖ 2.) To become so obsessed with God's transcendence as to deny His immanence means excluding God from the spatio-temporal world, which on the one hand, in Will Herberg's words, leads to a practical "a-theism" or to pure atheism, on the other hand to Manichaeism and, finally, Satanism or devil worship.

Unfortunately, both Christianity and Islam have frequently been plagued with the above heresy and aberration.

❖ 3.) To become so obsessed with God's immanence as to deny His transcendence leads to gross idolatry and a vague pantheism, and, finally, once again to atheism. Denial of God's transcendence has been much less common in Christianity and Islam than denial of His immanence, though it is found today in some "new age" circles with their "creation spirituality" (understandable, perhaps, as a reaction to certain Protestant tendencies, but still an aberration; to affirm God's immanence, it is NOT necessary to deny His transcendence). Mystics are sometimes accused of being

pantheists, but this is absolutely false. The truth is that mysticism of necessity affirms both the immanence and the transcendence of God, as I believe was made clear in the chapter on St. John of the Cross.

The Venetian traveler, Marino Sanudo, gives the following report concerning Shah Ismail Safavi, founder of the Safavi dynasty:

"He (Shah Ismail Safavi) took a Turk named Talisman and asked him where God was; and he replied that God was in Heaven, whereupon he caused the Turk to be cut in two. And then he took another man, a Christian priest from Armenia, and he asked him where God was; and he (the Armenian Christian priest) replied that God was in Heaven and upon earth and pointed to him who was listening. And he (Shah Ismail Safavi) said: "Let him go, for this man knows where God is." (169)

Sanudo almost certainly heard the above a second or third hand, and the version he heard apparently contained some hyperbole, or perhaps did not hear or at least did not report the whole story, for it is not credible that Shah Ismail Safavi would have had a man executed solely for the motive given above. However, the story basically rings true, and it is virtually inconceivable that Sanuto would have invented it "from whole cloth", as it is most obvious that Sanuto did not possess the necessary philosophical and theological acumen, nor the required knowledge of Shi'a philosophy and theology. Some explanation is required.

Judaism strongly affirms God's Transcendence, but denies His Immanence, often accusing those who affirm God's Immanence of being "pagans" or "idolators". Indeed, it is the above fact

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which was the most fundamental cause of the rupture between

Judaism and Christianity. Of course, it would not be true to say without qualification that Judaism has always and universally denied God's Immanence.

Kabbalism is almost a "waste basket word", as it has been extended to include philosophies which are not only different, but mutually incompatible and contradictory. Recently, it has become fashionable for some Hollywood celebrities to proclaim themselves to be Kabbalists. Without giving any more details, it is impossible to say exactly what said Hollywood celebrities mean when they claim to be Kabbalists, and it is a perfectly safe assumption that they themselves do not know. At least in the cases of Solomon ibn Gabirol, Moses de Leon and Abraham Abulafia, "Kabbalism" simply means "Jewish mysticism". Solomon ibn Gabirol is not usually considered to have been a Kabbalist, but since "Kabbalism" has become such an elastic term, there would appear to be no reason, except for chronology, to say that he was not a Kabbalist; at least he should be considered a "proto-Kabbalist". Of course their fellow Jews accused Solomon ibn Gabirol, Moses de Leon and Abraham Abulafia of having been influenced by Christianity and Islam.

However, there is another way of viewing the above; as we have said in other places in this book, in Spain mysticism is the lifeblood of religion. The Jews of Medieval Spain identified with Spain in a way that the Ashkenazi Jews never identified with Poland, Russia or Ukraine. In all his wide travels, Moses ben

Maimon, better known as "Maimonides" always signed his name "Moses ben Maimon *ha-Sefardi*, i.e., "the Spaniard". In their profound mysticism, Solomon ibn Gabirol, Moses de Leon and Abraham Abulafia were proclaiming themselves to be Spaniards.

Much later, among the Jews of 18th century Ukraine, there arose a mystical movement known as *Hasidism*, whose founder was known as the *Baal Shem Tov*, id est, "Master of the Good Name". The philosopher Martin Buber did much to record the lore of the *Hasidim*. The Hasidim are often called "ultra-Orthodox"; however, this is manifestly false, and those who say it reveal a gross ignorance. As one might expect, their fellow Jews accuse the Hasidim of being influenced by Christianity, which considering the strongly mystical orientation of the Russian Orthodox Church, is hardly a surprise. If the Hasidim have never admitted nor affirmed Christian influence on their movement, neither have they gone to any trouble to deny it. Some affirm that Hasidism has its roots in Kabbalism; if this is true, then it would be the purely mystical, "Spanish" Kabbalism of Solomon ibn Gabirol, Moses de Leon and Abraham Abulafia. Being a purely mystical movement, Hasidism affirms that God is Immanent as well as Transcendent. Many Christians - particularly traditional Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians - who are generally uninterested in Judaism nevertheless find Hasidism both interesting and congenial. To put it very mildly, Russian and Ukrainian peasants are most certainly not inclined to be pro-Jewish. However, some Russian and Ukrainian peasants find

Hasidism congenial, and even have a certain reverence for the *Baal Shem Tov*.

Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christianity have always affirmed that God is Immanent as well as Transcendent, and considered the denial of either His Immanence or His Transcendence to be heresy. However, Protestantism, especially those sects of Calvinist origin often deny God's Immanence, in spite of the words of the New Testament, not to mention the Church Fathers, screaming "pagan" and "idolatry" at any affirmation of God's Immanence. In this, said Protestant sects reveal that they are both Judaizers and crypto-Manichaeans. It is a commonplace that Protestants tend to prefer Jews to Catholics or Eastern Orthodox Christians, who in turn often prefer Muslims or even Hindus to Protestants.

It is sometimes affirmed that Islam denies God's Immanence, this in spite of several sayings of the Prophet Muhammad which affirm Divine Immanence in no uncertain terms. Others, a bit more informed, agree that Sufism and Shi'ism affirm God's Immanence as well as His Transcendence, but that Sunni Islam denies Divine Immanence.

Now, it is true that Sufism and Shi'ism by definition affirm God's Immanence; however, it is not true that Sunni Islam in general denies it, though some sects, which may be called "the Puritans of Islam" do indeed deny it. No Sufi-oriented Sunni can or will deny God's Immanence, and many other Sunnis, following the words of the Prophet Muhammad also affirm it. However, when

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all is said and done, it is true that there are some Sunnis, and not only those who could be classified as "the Puritans of Islam", who affirm God's Transcendence but deny His Immanence. This is the point of the above anecdote concerning Shah Ismail Safavi, though Sanuto apparently lacked the philosophical and theological acumen to be aware of it. Being a Shi'a and a Sufi, Shah Ismail Safavi firmly believed that God is both Immanent and Transcendent, and considered the denial of God's Immanence to be a gross heresy. The "Turk named Talisman" mentioned in the above anecdote was obviously a Sunni who affirmed God's Transcendence but denied His Immanence, while the Armenian priest, being a traditional Christian, affirmed God's Immanence as well as His Transcendence. Hence, it would be no surprise that Shah Ismail Safavi felt closer to the Christian who affirmed God's Immanence as well as His Transcendence than to a Sunni Turk who affirmed God's Transcendence but denied His Immanence. It is obvious that, at least in some cases, Shah Ismail Safavi gave far more importance to meaning and substance than to names and labels; this was also true of Dara Shikoh, son of the Moghul Padishah or Emperor Shah Jahan, who, like Shah Ismail Safavi, was a Shi'a and a Sufi. E. Michael Jones, Ph.D., editor of the traditionalist Catholic monthly "Culture Wars" bluntly affirms that he is closer to Shi'a Muslims than to Protestants. Dr. E. Michael Jones also obviously gives more importance to meaning and substance than to names and labels.

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Will Herberg is a devoutly religious (not secular) Jew, so one would expect him to be more or less neutral in reference to a conflict between Protestantism on one hand and Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy on the other.

Will Herberg defines the "American Way of Life" (since the U.S. Civil War) as "secularized (Calvinist) Puritanism". According to Prof. Herberg, both Puritanism and secularism exclude God from the world, secularism by pure atheism, Puritanism by being so obsessed with God's transcendence as to deny His immanence. Thus, though the starting points and motives be quite different, in practice secularism and Puritanism lead to the same thing, i.e., practical atheism, or as Prof. Herberg puts it, "a-theism". The secularist denies God's existence; the Puritan affirms God's existence, but excludes Him from the world. There is little or no real difference between the practical "a-theism" of the Puritan on the one hand and the frank atheism of the secularist. Puritanism (and Protestantism in general) is thus the half-way house to atheism.(170) One can see how right Frank Schaeffer was when he said that Protestantism is "THE engine of secularization in the Western World."

It has been noted that Protestantism has allied itself with the militant atheism of Paul Blanshard (171); not the only time that anti-Catholic and/or anti-Islamic bigotry has lead Protestants to make common cause with militant atheism.

Belloc was far from being an Islamic scholar; one can imagine Belloc's enthusiasm for Shi'ism, had he been familiar with it.

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Besides the general affinity between traditional Catholicism and Shi'ism, Spanish Catholicism and Iranian Shi'ism have so many particular characteristics in common that the resemblance between them is often uncanny. We will give only a few examples. The resemblance between Ashura, the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein as celebrated in Iran and Holy Week as celebrated in most of Spain has been noted by many. Of course, the Church very strongly disapproves of deliberately doing bodily harm to oneself. However, anyone who has heard the heart-wrenching "saetas" of a Spanish Holy Week and seen the processions with the images of Christ being scourged at the pillar and carrying the Cross will readily grasp what we are talking about. During Holy Week in Spain I have heard keening and seen weeping. I have seen people prostrate themselves, carry or drag heavy weights long distances or hobble long distances on their knees. Some of Protestant and/or secularist inclination (it is becoming more and more difficult to distinguish between the two) will say that this is "exhibitionism". How many are capable of weeping until their eyes are red for mere exhibitionism? This requires an acting or dramatic talent which few possess. Besides, with the exception of weeping, nearly all those doing what I have described above were dressed in tent-like robes, wore the standard "Nazareno" sandals and had their heads and faces covered by hoods with only two small openings for the eyes. Thus, very few if any of the spectators knew who they were. The charge of "exhibitionism" will not wash.

In some places in Spain, notably in Lorca in the province of

Murcia, dramatic representations of the events leading to the Crucifixion are part of the Holy Week ceremonies, demonstrating a striking parallel to the *taziyeh* of Ashura as celebrated in Iran. All this, together with the *joie de vivre* of other religious holidays, the sublime beauty and stately dignity of a High Mass and the soaring of the spirit of the Spanish mystics is part of the rich and colorful mosaic of Spanish Catholicism.

Interesting in this regard are three stanzas from a poem by the 16th century Iranian poet Muhtasham of Kashan, consider to be one of the gems of Persian literature:

When they summoned mankind to the table of sorrow,
they first issued the summons to the hierarchy of prophets.

When it came to the turn of the saints, Heaven trembled at the blow which they smote on the head of the Lion of God (Ali ibn Abu Talib).

Then they kindled a fire from sparks of diamond-dust and cast it on (Imam) Hasan, the Chosen One.

Then they tore up from Medina and pitched at Karbala those pavilions to which even the angels were denied entrance.

Many tall palm trees from the grove of the "Family of the Cloak" (Muhammad, Ali ibn Abi Talib, Fatima, Imam Hasan and Imam Hussein) did the people of Kufa fell in that plain with the axe of malice.

Many a blow whereby the heart of Muhammad was rent did they inflict on the thirsty throat of Ali's successor (Imam Hussein).

While his women, with collars torn and hair unloosed, raised their laments to the Sanctuary of the Divine Majesty.

When the blood of his (Imam Hussein's) thirsty throat fell on the ground, turmoil arose from the earth to the summit of God's throne.

The Temple of faith came near to ruin through the many fractures inflicted on the Pillars of Religion.

They cast to the ground his tall palm-tree (stature) even as the thorn bush; a deluge arose from the dust of the earth to Heaven.

The breeze carried that dust to the Prophet's

tomb: dust arose from Medina to the Seventh Heaven.

When tidings of this (the martyrdom of Imam Hussein at Karbala) reached Jesus dwelling in the Heavenly Sphere, He forthwith plunged His garments in indigo in the vat of Heaven (dark blue as well as black is the colour of mourning in Iran or Persia).

Heaven was filled with murmuring when the turn to cry out passed from the prophets to the presence of the trusted Spirit.

Mistaken imagination fancied that this dust (sorrow and vexation) had even reached the skirts of the Creator's Glory,

For although the Essence of the All-Glorious is exempt from vexation, He dwells in the heart, and no heart remains unvexed.

I am afraid that when they record the punishment of his murderers, they may forthwith strike the pen through the Book of Mercy.

I am afraid that the Intercessors on the Resurrection Day may be ashamed, by reason of this sin, to speak of the sins of mankind.

When the people of the House shall lay hand on the People of Tyranny, the hand of God's reproach shall come forth from its sleeve.

Alas for the moment when the House of Ali (ibn Abi Talib) with blood dripping from their winding-sheets, shall raise their standards from the dust like a flame of fire!

Alas for that time when the youths of that Holy House shall dash together their crimson shrouds on the Resurrection Plain!

That company, whose ranks were broken by the strife of Karbala, at the Resurrection in serried ranks will break the ranks of the uprisen.

What hopes from the Lord of the Sanctuary can those worthless ones entertain who wounded with their swords the quarry (the head of Imam Hussein) of the sanctuary?

Then finally they raise on a spear-point that Head (of Imam Hussein) from whose locks (the angel) Gabriel washes the dust with the water of Salsabil (one of the rivers of Paradise)"(172)

Below is another poem by the Safavi (16th century) Persian poet Muhtasham Kashani:

The name of this land full of tragedy (bala) is Karbala.
O pitiless heart, where is your sigh of burning sorrow to burn the heavens?

This desert is the place of the murder of a lord who died suffering from thirst.

O tongue, it is time for lamentation; O eye, it is time to

weep!

This space still bears the mark of the sighs of the wronged ones

If the sky has become black through the smoke of sighs, it is fitting.

This spot which today is covered by the canopies of the bubbles of our tears,

Was once the place where the tents of the People of the House were set up.

Here the ship of Hussein's life foundered in disaster;

Then why is the ocean of our tears, in such a maelstrom, stormless?

Behold that dome filled with light from near and far;

It's world-illuminating rays show the way to those gone astray.

Behold a grave most illuminated before which

The casket of the horizons with its hundred thousand petals and precious stones is as without value.

Behold beneath the earth, the cypress of the garden of the Prophet,

For sorrow of whom the sky is archedm bent over.

Behold, one clotted with blood, the tree of roses in the garden of Fatima (Zahra), a woman pure.

For whose defeat of whom the garments of the houris are rent like the rose.

This is the lamp to the eyes of mankind, and now by the sword of oppression,

Extinguished, as though merely a candle - a naked body, the head separated from the rest.

This is the joy of (Fatima) Zahra's breast, and now by horses' hooves

His breast so full of wisdom trampled from all sides by tragedy (bala)

This is (Imam) Hussein, son of Ali, beloved of the Prophet

Now pierced through by the blade of oppression at the hand of the murderer Sinan.

Set foot with reverence in this place of martyrdom, for its carpet most illumined,

Is the color of anemone with blood from the head of him who was the light of the eyes of Ali Mortaza.

And even if the eye of a friend should not weep bitterly with sorrow,

Still the cry "O sorrow!" would be upon the tongues of

(3129)

enemies, a cry of regret!

Now night appears from the setting of the sun, for on the
roof of the horizons,
The black standard of the People of the cloak falls from the
shoulder of ever revolving-time

O viceregent of God, I, Muhtasham, the beggar at your
threshold,

Stand at the door of helplessness, empty, and empty-handed.
O how long since I tore my heart from my homeland for your
sake!
And now the long road it has taken, it enters in this palace.

Now the suppliant hand of my heart is raised in wretchedness
to the sky,
And that which it seeks depends on your favor.

And though, O Hussein, through the desires of the self, that
lover of sin,

My heart sits at the banquet of sin, and astride the horse of
error
Yet since the plain of Karbala has become covered with dust
it would be fit
If you were to take away from this heart the dust of
sin. (173)

Muhtasham of Kashan was of the Safavi period, 16th
century to be exact. Below is a poem by Ansari, a much later
Persian poet:

O breeze of morning, take to Ali these words of the poet
Ansari:
Say: Hussein is fallen. Rise, then, go and see.
To Karbala from Najaf where you lie,
His body in a hundred pieces pierced by the lance, the
dagger, the sword.
See who was once the light of your eyes,
Now the enemy around him like eyelashes around the eye;
And here you lie, in pleasant repose with Adam and Noah, at
rest
While Hussein has as his resting place the burning sands of
Karbala!
Although you were made stranger to yourself by the stroke of
the sword,
Around you were both stranger and kin, with refreshments and
sweets;

(3130)

While the body of your (son) Hussein is rent the whole length
with wounds.

And would you know the number of those wounds?
 They are as many as the stars!
 Wherever you turned your gaze, there stood a friend to see,
 While Hussein's eye falls only on the enemy.
 Ali, when you gave your life your family was there beside
 you,
 But there on a desert plain far from daughter or sister
 Hussein dies.
 Faithful Spirit, Gabriel, brought a shroud from Heaven,
 But Hussein fell there on the earth without ablution, without
 shroud!
 Ali, since Hussein in the last hour took your head on his lap
 to lie,
 As kindness in return, then, lay his head on your lap till he
 dies. (174)

Below are some more poems in honor of the martyrdom of Imam
 Hussein at Karbala, and of other Holy Imams. Some were originally
 written in English, some in Persian, some in Arabic, some in Urdu.
 All are from An Anthology of Islamic Poetry, Vol. 2, edited by
 Talat June Peiravi, B.A. and Lisa Zaynab Morgan, M.A., Qum Iran,
 2008:

FRUSTRATION

The day of dread has come,
 And my heart remains light
 O the guilt of it,
 Have I not been blessed with a heart?
 Does it not beat?
 The sun shines invitingly,
 Obscuring the sea of Imam Hussein's (MGB) blood,
 Shed on this fateful day.
 The harder I try to remember,
 The emptier I feel.
 Hussein (MGB) who were you?
 I can't understand the pain,
 And I amble through this day,
 Numb, numb, numb.
 A silent spectator
 Haplessly caught in the torrent
 Of waiting and weeping.
 If I were a part of you,
 I would claw my face with grief,
 (3131)

My hair would turn white,
 My eyes, cry blood,
 And my heart would burn.

Instead I write this poem,
Trying to desperately to prove
That I love you.
O Hussein!
I can't begin to understand the pain,
I am no mother,
Who could picture her dying son,
A sister, yes!
But of Zainab's calibre?
I am merely a beggar
Who has stumbled onto your stage,
Yearning for what is with you,
But grasping only elusive air.
So take pity on my most miserable state,
The one who cannot cry for you,
Is truly wretched,
And out of sheer astonishment,
For my situation,
Allow me to
Shed a single tear,
And let it flow
Over my grateful cheeks. **Anonymous**

GHAREB TUS' (Reference to Imam Reza)

Bloody sorrow paints the dawn
The sun of certitude has set
Starlit tears fall from the sky
Rose petals in cry full dew wet
In deep cave of solitude
Worshippers prostrate to pain
Flashbacks revealed to my soul
As the fire of love is silenced by rain.
The ascension of a stranger
Free from the shackles of lust
This lover of humanity
Like a bird was put to dust
His only sin was the Beloved
A love illuminating the moon
He was crowned in martyrdom
And by the lost called Majnun.
This reeds by him sway
As all the divine might
The chosen mystics say
Is manifested in his light
The river of harmony
Purer than a peaceful dove
His soul took farewell
(3132)

Annihilated in celestial love.
Angels caress my dreams
Whispering secrets whose
Eternity I forever shall gymn

The memory of Ghareeb Tus. **Anonymous**

IMAM HUSSEIN'S 18 YEAR OLD SON

Resembling the Prophet in every way
He rode the horse like the king of the day he was known as
Beni-Hashim's crescent
Appeared like the Prophet was present.

Tense with thirst, he begged his father
"A drop of water could take me further".

On the battle ground he had no fear
Defended himself from front and rear.

The enemies dare not come even near
Until he got struck by a spear.

With bleeding heart, on the ground he lay
Calling Imam Hussein to come to his aid.

In the eyes of Imam Hussein, the world went dim
The loss of Ali Akbar became grim.

Mahboob Esmail

IMAM HUSSEIN'S 4 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER

The one who slept on the Imam's chest
Bold and strong for any test

Hussein was ready for the battle field
Carrying his sword and holding his shield

Bibi Sakina the four year-old
Asked her father "Please, can you hold me.

Where will I sleep once you are gone
Leaving me here, sad and alone.

Please don't go to the battle field
For none is left to give us help.
Grabbing the horse then by the leg
Begging the horse please leave my father

The horse, too, began to shed a tear
At the crying voice of a child so small

(3133)

Hussein then whispered in her ear
"My child, to me you are so very dear
But time has come for us to part

I know how this may touch your heart. **Mahboob Esmail**

IMAM HUSSEIN'S SIX MONTH OLD INFANT

When Imam Hussein called for help in his grief
Ali Asgher responded in a manner so brief
He plunged out from his swaying cot
And fell down on the sand so very hot

Food or water he had none
Ruthless enemies he did not even feel.

The six months old infant suffered the most
Puzzled thereby at the hostile host

Husein took him to the open field
And said for his sake to kindly yield

Drops of water could save his life
All the water that you have in plenty

No water for you, not in the least
Shimr said, "it is for our beast"

None would quench the infant's thirst
Instead they killed him in an instant

Hurmala raised his bow and arrow
And killed the infant in so cruel a manner

Hussein then dug a shallow grave
And buried the martyr, oppressed but brave.

*Thereafte, the mother of the infant used to cry and weep
bitterly, saying:*

"To see my Asgher I so much crave to see
I hear my baby crying in the grave

What was his crime for which he was slain
My wounded heart will never be healed.

I keep staring at his empty cradle
And feel that I can reach out and touch my child.

(3134)

My Asgher, my baby, my love, my heart
All I can do now is to weep and bleed from the heart.

Mahboob Esmail

IMAM HUSSEIN'S YOUNGER BROTHER

The caravan was driven away from the river
And none was even allowed near it.
The scorching days
Were getting hotter
Deprived they were of drinking water.

By the seventh day the glasses and bottles ran dry
'Al-Atash became a frequent cry

Sakina told the children to rest
Uncle Abbas will go and do his best

Abbas then made his way to the river
Filled the jug with great joy and cheer

He faced men with drawn swords
Abbas firm with faith in the Lord

In trying to save the jug of water
Arms and eye he lost both

With force he fell to the ground
Calling for the Imam with an humble plea

Abbas Alamdar, commander-in-chief
Showed his great courage in a moment so brief.

Mahboob Esmail

IN THE DESERT OF KARBALA

A sweltering, shimmering, broiling land
Of igneous, scorching, arid sand.

No bramble nor thistle it boasts
A crop of humpback dunes it hosts

A torrid, baking, searing place
Even imagination cannot verdure trace.

The exhausted earth is a desolate plot
An anhydrous, thirsty, hapless spot.

A parched fragment of a barren world
A glowing meteor to the earth hurled.

(3135)

Not even a cheerless, forlorn cactus grows
A hellish, blistering simoom blows.

The blazing, fiery, flaming sun
This eerie desolation, that even the valiant shun.

A ghostly silende, an ominous hush

The wind escapes it with a rush.

The *terra firma* appears ablaze
The earth is stunned in a languid daze.

A vision, on earth, of a virtual hell
A veritable furnace, a fiery shell

The heat wave diffuses a thermal haze
The blazing ether forbids the gaze.

The primeval sands primordial heat
With contempt doed the Inferno treat.

Behold a dauntless, valiant band
Stands resolutely, on this land.

The Prophet's grandson; with his band
A tranquil company, not a militant troop.

In this somber, dreary terrain
They, their reverence did sustain

"Suddenly a deafening tumult I heard,
Thundering of myriad hooves now converged

A tremor struck, the earth did shake,
My tranquility shattered, I was awake.

Loomed, ominously, a host of swords,
Rush, headlong, did furious hordes.

The glint of gleaming arms appeared,
As their coursers they spurred.

My waves, in terror, rushed, did flee
As thir identity dawned on me.

Their sinister countenance, hideous looks,
Depicted a pack of depraved criminals.

Their obliquity; their visage betrayed,
A flash flood hit me

(3136)

Hussein was coaxed to change his heart
Induced to play the heathen's part

Adamant to surrender, though he remained
Aggression he shunned, from conflict he abstained.

Hussein, explicitly, did explain:
"Vain, O Yazid, is temporal gain.

Through depraved and dissolute ways
You stray from what the Prophet says.

Your ephemeral, sordid, slippery boon
Will vanish, like a mirage, very soon.

The devious manoeuvres you employ
Islam will ruin, the faith destroy.

Through muddled thinking, and notions dark
On a feckless mission do not embark.

Potentially hazardous whims dispel.
This mood of bleak despair expel.

This sense of spiritual emptiness
By rational thinking do suppress.

Sanity do not in this bog sink
And push Islam to disaster's brink

Decay of faith, I do perceive
The Prophet's mission I will retrieve.

Like a looming disk, on the horizon
Poised is the religion's setting sun.

To bury the hatchet, and heal the breach
I show an olive-branch; peace I preach.

A vain strife do not provoke
Save your necks from a hellish yoke.

Listen to me, for goodness' sake
(Do not just acquiesce - advice take)

A holy war it means, indeed
If waged to crush the devil's creed.

No rancor, against you, I hold
But faith do cherish, as I told.

(3137)

Islam I will resolutely shield
Though burnt I will stand and never yield.

I would welcome death (and make it tame)
Would rather die than live in shame:

Your Prophet's scion I am - you know
At least some regard to his name show.

His singular dictum is my creed
"Universal good" I adore, indeed

Ali, the paragon, the seraphic Imam
Champion of the faith, shield of Islam

In imitable, impeccable: I am his son
His peerless attributes I have won.

My heart is virtues' abode and nest
Blessedness finds harbor in my breast

Condone the rule of right, I do
And believe, that right is might.

Your vulgar sway vanquish I will
This sacred duty I will fulfill

My soul is couched on eminence
I was born with a divine sense.

"When mortals to heinous gains are lured
Their doom, eternal, is procured,

Wallowing in lustful lap of wealth
With a joyful face, sparkling health,

Gloat over, regale, waver not
In dulge, frolic; then meet your lot.

Perpetual remorse, unceasing pain
Ceaselessly equate the ephemeral gain,

Truth sustains, exists, prevails
Knavery dies, infamy fails,

Repent you surely will, I warn
Callously, my "platitudes" you scorn.

A dealer in platitudes, I am not
Explicit support for the faith I sought,

(3138)

Sanity, ethics, sense I preach
Pursue I do whatever I teach,

With effortless clarity I speak
I never talk with a forked tongue

A torch, to light your way I show
Follow its beam and safely go,

Do not initiate an abject act

'Tis futile if done and then retracted.

All discernible trends in human thought
We do not know what you are talking about",

This tirade did enervate them
The foe still sustained his bid.

Woe to those whose hearts were sealed
Their promiscuous prattle thus unveiled:

"Confound us not by harangues, Hussein
Unleash not your diatribes in vain.

The Prophet, some message did convey
Concede, that Yezid now shows the way.

To usurp the Caliphate do not try
Your revolt does envy imply

What the Caliph avers, is truly best
Submit, and do not his dictums test

You should not his celestial place dispute
Withhold not allegiance, pay tribute.

The Caliph pilots our faith and fate
Divinely commandeers our love and hate.
His words, divine truth contain"

Hussein thundered: "O wretches, you
Before the swine pearls I threw.

Do not venom spit in religion's name
Comprehend, I do, your noxious game.

When degeneration marks its way
An entire nation goes astray.

Delusion, do not let you sway
Confounded whims induce decay.

(3139)

For you is mild profoundest hell
That infernal jail cannot match you well.

A hideous deed, sponsor not
Save your conscience, mend your lot

Erase and efface your sins's stains
With tainted conscience no one gains

The lure, the virtuous to pursue
The crass chase it, to gran it, run.

This pathless desolation, do not tread
'Tis disquietude, self-imposed dread

Do not your conscience push and goad
Vainly, trudge not a craggy road".

"Your predilection for conceit
And profane wiles, entranced with deceit

Have driven me to prove, with sword, my case
To screw up my courage to the sticking place.

When my sword, to act, is forced
My views, by the apotates, are endorsed.

Bathed in the foe's infernal blood
Zooms, inbuedm through the gory flood.

As I draw my sword (and yield)
Peremptorily thr rivals yield.

A conquest, when I plan to clinch
To elude the battle the bravest flinch.

Launch an assault, and attack you do
A veritable rock will confront you.

In your quest to win; prevail
Assume the initiative; charge, then fail

To feed hell's fire, be dispatched
Midst devils perform misdeeds, unmatched."

"Died other martyrs, one by one,
All were fearless, coward none.

Plucked were the Prophet's "bollms" in a day
Leaf by leaf on the sand they lay.

(3140)

Juveniles, adolescents, young and old
An army not; seventy-two, all told

I groaned aghast as Hussein I saw,
(His visage stately, with no flaw")

"Hussein placated Abbas, with calm;
Amity's balm seeks; hurt Islam

Restrain your wrath, my brother brave,
A battle to precipitatw, we do not crave,

"Tis prudent, now, to peer ahead,
Do not let them act in haste - instead.

Intellect, sound, they have none
Antagonism, to them is a thrilling fun

Nothing is worse than want of zeal
Its lack can a nation's fortune seal

But aimless zeal is folly's trap
In wisdom's or 'tis a mighty gap

Their show of passion is not zeal
This pseudo-zeal only varlets feel.

Peoples without vision were destroyed
The prudent, e'er vision employed

Canting slackers they all are,
Despicable, insensate, they cannot look far.

We hope our "passive defence" does work,
A "defence offensive" till last we shirk.

My cool appraisal of this mess,
Is a genuine effort to forestall distress.

The stakes are dreadfully high,
Staggering results it will imply.

Erupt will the battle - it will get worse,
They crave and yearn for the divine curse".

Left my bank my honored guests
Swamped was I by the swarm of pests.

Shorn of honor, I was robbed
Wept through waves, through swells I sobbed.

(3141)

Lamented my ripples, my flow did wail,
Inherit I did, thus, a dolorous tale.

Water, my guests were refused, en bloc,
Agonised I was, distraught with shock.

This torrid zone and simmering land,
None without water could stand.

Capture me if not they did
To counter the foe's obnoxious bid

If access to me they did not attempt

Die of thirst they will, it meanst.

Sayyid Ali Mahdi

LADY OF THE WORLDS

A woman whose name is purity,
A woman of true faith and sincerity,
A light for men and women alike,
A priceless treasure we did strike.

A woman whose level is abundance,
A heavenly woman of pure substance,
To my lord I ask above,
Make our hearts for Fatima to love.

Dying so young, yet you did so much,
So many years passed yet our hearts still you touch,
O daughter of our beloved messenger,
To follow you is to be your passenger,
To heaven will be our first and final stop,
A great punishment for those who killed you and mocked you.

O flower of flowers,
O worshipper of possessor of powers,
Allah did truly bless your name,
When the Surah of Al-Kawthar came.

Ahmed al-Hashimi

THE JOURNEY

It was the peak of the mischief and virtues in chains;
Just laws were sacked with rules insane;
As the tyrants on the rise, and mass confused,
Offered lust with lies, and faith abused.

(3142)

Thus the signs indicated, and time dictated.
Some souls elevated as Hussein navigated;
A seed of the Prophet and the sight of his Parents
That time in deluge, he was an ark so apparent.
In the Name of God, for the sake of Islam;
For the freedom of life and the soul of Islam;
Gave greatest sacrifice, but not his hands,
With the members of his kin and many of his friends.
Hurr, Muslim and the friends whose hearts so pure;
They offered their lives as shield and cure;
Thus tyrants came forth from the curtain way old;
Then peace was bought and lives were sold.
An daring in the manners were twi young brothers;
In the boldness of their moves were the teachings of a mother

Shown Aun and Muhammad with the valor known as Haidar
Those children were slain, not the feeling of the mother.
With a message from his father was Qasim Ibn Hasan
A radiant jewel of Islam was this glowing young son;
But Qasim lay in pieces with a brida of a single day;
On the sand in the heat it was savage and cold.
Then the pride of the Hashimites rode back from the river;
And the tyrants made sure that he did not deliver (water);
They cut off his arns, but spirit was set;
Till an arrow hit the (water) bag, only eyes got wet.
Fell Abbas from the horse, with no hands for support,
Then Hussein rushed to shore for a brother's last resort;
Those children who waited with patience were told;
And thirst in the camp was three days old.
Soon Akbar came down with a spear in his chest;
Which a father had to pull, so svere was the test;
He was the image of the Prophet and the life of Hussein.
He was the vision of a mother and the eyes of Hussein.
Now the Leader was alone as he called for help,
Then a baby fell down; a response from the crib!
This thirsty, pure infant was a son of the Imam.
Who, acknowledged his father and the call of the Imam.
Thus Hussein brought for him some water in the field,
And showed them the baby's dried lips and appealed;
But the six month old got an arrow so thick,
That turned him over and tore his neck.
Ali Asghar went to sleep, with his father and no fear;
With the cradle on the fire, and their heads on spearpoints;
And the mother's empty hand, with the tear reddened eyes,
Who looked for the baby to sing him lullabies.
And a sister by the camp saw the horror of this trip;
As a knife tore the neck, where the Prophet had put his lips;
Earth in grief, the heavens roared and mourned,
Sand turned red when Hussein was torn.
And a child full of tears and with tiny bleeding ears,
Bruises on her face and her thirst so severe;
She ran for her father who lay beheaded,
(3143)

And cried for the uncle for the help she needed;
Sayeeda Zaynab looked for her in the sadness of the night;
Did inquire to every soul in the land of plight;
But Sakina was sleeping on the chest of a corpse;
With the love of the father, from the fragrance of his body.
Then the camp fell, while flames went up;
Little children rushed out, as their dresses caught fire;
It was a night full of cries and the innocent quests;
Shattered were the dreams and broken were the nests.
All defenses laid to rest, after trials and the tests;
Left to face, one Imam, even history would attest,
Who fainted with illness, faced torture and torment;
A Master of the pious and devotees' ornament.
Lashes and heavy chains on his back suffered the Imam;
But ladies were the prisoners, such was the wound of the

Imam;
No chador for them but their rope-tied arms;
And grief soared high from Kufa to Shams (Syria).
But, the daughter of Ali proclaimed, miseries with the
messages;
With the families in the bazaars, and in the deadly courts of
savages;
With the depth of patience and the Zenith of Bravery;
Islam was rescued forever from slavery.

Murtuza Saifuddin Topiwala

THE LOOT

Eerie silence hung over the battlefield
Broken occasionally by the sound of drum beats
The carnage, the massacre, of saintly souls
Caused a shudder, in Islam's true believers' fold.

The massacre being over, they raided the tents
To loot and destroy, they were all fiendishly bent
Helpless ladies and children, they mercilessly bashed
Young innocent babes, to the ground they dashed.

Daughters of the Prophet, simple lives had led
Coarse and patched clothes were all they had
Woven by Fatima, they were immensely treasured
In terms of money, none could be measured.

They were shamelessly looted of even their veils
The hordes of Yazid outclassed, themselves, the devils
Earrings were snatched from the child of Hussein
She was slapped mercilessly, for crying in pain.

In stupor lay the only surviving adult male
Ali Zayn al-Abidin was flogged as in horror tales
(3144)

After the looting, the tents were set on fire *en masse*
Hell was let loose, with a vengeance, quick and fast.

Zaynab was perplexed, she was lost
Perish in flames or face still worse
This hour of trial, whom to consult
Her nephew was unconscious, lying in the dust.

"Ali Zayn al-Abidin, I appeal to you
As our Imam, tell us what are we to do?"
He opened his eyes, burning with fever
With utmost effort, advice he delivered.

"To save our lives is a religious duty
Go in the open and seek security."
Ladies and children, they left the tent

Salvaging what they could as they went.

The loot, the pandemonium was soon over
Only burning embers of fire hovered
A partially burnt tent was all that remained
A solitary witness of torture and blood stains.

The Ahl al-Bait huddled together therein
Shattered in mind and body, beyond dream
Time had come almost to a standstill
The night was in sorrow; one could feel.

The mourning widows of Hussein's friends
Their anguished hearts who could mend?
Zaynab and Kulthum consulted each other
The orphaned children they had no mother.

Zaynab counted the children; one was missing
To her dismay, it was Sakina, her darling
"Tell me, Sakina, where are you, my child?"
In the wilderness, an echo was the only reply.

Frustrated, she ran towards the battlefield
"Sakina is lost, your darling child
Hussein, where shall I look for her?"
She imploringly sobbed in utter despair.

The silvery moon, behind the clouds was hid
The clouds dispersed, the ground was lit
Lying with her head on Hussein's chest
Little Sakina was sleeping in her usual nest.

"Sakinam my child, I have come here
After searching the desert, my dear
Your father's beheaded body, how could you find
(3145)

In this dark night, with your frightened mind?"
"An irresistible urge seized me, though dampened
To tell my father all that had happened
How they snatched my earrings, after his death
The slaps I received, the treatment we met."
"Running aimlessly in the desert I cried
Tell me dearest father, where do you lie
Sakina, my darling Sakina, come here, come here!
I heard him calling and found my father dear."

"I narrated to him all I had endured
It lightened my heart: I was reassured
An urge to sleep on his chest, for the last time
I placed my head in that nest of mine."

With Sakina, Zaynab hurried to the camp
Again it was dark; there was no lamp

All were anxiously waiting in the ghostly night
Praying silently to God, the Eternal Light.

She placed Sakina in her mother's arms
She had several other duties to perform
No, not to protect any worldly treasure
The children had suffered beyond measure.

Advancing towards then, she saw a group
"There is nothing left which you can loot
Pray, do not disturb the children in sorrow
If you want something, come on the morrow!"

"We do not want anything from you
We know, what you have said is true
We have brought some water and food
We know, you are in a sorrowful mood."

Zaynab was surprised; so polite was the speaker
It was the widow of Hurr, the truth seeker
"Soldiers of Omar Saad have assigned me
To carry food and water for thee."

"Lest you perish, due to hunger and thirst,
Before Yazid, they wnt to take you first
That is why they have sent water and food
Not because they have suddenly become good."

"O, sister, we are indebted to your husband
For his precious life, in defending Hussein
He was our guest, but at a time, alas!
We had not even water, no, not a glass!"

(3146)

"My lady, I am grieved, you lost not one
But eighteen members who to death were done."
The offered condolences to each other
Zaynab was large-hearted like her mother.

"At last there is water for you
Wake up, Sakina, see that it is true
Wet your throat, sobbing will stop."
For days, she had not even a drop.

"Let Ali Asghar first, he is the youngest
My dear brother died of sheer, maddening thirst
Now that water is available, give to him first
Before I can taste it and quench my thirst."

Guarding her folks, with a half burnt pole
Alone, all alone, with no waking soul

Due to exhaustion, Zaynab fell in a swoon
O Merciful God, it was, indeed, a boon!

One person came galloping in her dream
"O Sheikh, please go back, she screamed
"I am daughter of Hazrat Ali and Fatima
We are guardians of the holy Kalima!"

The person lifted the veil from his face
It was her father Ali himself, by Divine Grace
She poured out her mutilated and bleeding heart to him
The outpourings caused convulsions, ending the dream.

Lying on the desert sand, clothes wet with tears
The dawn was breaking, time of prayer was near
Events of the previous day, she recalled with pain
Ali Akbar had given Azan; prayers led by Hussein.

Finishing her prayer, she laid her head
Prostrate before the God of the living and the dead
To give her courage, to carry on the mission
Which, to the world, would be an everlasting lesson.

Noorali S. Merchant

THE MURDER OF THE MARTYR'S CHIEF

Hussein buried his baby boy and sat outside the tents all alone.

On the other side, a thousand men, armed and full grown;
Waited for him to step forward and reap what his defiant courage had sown.

Hussein was in great physical and emotional pain.

(3147)

All of the males of his entourage had been slain.

He was thirsty, hungry, and sore;

And he was reaching the limit that a human can emotionally endure;

But one thing was sure;

Hussein still walked aith God. He was never alone.

His prostration was sincere and he was near to God's Throne.

And with the craven murder of his six month old son,

It was growing close to the time whe God's will would be done.

The sun would soon set on this long dark day of grief

With the brutal murder of the martyrs' great chief.

The army of Yazid was puffed up with pride form marrow to skin.

Though they suffered many losses on their side from Hussein's close friends and kin;

They thought they had won just becaused they survived.

Hussein's dead would be honored, since they died where they strived

Against the unholy government a tyrant had contrived
Yazid's men were so glad that they were able to return with
their lives;
That all they could think about was going home to their
wives.
So they beat on their drums, yelled war cries, and made a din
That was intended to hurry on whoever was left to defend
The Imam and his helpless children and women.
But all the warriors in his band were gone home to rest.
And Hussein was left with no human hand to assist him in this
test.
His son Ali Zayn al-Abidin was unconscious with a fever so
high,
It was feared that the next Imam was so sick he might die.
Hussein listened to the revelry of his enemies, with bitter
disdain.
He recalled all his friends, and his kin who were brutally
slain.
And how his few killed so many, they could barely sustain the
upper hand.
And yet, they dared to boast!
He was eager to go meet them and make his last stand.
But at the same time he knew what they would do to the
helpless few
Women and children who would be left at the mercy of this
cowardly crew.
So before he charged into death as his last bloody sign of
righteous defiance,
He had to meet with the ladies, whom he would soon leave
behind, to weak self-reliance.
Hussein rose from his musings, battered and bloody, but
dignity still adorned

(3148)

His presence like a manifestation of God's Unchangeable Will.
He gathered the widows of his friends and the women of his
domicile,
To hear his last words of appreciation, and salutations; his
last testament and will.
Zaynab, his sister, was beside herself with grief until
Her saintly brother calmed her down, with tenderness and
skill.
He told her that it was God's Will that they remain patient
and dutifully fulfill
Her part in the mission, even though these brutes would put
her through the mill.
Zaynab tearfully asked him to pray that she should follow him
quickly, he said,
"Zaynab! Who will there be to fulfill the mission if so soon
you are dead?
"Who will accomplish the task which your brother is leaving?
"Who will care for our women in their trials and their
grieving?
"The widows and orphans, I entrust to your care.

You must lead and console them for I will not be there.
"Keep them from harm, and see to each need.
"Stand between them and the tyrants' meanness and greed.
"I am also entrusting you with my poor ailing son.
"And my darling Sakina, our group's youngest one.
"We have never been parted for as long as a day.
"So console her young sirit in your own special way.
"Have you noticed that since her uncle Abbas was cut down
"Sakina has not uttered a single sound?
"I do not know if this is from grief, or from thirst.
"But when you finally get water give it to her first.
"My dear sister, Zaynab! Would you do as I ask?
"Stay strong and be patient. Perform well each task.
"Promise your brother, that you will give it your best,
"And at the end of this day, in peace I will rest."
The brave sister replied to her soon to be martyred brother.
"My Imam! I swear by Our God, and for sure there is no other;
"That I will do exactly as you have asked, as an extension of
your will.
"I will take on these responsibilities after you have been
killed.
"I will show to the world that I am of your blood; that I am
your kin.
"That I am the daughter and grandchild of people God freed
from sin.
"So pray that God keeps me steadfast and strong,
"and up to the task of commanding the right and forbidding
the wrong.
"Pray that I am not found wanting in my hour of trial.
"That I act boldly, and fearlessly in the Hashemite style."
(3149)

Hussein's heart swelled with love and with pride.
How great it is to have women and men like these on your
side.
He addressed the rest of the women, including Fizza his old
nurse.
She tried to stay strong but she took it the worst.
She was Lady Fatima's servant and very best friend.
She was no slave or employee, she was more like his kin.
She said, "Salaam, my dear son. May Allah be with you.
"This is your supreme trial. There is no doubt you will be
true"
She shuddered and let out a long pain-filled scream
And the old woman then fainted, and crumpled, and fell.
The loss was too much for her grief-stricken heart.
Old Fizza was strong, but she could not bear to part
With this mos perfect of human beings, whom she nursed as a
boy.
That bundle of brilliance who had brought her such joy
That she chose to stay on as a slave rather than return with
her blood kin.
The strain was too much, knowing that this was the end.
After addressing the ladies, he had one last stop to make.

He had to rouse his last living son, who was not yet awake.
Zayn al-Abidin, who was suffering with the fever still.
He was very, very weak, and dangerously ill.
But as soon as his father woke him, the strong-willed young man
Tried to rise from his bed to make his last stand.
When he saw the condition of his father, wounded and
bleeding,
He knew that condition of the mission, and he was not
needing,
Any explanation. He knew that everyone was gone from the
scene.
He knew that they had sacrificed all for Allah's perfect Din
(religion).
And he knew that his father had come to say his final
farewell. And that his great holy father Hussein would soon
answer the bell.
Zayn al-Abidin was determined that his father would not be
slain
As long as he was alive to protect Imam Hussein.
The Imam put his hand lightly on The Future Imam's shoulder
and said:
"My dear son! I command you as your father and Imam: remain
in bed.
"I know that persecution is worse than death, but you must
stay alive.
"You have to be with your aunts, and the others. It is God's
will that you survive.
Your task is harder than mine. Public humiliation. Never-

(3150)

ending grief.

"All clouds. No sunshine. No hope of relief.
"You may live on for years with sad memories and tears
"While the tyrants are gloating with song, dance, and cheers.
"But your mission is vital. You must play the role.
"Be strong and forbearing. Let this be your goal.
"You must be the model, for all time to come,
"Of the real holy warfare. So never succumb
"To despair in any trying situation.
"Rather step up and become an incarnation
"Of faith, and good deeds in front of God, and the nation.
"This is more difficult than martyrdom, a glorious
Demonstration.
"And this my dear son is your fate and your station."
"Face it with grace, and grim determination."
Hussein embraced his son gently. And the lad fainted away.
It was difficult to face the depths of the words and the
stress of the day.
It was simply too much for his fever-racked body to bear.
It was for the best. Because Hussein had so little time to
spare.
That horde of cut-throats was clamoring for him to come out.
If he was not going to come out, they would come in, and

without a doubt,
Hussein would not let them invade his women's privacy while
he still lived.
So he left his son on his sick bed,
And strode off to fight those lackeys of the oppressor until
he was dead.
Once outside he found Thul Jannah, his old faithful steed
Waiting impatiently to charge back into action,
Against this cold-blooded mercenary faction of the Tyrant
Yazid.
Hussein's sister held the reins because all his assistants
had previously been slain.
Pain ripped through Hussein as he mounted Thul Jannah, with
visible strain.
But God maintained his calm, so Hussein could achieve what
God ordained.
This situation was insane. How could the former enemies of
the Prophet be preparing to murder Muhammad's (Grandson)
Hussein?
How could Muhammad's old enemies hold the reins of the
Islamic Domain?
So that there was no Muslim amongst them who would even
complain?
With gritted teeth and the remembrance of God in his heart,
Hussein spurred on his stallion to speedily depart.
But Thul Jannah stood affixed to the spot.
Was it that the old steed was too thirsty and hot?
(3151)

Hussein bent over and spoke softly into his animal's ear:
"O pony from my childhood! O steed without peer,
I know that you are old and weary,
"And you may even be a little leery
"Seeing the horrors that you have witnessed this day.
"But this will be the last time you and I will charge into
the fray.
"I need you to take me to the place of my destiny.
"Believe me old [ony, this end is best for me."
The speech was touching, but Thul Jannah was ready to ride
into hell if Hussein had pointed him in that direction.
This was not an equine defection.
Thul Jannah showed the reason for his rejection
Of his master's command by bowing his neck towards the
ground.
Hussein swung around, and looked down,
And saw his little daughter Sakina with a tearful frown
Clinging to the horse's leg.
She was so weak he could barely hear his little girl
pitiably beg
The horse not to take her father out to die.
Hussein forgot his wounds and jumped down to pacify his
little girl.
He picked her up and they held each other tight.
How unfair this was. This was the exact opposite of right.

This touching scene being played out in plain sight of all those Muslims.
The great granddaughter and the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad
Crying together, after being placed in a hopeless plight
By a party of men who were outright enemies of the Prophet's Clan.
But there was not a Muslim that day who was willing to stand.
So the great granddaughter of the Prophet was about to become an orphan,
And she was trying as hard as an innocent father's daughter can
To keep what befell her uncles and cousins from happening to her father.
Hussein was touched, but he knew that this was a thing he had to do.
With tears streaming down his cheeks,
He held his daughter in a tender, baby-love embrace.
And spoke ever so softly to his grief-stricken little daughter.
He said, "My darling Sakina, you know I love you more than the whole world.
"You are so young. How can I explain why I must go out and fight
"Even though I know that I do not have the military might to win?

(3152)

"Living peacefully with one's dear friends and beloved kin
"And dying in bed after a long life comes to a peaceful end,
"Is what I would love to do. But, darling, this transcends personal desire.
"Each of us has an ultimate test, that depends
"Solely on God's will.
God has made it clear that I am to contend
"On the side of Truth and Righteousness to the cruel, bitter end.
"I cannot hide from my duty. I must go forth and defend.
"I will love you forever, Sakina, forever and ever without end.
"Everything in this world, for certain will soon end.
"But the things of the soul will surely transcend all.
"Things such as faith, piety, and love will live on and ascend
"With the souls of the righteous when God takes back what he did lend.
"Listen, I will die here today, to make a place for you in Heaven.
"And someday you will follow me. And we will be together again.
"So please understand that it is God's will that I fight and defend
"His religion from these evil djinn who pretend to be the Muslims' friend.

"Please give me your blessing, a smile and a kiss, and try to comprehend
"This end that Allah, our Almighty Lover and Friend, did so wisely intend."
The little girl may noy have understood everything her father said;
But she knew that he would live on in Heaven afterwards when he was dead.
So she said, "Father, you said that someday I will follow and be with you again.
"Please ask Allah to hurry, and cause my life to end.
"Promise you will ask Him to make the time go fast
"For without you, my dear papa, I do not want this life to last.
"And promise you will visit me, in dreams by God's own grace.
"Then I will have the night to long for, the night and death's embrace.
"Promise me these things, father, and I will let you go.
"Though it breaks my heart to lose you, I can bear it if I know
That this cruel separation will not linger on and on.
"And I can hug, and kiss, and hold you in my dreams until the dawn."
The Imam was tiouched to the quick.
(3153)

The depth and sweet sincerity of Sakina's rhetoric,
Swelled his heart with ride and simultaneously made his heart sick.
Both wept bitterly, and held on to one another even tighter than before.
The beating of Yazid's war drums, and the taunting of his men Tore into the father and the daughter's consciousness.
Time was running short. Though they loved each other dearly, Hussein would not abort his mission.
It was time to let go, and make the metamorphic transition From father to fighter.
It was time to go to war.
He said, "My beloved baby girl, I promise to give you what you asked for.
"But please promise me that you will remain strong, and patient and brave.
"And please, my dearest, try not to cry too much, so that you can save
"Your poor aunt Zaynab from being over burdened by your sorrow.
"She will be alone, with full responsibilities tomorrow."
Sakina answered in a child's voice weakened by thirst
She said, "Father, I will promise to stand up to their worst.
"My dear father, I shall do just as you asked from the last to the first.
"But please, Father, every night I have fallen asleep on your broad chest.
"This will not happen again.

"So please let me use your chest as my mattress.
"Just one last time, before you go to meet your Lord and rest?"
He silently lay down in the hot desert sand, on his sore, wounded back,
And she climbed on his blood-stained chest, and wept softly,
As azid's demoniac henchmen called for her father to come and meet his end.
He patiently waited for her to aries.
Then he kissed her, and said his final farewell.
He mounted Thul Jannah, and headed towards the same fate that befell
His seventy-two close friends and kin, who had gone on before.
He took one loving look back at his little girl standing by the tent's door;
And then he pointed his horse straight at the waiting horde.
He pranced with pride and swagger, towards the will of his Dear Lord.
As soon as Hussein got within ear-shot, he once again gave them a choice
Between Heaven and Hell.

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Addressing them in a strong, loud voice.
He said of Yazid! Who amongst you does not know me?
"I am not some animal to be hunted for a bounty or a trophy.
"I am the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, whom you claim to revere more than you mother and father.
"Is there any one of you who believes that this is not true?
"Th woman who was leader of all the women of earth
"Was the Prophet's own daughter, the womb of my birth.
"You know well my father; his words, and his sword.
"They brought you your religion from The Almighty Lord.
"Many of you have seen the Prophet lavish affection on my brother and I.
"You have seen him laugh with me and cry with me in prophetically sincere empathy.
"Have you not heard, or heard of your Prophet commenting that he loved me,
"And did he not command you to do right by me, and the rest of his family?
"Now, God's Holy Prophet has gone home to rest.
"But I stand here before you, called to this place at your people's behest.
"And look what you have done.
"You butchered an infant, Muhammad's great grandson.
"You have killed my friends, brothers, and sons one after the other.
"You have deprived children of water in this hot desert sun.

"In God's Name, where is your conscience?
What have we done that we deserved to be treated worse
than wild beasts who are hunted for sport?
"Answer me, answer me, what crime have I done?"
Silence! Not a drum beat! Not a war cry! Not one
clever pun!
Not one poignant political reply.
Only the sound of weighty silence was heard by all.
And that silence made General Umar tense as he felt
the reins slip once again.
Hussein was making too much sense, and Umar felt that
if this battle did not soon begin,
Hussein would soon change the hearts of Yazid's own
men.
So he evaded the question,
And muddied the waters to hide the suggestion
That these soldiers were guilty of the worst kind of
oppression.
He said, "Hussein, Hussein! It was a waste of time for
you to say what you said.
"We gave you a choice, accept Yazid as your spiritual
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and temporal master and lord,
"Or dies by the arrow, or the sharp unsheathed sword.
"Abu Sufyan's grandson succeeded the Prophet, and he
now rules this land.
"To gain life and safety for your household, you must
bow to our demands.
"So there is no other choice.
"So you may as well save your breath."
Hussein trotted in a little closer, looked Umar in the
eye and replied,
"Umar! Your father was a companion who stayed by the
Prophet's side.
"You witnessed what I have said. You know that I have
not lied.
"Do you think for just one minute that I would accept
Yazid as the Imam of God's Religion, and incompetent
foolish sinner, who is fickle, vain, and mean?
"Do you think that I would cosign the warped
deviations he seeks to bring to the Religion in the
name of its Prophet and funder?
Have you ever seen me morally flounder, or do such a
thing?
"Do you actually think that I would capitulate to his
bogus mandate in order to spare my women and children
hardships and to postpone the date
"When I shall return to Allah, from whence we all
came, and to where we shall return to receive our just
dues?
"Let me dispel any doubts, and make this point plain.
"I will never compromise my principles for
dishonorable worldly gain.

"Given the choice between death and dishonor, you know that I would rather die than accept your offer of life, and bow to a liar in support of his lie.

"So I am rejecting your proposal here and now.

"And I am asking you, in God's Name, tell me how I have ever done anything that merits that I be slaughtered like asheep.

"Of what capital crime do I stand accused?

"O you who claim to be Muslim, you will be eternally punished if you stain your hands with the blood of the Prophet's closest kin.

"For on the Day when the Bill comes due, you will face my family again.

"The Prophet, and his daughter, and his cousin and best friend.

"And what will you say when they ask you how Hussein's life came to an end?

"There you will stand with my blood on your hands, knowing that I was innocent.

"O soldiers of Kufa and Damascus, I encourage you to
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repent.

"Even though what you have done to me already is enough to kill me even if you now relent,

"If you sincerely turn away and repent, from enacting this tyrant's intention.

"You can save yourself from the curse that you seem hell-bent on bringing upon yourself, and your future long after this shameful event.

"For it is the tradition of Our Household to pray for forgiveness and enlightenment on the souls of the penitent who formally inflicted us with cruelty and torment.

"Through sincere contrition and our intercession, it is still not too late to escape eternal punishment."

General Umar looked around at his men, and smiled.

Hussein's speech was most eloquent and his speaking style must have reminded everyone who was old enough to remember his supernaturally eloquent father when he held Kufa's minbar.

But Umar saw by the look in their eyes that they were thinking of now.

They were thinking of gaining rewards from their king.

For slaying this rebel, who now was a bow without a string.

For the first time all day, Umar's confidence soared.

Hussein's words fell on ears that were stone deaf, or bored.

There was no fear of Hussein, and no fear of Hell.

So shortsighted advantage made his sick ego swell.

He said, "Enough! You have not said what we wished to hear.

"All you had to say is that you accept Yazid as your

Imam and your Amir.

"Since you have refused, you will be beheaded, say whatever you will.

"Your words cannot defeat us, and no one has the skill to singlehandedly overcome these odds even in single combat.

"So that is that. You are just stalling for time like a diplomat.

"And look at you. You are a pitiful sight.

"As hurt as you are, in your present plight, my worst, weakest warrior would crush you in a fight.

"And I have a whole army at my left, back and right."

Hussein had been in a diplomatic mode, but now he was on the war path.

That insulting tone of voice; had Umar forgotten the legendary wrath that was displayed by the believing Hashemites not so long ago?

Hussein's blood was aroused, and he was now eager to show these expendable pawns of the tyrant, that not

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only was he ready to go toe to toe,

He was ready, willing and able to introduce quite a few of them to the Angel of Death before overwhelming odds brought about his last breath.

He whipped out his sword, and his horse reared up and neighed.

There it was, al-Zulfiqar! Ali's legendary two-edged forked blade.

This was not the card that Umar thought would be played.

Hussein roared, "Umar ibn Saad! I accept the challenge that you just made.

"I offer single combat to your bravest; come and taste my father's blade.

"Nay! Not single combat, send as many as you like who are not afraid

"And who believe that I am only a diplomat capable of a wordly trade."

The Satan that had pumped them up with pride left.

Not one of them had the courage to risk making their wives into widows.

The generals consulted quickly, to calculate their next move.

While they were planning, Hussein decided to prove that he meant what he said.

Before they could regroup, quite a few of them were dead.

Hussein had charged into the heart of their ranks.

He charged right, and then cut left, sowing fear in all their ranks.

Fear gave way to confusion, then to panic-stricken retreat.

Zulfiqar was like a sickle and those soldiers were

like wheat.
Horse and rider moved like one being, and where they moved, someone died.
Cut in and out so quickly, that the soldiers collided one with the other.
And tha confusion, fear and quickness helped the Imam's tyrannicide.
The prowess of the old Imam was breath-taking.
Who could not help but admire this old man, making all these fantastic moves on horseback while staediky keeping up a relentless attack.
And keep in mind, he was also being cut, on his sides, front and back.
And he was already badly wounded before this duel began
And he had no food and no water for a long three day span.
Yet, this lone, wounded old man had forced the whole battalion to scatter.

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One could almost hear their mercenary courage bend, crack and then shatter.
Scattering was the only thing they could do. So they hastily withdrew.
Ashamed they were not. For them, cowardice was not new.
Hussein stopped his charge. He did not pursue.
At close quarters they were no match, but from experience Hussein knew what they were going to do next.
Nothing bold or complex. Volleys of arrows were shot from a long, scattered line. When they stopped, Hussein looked like a large hedgehog.
The battle was over. They could do with him as they willed. The Imam did not want his family to see him killed.
So with difficulty, he remained on Thul Jannah's back, And rode to a place where his people could not see this last act.
But Zaynab, who was watching the whole scene, ran to a small hill, where her brother's fate could be seen.
Hussein dismounted with great difficulty, even though Thul Jannah spread his front legs to make it wasy.
He slumped to the ground with arrows protruding from front and back.
He wanted to perform his asr praters.
But in an attempt to perform the act of prostration, he was blocked by the arrows that were stuck in his chest.
So in order to touch his head to the sand, he pushed the arrows through his breast with the weight of his body and with courage, strength and will.
And as he finished his prayers, they rode up for the

kill.
Zaynab ran from the hill to reach that spot
In order to try to say or do something to improve her
brother's lot.
She pleaded and begged them to at least give him some
water first.
Even a slaughtered animal is offered water so he will
not die thirsty.
But they acted as if she was not even there.
As hurt and near death as Hussein was,
He wanted to spare his sister the emotional trauma of
witnessing his decapitation.
He said, "My sister! Return to the camp without
hesitation.
"It would grieve me too much if you were to see this
gory thing.
"By the love that you have for me, spare me this
humiliation."
Zaynab ran back to the camp, and Shimr did the deed.

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He cut off Hussein's head, the fruit of the Prophet's
seed.
O Allah Bless muhammad's Soul,
And rain Down Peace On His Household.
O Allah Bless Muhammad's Soul,
And Rain Down Peace on His Household.
O Allah Bless Muhammad's Soul,
And Rain Down Peace On His Household.

Shaykh Ali Abu Talib Son of Abd an-Nur

THE SCORCHING PLAINS OF KARBALA

The scorching plains of Karbala
Were also known as Nainawah
Yazid was the king at that thime
Known to be a king of crime.

Yazid demanded Hussein's hand
To accept him as king of the land

A dmand to the Imam which he made
"Give me your hand or give me your head"

Imams in principle do not yield
Be it in the mosque or be it on a field

Hussein said: "I will give my head
But I will not bow even if I am dead

At Karbala made a stop
Waving the flag of peace at the top

The land was bought and locals paid
The tents were laid where the Imam prayed

The Imam returned the land and said
Telling the people and the tribal head

We shall be killed and left here dead
Our bodies beheaded, trampled and shredded

Bury us, please, if you can
Throw a handful of earth and sand

The Imam was killed with seventy-two
Old, young and infant, too.

Mahboob Esmail

(3160)

THE STORY OF SAKINA

Walking in chains on the hot sand
We are women of our Prophet.
Cruel men have ripped off our chador,
As is ripping a seal from a wound.
A scar is imprinted.

Sand is blowing in my eyes,
I can see a little girl.
Sakina.

Daughter of Imam Hussein.
My heart aches to watch her small limbs
Walking in chains amongst us.
Looking at her hurts my eyes.
She is like a bright star in a dull universe.

A stranger is approaching her.
He lifts his hand to her ear and roughly rips
An earring from her ear.
Tears prick my eyes as my fingers rush to my own ear.
Fear.

She was still looking at the stranger,
Eyes filled with tears,
Blood softly trickling down her neck.
Please, stop hurting her.
I wish my thoughts were more forceful
I wish I could run in front of her,
Protect her.

Every woman standing looked at the man,
Pleadingly.

Once again, the man raises his hand,
Touching her ear.

Once again he roughly pulls an earring
Blood spills.
Tears filled the eyes of every woman present.
Silence was the only comfort.

Has he no conscience?
Yet, head held high,
Sakina walks on.
For her father is Hussein,
And soon there will be no more pain.

Kamila Chowdhury

(3161)

THE SUPREME SACRIFICE

The sad day dawned, the heavens were aghast
Truth was at stake; the die had been cast
Never had they witnessed so supreme a test
Between falsehood at its worst and truth at its best!

For three torturous days and three miserable nights
Hussein's small band was in a waterless plight;
The babes they licked their mothers' tongues,
Parched and thorny, they weepingly let it hang.

His faith in God was sublime, beyond any dream
His patience, spoke of complete surrender to Him
Even in his worst hour, from the material eye,
He was calm and unperturbed, not afraid to die!

Hussein was fully alive to the things at stake
He well knew what would be his family's fate
He was aware that it was his martyr's cup
He showed absolutely no grief when his time was up.

He endeavored to make a 1st attempt
But the foes were all determined and bent
To spill his blood, they thought it an honor
Such is the fate of all the world's warners.

"Speak, O, you Kufis, is this how
You invite your guests and treat them now?
You summoned our aid, you one and all
You, as our Imam, must heed our call."

"Truth is being trampled, we look to you,
To uphold the flame, to come to our rescue

Treachery is, indeed, a Satanic vile
But in this you are ahead by miles."

"I beg you to ponder what you do
Verily, those that can see, are few
Three honorable offers I have to make
For no blood should spill for my sake."

"If my life is what Yazid desires
Why should Muslims' blood be the hire
To Yazid, I request, you do me lead
No share you have, in this foul deed."

"Or let me to Jihad go and die
For this life, no fear have I
I will fight in the cause of God
Till death descends from my Lord."
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"If not, let me to Hijaz return
You will Muhammad's pleasure earn
For was he not my grandsire?
Verily, a shield against Hell's Fire!"

"Know for sure, that I am he
Whom God has granted Heaven's key
We live for the Lord and His pleasure
We seek not the world, nor its treasure."

"The flame of truth is what we hold
Let none of you, I pray, make bold
To subdue the flame not those that hold
Though your heart may yearn for gold."

The foes were silent, their mouths were shut
Only thirty of them felt genuine hurt
They demanded to know why Hussein's fair offer
Could not be accepted and considered as proper.

In disgust, they left the enemy's rank
And joined the Imam's small faithful band
Too glad were they to fight for him,
Though chances of success, they knew were dim.

The rest were unmoved, their hearts were sealed
They danced and mocked, till their heads reeled
Hussein still felt it his duty, to make it plain,
To save his life, was not his object nor aim.

Omar ibn Saad, discharged the first villain's arrow
Proud, that he had started this battle of sorrow
And soon to his dismay, he found Ali's sons
To fight them, he learned, was not laughter nor fun.

They fought courageously like lions, one by one
Though outnumbered, they made them run
Till the archers took their inevitable toll
Claiming fifty, from Hussein's small band.

Bent with grief, he surveyed the tragic scene
Tears welled up up, his sorrowful eyes did gleam
He made a plea, to the enemy's rank and file
Whether noe sympathized with the Prophet's child.

Hurr ibn Yazid Riyahi felt this as a jolt
The words to him were, as from heaven, a bolt
He, with his slave and son, joined the Imam's band
And begged forgiveness at his merciful hands.

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Forgiven were they, unreservedly, one and all,
By the generous Hussein and his noble family
They fought for him, till they were slain
Their lives they lost, but heaven gained.

Corpses flowed in regular stream of these brave
soldiers
Hussein and his friends carried them on their
shoulders,
In distant lands, they had no families to mourn them
The ladies of Hussein wept, as for a brother or son.

Wahab ibn Abdullah Kalabi was the last to go
The newly married warrior, his spirit was loe
Time and again he had sought for permission
"Not yet!", was Hussein's firm decision.

"First seek permission of your mother and wife
Their claim is far greater on your invaluable life
Exclaimed the mother of Wahab, standing nearby
"I will deem it an honor, for my son to die!"

With tears in her eyes, his wife pleaded
"Do defend Hussein in his hour of need
Only one request I have, reluctantly, to make
The security of Hussein's family, may we partake."

Little did she know what fate had in store
For ladies of Hussein when he was no more
She never could imagine that it was likely
That enemies would dare behave so dastardly.

History of mankind, numerous instances can cite,
Where brave persons have scaled great heights,
And endured hardships, out of love and affection,
Or died out of duty and self-consuming devotion.

But never before, the world had ever witnessed,
Such deeds of selfless devotion and self-abnegation
In this transitory world, though nothing endures,
The deeds of Hussein shine with ever-increasing
lustre!

And now were left, those tied by blood
Who cared nought for this mold of mud
Eager were they to offer their worldly lives
In the cause of God, so truth may foreve thrive.

Abbas ibn Ali, was the TRUTH'S standard bearer
Hussein to him, was a jewel, nay, even more dear
He called him "Lord", though his foster brother
Such was the regard they had one for the other.
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Ali Akbar was his most beloved second son
More brave, more handsome there was none.
Eighteen summers old, flower of youth,
An image of the Prophet, from head to foot.

Qasim was his brother Hassan's child
He was, like his father, by nature mild
His father had willed before he had died
A *tawiz* he prepared and, to his hand he tied.

It only be read, as was his wish dear
By Hussein, when his end was near
He remembered this will of his brother
Now that he ould soon be murdered.

It was willed that Qasim should wed
Fatima Qubra, ere his blood was shed
Hussein's darling daughter was she
To wed her to Qasim, very glad was he.

A wedding with widowhood as dowry!
A festa without water and food!
A bridegroom with few hours ti live!
A bride with only tears to give!

Such was the wedding in Karbala's field
Which Hussein, with his blood would till
So that the plant of Islam may live anew
For the sake of lovers of God, though very few.

Hussein wished that Ali Akbar, his dearest son,
Should be the first to go to the battleground
His devoted friends and followers were aghast
They refused to entertain such an idea - first or
last.

Now were left with Hussien only the next of kin
Ali Akbar looked in his face; was he daydreaming?
He has come to seek permission; the words were
ringing!

He tried to say something, amidst the enemy's warlike
cries
With considerable effort, he whispered, with downcast
eyes
"Akbar, my beloved child, you wish me to see you slain
What I am experiencing, at this moment I can hardly
explain!"

"How can I grant you permission, Akbar, my son?
Knowing that none have returned, not one!
The call of duty, however, makes me helpless
Ask your mother and aunt, who are restless."
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His aunt, Zaynab, and Umm Layla, his mother dear
Knew that it was now the turn of all those near
Who went first to the battlefield, and who went last,
Was a matter of time, which was running very fast.

Akbar knew the affection his aunt, Zaynab, had for him
Of the pangs of sorrow she was, since the morn
experiencing
He looked at her face and at that of his mother
They were speechless at the thought of his murder.

"Let it not be said of my respected father Hussein,
He spared me till his brothers and nephews were slain,
I implore you, by the love that you bear for your
brother,
Let me die first and quench my thirst at Houz-e-
Kawther (The Heavenly Pool).

"May God be with you, my son," Umm Layla said,
"With you I shall lose all that I have, my lad
What destiny has in store for me, I am fully aware
After you, for pleasure and pain, I shall not care."

Death was now beckoning to Ali Akbar, "come, my son,
come!"
Amidst the war-like shouts of the enemy, amidst battle
drums
The cries of the ladies and children were most woeful
To die in the prime of youth, even death was mournful!

Ali Akbar was now facing the enemy's forces
He was addressing them with such eloquence
The older ones were blinking their eyes in amazement
Has the Prophet descended from heaven, his son to
lament?

Omar Saad saw the magic spell which the words had cast
All would soon be lost, if he allowed this to continue
He exhorted his men; he whipped up their gold lust
"Emaciated is he by three days of hunger and thirst."

He met the hounds in battle, one by one
Was this Ali himself? Each battle he won.
The winds were whispering "*La Fatha Illa Ali*
La saif Illa Zulfiqar most eloquently.

Such was the skill and prowess in fighting
Heads rolled on with speed of lightening
None dared come forward from the enemy's ranks
Cowards were they; their hearts had shrunk.

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through wounds, though victorious in single fights
The blood was gushing; thirst was his plight
He had left his mother in a dazed condition
Irresistible was the urge to see his dear ones.

His father was anxiously watching his son's heroic
deeds
His mother and aunt were behind, to attend his needs
They watched his face; it reflected the progress of
the fight
If any calamity befell Ali Akbar, dim would grow the
light.

"O, Allah, who brought back Ismail to Hagar!
O, Allah, who listened to the mother of Musa!
O, Allah, who reunited Jacob with Joseph, his son!
Grant us our wish, to see Ali Akbar for once."
Was it the effect of these prayers, of his mother and
aunt
That brought Ali Akbar back to his father's tent?
With an exclamation of joy and relief they clung to him
"Bravo, my son! Such a fight the world has never
seen!"

"Father, thirst is killing me; Ah, these wounds!
For victories in combat, it is usual to ask a boon
A refreshing cup of water is all that I ask and need
But alas! I know that not even a drop you can give."

Ali Akbar met his family including mother and father
The second parting was equally sad, perhaps even sadder
Fizza, the faithful maid, was disconsolate with grief
And so were Zaynab and Umm Layla, to be very brief.

As he rode away, Hussein walked for some distance
behind him

Was it his sacrificial lamb? O, what a heart-rending scene!

When Akbar disappeared from his sight, he turned heavenwards

"O, Allah, Thou art my witness, on this mournful day
One, whom I loved and cherished most, I have sent away
To defend the cause of righteousness and truth
And to fight the forces of the devil and his brutes."

He sat on the ground; he looked all around in vain
He received a wailing call, a call of anguish and pain
Though Hussein and his people were expecting such a call

A ghastly effect it had on all of them, one and all.

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"Father, Akbar is with a mortal wound in his chest
Father, do come to me, please hurry, and try your best
If you are unable to reach me, your dear son,
I convey my salutations, to you and my dear ones."

He rose from the ground and fell; he rose again and fell again

He struggled to his feet; his heart was in terrifying pain

Torrential tears were flooding his eyes; it was awesome!

He rucked hither and thither; from where had the cry come?

He was sobbing; uncontrollable and tragic was his condition

"Akbar, give me a shout, so that I can follow its direction

Akbar, my sight is gone; Akbar I can hardly hear your cry

Is there nobody in this world to guide me, to where you lie?"

To the side of his master, Abbas soon came rucking

Holding his hand, he led him to where Akbar was lying

Ah, the tragical sight! Akbar, lying in a pool of his own blood

Blood, blood, blood all around; blood itself was in flood!

Writhing in unbearable pain and digging his feet in sand

His breathing was now heavier; on his heart was his hand

A gurgling sound was coming from his parched throat

An uneven struggle with death, a fast sinking boat!

And so passed away the brave one, the angelic soul

With a smile on his face, he reached his heavenly goal
Leaving Hussein heart-broken and utterly inconsolable
God was a witness; the sacrifice was without parallel!

The days of our youth are the days of our treasure
To some, life is doled out in a different measure
Surging in young hearts are the hopes and feelings
With every nerve and sinew, quivering with joy of
living.

(3168)

Some budding flowers are swept away by the winds of
doom
Before they have an opportunity to blossom and bloom
Such was the destiny of Hussein's three beloved
nephews
Such rare gems, they were limited to only a few.

Three innocent lads, barely in their teens
Hussein's nephews - Aun, Muhammad and Qasim
Were closeted together to discuss their role
For that fateful day, clear was their goal!

To seek Hussein's permission was their main task
What should they say? How should they ask?
Seriously they discussed for quite some time
To die as martyrs as was in their family line.

How commendable was the behavior of these three young
men
There was no sign of childishness or immaturity, no,
none!
They were neither nervous nor in any way afraid
The chances of survival were nil, they were well
aware.

Qasim abruptly left; he entered the tent
Umm Farwa, his mother, her head was bent
Engrossed in her thoughts - Hassan's widow
Was thinking of her son and the morrow.

"Do you know why I called you, Qasim, my son?
To remind you of your duty to your uncle Hussein
Hassan and Hussein were so much devoted to one
another,
More than children are to their father and mother.

He wanted you to deputize for him, on this day
It was your father's wish that, come what may,

You should stand by Hussein with unflinching devotion
To defend Hussein should be your life's sacred
mission."

A load was off his head; how thoughtful of his father
To have provided for this situation, and one still
harder
A letter for Hussein, containing his dying desire
"Qasim shall deputize for me, since I have from this
world retired."

"My children! Do you know what tomorrow has in store?
Zaynab's near and dear ones will be no more.
All the vendettas nurterd, all these years,
Will rise like snakes; strike them down without fear!"

(3169)

"I want both of you, my dear beloved sons
To defend uncle Hussein and his priceless children"
How relieved they felt, and what a pleasant surprise
The hurdle was over; they had barely surmised.

After a pause she added, "When I was leaving Mecca,
It was the wish of your father Abdullah
You my son, Aun, should deputize for him
And you my child, Muhammad be my offering."

With folded hands, Zaynab addressed her brother
"In my whole life, have I asked for a favor?
For the first time, grant me my one wish,
Let my sons follow Ali Akbar to the Abode of Bliss."

"Go forward my children and fulfill your desire
Die like heroes and from the physical world retire
I shall soon join you on your journey to eternity
Convet my salutations to the Heaven's fraternity."

My humble tributes to your dear ones, O Zaynab!
The two darling youngsters marched like lion cubs
Brave was their bearing, brave their stance,
Tiny little swords soon clashed with the enemy's
lance.

The dust lifted itself to give a clearer view
Enemy soldiers were battling with Hussein's nephews
"Bravo! My sons," was it the voice of Ja'far-e-Tayyar?
Wathcing from the heaven was the famed winged warrior!

And why not? It was Muhammad his grandchild
It was a heroic fight, with numerous corpses piled
Some distance away was his younger brother, Aun
Fortunate were they, to whom such sons were born.

Against heavy odds, as was obviously expected
Both fell heroically fighting; so it was fated
What a heart-rending scene it was, O Merciful God!
Only the brave herat of Zaynab could endure the dart.

As was the practice, they started beating the battle
drume
The butchery of two innocent lads, to them it was fun
The usual cry, challenging the young defenders of the
faith
To come out to the battlefield to face their fate.

(3170)

Qasim rushed with the letter to his uncle dear
There was a crowd around him, how could he get near?
The corpses of Aun and Muhammad had just been brought
in
Such wailing and weeping, he had neither heard nor
seen.

Clad in his father's clothes, he looked his very image
Aided by his mother, he pushed forward, taking courage
With letter in hand, he respectfully presented himself
The weeping Hussein looked up; had Hassan come to
help?

He read the letter of his beloved brother
He wept bitterly; he could read no further
His last desire, how could he not honor
When his love had permeated every nook and corner.

Qasim fought bravely, though a youth of fourteen
He vanquished the enemy one by one; what a wonderful
scene!
Swords, spears, daggers and arrows flew from all sides
Wounded from head to foot, he did not run nor hide.

Falling from the saddle, he gave a valiant cry
Crushed under horses' hoofs, scattered the pieces lie
Hussein, the immortal Hussein, collected the mortal
remains
It was his dear Hassan's offerings in the cause of
Islam.

One against thousands - can it be called a fight?
Killing an innocent lad, it caused them delight
They thought they were doing something great
It was a continuation of their old game of hate.

Smeared with blood, on the shifting sand dunes of
Karbala
Lay a figure of youth, on the baks of Alkoma
The crimson life tide was ebbing fast, very fast
He was anxiously awaiting somebody, ere he breathed
his last.

From his parched throat he was feebly calling somebody
His master had heeded the call, since morn, of
everybody
To rush to the side of his dying friends, was his
image
Despite a thousand shocks and famished body, he had
not budged.

(3171)

Who is this mand, with indomitable courage, one may
ask?
He is the standard bearer of forces that are no more,
alas!
A pillar of strength, the full moon of the Hashemites,
A beautiful specimen of manliness, a glorious sight!

Before a man's death, all past events fly in a
flashback
Abbas was seeing them, lying on the burning sand
How, as a child, he followed his master, Hussein
To attend to his every need; to see that none caused
him pain.

He was in reverie for quite sometime,
Scene after scene passed over memory's screen
He suddenly remember Sakina, with forty-two other
children
Had begged him for water to meet their barest needs.

How like an enraged lion he had charged at the enemy's
ranks
Like a knife piercing butter, he had reached the
riverbank
He had filled the water bag, without tusting a single
drop
His horse also refrained, though it was not stopped.

One though was in his mind; how to reach water,
For his dear little Sakina, Hussein's youngest
daughter
Both his hands were cut, while on the way back' Pierced
with arrows, empty was the leather bag.

He fell to the burning sand; unbearable was the pain

Life was ebbing fast away; his wish to see his master remained
"O, my master! I beseech you, do come before I die."
One eye was pierced with an arrow; blood was in the other eye.

At last he heard Hussein's voice, a half sob, a muffled cry
"Abbas, my brother, what have they done to you!" he cried
Uncontrollable was his grief, "You have come, at last, my Master!"
He was sobbing; his breath was now much faster.

(3172)

Hussein lifted his head; Abbas put it back on the sand
"My master! When your neck will be wrung by cruel hands
No one will be there in this world to comfort you
Let my head remain in the same position, as yours would be!"

"My master, I have some last wishes to express."
Completely drenched in blood were his garments
"When I was born, I had a first look at your face
When I die, on your face I wish to fix my gaze."

"Please clear the blood from my one eye
Let me fulfill my last wish, before I die
Do not carry my body to the tent ground
I had promised to bring water for Sakina."

"Since I have failed, I cannot face her, even in death
Nor bring Sakina here, to see her uncle's miserable fate"
The flow of Furrat became turbulent and dark as winter
A murmur arose, at the cruel and unwarranted slaughter.

"Abbas, I too have a wish to be fulfilled
You know well, I too have not much time to live
Since childhood, you have always called me Master
For once, with your dying breath, call me Brother."

The blood was cleared; the arrow removed
One brother looked long at another, a long, lingering look
Abbas was heard to whisper, "My brother, my brother!"
With these words, he surrendered his soul to his Creator.

Though ten months old, he looked barely six
Famished and thirsty, his stare was fixed
Extending his parched tongue, he rolled it on his lips
Small were its wants; a little water to sip!

Ali Asghar uttered a heart-rending moan; a tragic
sight!
It tore asunder the hapless mother's sinking plight
"Sire, dying of thirst is my small innocent child
Do something to save him", Umm Rabab frantically
cried.

(3173)

To Yazid's force, he carried Ali Asghar in his arms
Wrapped under his robes, they thought it was the Holy
Qur'an
A little water for the child, he appealed, again and
again
They shot arrows instead, to their everlasting shame.

What cruel men were these heartless brutes?
An innocent child, what harm could he do?
An arrow pierced his parched and thirsty throat
Providing water is a must, even while killing a goat!

Anxious was the mother for the return of the child
Hussein's face was dripping with blood; a gruesome
sight!

Her heart sank; shattered were her hopes, forever
The picture was clear; Ali Asghar was no more!

Alone, all alone, with none to befriend him
It was all clear; it needed no special vision
The time was up for the long-awaited supreme test
Hussein was not found wanting; he was at his best.

How can a man, in midst of such calamities and such
disastrous times
Retain his faith in God, and maintain the balance of
his mind,
It is difficult to imagine nor can it be explained
Subject to such a supreme test was Hussein.

The challenges of the enemy were growing in tempo
The sun was now declining, it was time to go

A few words of advice he gave most lovingly to each
A touching farewell, a most cherished deed!

The farewell between Hussein and Zaynab
Was as sorrowful as between a mother and cub
Parting with Sakina was no less difficult
It was a heart-rending episode, poignantly felt!

Standing near Hussein, looking at his face
His darling child was speechless and dazed
All his courage could not steel his heart
To tell Sakina he was leaving her, alas!

Leaving her to the world, unkind to her
To fate, with only sufferings in store
(3174)

He kissed her cheeks, wet with tears
To be slapped for mourning her father dear.
Putting Sakina down, he hurried to the tent
Ali Zayn al-Abidin was lying full bent
He was unconscious, his twenty-five year old son
Chosen to live with death, he was the one.

"My appointed hour is near; wake up, Zain al-Abidin!"
Aroused from stupor, he was shocked beyond dream
Hussein's transformation was beyond any description
Gaping wounds, snow-white hair, bent back; ah, those
fiends!

"O, God! What has the enemy done to my father?
Where is uncle Abbas, my brother Ali Akbar
And my cousins, Qasim, Aun and Muhammad?"
He inquired; unaware, that they were all dead.

Hussein explained to him all the things he knew
It was now his turn, he had come to bid adieu
"Father, so long as I live, you cannot go and die
Let me go instead; let me hold the banner high."

Hussein gently put him down; he could not even sit
Burning with fever, he was famished and seriously sick
"You shall remain in bed, my beloved ailing son
As your father and spiritual head, I command."

"This is the beginning, not the end of your terrible
woes
Undescribable trials and tribulations you shall
undergo
Destiny has singled you out, my son, to demonstrate
Faith, in the hour of trial, is the real crusade!"

"Accompany your mother and other ladies in captivity
Bound in chains, suffering insults and indignities

Through Kufa and Damascus, you will be soon paraded
In the court of the tyrant, you will be humiliated."

"your sufferings will be far worse than death
Death is a reliever of things, destined by fate."
He clasped his son in a loving, lingering last embrace
Unbearable grief, Zain al-Abidin was unable to face.

He fell unconscious, the agony he was spared
Of seeing the departure of his aged father
How merciful is God; non, none can dispute it
Through trials and tribulations, virtues he
highlights!

Hussein spurred his horse, Zuljanah, to move on
Glued to the spot, he did not budge nor respond
(3175)

Famished, hungry, wounded, there was no doubt
His behavior was inexplicable, he could not shout.
He bent his head towards the burning ground
Sakina was clinging to his hoofs, Hussein soon found.
"Do not take my father to the battlefield!"
She was imploring the aged, faithful steed.

Exhausted, her moaning was hardly audible
Her condition was extremely sad and pitiable
Hussein jumped down, both clung to each other
Choked with sobs, they cried their hearts out
together.

To sleep on his chest was her last desire
Before he departed to face the enemy's fire
His chest had been her nest since birth
What was now left, save this little comfort?

She clung to him, as she had never done before
"No, father, to the battlefield I will not let you
go!"
With supreme effort, Hussein controlled his feelings
Shocked she was beyond imagination by so many gruesome
killings.

He consoled his child, as best he could
What was at stake, she soon understood
He promised her he would pray to God,
To join her soon in the heavenly ward.

So eloquent was his speech, they remembered Ali
Greed was overpowering; their minds were sullied
Their task was nearing completion; they were lured
Extravagant rewards, for annihilation, were bated.

He earnestly implored them, again and again

To save themselves from everlasting shame
And not be partners in Yazid's foul game
As posterity would condemn their names.

Now that his job was more than done
He called to witness, all and one
Lest on Judgement Day they should plead
Their blindness to the foul deed.

Omar Saad was perturbed; he tried to act hard
"Hussein, in your condition, my weakest soldier is
enough.
Accept the one and only condition we have imposed;
Accept Yazid's competence on religious matters to
dispose."

(3176)

The taunting words aroused Hussein's wrath
The Hashemite blood was raging and boiling hot
He was the son of Ali, the Lion of the Almighty God
Fierce was his ire; the devils were aghast.

"Omar Saad, I accept your challenge, you knave.
"In single combat, I will fight your bravest of the
brave."
Shaken by Hussein's words, none dared come forward
Courage they had none; they were all cowards.

He faced the foes, they were all afraid
To meet him in single combat, none dared
They attacked *en masse*, the cowardly ones
Little they realized that it was Ali's son.

The archers shot a volley of deadly arrows
Swords, scimitars and daggers flew like sparrows
Sword in hand, he cut through each flank
Utter confusion prevailed in enemy ranks.

Swift was his movement; well trained his charger
With incredible speed, he did them scatter
The hounds retreated; they licked their wounds
Their boastful shouts they whimpered without making a
sound!

The road to the rivulet was now clear
There lay the corpse of his dear brother
"Abbas, did you see your brother's last fight?
Why do you not say bravo, to me, heavenly light!"

Hussein looked at the sky, the sun was declining
It was time for prayers, the world was reclining
Availing of the respite, he sheathed his sword
Though he knew full well he could ill afford.

Their fiendish minds could hardly understand
To think of prayers, how could any man,
In such circumstances, even think or dream
The like of Hussein they had not seen!

After hurried consultations, from a safe distance
The archers shot arrows from all sides at once
Accompanied by stones, missiles and burning coal
To kill him somehow, clear was the goal.

Wounded all over, the missiles kept on showering
With blood draining fast, dizziness was overpowering
His mission was complete, the fight was over!
To hide from Zaynab, he looked around for cover.

(3177)

"Zuljanah, take me far away to a low-lying ground
My family should not see my head being severed by
hounds
Such was the understanding of his master's wishes
He immediately bolted to a place free of the enemy.

Realizing that his master was unable to dismount
He knelt and slid him gently to the ground
From a small hillock Zaynab watched her brother
Seeing him unconscious, she ran like a mother.

In his subconscious mind he saw the Prophets of Yore
Wailing and weeping for him were those who were no
more
The Prophet was in tears, Fatima was disconsolate
Ali nad hassan were helplessly watching his fate.

On his burning forehead he felt something cool
Was it the hand of his mother or the pool of blood?
His senses revived; he opened his blood-red eyes
Zuljanah was shielding him, the sun was yet high.

He remembered why he has stopped his fight
To offer prayers, despite his vulnerable plight
With prostrated head he addressed his Creator
The world had not witnessed such a Worshipper.

"You are my witness, O, my most beloved God,
I have fulfilled my mission, without hesitation, my
Lord;
Without whining, faltering or complaining, O God,
To Your decree, and your dispensation, I submit, O
Lord!"

While Hussein was still in prayer, Omar Saad pondered
"Cut off his head," he thought to himself and soon
ordered

Willing to wound, but mortally afraid to strike
None could muster the courage, so great was the fear.

He himself went forth, by his side was Shimr
Hussein was lying prostrate, his head in prayer
His lips were moving; can it be that he was cursing?
They bent over to hear what he was saying.

"I beseech You, wit all humility, O Allah!
Forgive the erring ones, of their trespasses
You are the most Beneficent, the most Forgiving!"
Can there be a being more compassionate, more loving?"

(3178)

The prayers were almost concluded, they were afraid
He was Ali's son, none could dare underestimate
Shimr jumped on his back, with sword in one hand
Too weak from loss of blood. Only his head he turned

"O Shimr, give me water, I am thirsty
Then complete your task", however criminal.
Zaynab rushed out, she was on the scene
"Save my brother!", she imploringly screamed.

She appealed to Omar saad, again and again
To give a little water, to save the life of Hussein.
He contemptuously turned his face, in utter disdain
O you fiend!" "O you slur on Islam's name!"

Her humiliation was watched by Hussein
He was in the greatest agony and pain
"For the sake of love you bear for me
Please return to the camp immediately."

She rushed back to her nephew, Ali Zain al-Abidin
Shaking him from stupor, she narrated the scene
In the dusty panorama they soon saw a spear
Hussein's head was on the tip of it, without malice,
without fear!

Noorali S. Merchant

THE WATER BEARER

When Abbas saw that the end was quite near,
He called on his brothers to go forth without fear.
These saintly young men, who had the same mother,
Loved Imam Hussein, their older half-brother.

Abbas said, "O sons of my mother!
"It is time to go forth for the cause of our Master.
"Let me see that you stay true to Allah and his cause

"And the Prophet Muhammad with no fear and no pause.

Abdul-Allah, Ja'far, and Uthman came forth to fight
With grown, hardened men who were opposing the right.
Each lad was cut down by a man twice his age.
And went on to glory to receive their just due.

Most of the males with Hussein were immature boys;
But they faced death, pain and slaughter for the
hereafter's joys.
Those foolish tools of Satan were not intending only
to murder Imam Hussein.
They inflicted ordeals on the whole household to cause
everyone pain.

(3179)

Why wise did they bar the whole party from the great
Euphrates' water?
Why did they not spare the weak, instead of bring them
to slaughter?
As the afternoon waned, the little children were in
such pain from lack of water
That tiny Sakina, Hussein's little daughter,
Led forty little children to petition for just a few
drops of water.
They approached their Uncle Abbas and with one voice
they pleaded,
"We thirst! We thirst! If this thirst gets much worse,
we soon will be dead."

Sakina stepped up to speak to Abbas,
"O Uncle is there not something you can do?
"There is no moisture anywhere, not even any dew.
"If just one leather canteen for us you could fill,
"We could all wet our throats, if it be Allah's Will."

Abbas was a champion warrior but the sight of these
Innocent babes begging for water
Hurt him more than their young heroes one by one
tasting death.
So he picked up Sakina's water bag,
His sabre, and the Prophet's battle flag.

And with the Imam's sacred permission,
Charged straight for the river, with only one
objective;
To quench his favorite nieces' and the other
children's thirst;
To fill that canteen before their thirst became worse.

Now, these sick, semi-bestials could barely stand with
the Hashemite youth.
They were mown down like grass by the great champion
of Truth.

Abbas put a terrible hurt on those expendable pawns
They panicked and scattered, wanting only to flee.
They were falling so fast, chaos swept through their
ranks.
In fear they deserted that cool river's banks;
That very same river that they had guarded for days;
In fear of one man, and the skill he displayed.

(3180)

Abbas filled his canteen
He was so keenly intent on quickly returning to the
tents
After hearing the children's pitiful laments,
And observing from their features that their deaths
were imminent;
That he would not relent to ease the torment of his
own thirst
With one drop of water from the Euphrates' swift
running torrent.

He simply filled his canteen, jumped on his horse,
pointed him towards Sakina's tent,
And spurred his charger to gallop at a speed like the
wind.
This caused real concern to those impotent pawns of
Yazid's illegal government.
Those pitiful incompetent pawns could not efficiently
deal with Hussein's heroic contingent.

When they were deprived of water and nourishment by
those defenders of demonic tyranny.
What would it be like to cross swords with those
"suicidal zealots", if Abbas' daring experiment
Actually did succeed, and they were freed from thirst
by one lone combatant;

One lone combatant who managed to fetch water from a
river that was blockaded by an entire mounted, well
armed regiment?
If Abbas was allowed to achieve that super-human
challenge,
It would be a great encouragement that would
supplement
The steel that was already a part of their most
excellent armament.
That illegal government's paid cowards never thought
that the water was to quench the children's thirst.
So they endeavored to prevent this bold experiment
from becoming a most dangerous humiliation.

This time they fought harder, with more determination,
but still they were too incompetent
To face this Hashemite prince; and once again a whole
regiment
Fled from one man to escape his sword's terrible
effect.

(3181)

They fell back in fear and humiliation;
Then sent for the archers to prevent this from
occurring
From turning into a rallying point that would make
Hussein's men even more fierce.

Arrows came at Abbas from every direction.
He turned and dashed towards the tent using his own
body as the canteen's shield.
He was seriously wounded, but he was intent upon
reaching the tents with a full water bag.
But when the tyrant's pawns saw Abbas' condition, they
closed in and attacked.

They surrounded Abbas like a wolf pack surrounding a
crippled stag.
They cut deep into his flesh, and cut off the hand
that held the Prophet's war standar.
He saved the standard by trapping it between his body
and the horse,
And once again he tried to manoeuvre to return to his
course.

But his mission of mercy was becoming more difficult
to achieve.
He was bleeding profusely from scores of wounds
inflicted by the enemy.

One hand was severed already, and before he could
compose himself,
One of Yazid's minions, who was short on courage but
not on cunning and stealth,
Had concealed himself behind a sand dune.

So when Abbas broke free from the wolves, in a semi-
swoon;
This master of treachery suddenly appeared and severed
his other hand.
The sword, and the hand lay on the hot desert sand.
But the man still tried to finish his quest that he

had gallantry begun.

With the water bag, and the Prophet's flag, pressed
between his body and the horse,
He fought to remain conscious, and to get back to his
quest.
But they surrounded him again, this time with
impunity.
Little they had to fear from a man with no hands.

(3182)

They cut at him fiercely, but his yet strove to get
free.
To get that water bag to the children, with that life
saving liquid.
But it was not only his blood that he heard spilling
onto the sand.
His canteen was pierced by one of the arrows shot by
this mercenary band.

So were dashed the hopes of the children, and of his
bold plan;
The blood, and the water, the life of the man.
Abbas was now helpless and trapped.
Both hands were severed, his energy disapated.

Arrows protruding from all his body including an eye.
It was clear to Abbas that soon he must die.

Then one of his enemies delivered a crushing blow to
his head with a mace.
They left him writhing in pain and calling for Hussein
for they knew that soon the mighty Abbas would be
dead.

Hussein heard his half-brother's cry.
And rushed to arrive before he died.
There he lay, blood flowing from cuts everywhere,
Writhing in pain, and gasping for air.

Both ahnds cut off, and an arrow in one eye;
Calling for God and Hussein, preparing to die.

Hussein dropped to his knees, and sat,
He cradled Abbas' head on his lap.
Abbas could barely speak.
Not only was he in terrible pain and very weak;
His breathing was labored and fast.
He managed to say, "Thank God you came, O my Master."

And then with a great effort he lifted his head off

the lap of the man,
And laid it back down on the hot desert sand.

He said, "O Master! You will suffer much worse before
this day ends.

"And there will be no lap to lend comfort to you; not
one of your friends.

"It is better that Abbas share with you this pillow of
hot, dusty earth.

"More, you are my master, this pitiful slave is not
worth

"The luxury of such an exalted place to rest his head.

(3183)

This is good enough for Abbas, for me this is best."

In between sobs and tears Hussein made his last
request

From his brother, his champion, the best of the best.

He said, "O my most loyal friend.

"I am not just your master. I am your very close kin.

"You have called me master since you were a boy.

"Now it would please me, and bring my heart joy

"If you would please call me brother, just once,
before we part."

Abbas whispered, "My brother, my brother", with the
last beats of his heart.

Then he gave up the ghost.

Thus ended the life of this great personality.

Abbas ibn Ali, a mythical hero who lived in reality.

The epitome of chivalry, humility and bravery,

The enemy of tyrants and governmental slavery.

Shaykh Ali abu Talib Son of Abdunnur

THE MOON OF MUHARRAM

The moon of Muharram was seen,
Anxiety about the princes occurred.

Muharram has returned,
But the Imams have not come.

O princes of Medina,
May the Lord bring us together.

The Mirs have gone out from Medina,
They have not come back.

The hardship of martyrdom,
Listen, is the day of joy.

Yazid has not got an atom of this love.

Death is rain for the children of Ali.

The hardship of martyrdom is a joyful rainy season.

Yazid has not got the traces of this love.

The decision to be killed was with the Imams from the
very beginning.

The perfect ones, the lion-like sayyids,
Have come to Karbala;
Having cut with Egyptian swords,
Thye made heaps of corpses;
Heroes became confused,
Seeing Mir Hussein's attack.
The hardship of martyrdom is all coquetry (naz).
The intoxicated understand the secret of the case of
Karbala.
The earth trembles, shakes; the skies are in uproar;
This is not a war, this is the manifestation of Love.
The friend kills the darlings, the lovers are slain,
(3184)

For the elect friends He prepares difficulties.
God, the Eternal, without necessity, what He wants, He
does.
Paradise is their place, overpowering they have gone
to Paradise,
They have become annihilated in God,
With Him they have become He.

**Shah 'Abdu'l-Latif of Bhit (1689-
1752)**

EVER IS YOUR NAME SORROW

O Karbala! Ever is your name sorrow (*karb*)
And tragedy (*bala*)!
O what you brought upon the family of Mustafa!
(Muhammad)
How much blood flowed upon your soil when they fell,
And how may tears were shed there!
And how many a noble horse there was,
Weeping, his teras coursing,
His cheek next to one perished from thirst,
Wiping the dust off his hooves.
On the stain of a throat covered in blood!
These guests came to a barren plain,
And there was no food to be served them;
Nor did they taste water, until they gathered
At the edge of the sword, and the spring of death.
O murdered one, who struggled with death,
Without uttering an insult, without killing anyone!
And they washed him only with his own
Blood, shed by spears:
Shrouded him only with a shroud of dust.
Exhasuted, he calls, while there is no help for him,
In the name of his beneficent father, and his
grandfather Mustafa (Muhammad),
And in the name of a mother for whom God
Has raised a standard,
Not found among all the women of
Humankind.

And what father, what grandfather does he call!
 O grandfather, grandfather, help me, O father!
 O Messenger of God, O Fatima,
 O Prince of the Faithful, 'Ali, Murtada!
 HOW WOULD God not hasten for their sakes,
 To cause the earth to heave, the sky to rain stones!
 And O Imams, mountains of the earth, most
 Great, most high;
 O moons of this earth, shining, brilliant!
 The disaster which befell you
 Brought to us deep grief and weeping, never ending,
 I know that sorrow for you is not to be
 (3185)

Forgotten, nor grief for your sake comforted,
 Though ages may pass;
 For much time has passed since your deaths,
 And continues to pass,
 Yet neither has grief abated, nor tears.
 How far are you, O Imams, from him who
 Hoped to achieve by you,
 With the Spostle of God, victory and salvation;
 On the day of the Great Encounter, when the
 Apostle will turn his face from those
 Gathered, and say:
 (Speaking to God against them,
 And how could a generation thus accused prosper?)
 'O Lord, on this day I am enemy to them;
 I come as one wronged, and this is the
 Day to judge.'

Al-Sharif al-Murtada

IN THE GRAVE AT TUS

In the grave at Tus has resided an Imam (Imam Ali
 Reza, the 8th Imam)
 To whom visitation is obligatory and general.
 The grave in which the Peace has resided,
 To which greetings and *salaam* are given as a gift.
 The grave whose flashing lights remove blindness
 And through whose earth maladies are repelled.
 The grave which represents to (our) eyes that
 Muhammad,
 His Testamentary Trustee, and al-Ma'mun are standing.
 Eyes are lowly before this and that
 (I.e., Muhammad and his Testamentary Trustee) out of
 dignity;
 Understandings are bewildered by their essences.
 When visitors stop at the quarter of the grave and
 depart,
 Their sins are forgiven,
 They supply themselves with security against
 punishment,

And they are safe that chastisement will not befall them.
Allah gives security to them (pilgrims) through it,
And because of it the pens (of judgement) have become dried to them.
Had it not been for it, no cloud would water the country, though it
Is in no need of rain.
Ali ibn Musa has resided in the grave of whose earth boasts
The sanctuary and the area outside the sanctuary (*al-hill*).

(3186)

The running (*al-sa'i*) to it has been made obligatory just as
The Sacred House,
Which has, apart from it, the right of glorification.
If one visits it while recognizing its right,
Then it is forbidden for Hellfire to touch his body;
His rank, without doubt, will be praiseworthy tomorrow,
He will have a place in the Gardens of Everlastingness, And he has, in that regard, Allah the most faithful Guarantor;
This is an oath which all oaths reach.
Allah blesses the Prophet Muhammad and Ali Who supported Islam.
Likewise Fatima al-Zahra is eternally blessed by the Lord,
Who knows her obligatory right.
He blesses Ali, and then He starts with al-Hassan, And blesses al-Hussein, may Allah honor him.
He blesses Ali al-Taqi, Muhammad, And every gallant Sayyid.
Even though the dwarfs may be averse to blessing, He blesses with the finest blessing of the educated, Pure one, Ja'far al-Sadiq the Truthful One (the 6th Imam),
From whom your knowledge is reported and to whom Peoples cling.
Similarly, He blesses Musa, your father, And after him He blesses you with a permanent blessing.
He has double blessings for Muhammad al-Zaki; He blesses Ali as long as speech continues.
He blesses Ali al-Reza Abul-Hasan because of whose lack
Darkness has dominated the country.
And he blesses Ali al-Reza's successor through whom The system has become complete and perfect.
For it is he who is the one hoped for
Through whom guidance will return afresh
And the religious precepts become firm.

Had it not been for the Imams,
Islam would become effaced and submissive.
Each Imam takes the place of his predecessor
Until the days end in al-Qa'em.
O son of the Prophet and Allah's Proof
Who stands for prayer and fasting,
If an Imam from among you disappeared,
His place is taken by his successor through whom
maladies are cured.
Surely the Imams are equal in excellence
And knowledge when old and when young.
You are the means and mediation to Allah;
You have taught guidance to men,
So you are its Emblems.

(3187)

You are the guardians of the religion, the world.
And those who are respected and protected for Allah.
The people are nothing except those who acknowledge
Your excellence;
The diners are beasts and livestock.
Rather they are straying farther off from the path
because of their unbelief,
And those from among them who follow them are
featherless
Arrows (used by ancient Arabs in divination).
They claim regarding your world as if they did you a
favor
Through denying your favors.
O Allah's Blessing which He bestows upon whom He, the
Munificent, chooses from among His creatures.
If your (Imam Ali Reza's) body is absent from us,
Your soul is constantly present
Even if your body has been hidden from our eyes.
The difference between you and the Prophet is
prophecy,
For after that feet are equal.
Two graves are at Tus:
The Guidance is in one,
And the Error is in a grave
Which he sees as a flame.
Two graves are connected with one another:
This grave is a lovable garden where the Imam is
visited.
And likewise that grave is a pit of Hellfire
Wherein burning thirst is renewed for the errant one
(i.e., Harun al-Rashid).
The nearness of the errant one to the pure one (i.e.,
Imam Ali al-Reza) doubles his chastisement in spite of
him.
Though he is near to him, yet he is far,
And on him are heaped the robes of chastisement.
And likewise, you are not harmed by the unclean one
who

Has been brought nigh to you by rocks and marble.
No, rather they show that they are greater in regret
for
You when you are honored
And the cursed one is subjected to severe, doubled
torment
Throughout hours, days, and years.
I wish I knew:
Will your Qa'em be a sufficient sword for fighting
tomorrow?
Through the sword, my hands will quence the thirst in
the
Bowels for avenging you;
I have not quenched my burning thirst yet.
Your graves excite me just as landmarks and tents
(3188)

excite those other than me.
If someone is very fond of praising the rich,
Then through praising you I have ardent love.
I have given to Ali Abu al-Hassan al-Reza the poem as
agift,
Which is pleasing and which is easily understood.
Take it from al-Dabi, your servant,
Who has suffered unjust accusations for your sake,
Then I have the right of hospitality of the guest
When he comes at night.
Therefore, accept my purpose,
For I regard your acceptance of my purpose as a gain.
If one comes to know about love for you through
teaching,
Then my love for you is an inspiration.

Al-Dabi

MY HEART IS FINE

My heart is fine and bright with the love of Haidar
(Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib)
Next to Haidar, al-Hassan is our Guide and Leader.
The dust beneath the shoes of al-Hussein
Is the eyeliner (*Surmah*) for my eyes.
Zain al-Abidin - the ornament of all devotees
Is like a crown on my head.
Muhammad al-Baqir is the light of both my eyes.
The religion of Ja'far al-Sadiq is true
And the path of Musa is right.
O loyal ones!
Listen to me praising the King of Kings, (Imam Ali al-
Reza)
Who is buried in Khurasan (in Tus, near Meshed, to be
exact).
A particle from the dust of his tomb is the sovereign
cure of all pains

Leader of men of faith is al-Taqi,
O dear Muslims!
If you love al-Naqi in preference to all other people,
You have done the thing which is proper and right.
Al-Askari is the light of the eyes of both Adam and
the world.
Where can be found, in the world,
Such a commander-in-chief as al-Mahdi?

Shaikh Ahmad Jami

(3189)

MY HEART SIGHED

My heart sighed, for my innermost being was dejected;
Sleep no longer came, and sleeplessness was
bewildering.
O who shall be the bearer of a message from me to
Hussein,
(Though the hearts and minds of some may disapprove!)
Slaughtered, though without sin himself,
His shirt was as if dyed through with crimson.
Now the sword itself wails, and the spear shrieks,
And the horse which once only whinnied, now laments.
The world quaked for the sake of the Family of
Muhammad; For their sake, the solid mountains might
Have melted away.
Heavenly bodies sunk, the stars trembled,
Veils were torn, and breasts were rent!
He who asks blessing for the one sent from
The Tribe of Hashim,
But attacks his sons; truly, that is strange!
And if my sin is love of the Family of Muhammad:
Then that is a sin of which I do not repent.

Imam Shafi'i

O DILIGENT RIDER, STOP THE CAMELS

O diligent rider, stop the camels when they arrive in
the land of Tus!
Do not be afraid of their being tired,
And desist from hitting them when stopping and taking a
rest.
Kiss the ground when you see the earth of the Shrine of
the best of mankind, 'Ali al-Reza.
Recite to him my greetings, which are like the perfume
of musk,
(And say to him that these greetings are) from Ali ibn
'Isa.

Say: That precious place receives the peace of Allah at all times.

The one who remembers Allah is still reciting prayers of glorification and hallowing in the house.

(It is) the house of honor.

The one who goes straight to it will continue sending his hopes and camels to it.

(It is) the house of glory.

Praise and lauds are still devoted to it.

What could I possibly say in praising the people whose glory has been established by Allah?

What could I possibly say in praising the people whose name Allah has sanctified?

(3190)

They are the guides of mankind.

They are the most generous of all people.

Their origins and souls are noble.

When a drought occurred, they gave generously like the rain.

When all was darkened by error, they appear like the sun.

They gave honor to horses, pulpits and camels when they ascended them.

They are the people whose love removes worried,

And whose qualities make clear the words.

They are noble in birth, good in origin,

Pure in ancestry, and meritorious in root.

No friend became unhappy through them when he became their friend.

I supported them with my praises when I did not join the army.

They have filled my heart with friendship and hope.

And I have filled pages with my praises of them.

So you know that I am obedient to them and showing love

Toward them, and that to other than them I am disobedient and obstinate.

O Ali al-Reza, I send you affection leaving my heart out of love.

(You are) my faith; my faith is in you;

And in my heart, for you, there is love passionate and steadfast.

I do not think that the malady (of my own heart) recovers save by you;

Nor is the wound (of my own heart) cured by other than you.

I wish that I could visit your lofty shrine and kiss your blessed land.

If it is difficult for me to visit you in wakefulness, Then you visit me in sleep and quench my thirst (for visiting you).

Ali ibn 'Isa al-Arbali

WHY HAS MY EYE SHED TEARS?

Why has my eye shed tears?
If it looses the water of the veins,
Then it will be delighted with him for whom the earth
weeps,
And for whom the peaks of the high mountains have been
brought low
And they have become humble.
The sky has mourned for missing him;
The stars have wailed for him till they became weary.
Allah is pleased with our fallen one,
(3191)

The grandson of our Prophet.
The world had opposed him
And turned away from him.
So today we are more worthy of weeping over him
Because of a misfortune we regard as difficult and
great.
The world after the family of Muhammad is not good;
We must not pay attention to it when it vanishes.
The misfortunes of the time have become manifest,
But I do not see that our misfortune regarding the
Chosen ones has become clear.

De'bel al-Khuza'ee

IN PRAISE OF ALI (1)

At the battle of Hunayn, his heart
Was steady as amountain in the sin of war.
Lions slink away like foxes
At the sight of his blade.
If you fear that the devil will plunder you
Hide yourself in his cavern
Where no one enters but by the command
Of his deputy, and which is made not of stone
But of knowledge (for how could the pride
Of Ali descend to stone?), and where are found
His house, his estate, his chattels.
On the trees and meadows of Ali the rain
Falls as hermeneutic exegesis, for he
Chose no silver and gold, but knowledge and faith.
How but by his sword-wielding hand
Could the Divine Law find protection?
How should the unbelievers of Mecca
Not feel him as an inward affliction?
Free from taint, his tongue, hands and loins -
Where was the best woman of the world
But by his side? Hassan and Hussein, those
Mirrors of the Prophet, were also his mirrors.
Satan's hands and feet were amputated

In the uproar he caused, and no one
Will be safe but in his refuge.
His sword ruined the good name
Of countless warriors in the battles
Of Badr, Uhud and Khaybar, which were his work.
The heartspring of Ali's lover reflects and is full
Of the image of him - so is my heart this spring
And his knowledge is my shield. O lovers, pluck his
blossoms
But save the thorns for his enemies.
No one of the Community is worthy of greatness
But his lover, for the Shiite rests immune
(3192)

From the wiles of Satan in his citadel.
He is the Prophet's kinsman, but no one
Belongs to Ali's tribe but the lover of Truth.
A thousand years of praise will not exhaust
A thousandth of his qualities; I take pride
In his Four Virtues, his manliness, his knowledge
Piety and munificence, and my back is bent
With gratitude, the burden of Ali.
I imitate his way of dress, robed in faith and gnosis.
Nasibi, be silent - you have not learned
Of his warp and weft, or you would
Think more of him.
Act not the snake with me
Lest you think you can bear the sting
Of the serpent of Ali.
Why do you rank
Every lowly weed with him?
He was a lion, the battlefield his veldt,
The unbelievers his prey, his sword,
His Zulfiqar like a dragon
In his claws, slayer of three armies,
His right hand, armor-piercer that
Xast to the ground the severed heads
Of great commanders.
Gabriel called his spear
Send him my challenge, the boastful knight,
For I am the chevalier of Ali.
Even his enemies I shall convert
If they lend me their ears, and in spite
Of all they do, I shall bind them fast
With the bridle of Ali;
But if they turne their heads away from this knowledge
Sweet and boundless, they will come'On Resurrection
Day,
Is graced, heads dragged in the dust before Ali.

Nasr-i-Khusraw

IN PRAISE OF ALI (2)

My back - by the grace of God and in devotion to Him -
Is strong enough so that perhaps I might attain
To th Messenger and his intercession, I ask for no
other
To plead for me with God but His Prophet, and to plead
For me with the Prophet none but his blessed Family,
With whom I shall go to him; no fear of taint
Or contagion from hypocrites.
The Religion of Allah
Is the Prophet's kingdom and today all creatures
Are his subjects, his Community.
(3193)

Your slave does not owe you even half the obedience
That the Prophet's Community owes him.
He has ordered you not to kill your slave for
disobedience
Nor will he slay you for your rebellion;
Do not sver yourself from his all-encompassing
protection,
For he is the Guide of all creation, his message
Has reached from one end of the earth to the other.
After him, his Family are the Guides - revere him
And turn not from his Family.
If you know him not
Then you must know his children - how else
In your bewilderment can you hope for mercy?
Have you not heard to whom the Prophet entrusted
His dominion on the day of the Sermon by the ditch?
The one to whom allusion is made in the Book?
The one before whose courage the boldness of the
unbelievers
Faded like a lantern before the sun?
Who gave his ring to a begger?
To whom the Prophet gave the banner in the battle of
Badr, when all others had quailed?
The lion, the warrior
Whom God has made all heroes to love?
On the field of battle our Prophet had no miracle
More potent than that man's might.
It is he who will distribute paradise and hell to the
faithful and unfaithful.
He is the Gate of the City of Knowledge
Which is the Prophet, none but him
Is worthy of that trust.
If you seek the City
Go to its gate, that felicity's light may brighten
your heart.
Yes, he was the Prophet's miracle in battle
And Zulfiqar, his two-tongues sword, was his own
miracle.
The Prophet was God's treasure, but he - his mind and
heart -
Were the Prophet's treasure.

The enemies of God's lion are beset with the disease
of ill omen
And cannot be accused of anything but stupidity,
Or the horror of an ass when it sees a lion.
Turn away, flee those infected with such prestige,
But if they show you honor, do not (for the sake of
the dignity of Islam) refuse their reverence.
In disputation with them do not expect more
Than dullness, for they have no other tool to use
But the frozen intellects, nothing to say but
nonsense.

(3194)

When the chain of stupidity rusts shut, there is no
escape.
All their proof is simply abuse -
But who will listen to it on Resurrection Day?
Satan is powerful, yes, but his power lies
Only in falsehood and cunning.
God values one above another for his faith -
If you expect succor from him, give succor to
His True Religion.
Put no stock in the moment's good luck
For fortune always hides destruction within it.
I find the world a faithless bawd - do not mourn her
loss.
The only positive thing one can say about her is that
she is living proof of the ephemerality of material
good.
Her boon is bane - for no one shall escape death
Who has drunk from her cup - and therefore
Do not cover her flawed and sickly benediction.
I ought not to strive for nought but your discomfort.
She gave me robe after rich robe of honor
Then stole them all back, one by one.
Now that I lean for support on God and Islam
I grow weary of the world and of men
And by God's grace I am freed of need
Of anyone who does not need me.
The blessed Qur'an reposes in my heart,
Which is filled with peace.
Praise the Lord, that nothing burdens my back
But His favor and Grace, that thanks to the generosity
Of the true Imam I have some to know his truth,
His certainty and the justice of his cause -
That matchless king whose domain, of all the earth,
Is free of deviltry; who has robed Jupiter
In its constellation of Fortune of all auspiciousness
And joy.
Lord, help me to spend my days and nights
In devotion to him, to string together from time to
time
A few pious verses based on his knowledge and wisdom.

Nasir-i-Khusraw

IN PRAISE OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

My choice is the Qur'an and th Faith of Muhammad
For these were the choices of Muhammad.
I am sure that if I just practice these two
My Certitude will become as the Certitude of Muhammad.

(3195)

My key to Paradise - my guide to Felicity
The fortified Citadel: what are they but the Religion
of Muhammad:

For us he is the Messenger of God
Such was the carving on the seal-ring of the Prophet.
Rooted in my heart: the Faith and the Book
As firmly as in the heart of Muhammad.
By God's grace my hope, my prayer
Is to be the least of servants in the Community of
Muhammad.

My brother, in the sea-depths of religion
The Qur'an is the pearl beyond price of the Prophet;
Every king owns a treasure of Muhammd.
Now look to these riches, this pearl:
Who now is custodian of Muhammad's legacy?
You yourself would bequeath your wealth to your
children;

Just so are his children the guardians the heirs
of the Prophet.

Ponder well: you Muslims will not find the jewels
But in keeping of muhammad's progeny.
Surely he handed all down to him
Who was the worthiest of all Companions of the
Prophate.

Who was he, the Companion whose wife
Was the delight of the eye of Muhammad
And from this delight and this Companion
Was born Hasan and Hussein, the darlings of Muhammad.
I have seen in both worlds the reality of Hussein and
Hasan:

The rose and jasmine of the Prophet;
Where in heaven and earth could such blossoms spring
But in the garden from the seed of Muhammad?
I dare not tremble lest I prefer any creature
Above these beloved ones of God's Prophet.
The Book, and the Sword of the Lion of God:
These are the bulwarks beneath the firm Faith of
Muhammad.

Who stood sword drawn in every battle
Who stood at the right hand of the Prophet Muhammad?
The Sword of Ali lent its aid to the Qur'an
And Ali no doubt was the Helper of Muhammad.

Ali: in Islam as Aaron to Moses:
Partner companion of the Prophet Muhammad.
On the Resurrection Day Aaron and Moses shall kiss
The mantle of Ali, and the sleeves of Muhammad.
Muhammad's religion was a den, but
Ali was the lion of the den of Muhammad.
Seek knowledge - he bid us - even in China:
Ah! What praises are mine in the China of Muhammad.
I heard from the heir of the Prophet Muhammad,
(3196)

The honeysuckle words, the Sayings of Muhammad;
My heart beheld a mystery revealed from the Origin
To Ali's heart through the Prophecy of Muhammad
And learned from the babes of (Fatima) Zahra and (Ali)
Haidar
The true nature off the Prophet.
From that illustrious child who has attained
The highest ranks of Muhammad
Surely I could have gained no more than I gained
Had I lived myself in the time of Muhammad.
The Creator of the Universe Himself praises me
For my love of Ali, and my blessings on the Prophet
Muhammad
And with the Blessing of the Lord of the Worlds
I dwell in the Stronghold of Muhammad.

Nasir-i-Khusraw

According to ibn Abbas, after the battle of Siffin, Ali ibn
Abi Talib, First Imam, told him:

"Jesus one day passed with his disciples through
Karbala and on that spot they saw a group of gazelles
gathered together weeping. Jesus and his disciples sat
and wept with them, without the disciples knowing the
reason for that lamentation Jesus finally told them
that his was a spot on which was to be killed the young
descendant of the Apostol Ahmad (Muhammad), and child of
the pure, unblemished virgin (*batul*) Fatima, who is
like unto my mother (the Virgin Mary). He (Hussain)
shall be buried on this spot whose soil is more fragrant
than musk. For it is the burial place of the martyr
(Hussain). Such is the soil containing the bodies of
prophets and descendants of prophets." (175)

Some will say that while Ali ibn Abi Talib, First Imam, was
certainly neither a liar nor a fool, he may have been trying to
express a difficult truth by way of allegory and parables, as

Jesus often did. However, at this point, there is something which I wish to note. In Arabic the New Testament or the Gospel is called *Injil*. Said word is not pure Arabic, but rather is derived from the Greek *Euangelion*, meaning, roughly, "good news" or "a

(3197)

good message". Like the word "angel", the Greek *Euangelion* is remotely derived from the Avestan word for "messenger", the *EU* being a prefix which means "good". From the Greek *Euangelion* comes the Medieval Latin *Evangelium*, from which in turn are derived so many words in English and various Romance languages.

The Gospels (*Injil*) are silent concerning many years of the life of Jesus. Several years ago in Europe were widely circulated ancient traditions according to which Jesus visited India. Many simply scoffed at this. However, noting the wide gaps in our knowledge of the life of Jesus and also the trade routes at that time between the Roman Empire and the East, the conclusion I came to was this: in our present state of knowledge it may appear unlikely that Jesus visited India, but it is by no means impossible nor fantastic. It is most certainly neither impossible nor fantastic that Jesus may have visited Mesopotamia.

We shall deal later with the traditions connecting Imam Hussein and St. John the Baptist.

In The remainder of this chapter and in the whole of the following chapter, we shall repeatedly refer to the tragedy of Karbala and the martyrdom of Imam Hussein. Below is part of a meditation on the month of Muharram, which marks the anniversary of said tragedy. This one is particularly interesting, because it

includes a brief account of the tragedy of Karbala written by Ja'far as-Sadiq, 6th Imam and great-grandson of Imam Hussein, the martyr of Karbala:

(3198)

"Muharram is one of the four months declared sacred by Allah in the Holy Qur'an. The other three holy months are Rajab, D'ee Qaa'd and D'il Hijj.

There is no god save Allah If someone claims to be a god or has faith in others' godhead, other than Allah, Allah does not make a compromise to take anyone as god, although He gives a free hand even to such false pretenders, because:

"There is no compulsion in Religion"

(Qur'an: II:56)

In verse 59 of Surah an-Nissa, Allah says:

"O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger (Muhammad) and 'Ulil Amr' (Those who are authorized to command) from among you."

The believers always obey Allah, obey His messenger and the "Ulil Amr" appointed by Him. It is an open invitation. There is no compulsion. Those who (in truth) are not believers can do what they wish.

Likewise Prophets, Messengers, sent down by Allah to guide and warn people, never accepted anyone at all as Prophet of Messenger, whatever the circumstances, be it that they did not stop claimers of this kind, or oppoentents, with application of force or repression.

In the same manner, Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib did not recognize anyone as "Ulil Amr".

His elder son Hasan (A.S.) like his grandfather, the Holy Prophet (S.A.) (treaty of Hdaybiah), let Mua'wiyah be ruler, but did not give up his rights of "Ulil Amr", which he was at that time.

When Yazid became the ruler, he threw to the wind the earlier policy of the rulers not to demand "Bay-a't" (oath of obedience) from the children of the Holy Prophet (A.S.), and began to exercise pressure upon Imam Hussein (A.S.) to swear fealty and acknowledge him as the "Ulil Amr", which the Holy Imam rightly refused to do. Another aspect of the whole affair is that Yazid was the vilest tyrant of the worst type, but even if he had been an ordinary ruler Imam Hussein could not swear fealty to him as the "Ulil Amr". So he did not. In the month of Rajab, year 68 A.H., he left Medina and went to Mecca. From Mecca, before performing Hajj, he took

his family with him, and with some friends and companions, true believers, he began the journey towards Iraq, with the expressed intention to cross the boundaries of the empire under the rule of Yazid, and settle down in some other country, Iran or India, because he wanted to make it clear to Yazid that he
(3199)

could not swear obedience to a "non-Ulil Amr", as he himself was an "Ulil Amr".

It was not to be. A large army in service of Yazid under the command of Umar ibn Saad surrounded the caravan of Imam Hussein when he reached Karbala on Muharram 2, 61 A.H.

There are several aspects of human relationship and behavior in the events of Karbala that took place in the 10 days of Muharram, culminating in the Martyrdom of Imam Hussein and his 72 friends and relatives, which come into sharp focus as we recount every minute, during the religious gatherings each year, but above all, the ultimate reason remains the same: the impossibility of swearing an "oath of loyalty" (Baya't) by an "Ulil Amr" to obey a "non-Ulil Amr".

After Imam Hussein, all his successors to "The office of Ulil Amr", our Holy Imams, refused to obey "non-Ulil Amrs", and every ruler held each of them prisoner, used every trick, applied force and in the end killed every Imam, exactly as Yazid did.

Muharram is a month of mourning for the lovers and followers of "Aali Muhammad". On the 10th day of this month in 61 A.H., Imam Hussein ibn Ali (A.S.), the grandson of the Holy Prophet (S.A.) and the younger son of Ali (ibn Abi Talib) and Fatima (Zahra) (S.A.), together with his family and friends, in all 72 men, were slain on the sands of the desert of Karbala. Since then, each year, the true followers of the Holy Prophet (S.A.), through grief, sorrow and tears, keep alive the message, cause and purpose of the greatest martyrdom in human history.

No doubt Muharram is a holy and sacred month.

The believing men and women, in this month, suspend application of good effects of days and dates and avoid rejoicing even if happy events come to pass.

The friends and followers of Aali Muhammad hold meetings (Majlis); they have been doing so for the last 1,300 years, in the name of Imam Hussein (A.S.). During the months of Muharram (and Safar), particularly in the last 10 days of Muharram, to give new life to the Divine Message of "There is no god but God". As the beloved (Sufi) saint and poet of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (of Ajmer, India) had said:

"Indeed (imam) Hussein is the architect of "There is no god but God; they are both reciprocally related

to one another."

(3200)

And the philosopher-poet of Pakistan, Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, said:

"Ismail was the beginning (the first step), Hussein was the ultimate."

Each year at the advent of Muharram, Islam turns over a new leaf.

In fact, it is on account of Imam Hussein's remembrance, every year that we know who are the Holy Prophet (S.A.), Ali ibn Abi Talib (A.S.), Bibi Fatima Zahra (A.S.), and what were their true substance, style and wisdom.

It is because of Imam Hussein's memory that we call to mind each year the original Islam, and it becomes clearly visible from behind the smoke screen of the dust of delusion, thrown into the eyes of Muslims in the name of Muslim rule. ...

...Said Ja'far as-Saddiq, 6th Imam:

A large army (in the service) of Yazid, under the command of Umar ibn Saad, surrounded Imam Hussein, his family and friends, on all sides on the 9th of Muharram, shouting for joy and uttering songs of triumph, in view of the presence of countless soldiers armed with swords, lances, arrows and (sling) stones, all this against a handful of 72, among whom were 90 year-old men and a six-month old child. Imam Hussein (A.S.) at that time received no support from any quarter; forsaken he was in this dire situation.

On the night of Ashura, the Holy Imam had invited his companions and relatives to sit together, after Isha prayers, and hear his last address. As soon as the prayers came to an end, they sat around him.

He said:

"Brothers! It is a misjudgement if, in one's heart of hearts, anyone expects to witness my victory in tomorrow's battle and gather the fruit of conquest. I tell you, in clear words, that the enemy will slay me, beyond the shadow of a doubt, and in a manner that will make your blood run cold. Abbas, my brother, his hands both cut off, shall be killed on the slope of the shore (of the River Euphrates), running along the river. A lance will pass through the heart of my son, Ali Akbar. The hooves of the enemy's cavalry will crush the wounded

body of my brother's son, Qasim. Likewise, whoever stays with me, be he a kinsman or a friend,
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will be killed in cold blood. I tell you, beforehand, that an arrow, well deliberately and purposefully aimed with malice aforethought, shall hit the throat of my six-month old son, Ali Asghar. He shall die, on the spot, in my arms. My son, Ali, who now suffers from a high fever, alone shall weather the storm, and bear in the aftermath the worst and meanest abuse, along with the womenfolk of "Aali Muhammad."

Friends! Do not let your heart break nor have qualms on account of obligation to loyalty to me and my cause, concerning which you have sworn an oath. I, willingly, set you free from the sworn pledge. Leave me alone to that which lies in wait for me tomorrow. They will be after me and no other. The night is dark. You

can cut and run and vanish unseen in the darkness."

The the Holy Imam asked his brother, Abbas, to put out the candles, to let the deserters show their heels and save their necks. In the darkness many escaped. The lamps again were lit and a final group of 72 was sitting there calm and quiet, willingly prepared to meet the certain death next morning when the "Dibh'in A'z'eem" as promised by the Almighty, would become a fact.

"And We (Allah) ransomed him (Ismail) with a great sacrifice (Imam Hussein)."

Qur'an: Surah Saaffaat: 107

It was a dark, dismal and deadly night.

The chosen godly group, men and women, passed the whole night reciting the Holy Qur'an, worshipping Allah, praying Salaat, and their guide, Imam Hussein (A.S.) was with them at all times.

It is a proof of sincere devotion to Allah if we, his followers, also spend this night in the worship of Allah.

"Whosoever spends this night awake, until the daybreak, worshipping Allah, near the grave of Imam Hussein, Allah will raise him or her, on the Day of Judgement, along with the martyrs of Karbala. ...

DAY OF ASHURA

...Today is the day of Martyrdom of Imam Hussein (A.S.).

Today, in the year 61 A.H., Imam Hussein (A.S.) fulfilled the promise made by the Almighty Allah in Surah as-S'aaffaat: "And We (Allah) ransomed him

(Ismail) with a great sacrifice (Imam Hussein"

It was the third day since the water supply to the Imam's camp had been disconnected. At dawn the small devoted group performed "Tayammum" and assembled to pray the Fajr Salaat behind Imam Hussein (A.S.).

The first swarming flight of arrows shot by the enemy archers hit the Holy Imam and his devotees while they were saying the Salaam. Thirty persons were killed on the spot. With "whatever is left", the Imam came onto the battlefield and before attacking the enemy soldiers, addressed them to make known his rights and status with reference to the Holy Prophet (S.A.) and the Book of Allah. He warned them not to kill him as it would bring upon them destruction in this world and everlasting punishment on the Day of Judgement. The Holy Imam again and again tried to make them understand the consequences of the events that would take place if they did not listen to him. He once again proposed that they let him, together with his family and friends, go away and settle down in some far-off land, far from the jurisdiction of the Muslim Empire. They listened to what he had to say, but declared:

"We shall kill you if you do not agree to recognize Yazid's overlordship by swearing loyalty to him."

Despite the hunger, thirst and wounds, one by one the devotees (of Imam Hussein) went to fight against the hordes of demons in human shape, displayed rare acts of bravery and courage, and gave their lives in the cause of Allah. On every occasion the Holy Imam, together with his brother and son, dispersed the "blood hounds", carried away the dead bodies and lay down on the ground under a tent, now known as "Ganj-i-Shaeedan".

The sun had crossed the meridian.

The time for the Zuhr prayers had begun. The renegades refused any sort of truce. The Imam therefore prayed Zuhr Salaat as "Namaz of Khawf".

After the companions, friends and comrades of the Holy Prophet, of Imam Ali and Imam Hussein's own, as he had foretold in his "Shab-i-Ashur" speech, it was the turn of his relatives. The two sons of Bibi Zaynab (Awn, 10, and Muhammad, 9), Qasim, son of Imam Hasan, 14, Abbas, the standard bearer, the backbone of the Imam, Ali Akbar, the Imam's 18 year old son, the other sons of Ali ibn Abi Talib, and the grandsons of Ali ibn Abi Talib, one and all gave their lives in order to bring to life the Message "there is no god but God", and for keeping alive their Imam, Ulil Amr.

Then our beloved Imam stood alone.

Bruised, slashed, cut, gashed, thirstly, soaked in his own blood and in the blood of his sons, brothers, nephews and devoted friends, he went into the tent of his sister, Bibi Zaynab.

His six-month old son, Ali Asghar, was in her lap, dying of thirst and hunger. He took him in his arms and slowly walked up to the warlike array of heartless Muslims.

He lifted the child up on his hands. This sad, sensitive, eloquent spectacle made even the devil's disciples curse the devil. With tears in their eyes they cried in deep anguish. Afraid of a revolt in the ranks, Ibn Saad looked at Hurmalah, who, reading the message in his commander's eyes, took aim and shot the fatal arrow which, passing through the Imam's hand, went into the child's neck. Ali Asghar stared at his father's face, smiled and rested in peace. The Imam dug a small grave and buried his son.

Then the Holy Imam paid his last visit to his kinfolk in the tents and, went forth mounted on his horse Zuljenah, wearing his grandfather's garments, and holding "Zulfiqar" (the sword of Ali ibn Abi Talib), in his hand.

On the battlefield he pronounced his last call:

IS THERE A HELPER?

There was no response. A fierce battle ensued.

Then Zuljenah sat on the ground. The Holy Imam, every pore of his body a bleeding wound, slid over the burning sands of Karbala. It was the time for the A's'r prayers. He bent over and rested his forehead on the ground in prostration. Swords, arrows, spears, daggers, lances, and stones hit him from all directions. The sacred blood of Muhammad, Ali ibn Abi talib and Fatima Zahra flowed in a stream over the sandy soil.

Imam Hussein, our Maula, and Maula of every living being, thereupon whispered to his Creator:

"O Merciful Lord of the worlds! Hussein, Your Servant, has given up every thing which You had granted him according to Your Holy Will.

Accept the humble sacrifice of Your servant Hussein.

If I, the grandson of Your Messenger, had more, I would have surrendered it to You willingly.

O my Lord! Be merciful, oft forgiving to the "not so scrupulous" among the faithful.

O Lord! O Lord! O Lord! ..."

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The eternally cursed Shimr came close and severed the sacred head of the Holy Imam from his blessed body.

The heavens and the earth sank low into a pit of gloom. A dreary, dismal darkness spread out everywhere. A cosmic cry of agony echoed in every nook and cranny of the universe. Animals stopped in their tracks, birds swerved in their flight, a shiver ran through trees, water, valleys, plains and mountains.

The demons, in devilish frenzy, trampled the bodies of the devoted martyrs under the hooves of their horses, plundered, looted, and set fire to the tents. The bewildered children and tearful women ran to Bibi Zaynab, the daughter of "Asadullah" (The fearless, overpowering courage of Allah), and gathered around her.

From the 1st Muharram to the 9th we discuss the philosophy of Hussein's martyrdom, we look into and make clear every aspect of true Islam, we carefully identify the role and merits of the Holy Prophat (S.A.), Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (A.S.), Bibi Fatima Zahra (A.S.), we make known and expound upon the real meanings of the "Word of Allah", the Holy Qur'an, on the strength of the wisdom and knowledge of Muhammad and Aali Muhaammad, we recount all the facets of the character of Imam Hussein which achieves much toward making available to mankind the vision and the ideal of making efforts to establish a society free from submission to idols and false gods - in whatever form, idea or institution they try to enslave mankind - and obedient to Allah and His laws.

But today, we the friends and followers of Imam Hussein (A.S.), who love him and belong to him, and through him to his father, mother and grandfather, and through them belong to their Lord and the Lord of the Worlds.

1.) Pray Fajr Salat. After Fajr Salat carry out the Aa'maal Ashura.

2.) do not drink water, nor eat food.

3.) barefoot, bareheaded, attired in black, come out from the shade and shelter of your homes, in the open, under the sky,

4.) together, disciplined, row after row, recite moment to moment events that took place in Karbala, until evening;

5.) pray Zuh'r and A's'r Salaat at their fixed times.

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6.) tears come to our eyes as the dry yellow leaves fall to the ground in autumn, it is an instinctive reaction; we weep, mourn and cry; in the height of our love for the Holy Imam some of us scrape and cut ourselves (not

others), to feel the pain and hurt that the martyrs of Karbala suffered on 10th Muharram, 61 A.H. In no way is there any hint of self-torture or exhibitionism, as Uways Qaranees broke all his teeth when he heard the news that in the battle of Uhud his "beloved", the Holy Prophet (S.A.) had lost a couple of teeth. It is the domain of love and passionate attachment, deep and abiding devotion, like the leap which the prophet Ibrahim took into the blazing fire.

7.) Invoke Allah to lay curse upon the killer's of Imam Hussein, his family and friends." (176)

Christians, particularly Christian monks or other holy men, often play a considerable role in the traditions concerning the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, usually acting as a rebuke to put to shame nominal Muslims who betrayed Imam Hussain. Here is a sample.

Hussein's head, according to popular tradition, was sent to Damascus with a large company of bodyguards to make sure it got to Yezid. On the way, the caravan stopped for a night below a hermitage where a Christian monk lived, spending his life in solitary worship. As they sat down for dinner, a hand wrote on the wall with letters of blood:

'Would a community that killed Hussein hope for the intercession of his grandfather (Muhammad) on the day of Reckoning?'

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The monk looked down and saw the writing on the wall and the head (of Imam Hussein) surrounded by an aura of bright light. He offered Ibn Saad ten thousand dinars to keep the head for a night. He took the head and, with it pressed to his bosom, spent the night weeping." (177)

Well known is the special place which St. Peter holds in the Catholic Tradition; he is called "Prince of the Apostles", and the holder of "The Keys of the Kingdom". The Popes are considered the successors of St. Peter. In this respect the Shi'ite tradition is also very interesting. Mahmoud Ayoub says:

"... Ridwan (the keeper of paradise) and Malik (the keeper of hell) will come to the Prophet (Muhammad) and deliver into his hands the keys of paradise and hell. The Prophet will give them (the keys) to Ali, who will then permit whomsoever he wishes to enter paradise and whomsoever he wishes to enter the fire (of hell). In this mood of exultation, the tradition concludes, '... And hell shall be on that day more obedient to Ali than a young servant (ghulam) would be to his master.' The intercessory character of this tradition is obvious. It is, however, interesting to note the similarity in this tradition between Ali, the viceregent and successor of Muhammad, and Simon (St.) Peter, the prince of the apostles and keeper of the keys of the Kingdom. In the Shi'i doctrine of the Imamate-succession, St. Peter (Sham'un al-Safa) is declared to be a prophet." (178)

Thus, not only is the role of Ali ibn Abi Talib in the Shi'a tradition very similar to that of St. Peter in the Catholic tradition, in the Shi'a tradition as well as the Catholic tradition St. Peter is accorded a position superior to that of the other apostles of Jesus.

In the previous chapter we have dealt with ***Sophia*** or ***Holy Wisdom***, (Greek: ***Sophia***; Latin: ***Sapientia Increata***; Church Slavonic; ***Sofia***) noting, among other things, the great part that

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it plays in Russian Orthodoxy, something which dates from the time of Sts. Cyril & Methodius, the "Apostles to the Slavs". However, said concept has other aspects which relate to the topic of the present chapter, notably in relation to Fatima Zahra.

Says Fr. Thomas Schipflinger:

"...Though this idea may seem unusual and novel to Western Theology and Mariology (Fr. Schipflinger exaggerates a bit here, as we shall see), it is a conception that is deeply rooted in the Russian (Orthodox) Church's devotion to (the Virgin) Mary. By way of explaining how I arrived at this point of view I would like to relate part of my biography.

While in Russia during the Second World War I had become interested in Russian icons and subsequently came across a book about the Russian Orthodox Church. I was especially captivated by a chapter about Sophia and Russian Sophiology (teachings concerning Sophia) where I read for the first time the names Soloviev, Florenski and Bulgakov - who represented the flowering of modern Russian Sophiology. According to them Mary the Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) is most intimately related to the Divine Sophia, or Holy Wisdom, and is actually represented as Wisdom's human form (see previous chapter, i.e., "St. John of the Cross and Sufism", with special note on that part relating to Sts. Cyril & Methodius, the "Apostles to the Slavs"). ...

...(the Virgin) Mary is Wisdom's human form; Holy Wisdom (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia***) appeared on earth in Mary! With this realization the peace and joy of certainty overcame me, and with the same sense of firmness I felt the impulse to dedicate my life to Holy Wisdom, to investigate Her secret and to make it known.

A seed had been planted which took root in me. Though there were times of neglect due to the war and theological studies which followed, it continued to grow, protected by a conscious devotion to Mary. It received further nourishment through religious and scientific interests, such as my study of the Chinese philosophy of nature (Confucianism and Taoism) during the years I spent in China (between 1948-1951). When I subsequently returned home to Germany, pastoral responsibilities hardly left any time for the theme of
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Holy Wisdom, although my interest remained alive. At the beginning of the 1970s however, when illness forced me to rest, I was able to occupy myself with Marian questions, such as Mary's title, "Lady of All Nations". From this point on Wisdom became my foremost concern and held me fast. ...

...The memory of my wartime Russian experience was still vivid within me and led to a study of Wisdom from the perspectives of Holy Scripture, theology, and comparative religion, as far as pastoral duties allowed.

As my studies and reflections seemed to show signs of progress, I began to consider putting the fruits of my labors into manuscript form.

After retirement I relocated to Munich which allowed me to attend university lectures. They helped me to ground my thinking and stimulated further thought. I was also able to fulfill the wish to study Sanskrit (wise decision!), a language which is very important for the study of comparative religion. While continuing to make new discoveries I now had the time to sort through the material I had gathered and to bring the present volume to completion.

As a way of introducing the book's *leitmotif* - that Mary is Sophia's (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia*) human form - I would like to quote the remarks of the Russian Sophiologist Paul (*Pavle* in Russian and Ukrainian) Florenski about the Novgorod icon of Divine Sophia:**

We have before us the wonderful icon of God's Sophia, the icon of His purest Mother...

This icon shows us the unspeakable purity of the virginity of God's Most Holy Mother; above Her is Christ, God's Logos, who so loved this Sophia that He willed to be born of Her flesh...

Who is this great, royal, feminine being, neither God nor God's eternal Son, neither angel nor saint? Is She not the true sum total of humanity, in an elevated and complete form, the living Soul of the World, deeply sensed and felt by our forefathers, the devout builders of the Sophia churches and the painters of Sophia icons...

The human appearance of this Sophia is Mary
Mary is Sophia's human form. ... Sophia is the

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first who was created and also the first who was redeemed, the Center and Heart of all created beings. She is the Guardian Angel of all creation...

The Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) is once again Sophia. ... The saints honored in Mary, God's Mother, the Bearer of Sophia, the visible appearance of Sophia Herself (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia*) on earth.**

As Professor Leonid Sytenko notes, in the above,
Pavel Florenski is paraphrasing the words of
Vladimir Soloviev.

In the years following the publication of the original German edition of Sophia Mary in 1988, the wish was voiced for the appearance of an English translation and edition. Fortunately my friend and colleague Robert Powell found a competent translator in James Morgante; and the two of them together found an interested publisher in Samuel Weiser. May the Lord God and His Sophia (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic; *Sofia***) especially bless this English edition and its pioneers." (179)

In the Gospel (*Injil*) there are references to Sophia or Holy Wisdom, for example, in Matthew XI:19:

"God's wisdom is proven right by its results."

Fr. Schipflinger notes:

"Some interpret the Wisdom that is mentioned in the above passage as the person of Christ (i.e., Wisdom is understood in a Christological sense). This is, however, not the only interpretation. It is more likely that Wisdom is to be understood here as the mode and characteristic of God's working. Perhaps the text's meaning can best be paraphrased as follows: the Wisdom evidenced in the deeds (in the working) of God is proven right, has shown itself to be right. The wise working of God cannot be characterized as false or incorrect, as the Pharisees complained to John about Jesus - that he was a friend of sinners (tax collectors and whores). Those who work in and from the Wisdom (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia***) of God act correctly; their deeds are
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always right." (180))

St. Paul in 1st Corinthians I:23-24, 30 also speaks of Holy Wisdom:

"...but we proclaim Christ nailed to the cross; and though this is an offense to Jews and folly to Gentiles (Pagans) yet to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, he is the power of God and the wisdom of God. ... By God's act you are in Jesus Christ; God made him our wisdom, and in him we have our righteousness, our holiness, our liberation."

Commenting on the above, Fr. Schipflinger notes:

"The first part of the above passage ("he is the power of God and the wisdom of God") could be indicated as proof that Christ is the incarnated wisdom of God. Such a Christological interpretation, however, does not really make sense. A better interpretation is that Christ is not personally the incarnated Wisdom (**Greek: Sophia; Latin: Sapientia Increata, Church Slavonic: Sofia**) but instead the incarnated Word which brought forth Christ - the effect of the power and Wisdom of God.

The second part of the above passage: "God made him our wisdom") must also not necessarily be interpreted Christologically. For here also Wisdom is not to be understood personally but instead effectively - as wisdom-filled life resulting from the incarnation. We are in Christ whom God made our proclaimer of Wisdom - the wisdom-filled and God-pleasing way of life - and the one who effects our righteousness, holiness, and liberation. In this way it becomes clear that Wisdom is not to be understood personally and Christologically, but as God's or Christ's manner of working. Wisdom effects and brings forth wisdom-filled life and righteousness, holiness and liberation." (181)

St. Paul continues on this topic in Ephesians III:3, 8-11:

"To me, who am less than the least of all God's people, he has granted the privilege of proclaiming to the Gentiles (Pagans) the good news of the unfathomable riches of Christ, and of bringing to light how this hidden purpose was to be put into effect. It lay concealed for long ages with God the Creator of the universe, in order that now, through the Church. The Wisdom of God in its infinite variety might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly
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realms. This accords with his age-long purpose, which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ..."

Commenting on the above, Fr. Schipflinger notes:

"This text is perhaps the clearest passage in the New Testament (*Injil*) which understands and proclaims Wisdom (**Greek: Sophia; Latin: Sapientia Increata; Church Slavonic: Sofia**) in a personal manner as Sophia. For this reason it was also used to prove that Christ is the incarnated Sophia. But here also a Christological interpretation is not compelling. And especially because Wisdom is connected to the Church, a Sophian, Marian and ecclesiological interpretation of this important passage

is appropriate.

The unfathomable riches of Christ, the mystery hidden since eternity in God the Creator, was realized in the course of time so that the infinite variety of God's wisdom might be made known. In what way? Through the Church in Jesus Christ - the Church as the Bride of Christ.

The mystery of Sophia-Wisdom (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia***) is that She is the Bride of the Son of God. The betrothal of Wisdom with the Logos-Son of God is revealed by the fact that He ordained and took the Church as His Bride. When we consider that Mary is the beginning of the Church and its Mother, and that Mary is the incarnated Wisdom (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia***) from whom the Son of God incarnated, then the mystery of Wisdom before history and Her relationship to the Son of God becomes clear. That mystery becomes visible and this passage makes sense. From the earthly reality we are able to infer conclusions about the eternal archetype and prehistoric existence. ...

..."The unfathomable wisdom of God is to be made known through the Church" - this is a short summary which clearly expresses the relationship of Wisdom (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia***) to the Church. It does so because the Church is Wisdom incarnate - personally in Mary and collectively in the Body of Christ (the Church), whose spiritual mother is Mary. The explanation of this incarnation of Sophia is given by the ecclesiological context of Pauline theology: the Church as the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ. The *Mariological connection* is indicated by the theology of Luke (the Annunciation of Mary and the childhood of Jesus) and the theology of John (Wedding at Cana, Mary under the

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cross, the woman clothed with the sun). ..." (182)

Of all the Church Fathers, it was St. Augustine who most dealt with Sophia. Though he wrote in Latin, and is thus considered one of the Latin Fathers or Western Fathers, in fact St. Augustine's models were the Cappadocian Fathers, i.e., St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Gregory Nazianzen. All of whom we have cited on a number of occasions in this book. In his Biblical commentaries, it has been noted that St. Augustine

was strongly influenced by what someone has called "the brilliant but artificial arc light of Origen's genius"; however, this highly allegorical sort of Biblical commentary ("brilliant but artificial") has its own merits, as has become recognized; Origen is not to be despised.

As Fr. Schipflinger says:

"St. Augustine (354-430) is the Church Father who occupied himself most with Sophia. According to him, there are two Wisdoms: "Uncreated Wisdom" (Latin: *Sapientia Increata*) and "Created Wisdom" (*Sapientia Creata*). In his many references to Wisdom, St. Augustine is speaking almost without exception about "Uncreated Wisdom" whom he identifies, along with many other Church Fathers, as the Logos Son of God. When he does, however, turn his attention to "Created Sophia" he dedicates profound meditations and prayers to Her, using images like "heavenly Jerusalem" and "our Mother from above" and relating Created Sophia to the eternity of God and to the temporality of created things. (183)

Said Vladimir Soloviev:

"Sophia is not only the object of divine activity, as the primordial Cosmos which includes all ideas and created beings in itself; She is Herself an active, living Being who is the spiritual foundation of the world, the Soul of the World, representing nothing other than the first created, undivided, living
(3213)

Creature, the ideal Personality of the world and, above all, of humanity. She is simultaneously the individual and the universal, primordial human being, or (which means the same thing) the individual and universal organism of all of humanity, actually containing in Herself all individual human beings, and in whom every human being as a creature of nature has his or her home and metaphysical roots. She is truly the great Mother of all persons and creatures." (184)

The above quotation from Vladimir Soloviev serves as introduction to what St. Augustine has to say concerning Created Sophia (Latin: *Sapientia Creata*) in the words of Fr. Schipflinger:

"...Augustine also distinguishes Uncreated Sophia (*Sapientia Increata*) and Created Sophia (*Sapientia*

Creata) by differentiating between "illuminating light" and "illuminated light" or brightness existing through the light of the sun:

However just as the illuminating light is differentiated from the illuminated light, so great is the difference between You, the highest, creating Sapiientia and that Sapiientia which is created.

He also calls Created Sophia a "rational and intellectual mind" (*mens rationalis et intellectualis*) and "Our Mother Jerusalem who is above and free ... eternal in heaven (St. Paul, Galatians IV:26). He again tries to explain Her mode of eternity by repeating that She was the first created long ago and eternal because there is no time before Her. She was not the beginning in a temporal sense but because of "Her own condition". He also says that She is the "pure and most harmoniously single mind (*mens pura, concordissime una*), the place of peace of blessed spirits, in heaven and above the heavens indicating that She is the principle of unity and peace.

Augustine's subsequent statements are very important because they speak of Created Sophia (**Latin: Sapiientia Creata**) in an individual and personal way:

This Sophia is from You, O God, but something quite different from You. Although we do not find temporality in Her, nevertheless She is able to change, whereby She could turn away from God. But She does not do that, for She is bound to God with a great love. ... Although She is not equally eternal to You, She is not constrained by transitions in time, and experiences no
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difference of time and is not extended in time, but instead rests in eternal contemplation of Your being.

The above passage raises the question of whether Augustine understood Sophia as a personification or as an actual person. Clearly he understood Uncreated Sophia as a person (identifying Her as the Logos Son of God), but whether he also thinks of Created Sophia (**Latin: Sapiientia Creata**) as a person is less clear. He says little about Her in a direct way; and when he does refer to Her he uses phrases like "House of God", "City of God", "Jerusalem", "Our Mother Zion", or "Daughter of Zion", which are ambiguous.

Other examples of universal notions that are portrayed in ... the parable of the vine and the branches in the Gospel According to St. John ("I am the vine; you are the branches" - John XV:5), and the mysterious body of Christ made up of Christ as the head and the faithful as the members (1st Corinthians XII:12-

28). ... Soloviev understood Sophia (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia***) as the personal *Hen-kai-pan* or the One and All of humanity and creation. (185)

Says Vladimir Soloviev:

"Sophia is the personal incorporation of the primary foundations of the world in a feminine form of transcendental beauty. ... Sophia is not only the object of divine activity, as the primordial Cosmos which includes all ideas and created beings in itself; She is Herself an active, living Being who is the spiritual foundation of the world, the Soul of the World, representing nothing other than the first created, undivided, living Creature, the ideal Personality of the world and, above all, of humanity. She is simultaneously the individual and the universal, primordial human being, or (which means the same thing) the individual and universal organism of all of humanity, actually containing in Herself all individual human beings, and in whom every human being as a creature of nature has his or her home and metaphysical roots. She is truly the great Mother of all persons and creatures." (186)

Pavel Florensky says:

"Sophia (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia***) is all of humanity, the higher and complete form of the world), the living Soul of nature and of the universe".
(3215)

The above examples suggest that Augustine's phrases can be understood to refer to a person, albeit a person of a higher order.

What gives more credence to the hypothesis that Augustine viewed Her as a person is the fact that he attributes personal characteristics, qualities and functions to Her. He says, for example, that though She is changeable She never turns away from God because She is attached to Him with "great love" and rests "in eternal contemplation of His being"; also, She is a spiritual nature "who in contemplating the light is light;" [**How Zoroastrian this sounds!**] and that She is a "blessed, elevated creature, the greatest of all created beings" who is "happy, indeed bountifully felicitous, heaven of heaven, God's dwelling in heaven above the heavens." Thus She is more elevated than all other creatures and spiritual beings such as Angels, occupying a unique position of dignity (God's heaven of heavens).

Calling Her the "rational and intellectual mind of your City, Our Mother, who is eternal" is another clear

indication of Her personal nature, for only an individuality that has understanding and reason and is able to exercise intellectual functions. Augustine also says that She is "capable of beholding continually the countenance of God."

In a lovely prayer ("O House, luminous and beautiful") Augustine fervently requests that he "be carried on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd (Jesus Christ) to Her" as if to a comforting Mother. He also speaks of Her in personal terms by saying:

Therefore may You say, may you ask (O Sophia), that He (God) make me worthy to participate in Your splendor ... may Your assistance help me ... may Your holy, pious and most pure prayers stand by me, for in no way could they be ineffectual with God. ... Driven out of the paradise of joys, I cry in the land of my exile, when I think of You, O Mother Jerusalem, O Holy and Beautiful Bride Zion.

All of the various statements cited above combine to give the impression that Augustine also understands Created Sophia as a personal individuality,

In conclusion it can be noted that the expressions "God's City", "Bride Zion", and "Mother Jerusalem" directly relate to the following passage in (the New Testament (*Injil*) book of *Revelation*, sometimes known in the Greek form *Apocalypsis*) *Revelation*:

I saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down
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out of heaven from God, made ready like a bride adorned for her husband. ... "Come, he (an Angel) said, "and I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. So ... he ... showed me Jerusalem, the Holy City, coming down out of heaven from God (*Revelation: XXI: 2-9-10*).

These passages are usually interpreted to relate to the Church and Mary (who is the Mother of the Church); and by using such expressions to refer to his Created Sophia, (**Latin: *Sapientia Creata***) Augustine relates Her to the Church and Mary, defining Created Sophia's ecclesiological and Mariological dimensions.

The expressions "God's House and City" can also be said to represent an idealized creation, defining Created Sophia's relationship to creation and the cosmos. (187)

In summary it can be said that St. Augustine's reflections about Sophia undoubtedly served as a stimulus for others to devote themselves to the mystery of Sophia. St. Bonaventure and Nicholas of Cusa occupied themselves with Her. The adoration and love Heinrich

Suso (Seuse) for his "Exalted Lady" recalls Augustine's prayer "O House, luminous and beautiful". His intimations about Sophia's relationship to creation laid the foundation for understanding Her universal dimension which later becomes visible in the works of Ste. Hildegard of Bingen and the Russian Sophiologists." (188)

"...In summary it can be said that understanding Sophia-Wisdom as a person is legitimate for the following reasons:

1.) In Holy Scripture She is proclaimed as a spiritual nature with the qualities, attributes, and functions of a person (such as reason and free will).

2.) She is described as a created female who is different from God and who acts independently:

a.) with respect to God: She dances before God, advises God, and actively participates in the work of creation with God;

b.) with respect to creation: She guides, renews, and rules everywhere with reason, power and goodness;

c.) with respect to humanity: She admonishes, leads, and assists as Mother, Teacher, and Beloved.

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(Because She is characterized as independent She must at least be recognized as a dynamic hypostasis in a religious sense, but not as an allegory or personification.)

3.) The Christian tradition from the Church Fathers to the present has always understood Sophia as a person, even if interpretations have varied (She is understood as the Holy Spirit and the Logos; and some indications relate Her to Mary, the Church and to all of humanity or creation.) (189)

Sophia appears in the art of the Latin Middle Ages, though infrequently. However, this comparative rarity does not detract from the power and eloquence of said representations.

The oldest known depiction of Sophia (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia*)** is found in the Codex Rossanus, a 6th century Biblical manuscript from the Italian town of Rossano in Calabria, which is kept in the library of the

Archbishop. The person depicted in figure 1, who is St Mark the Evangelist's source of inspiration (She is touching the manuscript on which he is writing), is generally interpreted as Sophia.

The Codex Syriacus in the National Library of Paris is another ancient Biblical manuscript (from either the 7th or 8th century) which contains an interesting image of Sophia (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia***). Sophia is depicted in a royal garment with a blue veil. She is standing to the right of Mary the Mother of God, who is holding an image of the Christ Child, and King Solomon stands to the left of Mary. Sophia is holding a crosier (a staff with a cross on top) and both Sophia and Solomon have books in their hands.

Fairy of Lilienfeld rejects (justifiably) the customary interpretation which speaks of a depiction of Sophia and King Solomon as the two authors of the Books of Wisdom. In her view, Sophia and Solomon relate typologically to Mary and the Christ Child, but she interprets Sophia Christologically as a prefiguration of Jesus Christ. However for such an interpretation the significance of Solomon remains unclear.

An alternative interpretation is that Sophia relates to Mary and Solomon to Jesus Christ.

Understanding Solomon as a symbolic depiction of the Son of God is not inappropriate, for parallels
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exist in the ancient world and in Scripture. In ancient Egypt, Sumeria, and Babylon the king was considered the adopted Son of God; and in Holy Scripture King David is referred to as God's son (I shall be a father to him, and he will be my son" - 2nd Samuel, XII:12,25). Solomon himself was called *Jedidiah* and is thus an appropriate symbolic figure for the Son of God or the Logos.

Holy Scripture portrays Solomon taking Sophia as his Bride (*Proverbs VIII: 2 & 9*); and a New Testament parallel to this idea can be seen in the descent of the Holy City Jerusalem as the Bride of the Lamb (*Revelation XXI:2, 9-10*). The image of the Holy City is traditionally related to the Church (and to Mary as the Mother of the Church); however, this image also relates to Sophia, for Augustine calls Her "God's City" and "Mother Jerusalem". The relationship of Sophia to the *Hieros Gamos* or Sacred Marriage will be taken up later.

Thus this Syrian miniature can also be interpreted as a depiction which relates Sophia to Mary. (190)

Famous codices and missals appeared in the *scriptoria* (writing rooms) of older Orders such as the

Benedictines, and newly formed reform Orders like the Cistercians and Praeminstratens when book illustration was flourishing during the 12th century. The Hildesheim missal is one example, and it contains an impressive miniature of Sophia that bears witness to the Sophian stream that existed in the Middle Ages.

The missal comes from St. Michael's in Hildesheim and is in the possession of the estate's executor, Graf Egon von Furstenburg-Stammheim, in Cologne-Muehlheim. Albert Boeckler describes the missal's miniature in the following way:

Sapientia (Increata) as *Creatrix* of the world. She carries a bust of God and on Her scarf is the inscription: "I created the world with Him." Persons from the time of the Old Covenant are shown on both sides of Her who point to Christ. In creating the world Divine Wisdom also takes into account the plan of redemption.

Wisdom (*Sapientia Increata*) is royally dressed and wear's a mason's crown which symbolizes Mother Earth and the *polis* or city (i.e., the civilized human community). She is holding up a bust of the Logos, or from another point of view, She is receiving the Logos and presenting Him to humanity (She is connecting the world and humanity with God as the bridge and way to the Logos and God).

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The figures next to and beneath Her symbolize redemption, i.e., the plan to redeem and divinize humanity and the world. Many of them can be identified by the banners that they carry. The banner: "In your offspring all nations will be blessed" (*In semine tuo omnes gentes benedicentur* - Genesis XX:18) identifies Abraham. "The fruit of your body I will set on the throne" (*De fructu ventris tui ponam super sedem* - Psalms CXXXII:11) identifies David. The prophet Bileam is identified by the verse: "A star will come forth out of Jacob" (*Orietur stella ex Jacob* - Numbers XXIV:17); and the verse from Isaiah: "Behold the Lord of Hosts will come" (*Ecce veniet Dominus exercituum* - Isaiah III:1) probably identifies the prophet Isaiah. The central figure in the lower portion of the picture is most likely Zechariah, whose banner reads: "The one who comes with the dawn from heaven has visited us" (*Visitavit nos oriens ex alto* - Luke I:78). To the left of Zechariah is apparently Matthew the Evangelist whose banner reads: "Behold, God himself will come who incarnates" (*Ecce veniet Deus et Homo*). The banner on the right is undecipherable (perhaps the young man carrying it is John the Evangelist), Under Zechariah is the Patriarch Jacob.

All these figures point to Christ, i.e., to the incarnation of the Logos Son of God. What, however, is the significance in this composition of *Sapientia Increata*, Holy Wisdom, who is entirely surrounded by these Biblical figures that point to the incarnation of the Logos?

The answer to this obvious and essential question lies in the well-known fact that in Eastern liturgy and iconography, and then through its influence in the Byzantine-Russian and Roman-German Church of the Middle Ages (which Hitler described or defined as "Latin-Slav"), Holy Wisdom was understood to be intimately related to Mary. On Marian feast days, for example, the readings were taken from the Wisdom Books of the Old Covenant (or "Old Testament"). Our ancestors intuitively sensed the close and essential connection between Sophia and Mary which is the basis of Russian Sophia icons in particular. The Russian Sophiologists, especially Soloviev and Florenski, later tried to theologially articulate the deep conviction of the people with the concise formulation: *Sophia (Greek: Sophia; Latin: Sapientia Increata; Church Slavonic: Sofia) appeared in Mary, Sophia became human in Mary.*

Compare what the Russian Sophiologist, Fr. Pavel Florenski, says about Sophia in describing the Novgorod Sophia icon which is a faithful copy of the original in
(3220)

Constantinople:

There can be no doubt that a religious unity between Sophia (**Greek: Sophia; Latin: Sapientia Increata; Church Slavonic: Sofia**) and Mary the Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) exists which is expressed in liturgical practice and in religious devotion. ... It is proven that Sophia is Mary the Mother of God. ... Again and again, Mary the Mother of God is Sophia. ... the saints adored in Mary the Mother of God the Bearer of Sophia, the visible appearance on earth of Sophia Herself, and felt that Her (Mary's) dignity and nature has its basis in Sophia.

Pavel Florenski is thereby formulating the ancient Sophia teaching and devotion of the Eastern Church (he died for his faith in a [Soviet] Siberian concentration camp [in other words, the *Gulag*]).

Beginning with such theological presuppositions, which somehow also found their way into the Western Church or at least were felt afterward, and which are possibly the basis for the Hildesheim Missal miniature, we can proceed to the correct interpretation of this unique, Western icon of Sophia.

The Logos and Sophia are depicted in their *pre-incarnational* existential forms. Sophia's scapular states: "I created the world *with Him*" - reference to Proverbs VIII:22 which reveals Sophia in Her pre-existential, aeonic existence. The figures and their banners, however, point to the *incarnational*, salvational destiny and mission of the Logos within time and therewith of Sophia also. The Logos takes on human form from the Virgin Mary. Why, then, is not Mary but Sophia depicted? Because Mary's basis is in Sophia; because She is Sophia in human form, the incarnated Sophia. Sophia incarnated in Mary and from Mary the Logos took on flesh, i.e., human nature. The incarnation of Sophia in Mary and of the Logos from Mary are the presuppositions for justifying and understanding the figures and the contents of their banners. They all point to Christ who was promised as Abraham's and David's descendant, who according to Isaiah would be born from a virgin (Isaiah VII:14) and who was introduced to Zacharias (Quranic: *Zakariya*) and his son John the Baptist (Quranic: *Yahya*) as the one to come and proclaimed by the Evangelists Matthew and John as the Son of Man (the Son of Abraham, David and Mary -

Matthew I:1-2, 12) and the Son of God (John I:1-18).

Sophia and the Word (Greek: *Logos*; Church
(3221)

Slavonic: *Slovo*) are shown on this image as two clearly separated figures who are, however, connected in a most intimate vertical unity. A clear distinction is made between Sophia and the Logos and between Christ and Mary. This clearly contradicts the difficult-to-understand opinion of some Church Fathers (for example Athanasius) according to which Christ is understood as the incarnated Sophia. Such a Christological interpretation and transformation of Sophia's function, which was a reaction against Arianism, has contributed greatly to unclarity and confusion with respect to theological knowledge about Sophia. Fortunately the sense of faith (*sensus fidei*) of the Christian people intuitively understood in the Sophia churches and icons the correct significance of this secret and carried it through the ages; namely, the most apparent and best intelligible Christ-before-all-time and therefore pre-existent stature, the Bride of the Logos. In order to execute the plan of salvation She incarnated in Mary, from whom the Logos then incarnated. Just as both, Sophia and the Logos, were intimately connected before time, so, too, were they in time as Christ and Mary, and will be inseparable for all of eternity.

On the basis of its theological statement, this

Sapientia miniature of the Hildesheim Missal belongs to the clearest and most impressive Sophia images that are known. Though its artistic value does not compare with the Russian Sophia icons, the Sophiological meaning is clearer and more unequivocal than its Russian sisters." (191)

In recent years, Ste. Hildegard of Bingen has become somewhat fashionable, due in part to audio recordings of her verses, a facet of at least a small revival of interest in medieval music. In her visions, Ste. Hildegard of Bingen speaks at length of Sophia.

"Ste. Hildegard of Bingen was born in 1098 (apparently in the German town of Bermersheim). She was taught by Jutta, the Mother Superior of the Benedictine convent on M. Disibode, and succeeded her as leader after Jutta's death in 1136. Between 1147 and 1150 Hildegard founded a cloister on Mt. Rupert in the vicinity of Bingen [in the Rhine valley], and in 1165 another one in Eibingen near Rudesheim.

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She experienced visions which began in her childhood. She was chronically ill, but still undertook major journeys to Cologne, Trier, and southern Germany in order to hold Lenten sermons. Her many letters indicate that she was an adviser to popes, bishops, and princes, as well as to people of every class. In her works she writes of the soul's mystical path of ascent by means of contemplation and suffering. Considering the time in which she lived, Hildegard possessed an astonishing knowledge of medicine and the sciences. She died at the ripe age of 81 on September 17, 1179 on Mt. Rupert. Her remains are found in the cloister church at Eibingen.

Her most significant written works are *Scivias* (Know the Ways), *Liber Vitae Meritorum* (Book of Life's Merits) and *Liber Divinorum Operum* (Book of Divine Works). They contain a record of her visions pertaining to religious, scientific, and medical subjects, which she was accustomed to behold in a light. St. Hildegard is renowned for her cosmic vision of the world which is portrayed in profound and significant symbolic images. Hildegard herself provided lengthy commentaries to these symbolic images, which were illustrated by skilled craftsmen; although her

commentaries were naturally made according to the level of her understanding. Thus there is much in her images that lies hidden, which a modern-day knowledge of symbols (symbology), supported by psychology and the science of religion, is able and ought to recognize and explain in a more comprehensive way.

One such discovery appears to be Hildegard's Sophian world conception. She sees the universe as a cosmos that is ensouled and directed by an extraordinarily wise power. Several times she expressly names this power "Wisdom" (Sophia). She presents visions and images in which it seems that Sophia (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia*)** is clearly meant and portrayed, alone as well as in relation to God, Jesus Christ, the Church, creation, or even to the individual human in his or her being, activity, purpose, and goal.

St. Hildegard of Bingen, who was intuitively and mystically talented in an extraordinary way, was also strongly affected by the Sophian stream coming out of the Eastern (Orthodox) Church which we have already seen expressed in the Hildesheim Missal. She consequently lent strength and depth to this stream, and infused it with grandiose theological and cosmological relationships through her Sophian visions and images. Long before Vladimir Soloviev, she illustrated and presented the mystery of Sophia through

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an archetypical symbolism and cosmological breadth of vision. Unfortunately this Sophian background to her visions has not been sufficiently acknowledged, and as a result, the interpretation of her pictures has remained fragmentary and unsatisfactory in essential points.

The most powerful of her Sophian depictions will be presented from the two works *Scivias* (Know the Ways) and the *Liber Divinorum Operum* (Book of Divine Works). Several pictures represent Sophia from an Old Testament point of view as *Chokmah Yahveh* (Yahveh's Wisdom), i.e., the Co-Worker at creation and the Mother and Soul of the World. Others present a New Testament perspective, depicting Her as Sophia Mary, i.e., the Bride of Christ and the Mother of the Church; and some combine both aspects. (192)

Below is described Vision 2 from the Book of Divine Works:

"The figure of a woman, crowned with a man's

head, holds in her hands and carries in her womb a circle in which a man stands, who is the object of rays streaming forth from symbolic animals and nature figures. What is the meaning of this mysterious picture, which St. Hildegard received according to an Old Testament manner of conception?

The head above the head of the woman signifies Yahveh, the Creator; and the woman's figure below shows Wisdom Sophia who is his *Amon* (Hebrew: *Beloved, Darling, Confidant, or Co-creator*), the first of created beings, Darling and the one who stands by His side during creation and the world's preservation (Proverbs VIII:22-30).

Sophia (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia***) encircles the world, which is represented by symbolic animals and nature figures, and She carries it in Her womb. At the world's midpoint stands the human being. Various vital energies emanating from Sophia stream out to the human being standing in the middle through the symbolic figures.

Under and with Yahveh, Sophia is the *Cosmiarcha* (Greek: *Kosmos* - cosmos; *Arche* - beginning), the Co-Creator and Mother of the cosmos. In Her motherly concern She is also the world's *Eubiarcha* (Greek: *eu* - "well"; *Bios* "life"; *Arche* - "beginning") - Fount of salvation and Mother of a thoroughly whole life - especially for the human being, which is indicated by the human being depicted within Her womb.

Also in Vision 2 is an extraordinarily expressive image of unfathomably deep cosmological and
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anthropological symbolism. One of its essential statements is that nature and humanity form an organic unity with Sophia. Sophia is Mother and Soul of this unity, the Mother and Soul of the World, the *Cosmiarcha*. She is, however, also the *Eubiarcha*, especially for humanity.

This fascinating picture contains a wealth of deep and cosmic symbolism about life, whose full interpretation is unfortunately not possible within the present framework. (193)

We now turn to Vision 9 of the Book of Divine Works.

This fascinating and mysterious picture shows two figures. Hildegard calls the one on the left "Wisdom" and the one on the right "God's Omnipotence". Describing the figure on the left, she says:

I saw close to the northern corner a figure facing to the east. Its face and feet shown with such brilliance that they dazzled my eyes. It wore a gown

of white silk and over it a green mantle richly adorned with the most varied precious stones. There were pendants on its ears, a collar on its breast, and coils on its arms. ...

Heinrich Schipperges summarizes what Ste. Hildegard says about the first figure in the following way:

The figure in the northern corner indicates the Wisdom (**Greek: Sophia; Latin: Sapientia Increata; Church Slavonic: Sofia**) of true rapture, a Wisdom whose beginning and end are beyond human reason. The silken garment indicates the virgin birth of the Son of God; the green cloak indicates the world of creation along with the human species associated with it.

This interpretation of the vision in which Hildegard expressly beholds and declares Wisdom (**Greek: Sophia; Latin: Sapientia Increata; Church Slavonic: Sofia**) is extremely revealing. The figure of Wisdom is radiant with a wonderful and blinding brilliance. The statement *the silken garment indicates the virgin birth of the Son of God* is extremely profound and significant, because Sophia is related to the birth of the Son of God, and therefore to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. What is this relationship? The explanation near at hand is the thesis that runs throughout the book like a golden thread: Sophia incarnated in Mary, from whom the Son of God took on flesh and was virginally born. In other words, Sophia took on human form in Mary, and Mary is

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the true dwelling place of Wisdom, which is the basis for Her participation in Sophia's splendors. This Sophiological thesis has far-reaching implications for Mariology and ecclesiology.

Another picture in Vision 9 shows that over her garment of white silk, the figure of Wisdom is wearing a green cloak which is richly decorated with all kinds of precious stones:

The green cloak indicates the world of creation along with the human species associated with it; the adornment, too, is a symbol of the order of creation that is subordinate to humanity. But we humans are responsible for the whole of creation. This declaration is of cosmic significance. The cloak and jewels are related to creation and the jewels to humanity in particular. Creation is therewith *the cloak of Wisdom and She is decorated with humanity, Her favorite and most precious possession. Just as a*

woman

wearing a garment is the mistress, indeed the soul of the garment, Sophia (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia***) is the Mistress and Soul of creation, which is Her garment.

A woman's jewels emphasize and perfect her beauty. In the same way humanity is Sophia's masterpiece and primary decoration. Yet the person wearing the jewelry lends the jewels their brilliance, bringing out the full effect. In the same way, Sophia is the inner brilliance of humanity, helping humanity to achieve the fullness of its radiance and dignity.

White is a color containing all other colors. In the same way, Sophia's orientation to the Logos, and Her bridal and maternal relationship and cooperation with the Logos become human, is the basis for all aspects of Her dignity and beauty: the entire rainbow of Her splendor. Green is the color of life and hope. Sophia is the essence of *viriditas* (Latin: *viridis* - "green"; *viriditas* - "greenness", a primary concept of Hildegard's nature teaching), the essence of nature's and humanity's power of life. Gold is the most precious of all metals and signifies the elevated nobility of Sophia as well as humanity.

One could deduce still more comparisons and insights from this image of Sophia. One thing is certain: this vision is fundamental and the key to understanding and interpreting the others. For it reveals Sophia in Her relationship to Mary as the Mother of the Son of God (Sophia became a human being in Mary in order that the Son of God might become man from Her), as well as Her relationship to creation (creation is Her garment and decoration, She is Herself

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the bearer of creation and creation's Mistress, Soul and Power).

Hildegard indicates that the vision's second figure, in the form of a winged being, is a symbol of *almighty God, invincible in majesty and marvelous in power*. This apparition has the form of a six-winged Seraph, hands upraised in prayer, with a garment of fish scales and the feet of a lion. In the figure's bosom is the head of an old man. A fascinating and remarkable image!

Perhaps it is not erroneous to relate Hildegard's words about the figure's symbolic relationship to Almighty God to the Holy Spirit in particular, i.e., the figure is a symbol of the Holy Spirit in its dignity and powers. In Sacred Scripture, the Holy Spirit is often portrayed as a being with wings - in Genesis, for example, as a brooding mother bird: *the*

spirit of God hovered over the surface of the water. (Genesis I:2). In the New Testament the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove at the baptism in the Jordan (Matthew III:16, as well as the other evangelists support this). The Seraph's six wings point to the Holy Spirit, who is the spirit of love. The number six is the symbolic number of bounteous love, and Seraph means "burning in love". The hands of the Seraph figure are stretched out in supplication. The Holy Spirit pleads and sighs for us (Romans VIII:26). The garment of fish scales perhaps points to the water of baptism: *no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born from water and spirit* (John III:5).

Water is also the symbol of life and wisdom - water of life, water of wisdom. The feet of the lion may be an indication of the "power of the Holy Spirit" (*virtus spiritus sancti*). The figures's head radiates like the sun. The essence of the Holy Spirit is absolute light, sun, warmth, and life. The six wings - six is the symbolic number of love, the six Works of Mercy - point to the Holy Spirit, who is entirely love and mercy, and to the power of love which "soars" to more elevated states.

Perhaps the presence of this symbol next to the image of Wisdom means to indicate that *Wisdom is especially "involved" with the Holy Spirit and that She is the image or perfect mirror of the Holy Spirit:*

She [Wisdom] is the radiance that streams from everlasting light [i.e., the Holy Spirit], the flawless mirror of the active power of God (Wisdom, VII:26).

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If Sophia is the most perfect image of the Holy Spirit, perhaps we can draw conclusions about Sophia's characteristics based on those of the Holy Spirit. She participates in all the qualities and powers of the Holy Spirit, to the extent that this is possible for a creature (Wisdom VII:22-29 says: "*In wisdom there is a spirit intelligent and holy ...*").

Thus can we understand this Seraphic spirit-figure as a symbolic interpretation of Sophia Herself. The wings point to Her perfectly spiritual nature which is elevated beyond space and time. Eastern (Orthodox) Church icons almost always represent Sophia with wings. Water is the symbol of life and wisdom: water of life, water of wisdom. The head of the old amn within Her womb perhaps indicates that She effects everything in connection with Yahveh, guiding it to

completion. The head of the old man is depicted above the head of Sophia in the picture of the cosmos and in the picture of the Lamb of God (Latin: *Agnus Dei*). This is another reason for thinking of Sophia here and for understanding the depiction as a symbol of Her. The outstretched arms signify that Sophia is always open for God and the world; She is the intercessor praying for the world, the world's praying and intercessionary Guardian Angel, as Florenski calls Her.

The figure's head radiates like the sun; Sophia is indeed the sun that illuminates, warms and animates the world, causing it to grow and ripen; She is the Soul of the World. The Book of Wisdom says: "*She is more beautiful than the sun, and surpasses every constellation*" (Wisdom VII:29). The lion's feet indicate Wisdom's power and might.

From head to foot Sophia (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia***) is light, beauty, power might, and love. The figure of the Seraph with six wings testifies to this. Six is the symbolic number of proliferous love. The five spheres within the wings, however, also emphasize this. In symbolology five is well known as the number of the magical love and power of the feminine. Five is also the number consecrated not just to Ishtar, the goddess of life and love, but to Venus, the goddess of love. The five-sided Venus temple in Baalbek is a clear sign of this. In Christian symbolism Mary is represented with the symbol of the pentagram or five-pointed star as *Stella Matutina*. Five appears as a magical number in connection with the power of eros and the feminine. Accordingly, the five spheres within the Seraph's wings signify Sophia's magically inspired and inspiring power of love.

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This extraordinary and intensely expressive Wisdom-symbol next to Wisdom's figure intends to declare to us the nature, function, and characteristics of Sophia - which cannot be expressed by the depiction of a human image.

Perhaps it is just through the juxtaposition of Sophia (**Greek: *Sophia*; Latin; *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia***) and the Spirit-symbol that the vision intends to show Sophia's dignity, power, and splendor in an original, subtle, and genial manner, an above all that She is the most perfect icon of the Holy Spirit. (194)

We now pass to Vision 1 of the Book of Divine Works:

This extraordinarily expressive picture shows a

man's head above the figure of a winged woman, who is holding at Her breast a Lamb with a cross. On Her imposing wings can be seen the heads of a human being and an eagle. Beneath Her feet a snake is entwined who surrounds a human figure. Hildegard writes about this image:

For what you see as a marvelously beautiful figure in God's mystery ... similar to a human being - signifies the Love of our heavenly Father. ... Love appears in a human form. ...

This *Love in human form* can be understood as Sophia Wisdom, in the sense of Hildegard's identification between Love and Wisdom. As these remarks show, Love and Wisdom are often identical for Hildegard in her visions and in what she says. Considering the entire context of her visions and especially the explanation of the preceding image of Yahveh's *Amon*, it is therefore permissible to understand this figure with the Lamb as Wisdom who became human in Mary, Sophia Mary.

After the above introduction, interpreting the picture is not difficult. The head above the winged figure of a woman represents undoubtedly God the Father. Since the Lamb with the Cross can be recognized as the true Lamb of God (Latin: *Agnus Dei*) or Jesus Christ, this leads to the analogous interpretation that the Woman carrying the Lamb in Her hands is Sophia who became human, or Sophia Mary. The figure's large, majestic wings also point to such a Sophia interpretation. The Eastern (Orthodox) Church's Sophia icons always portray Her with wings. Thus the picture shows God the Father, the Lamb of God Jesus Christ who

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is the Logos Son of God become man, and Sophia Mary who has become human, the Mother and Co-Worker of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God in the redemptive work of the entire plan of salvation.

On the wings are a human head and an eagle. The human head, symbol of the first Evangelist Matthew and eagle, symbol of the last Evangelist John, stand for the entirety of the Gospels, which proclaim to us the mystery of the Son's incarnation and Sophia Mary's assistance.

The snake beneath the woman's figure, trampled by Her feet, signifies Mary Sophia's power over the snake. That is to say, She conquers the evil which holds humanity captive and by frees human beings so that they can elevate themselves again and return to their original place at the center of creation, i.e.,

within the womb of Sophia Mary.

Thus according to a Sophia interpretation, Vision 1 is a New Testament fulfillment of the previous Old Testament vision of Yahveh's Amon - Cosmiarcha, i.e., God's Sophia (**Greek: Sophia; Latin: Sapientia Increata; Church Slavonic: Sofia**) in Her pre-existence as God's Co-Worker in the work of creation. Here the ver same Sophia is depicted in Her incarnation as Sophia Mary and Co-Worker of the Logos Lamb of God (**Latin: Agnus Dei**) become human in His work of redemption. (195)

We now turn to Vision 3 of the book Scivas:

"Hildegard provides a transition to a Marian and ecclesiological view of Sophia (**Greek: Sophia; Latin: Sapientia Increata; Church Slavonic: Sofia**) with the previous picture of Sophia Mary with the Lamb of God (**Latin: Agnus Dei**). In the present vision from *Scivias*, as well as in those that follow (*Scivias*, visions 4 and 6), she beholds Sophia Mary as the Bride of Christ and Mother of the Church.

These images are grandiose illustrations and commentaries full of symbolism about Sophia-Mary-Church of the New Testament. They illustrate with a visionary and genial originality the Sophia verses of Holy Scripture, particularly those in the New Testament about the revelation of the connection between Christ and Sophia-Mary, between Sophia-Mary and the Church, and between Christ and the Church. They strongly suggest that Sophia (**Greek: Sophia; Latin: Sapientia Increata; Church Slavonic: Sofia**) incarnated in Mary - from whom the Logos Son of God became man and with whom He built, as out of a maternal and original cell, the Church whose head is Christ and whose bosom and heart is Mary. In this sense these images have been selected,

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reproduced and discussed.

Right Side: Sophia-Mary is shown as the Bride of Christ who is teacher and *Pantocrator* (Ruler of All). Christ, the Logos become human, has a golden halo and is sitting on a rock-like golden throne. One hand is raised in blessing and the other rests upon Holy Scripture (the Bible). Sophia-Mary is completely gold and wears a crown and royal garments. She is embracing the throne with Her hands. Mary's intimate connection to Christ is being depicted here. Christ is Teacher, King and *Pantocrator*; Mary is the Queen and Bride holding on to Christ's throne, but also carrying him. The throne decorated in gold symbolizes the Church, whose head is Christ and which Mary carries. Mary is the Church's archetype and primary cell. Sophia-Mary-

Church stands in virginal, bridal readiness to become the Mother of the Church.

Left Side: Now the mothering process and state are shown. The same woman in the same golden, regal garments and decoration is depicted. A new element is the banner in Her right hand, which reads: "I must conceive and bear." With Her other arm She clasps three figures to Her bosom, one of whom is playing the zither. To the right and left of the woman, angels (according to Hildegard's own words) are carrying chairs, stairs with six steps, and a ladder with six rungs. Of the four chairs, two are simple in style and the two others more elegant. This is the picture of Sophia-Mary-Church as the Mother, organizer, and fulfillment of the Church, leading it ever higher. (196)

We now turn to *Scivias, Vision 4* and *Scivias Vision 6*.

Left Side: Sophia-Mary-Church is illuminated by a tower of light with three windows, from which seven beams are radiating. At the bosom of the crowned woman are Her children, whom She protects from attacks and for whom She prays (She is presented in a praying position). She is shown here as Mother of the Church and mediator of Life. The three windows symbolize the three divine persons of the Trinity, and the seven beams of light the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Right Side: This is a depiction of Sophia-Mary-Church with the crucified Jesus Christ. In her commentaries Hildegard says that "by the will of the Heavenly Father, she was joined with Him in happy betrothal"; and she also hears a voice from heaven which says: "May she, O Son, be your Bride for the restoration of My people." She stands by Jesus under the cross, catching His blood. She is the intercessor and mediator of the graces earned by Jesus. The four
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pictures above the altar present the Lord's birth, burial, resurrection, and ascension. (197)

We now turn to *Scivias, Vision 5*:

This monumental picture depicts a majestic woman in silver and gold towering up out of wine-blue mountain peaks. She is surrounded by a golden mantel, Her arms are spread wide and Her hands are raised up in prayer. She is carrying a golden chalice or calyx with twelve outer and three inner petals, in whose midst is a small, praying figure surrounded by eight persons. The woman's head wears a crown that is only partially painted with gold. Her countenance gazes majestically, knowingly and with concern into the

distance.

This vision, whose artistic depiction for unknown reasons remained incomplete, is extensively commented on by Hildegard, even in various parts of the picture are not mentioned. In the first section of her description she says:

After this I saw that a splendor white as snow and translucent as crystal had shone around the image of that woman ... and in this brightness ... appeared a most beautiful image of a maiden. ...

And I heard the voice from Heaven saying, "This is the blossom of the celestial Zion, the mother and flower of roses and lilies of the valley. O Blossom, when in your time you are strengthened, you shall bring forth a most renowned posterity."

And around that maiden I saw standing a great crowd of people. ...

And again I heard the voice from on high, saying, "These are the daughters of Zion, and with them ... the voice of all gladness, and the joy of joys."

The crystalline, silver brightness surrounding the woman would seem to signify Sophia (**Greek: Sophia; Latin: Sapientia Increata; Church Slavonic: Sofia**) in her purely spiritual, pre-existential form; while the gold seems to symbolize the stages of Her realization and fulfillment in time and space, and in the supernatural dimension of salvation. Sophia incarnates into creation. The symbol for this is the wine-blue mountain. Sophia incarnates and fulfills herself personally in Mary. The symbol for this is the "little maiden" who is praying in the calyx. Together with Christ She brings to completion Herself and everything in the New Jerusalem, in Zion, in the Church. The symbols for this are the eight figures surrounding Her
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within the calyx.

In summary and conclusion, this picture is a grandiose, monumental, and yet enchantingly charming depiction of the great mysteries of creation, the Church, nature, and the supernatural realm. We can understand Sophia Mary here as the one who fulfills and brings to completion these mysteries. (198)

Holy Wisdom is an all-embracing virtue which radiates love in particular as its most beautiful jewel. (199)

It can be seen that all of the above reasons support the claim of the identity between Hildegard's

figure of Love and Holy Wisdom. It can also be seen that equating them can therefore prove useful to interpreting her visions, especially on the additional basis of other symbolical and exegetical reasons and when such an interpretation leads to a deeper understanding of the pictures, i.e., they become more intelligible. (In her article "Sophia in the Mysticism of the Middle Ages", Barbara Newman says: "Wisdom and Love are practically identical figures which appear in place of the Biblical Sophia as God's spouse, co-creator and world regulator.")

In summary, although only a few of Hildegard's visions specifically depict Wisdom (**Greek: Sophia; Latin: Sapientia Increata; Church Slavonic: Sofia**), many of them do relate to Her and reveal important aspects of Her identity. While Hildegard does not speak directly of a relationship between Sophia and Mary, there are hints in her visions and commentaries which mysteriously link them, providing a basis for considering indications from the Russian Sophiologists who do speak directly of their relationship.

If the interpretation that is given to Hildegard's visions is accepted, then it can be said that they portray the full scope of Sophia's (**Greek: Sophia; Latin: Sapientia Increata; Church Slavonic: Sofia**) identity and functions - from the creation of the universe and humanity to Her role in the history of salvation through Mary and the Church." (200)

The visionary Anne Catherine Emmerich is of particular interest at this time. Together with the Canonical Gospel According to St. John and the Extracanonical Gospel According to Nicodemus, of which we have spoken before and of whom we shall

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speak in the following chapter, Anne Catherine Emmerich was one of the principal sources of the script of Mel Gibson's magnificent film "The Passion of the Christ". Anne Catherine Emmerich is also of great interest as a Sophiologist. Says Fr. Schipflinger:

"The Venerable Anne Catherine Emmerich beheld in her visions someone whom she called "Mary in eternity", but a more exact formulation based on Her descriptions identifies this Mary as Sophia (**Greek: Sophia; Latin: Sapientia Increata; Church Slavonic:**

Sofia). The story of "Mary in eternity" also merits serious attention despite the fact that the great seer who beheld Her is not well known (at least until quite recently, thanks to Mel Gibson).

Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774-1824) was born in Flamske near the German town of Coesfeld. At age 28 she entered the Augustinian convent of Dulmen, where she became known for her devotion and the compassion that

she showed toward others. In 1812 she received the stigmata, whose genuineness was attested by a Church investigation. The physician who cared for her reports of her exceptionally virtuous life and unusual gifts: She needed no nourishment, was able to discern souls, and evinced great magnanimity. In spite of her own poverty and infirmity, she did sewing work in order to help the poor.

Anne Catherine Emmerich had numerous visions about the life of Jesus Christ and Mary. Her spiritual director, Bernhard Overberg, asked the great German Romantic writer Clemens Brentano (1778-1842) to write about her. Brentano was so affected by her humble personality that he moved to Dulmen and remained there until her death so that she could personally relate her visions to him. He discussed them with her and recorded them as carefully as possible. His labors resulted in the works The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord, The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary and The Life of Jesus Christ and Biblical Revelations which continue to be published and have been translated into several languages.

Anne Catherine Emmerich was one of the greatest visionaries of her time. Her visions report many interesting details about the life of Jesus Christ and Mary which have even helped to clarify exegetical questions (yet how her visions are to be explained is a question for the domains of theology and mysticism and will not be taken up here).

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What is of particular interest are the visions which concern Mary's conception and birth. It seems that Anne Catherine Emmerich beholds a kind of pre-existential condition of Mary. Her descriptions and their symbolic content suggest that she perceived the origins of created Sophia (**Latin: *Sapientia Creata***) and Her relationship to Mary.

I. An Angel Tells Ste. Anne that She will Conceive a Holy Child.

After she (Ste. Anne) had slept for a short time, I saw a brightness pouring down to her from above, which on approaching her bed was transformed into the figure

of a shining youth. It was the angel of the Lord, who told her that she would conceive a holy child; stretching a hand over her, he wrote great shining letters on the wall which formed the name MARY. Thereupon the angel dissolved into light and disappeared. During the time St. Anne seemed to be wrapped in a secret, joyful dream. She rose half-waking from her couch, prayed with great intensity, and then fell asleep again without having completely recovered consciousness. After

midnight she awoke joyfully, as if by an inner inspiration, and now saw, with alarm mixed with joy, the writing on the wall. This seemed to be of shining and golden-red letters, large and few in number; she gazed at them with unspeakable joy and contrite humility until day came, when they faded away. She saw the writing so clearly, and her joy thereat became so great, that when she got up she appeared quite young again. In the moment when the light of the angel had enveloped Ste. Anne in grace, I saw a radiance under her heart and recognized in her the chosen Mother, the illuminated vessel of the grace that was at hand. What I saw in her I can only describe by saying that I recognized in her the cradle and tabernacle of the holy child she was to conceive and preserve; a mother blessed indeed. I saw that by God's grace Ste. Anne was able to bear fruit. I cannot describe the wonderful manner in which I recognized this. I saw Ste. Anne as the cradle of all mankind's salvation.

...

II. Ste. Anne's Miraculous Conception.

They (Joachim and Ste. Anne) embraced each other with holy joy, and each told the other their good tidings. They were in a state of ecstasy and enveloped in a cloud of light. I saw this light issuing from a great host of angels, who were carrying the appearance of a high and shining tower and hovering above the heads of

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Ste. Anne and Joachim. The form of this tower was the same as I see in pictures, from the Litany Of Our Lady, of the tower of David, of the Tower of Ivory, and so forth. I saw that this tower seemed to disappear between Ste. Anne and Joachim, who were enveloped in a glory of brightness. ... I had at the same time an indescribable vision. The heavens opened above them, and I saw the joy of the Holy Trinity and of the angels, and their participation in the mysterious blessing bestowed on Mary's parents.

III. Visions About the Preparation of the Incarnation.

I saw the Throne of God and the Holy Trinity and at the same time a movement within that Trinity. ... I saw a mountain as of precious stones appear before the throne of God; it grew and spread. It was in terraces, like a throne; then it changed into the shape of a tower - a tower which enshrined every treasure of the spirit and every gift of grace. ... I saw in the sky a figure like a virgin which passed into the tower and as it were melted into it. The tower was very broad and flat at the top; it seemed to have an opening at the back through which the virgin passed into it. This was not the Blessed Virgin as she is in time, but as she is in eternity, in God. I saw the appearance of her being formed before the Most Holy Trinity, just as when one breathes, a little cloud is formed before one's mouth. I also saw something going forth from the Holy Trinity towards the tower. At this moment of the picture I saw a vessel like a ciborium being formed among the choirs of angels. The angels all joined in giving this vessel the form of a tower surrounded by many pictures full of significance. Beside it stood two figures joining hands behind it. The spiritual vessel went on increasing in size, beauty, and richness. Then I saw something proceed from God and pass through all nine choirs of angels; it seemed to me like a little shining and holy cloud which became more and more distinct as it approached the sacramental vessel which it finally entered. ... I finally saw this blessing in the shape of a shining beam, enter the ciborium, which then passed into the tower.

In this little cloud (for which Elias had prayed) I saw from the first a little shining figure like a virgin. ... The head of this virgin was encircled with rays, she stretched her arms out in the form of a cross, and had a triumphal wreath hanging from one hand. ... She appeared as if hovering above the whole Promised Land in the cloud as it spread even farther. I saw how this cloud divided into different parts and

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fell in eddying showers of crystal dew on certain holy and consecrated places inhabited by devout men and those who were praying for salvation. I saw these showers edged with the colors of the rainbow and the blessing take shape in their midst like a pearl in its shell.

IV. Other Visions About the Incarnation of Mary.

I had a vision of the creation of Mary's most holy soul and of its being united with her most pure body. In the glory by which the Most Holy Trinity is usually

represented in my visions I saw a movement like a great shining mountain, and yet also like a human figure; and I saw something rise out of the midst of this figure towards its mouth and go forth from it like a shining brightness. Then I saw this brightness standing separate before the Face of God, turning and shaping itself - or rather being shaped, for I saw that while

this brightness took human form, yet it was by the Will of God that it received a form so unspeakably beautiful. I saw, too, that God showed the beauty of this soul to the angels, and that they had unspeakable joy in its beauty. ... I saw Our Lady's holy mother lying asleep in her bed in her house near Nazareth.

There came a shining light above her, and a ray from this light passed into her in the shape of a little shining human figure. In the same moment I saw Our Lady's holy mother raise herself on her couch surrounded by light. She was in ecstasy and had a vision of her womb opening like a tabernacle to enclose a shining little virgin from whom man's salvation was to spring.

INTERPRETING THE VISIONS

Anne Catherine Emmerich indicates that the visions which were given to her about the events in the Bible and the lives of the saints:

Were given to me by the grace of God not only for my benefit, as there is much that I could not understand, but to pass on, so that many things which had been hidden and forgotten might be reawakened.

A deeper glimpse into the mystery of Mary's conception and Her relationship to Sophia (**Greek: Sophia; Latin: Sapientia Increata; Church Slavonic: Sofia**) belongs to what had been hidden and was to be reawakened, particularly in the Western Church (Russian Sophiology preserved the sense of Sophia's relationship

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to Mary in the Eastern (Orthodox) Church.

A closer analysis of the visions excerpted above indicate that they relate not only to the conception of Mary's body but most importantly to the mystery of the preparation of Her soul in heaven (see above: "I had a vision of the creation of Mary's most holy soul and its unification with her most pure body"); and to the distinction between Mary in time and Mary in eternity, in God (See above: "This was not the Blessed

Virgin as she is in time, but as she is in eternity, in God").

The process of incarnation from "eternity" to "time" is depicted through various symbols: mountain, throne, tower, cloud, beam, and pearl.

Before the throning of God a movement takes place within the Trinity which produces a mountain of precious stones that grows and is terraced and like a throne; it becomes a tower full of spiritual treasure and grace; the virgin "in eternity" appears from out of the Trinity as a small cloud of breath and merges with

the tower. A similar but different description of the same process speaks of a mountain movement and human form in the Trinity which exists as a kind of brightness and is formed into a beautiful human soul.

Other details in the visions speak of "many pictures full of significance" which surround the tower; a little shining cloud from God and a beam that enter into the tower; and a virgin inside the little cloud that hovers over the Promised Land, falling in showers on holy places and then taking shape "in their midst like a pearl in its shell". Finally the tower hovers between Joachim and Ste. Anne and disappears in their midst.

Of particular interest are the images which speak of the origin of Mary in eternity from out of the Trinity. She is described as a kind of breathlike cloud before the mouth of the Trinity and as a shining brightness which proceeds up out of the midst of the Trinity and from its mouth. The similarity between this description and that of Sophia in the Book of Wisdom is striking:

For she is a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty (Wisdom VII:25).

This breathlike cloud of brightness which becomes Mary's soul is then formed before God, recalling the words of Proverbs:

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The LORD created me the first of his works long ago, before all else that he made. I was formed in earliest times, at the beginning, before earth itself ... (Proverbs VIII:22).

Other images from the visions also relate to Sophia. The tower into which the virgin passes is described as throne-like. The throne image is reminiscent of several Old Testament passages which

relate to the throne, a symbol of royal power and might, to Sophia:

My dwelling place was in high heaven; my throne was in a pillar of cloud ... (Ecclesiastes XXIV:4).

Give me wisdom, who sits beside your throne ... (Wisdom IX:4).

She adds luster to her noble birth, because it is given her to live with God; the Lord of all things has accepted her. (Wisdom VIII:34).

The figure of the little virgin within the cloud hovering above the Promised Land is also described. It divides into parts which shower dew onto certain holy places, and then takes shape as a blessing "in their midst like a pearl." The first part of this description recalls Sophia's words:

My throne was in a pillar of cloud. ... every people and nation were under my sway. Among them all I sought where I might come to rest. ... Then the Creator of all things laid a command on me. ... "Make your home in Jacob. (Ecclesiasticus XXIV:4-8)

Sophia took up Her special abode in the Promised land of Israel; but as the Book of Wisdom indicates, She also dwells in other places (upon which She showers dew) where the devout pray to Her:

Wisdom ... is readily discerned by those who love her, and by those who seek her she is found. ... he who rises early in search of her will not grow weary in the quest, for he will find her seated at his door. ... she herself reaches far and wide for those who are worthy of her, and on their daily paths she appears to them with kindly intent, meeting them half-way in all their purposes (Wisdom VI:6, 12, 14,16).

Wisdom inspires the wise of all peoples and nations, but Her relationship to the Promised Land is special. As various parts of the visions describe, a

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beam enters the tower, a blessing takes shape in the Promised land "like a pearl in its shell", and the tower disappears between Joachim and Ste. Anne. These are all symbolic representations of the unification of the soul of "Mary in eternity", who is Sophia, (Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*, Church Slavonic: *Sofia*) with the body of "Mary in time", which is conceived through Joachim and Ste. Anne ("I had a vision of the creation of Mary's most holy souls and

of its being united with her most pure body" - IV).

It appears that in her own way Anne Catherine Emmerich beheld the mystery of the incarnation of Sophia, Holy Wisdom, in Mary. Even though she does not speak directly of Sophia (Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia*), Holy Wisdom, in Mary. Even though she does not speak directly of Sophia, the relationship of Sophia in the Old Testament to get elements of her description of the creation and incarnation of "Mary in eternity" is unmistakable. Anne Catherine Emmerich was unique in her ability to preserve this mystery and deserves to be held in high esteem among Sophiologists in the West and in the East.

The visions described above took place between 1819 - 1822, and two years later Anne Catherine Emmerich died in 1824. She had fulfilled her destiny of revealing through her visions "many things that had been hidden", earning her, and Clemens Brentano who preserved them in written form, the gratitude of posterity (including Mel Gibson and those who enjoyed Mel Gibson's film "The Passion of the Christ"). (201)

Before dealing with the Russian Sophiologists, we think it proper to include the Litany of Loreto and some relevant selections from the 7th century Byzantine Hymn known as the *Akathist* (Church Slavonic: *Akafist*) Hymn of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Below is a description of devotion to the Virgin Mary in Russia before 1917 by Catherine de Hueck Doherty, born Ekaterina (Katya) Feodorovna Kolyschkine in Russia on August 15, 1896. Her writings lack the vast learning and intellectual brilliance of

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many of those whom we have cited in these pages, as well as the sheer spiritual genius of Staretz Silouan, but for that very reason the works of "Katya" or "The Baroness" have a directness and immediacy all their own.

"The devotion to the *Bogoroditsa*, which, in Russian (and Church Slavonic) means "She who gave birth to God", came to its vastness, it is said, in the heart of a beautiful Russian princess, St. Olga (Old Norse: *Haelga*), who, in the ninth century, journeyed far across to the golden city of Constantinople-by-the-Bosphorus to be baptized.

Be that as it may. One thing is certain. When the *Bogoroditsa* came, with her Son, His Father, and her Spouse, she came to stay, and to rule the Russian hearts unto the end of time. Many are the countries that have been officially dedicated to her, but only in Russia (and Ukraine) have all the people made her their very own mother, dedicating themselves to her.

The Russians' love for her grew with the growth of the nation. For wherever the Russians went she seemed to go ahead of them, appearing miraculously, now in this plain, now in that city or stronghold, showering them with blessings ... And each time some solitary artist in some hidden monastery would record these happenings with an icon of her.

Thus ... the Holy Virgin of Kazan ... the Blessed Mother of Czestochowa (Poland) ... the *Bogoroditsa* of Kiev ... Tver ... Novgorod. Behind each icon is a story that would rival the miracles of Our Lady of Fatima, or of Lourdes.

Like a gossamer fabric, shining, light, but infinitely strong, She who gave birth to God covered every nook, every corner, of the Russian land. She covered the people and their lives. Some day historians and artists will discover this, and reveal to the world the rosary (or prayer rope, or *tasbeih*) of Russian shrines dedicated just to her, because in that immense land there is no city so big, no hamlet so small, as not to have some landmark, some shrine, or some icon erected to her, the beloved of the people.

It was the *Bogoroditsa* who got every part of Russia acquainted with all the other parts in the old days. Russians, like the rest of her children the world over, turn to her for most of the favors they want from her Son. In return for the immense values they receive from her, and in recognition of their sinfulness and unworthiness, and with warm, deep gratitude, or in

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further petition to her, they go on a pilgrimage to one of her many shrines.

They go fasting, barefooted, simply clad, chanting her litanies and praising her name. They are well aware of the power of the fasting and penance they offer through her to the Most Holy Trinity, power given by God Himself, to enable men to untie the hands of His mercy and to appease the hands of His justice.

One of the many litanies chanted to her is as follows:

*Hail Mary, mother of God, virgin and mother,
Morning star, perfect vessel.*

*Hail Mary, mother of god, holy temple in which
God Himself was conceived.*

Hail Mary, mother of God, chaste and pure dove.

*Hail Mary, mother of God, ever effulgent light;
From whom proceedeth the Sun of Justice.*

*Hail Mary, mother of God, who didst enclose in
thy
Sacred womb the One who cannot be encompassed.*

*Hail Mary, mother of God. With the shepherds we
Sing the praises of God; and with the angels, the
Song of thanksgiving: Glory to God in the highest
And peace on earth to men of good will.*

*Hail Mary, mother of God, through thee came to us
The Conqueror, the triumphant Vanquisher of hell.*

*Hail Mary, mother of God, through thee blossoms
The splendor of the Resurrection.*

*Hail Mary, mother of God, thou hast saved every
Faithful Christian.*

*Hail Mary, mother of God; who can praise thee
Worthily, O blessed, O glorious Virgin Mary?*

To each of these invocations the answer is :“We salute thee, mother of God!”

Through these endless, constant pilgrimages, men, women, and children of all social stratas and conditions came together, praising her name, learning to love her and her Son, learning to love one another

Long ago and far away in the dimness of centuries gone by she was given the title, Mother of the Body of Christ. This was but another way of expressing the sublime doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, which

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the West lost soon after the (Protestant) Reformation. But Russia, which the Reformation passed by, never lost it. How could she? Her heavenly Mother would not let simple, devout children stay away from the very essence of their faith.

You see the many facets of this faith reflected in Russian literatyre - through Dostoevski, Tolstoy, Chekhov, and, if the truth be told, even through the

present-day writers.

The hunger for justice is the most characteristic trait of the Russian. In his eternal quest for the integration of the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, he may wander even into the heresy (in reality, far worse than a heresy) of Communism. But, mark well, he will not stay there long, as God reckons time. How could he - who even now loves his Mother so well?

In every Russian home there are many icons. But the Virgin's icon always hangs in the eastern corner of the bedroom. And a gently flickering light burns before it, night and day, through the years. It is here that the life of the family begins and ends.

It is to the Bogoroditza that the bridegroom brings his bride. Together they kneel before her gentle face. They ask her benediction on their marital love. They beg her to make it fruitful in the Lord, her Son.

It is to her that they pray again, when their love is consummated in the flesh. With the candid manner of child-like trust, they thank her for the infinite blessings of giving - maybe - life to a new soul, which then and there they dedicate to her and her divine Son.

It is before this icon that the mother prays during child-birth. It is here that, soon after birth, the child will be brought for a blessing. It is here the child will kneel and pray, when he is old enough, all his little prayers.

Family councils will be held before this icon. And even death will pay it honor, for it will bear the last whisper of father, mother, or child. The Bogoroditza is the center of the life of this household ... of every household of the land. That is why her icon hangs in so intimate a place.

The Rosary (or Prayer Rope, or *tasbih*) is known in Russia. But it is considered an extremely holy and high form of prayer to her. Only nuns and monks and a few saintly lay people are allowed to say it, the latter only with the permission of their spiritual directors.

An old and revered custom was to remember Mary in one's will. Tsars and commoners, princes and paupers, have willed their best to her in money or precious stones, in silver or gold. That is why most of the well-known icons in Russian churches were so richly

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decorated. Each stone, each silver bit, represented either thanks for favors received, or petition for favors.

Those who could not give gold or silver or jewels

brought her the works of their hands. Her shrines, in small chapels, on special altars in the bigger churches or in monasteries or convents, were usually decorated with exquisitely embroidered silks and linens that had taken years to make. Fruits and plants were also sometimes seen at her shrine, gifts from grateful farmers.

The old Russian greeting starts with:

May the peace of God be with you",

But the farewell is Mary's:

"May the blue mantle of Our Lady cover you with its gracious folds, and keep you safe."

She permeates the Liturgy. She fills its many ectenes.

She walks through the Mass. She is invoked at the *Panikhida*, the prayer for the dead. She is always present in the *Moleben*, the prayer of petition.

Numberless are the songs about her, liturgical and national. It is her icon that blesses the child. Parental blessings for all occasions are a must in Russian life. Father or mother blesses the child with the icon, for school, for sickness, for marriage, in the beginning of a search for a job, in an endeavor, in any crisis.

The *Ave Maria* is the prayer the Russians love best. It contains only the angel's greeting. The second part, the "Holy Mary, mother of God ..." is omitted. *Bogoroditza, deva radiusa. Blagodatnaia Maria, gospod s tobou. Blagoslovena ti vi jenuh blagosloven plod chreva tvoego ... Amin.*

Yes, she who gave birth to God ... loves Russia ... and is beloved by Russia. It is to her that all must pray. May she cover the Russians with the blue mantle of her love and bring them safely, in its gracious folds, back to the house of their fathers ...

I, a Russian, pray to her daily for that end. I pray to her under her best known title, *Spouse of the Holy Spirit and Mother of the Father's Word ...*"(202)

Also, *nota bene*, the Latin *Mater Dei* means simply and literally, "Mother of God"; however, the Greek *Theotokos* means

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literally; "She who gave birth to God". In Church Slavonic, *Bogoroditsa*, like the Greek *Theotokos*, literally means "She who gave birth to God", while *Bozhii Mater*, like the Latin *Mater*

Dei, means, simply and literally, "Mother of God."

First, the Litany of Loreto, describing the attributes of the Virgin Mary:

Holy Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*;
Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*.)

Holy Virgin of Virgins

Mother of Christ

Mother of Divine Grace

Mother most Pure

Mother most Chaste

Mother Inviolata

Mother undefiled

Mother Most amiable (Loveable)

Mother Most Admirable

Mother of Good Counsel

Mother of Our Creator

Mother of Our Savior

Virgin Most Prudent

Virgin Most Venerable

Virgin Most Renowned

Virgin Most Powerful

Virgin Most Merciful

Virgin Most Faithful

Mirror of Justice

Seat of Wisdom

Cause of Our Joy

Spiritual Vessel

Vessel of Honor

Singular Vessel of Devotion

Mystical Rose (*Rosa Mystica*)

Tower of David

Tower of Ivory

House of Gold

Ark of the Covenant

Gate of Heaven

Morning Star

Star of the Sea (Latin: *Stella Maris*)

Health of the Sick

Refuge of sinners

Comfort of the Afflicted

Help of Christians

Queen of Angels

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Queen of Patriarchs

Queen of Prophets

Queen of Apostles

Queen of Martyrs

Queen of Confessors

Queen of Virgins

Queen of All Saints

Queen Conceived without Original Sin
Queen Assumed into Heaven
Queen of the Most Holy Rosary
Queen of Peace

Below are selections from the 7th century Byzantine Hymn
known as the *Akathist* (Church Slavonic: *Akafist*) *Hymn*:

...It is very meet to bless thee, the ever-blessed and most Pure Virgin and Mother of our God. Thou art more honorable than the Cherubim and incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim; thou, without spot of sin, didst bear God the Word (Greek: *Logos*; Church Slavonic: *Slovo*) and thee, verily the Mother of God, we magnify.

Now there came to the knowledge of the Angel the secret command, and he hastened to the dwelling of Joseph and spoke unto her who knew not wedlock: Lo, He who bowed the heavens and came down is contained wholly and unchanged in thee. When I behold Him in thy womb taking the form of a servant, maveling I cry aloud to thee: Hail, thou Bride unwedded.

An Angel, and the chief among them, was sent from Heaven to cry: Hail! To the Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*). And beholding Thee, O Lord, taking bodily form, he stood marveling, and with his bodiless voice cried aloud to her saying:

Hail, thou, through whom joy shall shine forth; hail, thou through whom the curse shall be blotted out.

Hail, thou, the Restoration of the fallen Adam; hail, thou, the Redemption of the tears of Eve.

Hail, Height, difficult to climb, for human minds; hail, Depth, hard to explore, even for the eyes of angels.

Hail, Star that causeth the Sun to appear; hail; Womb of the divine Incarnation.

Hail, thou through whom Creation is renewed; hail, thou through whom the Creator became a babe. ...

...Boldly and without fear the holy maiden spoke to Gabriel (Qur'anic: *Jibril*), knowing her own chastity: To my soul thy strange message is hard to believe; how speakest thou of a virgin and stainless conception?...

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...Craving to know unknown knowledge, the pure Maiden cried to him who ministered unto her: From a virgin body how is it possible for a Son to be born? Tell me. Then he spoke to her in fear, crying aloud only:

Hail, thou initiate of the ineffable counsel;

hail, surety of those who beseech thee in silence.

Hail, beginner of the miracles of Christ; hail, completer of His ordinances.

Hail, heavenly Ladder by which God came down; hail, Bridge leading from earth to heaven.

Hail, thou great marvel and wonder of Angels; hail, thou great cause of wailing in demons.

Hail thou who ineffably gave birth to the Light; hail, thou who withheld the divine secret from all.

Hail, thou who soars over the knowledge of the wise; hail, thou who gives light to the understanding of the faithful.

Hail, thou Bride unwedded. ...

...Divine power for her conceiving then overshadowed her who knew not wedlock, and showed her fruitful womb as a fertile field to all those who desire to reap their salvation, as they sing: Alleluia. ...

...Enshrining God in her womb, the Virgin hastened to (her cousin) Elizabeth, whose unborn babe at once

recognized the Salutation of the Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*), and rejoiced and as it were leapt and sang and cried to her: ...

Hail, acceptable incense of intercession; hail, Oblation for all the world.

Hail, Favor of God to mortals; hail, access of mortals to God. ...

...Floods of doubtful thoughts troubled the wise Joseph (Qur'anic: *Yusuf*) within, when he saw thee, O blameless and unwedded Maiden, and he feared for thee; but when he learned of thy conception through the Holy Spirit, he cried: Alleluia. ...

...When the great Archangel saw thee, O pure Maiden, the living Book of Christ. Sealed by the Spirit, he cried unto thee: Hail, Vessel of gladness, through whom the curse of our first mother is loosed.

Most holy Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*), save us.

Hail, Virgin Bride of God, the uplifter of Adam and the death-knell of Hell; hail, all-pure Maiden, the Palace of Him Who alone is King; hail, fiery Throne of

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the Almighty. ...

...Hail, Briar from whence blossomed forth only the Unfading Rose (once again, the rose as the mystic flower of the West, as the lotus is the mystic flower

of India); hail, thou who did bear the Apple of the goodly savor. Hail, unwedded Maiden, Fragrance of the King of All and preserver of the world. ...

...Hail, treasure-house of purity through which we arose from our fall; hail, Lady, sweet-scented Lily scattering perfume among the faithful; thou fragrant Incense and most precious Myrrh. ...

...Hail, radiant Dawn, which alone bears Christ the Sun, thou dwellingplace of the Light; hail, thou who did disperse the darkness and reduce to nothingness the demons of gloom. ...

...Hail, thou only Gate, by which the Word (Greek: *Logos*; Church Slavonic: *Slovo*) passed through alone; O Lady, by your birth-giving you did shatter the bars and gates of Hell; hail, divine Entry for those who are saved, most worthy of all praise. ...

...Gloriously the Angel hymned the incarnate Presence of Christ, and the shepherds heard; and hastening as to a Shepherd, they beheld Him as a Lamb without spot, reposing on Mary's breast, and to her they sang hymns and they said:

Hail, Mother of the Lamb and of the Shepherd; hail, Fold for the sheep of His pasture.

Hail, bulwark from invisible foes; hail, opener of the Gates of Paradise. ...

... High in the heavens the (*Persian, Zoroastrian*) Magi (New Testament Greek: *Magoi*, Avestan and Old

Persian: *Magav*; Modern Persian: *Majus* or *Magh*) beheld the Godward-pointing Star, and they followed its rays and kept it as a beacon before them; through it they sought a mighty King, and as they approached the Unapproachable they rejoiced and cried to Him: Alleluia. ...

...In the Virgin's hand the sons of the Persians (the Magi or Zoroastrians) saw Him Who with His Hand made man; and knowing Him as Master, though He had taken the form of a servant, they hastened with gifts to do homage, and cried to her who is blessed:

Hail, Mother of the Star that never sets; hail, Dawn of the mystic Day.

Hail, thou who quenches the furnace of error; hail, thou who enlightens those who know the Trinity.

Hail, thou who casts out the inhuman tyrant of old; hail, thou who shows forth the Lord, the merciful Christ.

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Hail, thou who redeems from the creeds of barbarism; hail, thou who releases from the morass of evil deeds.

Hail, thou who made the worship of fire to cease;
hail, thou who made the flame of suffering to be
allayed. ...

...King's messengers, the Magi (Greek:
Magoi; Avestan and Old Persian: *Magav*; Modern Persian:
Majus or *Magh*) became, when they returned to Persia;
they fulfilled Your prophecy and to all preached You
as the Christ, and they left. (King) Herod as a
trifler, who knew not how to cry: Alleluia. ...

...With the words of song th you, O all-
praised Maiden, in faith we sing: hail, fertile
mountain filled full with the Spirit; hail, source of
Light, and vase storing Manna, sweet to the senses of
the righteous.

Most holy Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek:
Theotokos; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii*
Mater), save us.

Hail, pure Maiden, higher than the heavens, who
did without pain carry within you the Foundation of
the earth. Hail, Sae-shell that dipped in your blood
the divine Purple for the King of the heavenly Powers.

...
...Hail, Lady, you did truly bear the Lawgiver
who freely blotted out the transgressions of all; O
unwedded Maiden, incomprehensible Depth, ineffable
Height, through whom we become children of God. ...

...The Universe was amazed at your divine glory;
for you, O unwedded Virgin, held in your womb the God
of all, and gave birth to an Eternal Son Who rewards
with salvation those who praise you.

Most holt Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek:
Theotokos; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii*
Mater) save us. ...

...Hail, pure Maiden, stronghold and fortress of
mankind, and Sanctuary of Glory; Death-knell of Hell
and Bridal-chamber full of light; hail, Joy of the
Angels; hail, Succour of all who call upon you
faithfully. ...

...Hail, Lady, fiery chariot of the Word (Greek:
Logos; Church Slavonic: *Slovo*), living Paradise having
the Lord, the Tree of Life, in your midst; His
sweetness gives life to those who in faith partake,
though they be yet under bondage to corruption. ...

...Hail, pure Maiden, spacious Tabernacle of the
Word (Greek: *Logos*; Church Slavonic: *Slovo*); hail,
wondrous Shell from which the Divine Pearl was
brought; ever, O Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*;
Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or
Bozhii

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Mater), you are the reconciliation to God, of all
those who at any time bless you. ...

...Most holy Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*), save us. Undefined bridal-chamber of the Word (Greek: *Logos*; Church Slavonic: *Slovo*), and means for the sanctification of us all, hail, all-pure Maiden, the burden of the words of the prophets; hail, O Ornament of the Apostles. ...

...From you the dew distilled, O you who did quench the flames of paganism; therefore to you we cry: Hail, Virgin, you are the dewy fleece foreseen by Gideon. ...

...Behold, to you we cry aloud: Hail, be you our haven and our port, when we voyage on the sea of all the tribulations and snares of the Adversary. ...

...O you who are the cause of joy, give us joy in our hearts that we may cry aloud to you: Hail, Bush, burning but unconsumed, a cloud full of lights, which unceasingly shelters the faithful. ...

...Hail, Flower of incorruption; hail, Crown of chastity. ...

...Hail, you who bore the Guide of wanderers; hail, you who engendered the Redeemer of captives.

Hail, pleader before the righteous Judge; hail, forgiveness for many transgressors.

Hail, Robe of boldness for the naked; hail, tenderness vanquishing all desire.

Hail, O Bride unwedded. ...

...Our minds are transported to Heaven when we behold this strange birthgiving, so let us now be estranged from the world; it was for this that the Most High God appeared on earth as mortal man, and that He might raise on high those who sing to Him: Alleluia.

...Present in all completeness with those below, was the Uncircumscribed Word (Greek: *Logos*; Church Slavonic: *Slovo*), yet in no way absent from those above; for this was a divine descent and not a mere change of place; and His birth was from a Virgin, and in her inspiration she heard words like these:

Hail, Space for the Uncontained God; hail, Door of solemn Mystery.

Hail, doubtful Rumor of the faithless; hail, undoubting Boast of the faithful.

Hail, all-holy Chariot of Him Who rides upon the Cherubim; hail, all-glorious Chair of Him who sits upon the Seraphim.

Hail, you who makes things that differ to agree; hail, you who yokes together Virginity and Motherhood.

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Hail, you by whom transgression is annulled;

hail,
you by whom Paradise is opened.

Hail, Key of the Kingdom of Christ; hail, Hope of eternal blessedness.

Hail, O Bride unwedded. ...

...Choirs of Angels were amazed by your great deed of Incarnation; for they saw the inaccessible God as Man accessible to all, dwelling among us and hearing from all: Alleluia. ...

...Rhetoric's many followers were mute as fish when they saw you, O Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*); for they dared not ask: How can you bear a Child, and yet remain a Virgin? But we marvel at this mystery, and with faith cry:

Hail, Vessel of the wisdom of God; hail, Treasury of His foreknowledge.

Hail, you who shows philosophers to be fools; hail, you who proves logicians illogical.

Hail, for the subtle disputants are confounded; hail, for the writers of myths are withered.

Hail, you who broke the webs of the Athenians; hail, you who filled the nets of the fishermen.

Hail, you who draws us from the depths of ignorance; hail, you who enlightens many with knowledge.

Hail, Raft for those who desire to be saved; hail, Haven for those who swim on the waves of the world.

Hail, O Bride unwedded. ...

...Hail, Bride of God, who did engender the Healer of mankind; the mystic Staff whereon the Unfading

Flower blossomed; hail, Lady, through whom we are filled with joy, and inherit life. ...

...The tongue of rhetoric fails to praise you fittingly, O Lady, for you were raised higher than the Seraphim when you bore Christ, the King; supplicate Him

so that all who faithfully reverence you may now be delivered from every hurt. ...

...All the earth praises and blesses you, and cries out to you: Hail, pure Maiden, volume in which the Word (Greek: *Logos*; Church Slavonic: *Slovo*) of the Father with his finger has written; supplicate Him, O Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*), that your servants may be enrolled in the Book of Life. ...

...You, O pure Maiden, did receive the Word (Greek: *Logos*; Church Slavonic: *Slovo*) into yourself, and bear Him Who bears all things; you did nourish Him, Who by a sign nourishes the whole world, and to Him we sing: All ye works, praise the Lord and magnify Him

forever. ...

...We who through deceit aforetime were made naked, have been clothed in a garment of incorruption by Your Conception; and we who were sitting in the darkness of transgressions have discerned the Light, O Maiden who is the dwelling-place of the Light; wherefore we praise you forever. ...

...Through you the dead are made to live, for you engendered Essential Life; those who before were speechless wax eloquent, lepers are cleansed, diseases are driven away, and the multitude of the spirits of the air are discomfited, O Virgin, salvation of mortals. ...

...Hail, all-blessed and pure Maiden, who brought forth Salvation for the world, through which we have been raised from earth to the heights above; you are shelter and stronghold, bulwark and fortress of those who sing. All ye works, praise the Lord and magnify Him forever.

Let every earth-born mortal leap in spirit, and carry torches, and let the whole nature of disembodied Mind celebrate and honor the divine Festival of the Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*), and let them cry: Hail, all-blessed, pure, and ever-virgin Theotokos. ...

...Deliver us, Maiden, from temptation, from heathen assault, and from every other ill which threatens sinful mortals owing to the multitude of their transgressions, so that we, the faithful, to you may cry aloud, "Hail"; for through you we become partakers of everlasting joy.

You have appeared as our light and our confirmation, wherefore we cry to you: Hail, unsetting star which led the mighty Sun into the world; hail, pure Maiden who opened closed-up Eden; hail, fiery column, leading mankind to a higher life.

Most holy Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*), save us.

Let us stand with reverence in the House of our God, and let us cry aloud: Hail, Mistress of the world; hail, Mary, Lady of us all; hail, you who alone are blameless and noble among women; hail, Vessel receiving the unemptied Myrrh which into you was emptied out.

Hail, O ever Virgin, the Dove which engendered Him Who is merciful. Hail, boast of all the Saints and crown of those who strive; hail, divine ornament of all the just and salvation of we the faithful. ...

Spare, O God, Your inheritance and overlook all our sins, for You have near You, she who earnestly entreats and on earth blamelessly bore You, O Christ, You Who was willing through Your great mercy to take upon Yourself an alien form. ...

You, O Virgin Mother of God, are as a city wall to virgins and to all who flee to you; for he Maker of Heaven and earth prepared you, O pure Maiden, and dwelled in your womb, and taught all to call upon you:

Hail, Pillar of virginity; hail, Gate of salvation.

Hail. Beginning of rational restoration; hail, leader of divine righteousness.

Hail, for you did regenerate our fallen race; hail, for you did remind those who were mindless.

Hail, you who did bring to nought the corruption of hearts; hail, you who did give birth to the Sower of chastity.

Hail, bridal chamber of a virgin marriage; hail, you who does join the faithful to the Lord.

Hail, fair nursing-mother of virgins; hail, bridal escort of holy souls. Hail, O Bride unwedded. ...

Unworthy is every hymn that would encompass the multitude of Your manifold mercies; for if we should offer to You, O Holy King, hymns of praise numberless as the sands, we should still have done nothing to compare to what You have given to us who sin before You: Alleluia. ...

Truly we behold the Holy Virgin as a shining beacon light appearing to those in darkness: for she kindles the Supernal Light and leads all to divine knowledge; she illumines our minds with radiance and is honored by these our chants:

Hail, Ray of the Living Sun: hail, Flash of fadeless lustre.

Hail, Lightning, shining upon our souls; hail, you, who as thunder does strike down the enemy.

Hail, for you did cause the many starry Light to dawn; hail, for you did cause the ever-flowing River

to gush forth.

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Hail, you who did from life trace the image o the font; hail, you who did take away the stain of sin.

Hail, Laver purifying conscience; hail, Wine-bowl for the mingling o joy.

Hail, sweet scented Fragrance o Christ; hail, life of mystic festival.

Hail, O Bride unwedded.

When He, Who forgives the ancient debts of all men would grant grace, of His own will He came to dwell among those who had departed from His favor; and when He had rent asunder the handwriting against them, He hears from all: Alleluia.

Yet while we sing to Him Whom you did bear, we all praise you, O Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic; *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*), as a living temple; for the Lord, Who holds all things in His hand, dwelt in your womb, and He hallowed and glorified You, and taught all to cry to you:

Hail, Tabernacle of God and of he Word (Greek: *Logos*; Church Slavonic: *Slovo*); hail, holiest of holy saints.

Hail, Ark made golden by the Spirit; hail, inexhaustible treasury of Life.

Hail, precious Diadem of godly kings; hail, venerable Boast of faithful priests.

Hail, immovable Tower o the Church; hail, impregnable Bulwark of the Kingdom.

Hail, you through whom trophies are set up; hail, you through whom our enemies are cast down.

Hail, healing of my flesh; hail, salvation of my soul.

Hail, O Bride unwedded. ...

Zealously we praise ou, O Mother, who did bear Him Who was the most holy Word (Greek: *Logos*; Church Slavonic: *Slovo*) of all he Saints; and when ou receive this our offering, deliver us all from every ill, and redeem from future woe those who cry to you: Allelluia. ... You are more honorable than the Cherubim and incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim; you, without spot of sin, did bear God, the Word (Greek: *Logos*; Church Slavonic: *Slovo*); and you, truly the Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*;

Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*), we magnify. ...

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O Lady, Bride of God, spotless, undefiled, incorruptible, most chaste and pure Virgin, who by your wondrous conception has united God, the Word (Greek; *Logos*; Church Slavonic: *Slovo*), to man, and joined the fallen nature of our race to heavenly things; the only hope of the hopeless, and the succor of those who fight; the ready help of those who flee, and the refuge of all Christians; spurn not me an accursed sinner, though I have rendered myself altogether useless by my shameful thoughts, words, and deeds, and through indolence have become a slave to the pleasures of life; but as Mother of the merciful God, mercifully have compassion upon me a sinner and a prodigal, and receive my prayer, though it be offered to you by unhallowed lips; and using your boldness as a mother, entreat Your Son and our Lord and Master that He may extend to me His goodness and mercy, so as to overlook numberless transgressions, and turn me to repentance, and show me forth as a zealous doer of His commandments. And be you ever near me for You are merciful, compassionate, and gentle; in this present life an ardent help and protection, defending me from the assaults of adversaries and leading me to salvation; and in the hour of my passing hence care for my miserable soul and drive far from it the dark visions of evil spirits; and in the awful Day of Judgement, deliver me from eternal punishment, and present me as an inheritor of the ineffable glory of your Son and our God. May this be my lot, O Lady, all-holy Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*), through your mediation and help, by the grace and mercy of your only-begotten Son, our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ; to Whom belongs all glory, honor, and worship, with His eternal Father, and His all-holy, righteous, and life-giving Spirit, now, and forever, and from all Ages to all Ages. Amen. ...

Most glorious, ever-virgin, blessed Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*), present our prayer to your Son and our God, and plead with Him, that through You He may save our souls. ...

In you, O Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*), all my hope I set; guard me under your protection. ...

May Christ, our true God, have mercy upon us, through the intercessions of His most pure and holy Mother; of our saintly and holy (Church) Fathers; of

the holy and righteous divine ancestors (of the Virgin Mary and therefore of Jesus) Joachim (Qur'anic: *Imran*) (3255)

and Anna and of all Saints; and may He save us through His goodness and compassion, as our merciful od. ...

Gabriel (Qur'anic: *Jibril*) stood amazed at the beauty of your Virinity, and at the splendor of your Purity, and he cried to you, O Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*): what praise is right for me to bring to you? What shall I call you? I hesitate, and marvel. Therefore as commanded I cry to you: Hail, you who are full of grace." (203)

As has been noted, Sophia or Holy Wisdom is deeply rooted in the Russian Orthodox Church's devotion to the Virgin Mary. Devotion to Sophia has been present in the Russian Orthodox Church since the time of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the "Apostles to the Slavs", as was noted in the preceding chapter. Hence, it is in the Russian Orthodox Church that Sophiology has found its greatest champions. We begin with Vladimir Soloviev:

"Soloviev (1853-1900) grew up in the spiritual tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church, but as a youth he had become attached to an atheistic and materialistic outlook. After much searching he returned to Christianity, yet his religious views were permeated by philosophical and mystical considerations. Of particular interest is his teaching about Sophia (Greek: *Sophia*; Latin: *Sapientia Increata*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia*).

Soloviev's devotion to Sophia had been nurtured by the traditions visible in the Russian icons and churches dedicated to Sophia, and this tradition was itself rooted in the intimacy with and devotion to nature and "Mother Earth". In 1862, at age 9, Soloviev experienced his first of three visions of Sophia. ...

...Soloviev's primary writings about Sophia are found in his Lectures About the Divine Human Being, Russia and the Universal Church, Sophia, and also in his poems.

In his lyrical and intuitive poems, Soloviev celebrates Sophia and tries to impart a comprehensive vision of Her. His philosophical and theological works, which are more analytical, attempt to portray his understanding of Sophia's dignity and function.

In his philosophical and theological works Soloviev refers to Sophia as: "the intelligible collective Soul of humanity which comprises the many selves of individual human beings." She is:

One and everything - *hen kai pan* -. ... As the living center or Soul of all creatures... She includes the manifoldness of living souls, She is all of humanity together in one, or the Soul of the World. She is ideal humanity, containing all individual living creatures, who constitute the actual content of Her life and the absolute unity of God.

Sophia, the "Soul of the World", has three parts which allow Her to unify, connect and direct everything: a higher, divine part, a lower earthly part, and a middle portion which creates space, time and causality, and directs them (Soloviev's tripartite division is an attempt to explain the complexity of Her function). The function which preserves the world and allows it to unfold through trial and error belongs to the middle and lower parts of Sophia's soul. About this activity Soloviev writes:

If the Soul of the World were to stop unifying everything through Herself, all created beings would lose their common relationship, the union of the cosmos would fall apart into a multiplicity of individual elements, and the organism of the world would transform itself into a mechanical mass of atoms. ...

Soloviev mentions the famous icon of Divine Wisdom in the Sophia cathedral in Novgorod, exclaiming:

Who is it who sits there in royal dignity on the throne, if not Holy Wisdom, the true and pure ideal of humanity itself, the highest and all-inclusive *morphe* (Greek: form) as well as the living soul of nature and the cosmos, eternally bound to God, who unites everything existing in the temporal world with Her."

Elsewhere he remarks:

"Every conscious effort of the human being that is based on the idea of universal harmony and *syzygy* (appearances in pairs), and every effort whose goal is the manifestation of the all-unifying ideal (Sophia), creates spiritual and even physical vibrations. These vibrations gradually spiritualize the surrounding

material world and manifest one image or another of the

(3257)

all-inclusive unity.

These are encouraging words for those desiring to promote a deeper understanding of the unity between humanity and nature with the Soul of nature who is Sophia. The force of these efforts are very real and will eventually have their unerring effect. Such ideas exerted a tremendous influence on Soloviev's contemporaries and on the 20th century as well. Recent scientific thought about the way the world works closely parallels the formulations of Soloviev's Sophia teaching, making him the prophet of present day hypotheses (see the Gaia Hypothesis). Soloviev's Sophiology deserves to become better known to today's scientists as well as theologians. (204)

Soloviev was also a poet, and Sophia was a frequent subject of his verse. Soloviev proclaims Sophia as his Mistress, Queen and Friend.

Today I Saw Her

Today I saw her with my eyes
My queen, all bathed in radiance,
Rejoicing, my heart stopped beating.
This happened at the golden light of dawn,
A miracle divine.
All earthly desire vanished,
Seeing her alone, her alone, only her. (205)

The above poem was written in Cairo at the end of November, 1875 when Soloviev was still affected by his third vision of Sophia under the pyramid.

My Queen's Castle

My queen's castle shimmers with gold,
Seven pillars are in the hall.
The diadem of my lovely queen
Shines with radiant jewels untold.
And in the green garden of my queen,
Blooms a rainbow of lilies and roses,
The deep waters of a silver brook
Mirror her countenance, lovely and pure.
But she does not see the dance of the waves,
Nor does my queen glance at the flowers.
Sadness surrounds her eyes' bright gaze
Her heart heavy and grave.

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She watches afar, in the land of night,
Where mist covers the sun,
How her friend with the power of darkness fights,
But parted from her, has not won.

She sets aside her crown of pearls,
And leaves the palace of gold
And comes down to her faithless friend
As an unexpected guest.

Like a blossoming spring after winter's might
She comes with a radiant wreath.
Her gracious form bends down to him,
Surrounds him with glittering veils.

At once dark power is vanquished,
Her friend's fire burns pure with light.
With eternal love her eyes smile to him,
And he hears her softly speak:

"Ah, your will was weak. And you swore to be true,
Yet your deed showed not any faith.
Yes, you broke your oath, but only you:
I will not betray, but be true."(206)

This poem was written between November 1875 and March, 1876 in Cairo, and also shows the influence of Soloviev's vision of Sophia, which provokes self-reflection. The poem's castle and palace with seven pillars recalls Sophia's house of seven pillars in the Old Testament (Proverbs IX:1).

O Earth, My Mistress!
O earth, my mistress, since the days of youth
I have felt your sweet breath,
Heard the beat of your heart in the veil of your
blossoms
And touched the pulse of all life.

At noon heaven's mercy descended upon me
In a shimmering form with the same tenderness,
The banks of the blue sea, the song of the beating
waves
And the trees bristling in the forest
Sent their joyful kiss to Her.
The soul of the earth wants to bind itself,
Mysteriously, with the fountain of light.
What luck that I chance upon this covenant!
All the world's suffering becomes as nothing.

The earth that Soloviev celebrates in this poem from May of 1886 actually signifies the earth's soul, o the Soul of the World, whose bodily garment nature forms. The poem reveals Soloviev's profound vision of nature and his close relationship to the earth which is a special characteristic of the Russian soul that perceives nature as "Mother Earth" (evident in poets like Dostoyevsky, Gogol and Tutschov). This mystical and nature-related sensibility helps explain Sophia devotion in Russia.

O Earth, my Mistress!
O Earth, my Mistress! I do not tire of harkening
To your song, before and now again it moves my heart,
Eternally fresh strains sing to me of rushing waters,
And the ancient beauty of dark forests.

On that day, the light from the vaults of heaven
Flowed down differently, clear and unclouded;
Between the old familiar trees of earth
Appeared mysteriously pale eyes, so blue. (207)

The above poem from June 29, 1898, is also titled "O Earth, My Mistress". Soloviev again speaks of Sophia's eyes, which is a favorite topic and attests to his love and devotion.

O Splendid, Tender Beauty How I Love You
O splendid, tender beauty, how I love you,
Regardless if the day is bright or dark and
oppressing.
I love the look of your eyes shining brightly;
But when grief surrounds them, I am also in ecstasy.

O most tender and beloved, who would deny me nothing,
O tell me, could you also, like others, be untrue?
No, proclaims my heart, often uncourageous faltering,
Now comes its final yearning.

O, splendid, tender beauty, love me!
Regardless if the day is bright or dark and
oppressing.
O love me fervently, tell me: "I love thee!"
Then will I life-long blessed and happy be.

Slumbering In Winter in a Blanket of Snow
Slumbering in winter in a blanket of snow

You lie before me, resting, sleeping
Not death, but fullness of life

Wafts out to me from your blanket all aglow.
(3260)

My inner eye perceived
How fine you look, wreathed about in cliffs and pines.
Lovely mistress of the fairies' (Persian: *peri*)
kingdom,
Royally resting, how your beauty shines.

Immaculata, snow-white, unvanquished,
Deep in thought like the mid-winter's night,
Resplendent, come out of the dark and chaos,
Bright as the northern light (*Aurora Borealis*) in all
its flaming might. (208)

The two poems above, written in the autumn and winter of 1894, manifest an almost ecstatic love of nature which comes from the conviction that Sophia loves and is loved through nature. They also testify to Soloviev's belief that not lifeless, mechanical laws but instead spiritual powers and "ideas" are at work in nature; and that Sophia, the Soul of the World, is the Queen and Mistress of all.

I Am Always There, Both Day and Night
Between the dawn and dreams, always
You are there, both day and night.
Your gaze streams through me, to the deepest ground,
Full of splendor, full of might.

The ice is melting, clouds yield to light,
Flowers blooming all around me,
Silent tones in ether of transparent sounds,
I sense you everywhere.

Sin's sting has been extinguished in the soul
And fear at the face of death.
Without concern I can look into the darkest depths,
Nothing can harm me there.

All around just water and light, afar in the blue
All flows into one.
But her eyes remain, shining like stars
When all that seems to be fades away. (209)

This poem, written November 21, 1898, again reflects Soloviev's deeply mystical relationship to Sophia. He constantly feels Her merciful presence and the loving gaze of Her eyes, seeing Her in everything. Union with Sophia loosens the effect of evil and banishes fear. ... (210)

We have spoken of Pavel Florenski several times, and will speak of him again and again. He is almost certainly the greatest of the Russian Sophiologists.

Pavel Florensky was born in 1882 in Tiflis in the republic of Georgia of a Russian father and Armenian mother. Florenski's father taught mathematics and biology, and Florenski shared his father's scientific interests, writing an article as a school youth about phosphorescence in fireflies. After graduating, Florenski enrolled at the University of Moscow, where he studied mathematics and occupied himself with classical Greek thought. He later attended the Theological Academy in Moscow and received a teaching degree in 1908, and in 1909 began attending lectures on the history of philosophy. He wanted to become a monk but his confessor advised him to marry, which he did in 1911. Not long afterward, he was ordained as a priest of the (Russian) Orthodox Church.

In the years that followed, Florenski taught at the Theological Academy and wrote diverse articles and essays. In 1914 his principle theological work appeared, The Pillars and Foundations of Truth, which comprehensively expresses his thought and religious philosophy. It reveals that he was a disciple of Soloviev and a representative of the so-called renaissance in Russian religion which took place around 1900.

After the Communist Revolution of 1917, the Theological Academy in Moscow where he taught was closed. Since Florenski was known as a capable scientist, he received a teaching position in mathematics and physics at the Polytechnical College in Moscow.

In time his reputation grew to the extent that he was consulted about the proposed electrification of the Soviet Union. He also became the principle editor for important parts of the Soviet Encyclopedia of Technology, which provided him with the opportunity to occupy himself with the latest currents of scientific thought (such as quantum mechanics, the theory of relativity and particle physics).

His appearance in priestly garb at a celebration of the Society of Physics in 1926 was tolerated but not forgotten. When Stalin began to persecute nonconformist academicians and scientists in the years which followed, Florenski's fortunes also began to diminish.

His name was eliminated from text books and lexicons and was not allowed to appear in the press.

His close association with Bukharin, who had sought Florenski's advice in scientific matters, proved to be disastrous. Following Bukharin's execution, Florenski was deported to a concentration camp in Siberia, and after 1937 nothing more was heard from him.

Florenski's colleague and friend Sergei Bulgakov, himself a pioneer theologian, spoke of the lasting impression of Florenski's powerful personality. He also said that Florenski was a congenital genius whose life was marked by spiritual and intellectual endeavor, and compared him to a work of art. Konstantin Andronikov, the French translator of Florenski's The Pillars and Foundations of Truth, considered this work a synthesis of all Russian culture and spiritual thought.

After being forgotten for some time, the Russian Orthodox Church has begun to celebrate Florenski's memory, commemorating the anniversary of his 100th birthday in 1982. (211)

In writing about the Russian Sophia icons, Florenski says:

This sublime, royal and feminine nature, who is not God nor the eternal Son, nor an angel nor one of the saints ... is she not the true synthesis of all humanity, the higher and more complete form (of the world), the living soul of nature and the universe? ... our forefathers, the devout builders of the Sophia churches and painters of the Sophia icons deeply sensed her existence. (212)

Florenski also says that Sophia is a monad of personal unity in which the Creator encompasses all of creation. Recognizing the person of this monad of creation does not come from intellectual reflection, but is instead the result of an actual spiritual experience:

The monad of which I speak is for me a fact of living experience. She is a religious reality, not something accepted *a priori* but *a posteriori*, not by arrogantly constructing Her, but in humble devotion to Her. ... I am compelled to use metaphysical terminology, but the concepts in my expositions do not serve a strictly technical purpose ... but a more symbolic one. They are the colors with which one paints feelings. (213)

Further on he writes:

I said a monad, i.e., a unity that is very real ... which takes its place among other such monads, excluding them from its own sphere, for if it were to lose its singularity, the other monads would force it to merge with them into an indeterminate, elementary union. But in the spiritual realms of which I speak, nothing loses its individuality. All things are understood and experienced as organically and inwardly bound and wedded to one another by a process of voluntarily realized self-emptying, as a nature that is intimately and essentially one and whole ... in short, they are all a manifold but single nature, everything is essentially one and everything is personally different. This is a union realized by an eternal act ... a suspended balance of hypostases ... an eternal exchange of energies ... eternal motion at rest and eternal rest in motion. (214)

In the above passage Florenski is attempting to explain the nature and life of the Trinity, which is one and consubstantial but individual in three hypostases as the model for a life together in love of many different "persons". The Trinity is a whole composed of individuals, and this "sublime nature" is Sophia, God's Wisdom. He continues:

Sophia is the Grand Root of the synthesis of everything that is created, i.e., the entire creation and not just all creatures ... Sophia is the Guardian Angel, the Ideal Person of the world, its formational foundation. ...

Sophia is the eternal Bride of the Logos. She is manifold in the ideas of creation, and She receives the creative power from Him. She is one in God and many in creation. ... The entirety of these ideas and images is the true House of God, the Holy Temple of God, the Holy City, Heavenly Jerusalem. (215)

It is worth remarking that in these passages Florenski is quoting Count M.M. Speransky, a Sophian mystic from the beginning of the 19th century, whose ideas about Sophia were very profound and original. Speransky compares Sophia to Eve. Just as Eve issued from the side of Adam, Sophia came forth from the Logos "by division". This idea was criticized as pantheistic, but it can be understood in a symbolic and mystical sense (such as the Holy Spirit's designation as *Costa Verbi* or the Rib of the Word).

Speransky depicts the relationship of Sophia to the individual

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persons of the Holy Trinity in a beautiful and profound manner: She is the Daughter of the Father, the Sister and Bride of the Son, and the image of the Holy Spirit; She is the primordial idea, the Mother of everything external to God; She is the first being external to God and She is supernatural Eve, the Mother of all "ideas" of creation. Florenski summarizes:

Except for saying that the Logos is divided, Speransky's point of view does not contradict Biblical teaching nor Patristic interpretation of the Bible. (216)

Florenski likes to describe Sophia with images from Holy Scripture and the Church Fathers such as the City of God, Heavenly Jerusalem, Bride of Zion, and the Spouse of the Lamb (the Church who has made herself beautiful for her Husband). He points to the Bride's pre-existence by referring to St. Clement of Rome and the Shepherd of Hermas in particular. Florenski uses the same expressions that St. Augustine repeatedly used to describe "Created Sophia" (Latin: *Sapientia Creata*):

Florenski also frequently invokes St. Athanasius, according to whom:

Sophia impressed Her image in space and time and thus precedes the universe as the pre-existent hypostatical whole of the ideas and prototypes of creation. (217)

However, St. Athanasius was undoubtedly referring Uncreated, Divine Sophia, or Jesus Christ. Florenski interprets St. Athanasius to be referring to Sophia as a created person with an individual dignity and function, and not to a Sophia who is the Logos; yet St. Athanasius actually meant the latter.

In describing the entirety of Sophia's attributes, functions, and titles, Florenski clearly reveals his ecclesiological and Marian understanding of Her. Some of these descriptions are:

Sophia is the first created and the first redeemed, the center (heart) of redeemed creation. She is the Church, i.e., the whole of everyone who comes to enjoy redemption and makes up the body of Christ.

(3265)

Sophia is personal virginity, i.e., the power which makes a human being entirely whole. And Mary carries this virginal power in Her *par excellence*. She is, therefore, the manifestation of Sophia, i.e., Sophia incarnated. (218)

By means of a bold series of inferences, Florenski makes some grandiose statements about Sophia:

If Sophia is the whole of creation, she is humanity *par excellence*, which is indeed the soul and consciousness of creation. If Sophia is the whole of humanity, then she is the Church *par excellence*, which is indeed the soul and consciousness of humanity. If Sophia is the Church, then she is *par excellence* the Church of the saints, for the Church of the Saints, the divine Church, is the soul and consciousness of the Church (on earth). And as the Soul of the divine Church, she is our advocate to the Logos (Church Slavonic: *Slovo*), the Judge, for she is also the Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*). (219)

In the above passage he is clearly identifying Sophia (Church Slavonic: *Sofia*) with Mary, the Mother of God. He continues:

Sophia is truly the jewel of human existence, Sophia is Beauty. Only Sophia is the beauty in essence of all of creation. ... Sophia is the Guardian Angel of all of creation. (220)

He continues that Sophia is the:

Fountainhead of the Church, beautiful and young Bride of God. She is not *prima entre pares* (first among equals) among the saints, but above all saints. She is the Bridge that connects God and creation, the Heart and Apex of creation. She is the Church in person. (221)

Florenski adds that what he has said about Sophia is found in the Church's liturgy (see the Akathist [Church Slavonic: *Akafist*] Hymn), in iconography and also in Church writings. He quotes several beautiful passages which identify Sophia with the Blessed Virgin:

Let me dare to celebrate Her who interceded for

the world, the Spotless Bridem the Virgin ... whom You named Sophia, Wisdom of God. ... You gave to Her a
(3266)

countenance of fire, from which goes forth the flame of Your divinity, i.e., Your Son.(222)

However, Florenski also quotes liturgical passages which present a Christological view of Sophia, for example: *From all of our hearts let us seek God's*

Wisdom, who incarnated from the Virgin Most Pure. He explains the apparent contradiction by saying that Sophia is worshipped both as the Logos-Christ and Mary, Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*), adding:

It is beyond the capacity of our theologians to explain and clarify this phenomenon. The devotion of the Russian soul has always understood Sophia to possess a mysterious grandeur of Her own and has correctly related Her to Mary or even identified Sophia with Her.(223)

He goes on to say that official theology is inspired by liturgy and the popular devotion, but often lags behind them. The theological axiom *Lex orandi est lex credenti* (The law of prayer is the law of faith) expresses this phenomenon and in a sense legitimizes it.

Florenski attributes special significance to Sophian iconography and indicates that its representations do not always accord with the interpretation of Sophia given by the Church Fathers:

It was from the beginning an authentic religious creation of our folk soul and does not represent something borrowed. ... What the Church Fathers meant by Sophia does not always correspond with the contents of the icons, which appeared much later; or to express it otherwise, the figure depicted in the icons does not always correspond to their understanding of Sophia.(224)

He expands on this statement by distinguishing between three types of Russian iconographic portrayals of Sophia - which depict Her either as an Angel, the Church, or as Mary. The Novgorod icon is an example of the first type, depicting Her as an Angel. Jesus Christ, or the Logos (Church Slavonic: *Slovo*), is above Her. To Her left is Mary and the Child, and to Her right is

St. John the Baptist. This particular icon is also interpreted Christologically because it is supposed to be a copy of the icon of the Divine Sophia Church in Constantinople, and the dedication date of both the
(3267)

Constantinople and Novgorod churches falls on Christmas. However, is not Christmas also a feast day of
May, Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*)?

The second type of icon portrays Sophia as the Church or the Body of Christ. Sometimes these depictions show the figure of Jesus Christ on the cross (such as the one in the Church of St. John Chrysostom in Yaroslavl). The body of Jesus Christ represents the Church, which is born from the wound in the side opened by the lance (i.e., the Church comes forth from Jesus' heart).

The third type of Sophia icon depicts Her as the Intercessor, or as the Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*). Such portrayals exist in the Sophia Cathedral in Kiev, the hermitage of Optina, and the Zion Cathedral in Tiflis (the familiar icons of Mary are most similar to this kind).

In addition to the three main kinds of icons outlined above, here are others which combine all these elements that Florenski also discusses.

Florenski allows that some iconographic portrayals may have meant to depict Wisdom as an attribute of God. He acknowledges that the original Hagia Sophia Church in Constantinople was perhaps conceived in this way. Emperor Constantine, who built the church, built two others dedicated to Divine Peace (*Eirene*) and Divine Power (*Dynamis*), apparently so that pagans might be able to identify with these churches (Justinian I rebuilt the church in Constantinople after its destruction and dedicated it to the incarnated Logos). Florenski concludes his remarks about Sophia with these words:

Sophia reveals Herself first of all as a transfigured and spiritualized promise to the world, a vision incomprehensible to others, of the kingdom of heaven on earth. (225)

Pavel Florenski remained true to Sophia and true to his faith and suffered exile and martyrdom as a result. His vision of Sophia's significance has

meaning for our time, which hopefully will begin to understand more and more that Sophia - the world's Guardian Angel and creation's Soul and Mother, who intercedes for us and leads to Christ - can help to save the world from the ecological disaster and threat of destruction caused by humanity.

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Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944) was born in Livny as the son of an orthodox priest. Although he planned to enter the priesthood himself, he left the seminary at age 16 because of a personal religious crisis. He subsequently attended the University of Moscow from 1890 to 1894, where he studied economics and joined the Marxist movement. He also partook of studies in Berlin, where he met some of the principal representatives of the social democracy movement (Bebel, Adler, and Rosa Luxemburg). Having concluded that materialistic philosophy was incompatible with spiritual ideals, he turned to the kind of socialism that was rooted in Christianity (I myself have never believed that there is or ever could be such a thing) and helped in the attempt (doomed to failure) to found a Christian Socialist Party.

Before World War I, he was closely allied with the spiritual elite of the "Silver Age of Russian Culture" (particularly Berdyayev, Mereschkovski, and the symbolists A. Blok and A. Belyi); and from 1904-1905 he published the journals *New Way* and *Questions About Life*. During this time he was immersed in religious and philosophical studies. He was deeply interested in the apparent tension between God and the world, and tried to come to terms with liberal Protestant theology (wasted effort) and the history of religion. In 1912 his work *Philosophy of Economics* was published. In 1917 his first religious and philosophical work *The Never Fading Light* appeared, and in the same year he was also the representative of the College of Moscow at the Council of the Russian Orthodox Church. The impact of the October Revolution resulted in his decision to become a priest, and he was ordained in 1918 in the presence of friends like Berdyayev, Florenskij and E.N. Trubeckoj.

As civil war tore through Russia, he was expelled in 1923, along with others belonging to the religious intelligentsia, like Berdyayev. He traveled through Constantinople and Prague and finally reached Paris, where, until his death, he was a professor of Dogmatics at the Orthodox Institute of St. Sergius.

Bulgakov's literary output was prodigious. He wrote a dogmatic trilogy about the divineness of

humanity: *The Lamb of God* (about Christology), *The Comforter* (Pneumatology), and *The Bride of the Lamb* (Ecclesiology). His work *The Burning Thornbush*, which summarizes his thinking about Mary, shows that he was well versed in Mariology. The leitmotif that is present in all his works, however, is Sophia, and his work *Sophia the Wisdom of God* summarizes his teaching about Her.

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Bulgakov's commitment to social welfare and his familiarity with the Sophiological ideas of Soloviev and Florenski led him to Sophia, and She subsequently became the focal point of his thinking. Bulgakov wanted to demonstrate the relationship between the Wisdom inherent in creation and the Wisdom in God. His intention was to oppose Manichaeism by emphasizing creation's unity and value, and he also opposed the prevalent atheism of the time by emphasizing creation's origin in God and significance. He was interested in developing a new "theology of creation" or "theology of nature" which for him was synonymous with Sophiology. Through Sophiology he was attempting to penetrate the world's hidden meaning, and he believed to have attained this by coming to understand Sophia as the universal, living element at the basis of all existence both created and divine.

His teaching however, was strongly criticized by the Church; in part because of misunderstandings about his theology and cosmology, but also because of some genuinely problematic formulations.

According to Bulgakov, Sophiology is not well known and recognized by the Church because of the inherited Patristic teaching which usually identifies Sophia with the Logos (Church Slavonic: *Slovo*) or Jesus Christ. A similarly dominant Christological interpretation of Sophia had also become entrenched in Byzantine theology, iconography and liturgy. (226)

Byzantine theology did not answer the question of Sophia ... the theological significance (of the Sophia churches) remained hidden for a long time. The curtain began to rise not through the efforts of theology but through the development of sacred symbology ... theologians had considered symbolism to belong to the domain of archaeology, or they were hostile towards it, thinking that it signified a misunderstanding of dogma ... but the time has come to decipher the sacred message (the Sophia icons and churches) and to reawaken the living tradition which has been interrupted.

What is significant for dogma and historically

undeniable is that Sophia churches, which are understood Christologically in Byzantium, as understood Mariologically in Russia ... Sophia devotion took on a Marian character. The Christosophia of Byzantium was complemented by Sophia Mary, as Mother of God. Russian Sophia churches were consecrated to the Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) and their patron feast days of Mary; in Kiev on the feast of Mary's birth, and in Novgorod on the feast of Mary's Assumption, which
(3270)

has a particular Sophia character among Marian feasts ...

This change in interpretation also had a visible effect on iconography and liturgy. The characteristics of Sophia icons clearly became Marian ... even though they were sometimes interpreted Christologically. (227)

Bulgakov also indicates that Soloviev was responsible for guiding him from Marxism to idealism, and then to the Orthodox Church, but he criticizes Soloviev's gnostic tendencies. His judgement of Florenski's Sophiology is very positive, especially because of its orthodoxy. He regrets that Florenski's work (i.e., his Sophiology) had not been taken up by theologians; and he also complains that in the West the best of Russian ideas are not acknowledged, and says that Sophia represents "an essential figure within Christianity". He continues that not until the mid-19th century through Sophiologists like Soloviev was Sophiology reawakened, and the intimations of the Russian people - expressed in the Sophia icons and churches - elevated the level of philosophical and theological consciousness.

One of his ideas, which became vociferously criticized, was his understanding of Sophia as the universal nature which contains everything that is divine and created. She is *Ousia* the essential nature of God and creation. She is the Divine Nature, and while not a hypostasis, She is hypostasized or personalized in the three persons of the Divine Trinity; and She is also mysteriously the nature of creation and individualized in created beings. Bulgakov summarizes the first part of his teaching by saying.

In short, by embracing three in one the Holy Trinity is Sophia. It is the *Ousia* or Sophia ... the Trinity has a single *Ousia* and this *Ousia* is Sophia. (228)

He (Bulgakov) defends himself against the

criticism that such an idea adds a fourth hypostasis (to the three persons of the Trinity) by saying:

The three divine persons a life in common, i.e. an *Ousias* Sophia (Church Slavonic: *Sofia*). ... Sophia is not a hypostasis, She is a mode, a quality, an attribute of a divine hypostasis or a hypostatical nature. ... Understanding the divineness of God to exist in God's *Ousia*, which is something other than God's hypostases, does not mean transforming the Trinity into a quaternity.

(3271)

Although he admits:

It is only natural for discursive reason to hesitate when when it is a question of distinguishing between hypostatic and essential nature. ... God's nature is God's *Ousia* and God's *Ousia* is Sophia, and Sophia is everything and the union of everything with everything in everything, a pan-organism of the Ideas of everything in everything. ... The Sophia-*Ousia* is itself not a hypostasis, but being and nature which takes on a particular form and modality through different hypostases that are both divine and created. (229)

In other words, Sophia has a divine nature and a created nature, and they are united but also different, which in effect defines Her mystery. This kind of thinking recalls (some aspects of) the mystical theology of Meister Eckhart, which also supposed a certain identity between divine and created nature, but distinguished between the all-inclusive Godhead and the God of three persons. Such conceptions are difficult for even theologians to understand (understatement of the year!!!), and it is understandable that that both Eckhart and Bulgakov were accused of heresy> Though one wonders whether Bulgakov (or Meister Eckhart) really deserved to be considered a heretic, it must be acknowledged that expressions like: "Sophia is *Ousia*" or "Divine Nature" represented a significant departure from the traditional understanding of Her. (230)

Some commentary is called for here. In the history of Christian (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) mysticism, there are three figures who powerfully evoke **Advaita Vedanta** and **Bhakti Vedanta**, i.e., Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, who in reality

was either the 5th-6th century Syrian mystic Stephen bar Sadaili, or that polyfacetic (we have already spoken of him in Chapter 4) genius Severus, who was the Monophysite Patriarch of Antioch from 512 to 519 (or perhaps both), the Dominican friar Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) and the Florentine mystic Maria Maddalena de Pazzi

(3272)

(16th century), contemporary of the Spanish Carmelite poet and mystic St. John of the Cross. For all I know, there may have been others, as Christian (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) mysticism is such a vast field, however, I have heard of no others save the three mentioned above.

Meister Eckhart never mentioned Sophia, nor did Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, whether in reality he was the Syrian mystic Stephen bar Sadaili or Patriarch Severus of Antioch, nor did Maria Maddalena de Pazzi. It was not precisely the more **Vedantic** ideas of Meister Eckhart which caused him to be accused of heresy - otherwise, the works of Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite (whether in reality he was Stephen bar Sadaili or Patriarch Severus of Antioch or both) would also have been condemned as heretical - but this would take us very far afield indeed.

It is also clear that from Bulgakov's point of view Sophia could not be a person in the sense that She had been traditionally understood, either as Christ or as Mary. At most one could perhaps speak of an hypostasized or individualized presence of the principle of Sophia - in Christ, Mary or in any other individual.

Though one can affirm Bulgakov's rejection of an identity between Sophia and the Logos (Church Slavonic: *Slovo*), this rejection must be viewed

critically because it stems from the premise of Sophia's impersonalness. And were She to represent a person for Bulgakov, She would represent a fourth element within God's nature.

In spite of such difficulties, Bulgakov's fundamental purpose was sound: to affirm creation's goodness and the connection between God and nature (in other words, Bulgakov was anti-Manichaeism, anti-Calvinist, anti-Puritan, and, ultimately, anti-Protestant). It is important to the significance of Sophiology that Bulgakov emphasized again and again:

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The images of creation, the ideas of things and natures are grounded in Sophia, yes, She is the primordial, all-embracing idea of everything. She is the ideal of everything, the integral organism, and the ideal unity of all ideas.(231)

He also continually stressed that Sophia is the Archeos or beginning of everything. She is the beginning in the sense of an ontological principle; and the words of Genesis "in the beginning God created heaven and earth" signify "God created the world through Wisdom with Wisdom, and according to the image of Wisdom." In making this statement he is arguing against the view that identifies Sophia with the Logos.

He also characterizes Sophia as the entelechy of the world and of the entire cosmos. For him, entelechy means the principle of the world's actualization and fulfillment. This is a thought which comes close to the idea of the World Soul, but he does not develop it any further.

It is also worth noting that Bulgakov attributes a kind of androgenous nature to Sophia. She is the polar "dyadic revelation of the Logos and the Spirit," She is *raison et Coeur*, reason and heart together, a harmonious abundance of both aspects are present in Her. And yet Her female nature is dominant. She is and remains a woman.

According to Bulgakov, in the realm of creation Mary represents Sophia's hypostasized form (he does not speak of an incarnation), and this hypostasization is the most elevated that occurs within creation. Sophia's hypostasis in Mary is also the basis for Mary's cosmological dignities and functions. She is the "Mother of Humanity, the spiritual focus of all that is created, and the Mother and Heart of the World."

When the Holy Spirit descends on Mary at the Annunciation, She becomes the Spirit's bearer and is enabled to become the Mother of the incarnate Son of God. This is the basis for her theological dignities.

She is the:

Daughter of the Father, Bride and Mother of the Son, the image (*Icon*) and human revelation of the Holy Spirit, the Heart and Mother of the Church, the Queen of Heaven, the Wife and Bride of the Lamb.(232)

As Sophia's hypostasized and created form, Mary is "the ground of the world, but also the power of its transfiguration."(233)

(3274)

Bulgakov's expositions about Mary and Sophia's relationship to Her exhibit a great love and a reverence, proving that he was a genuine son of Russian spirituality and devotion."(234)

The above naturally leads us to a closely related topic:

The relation between Sophia and the Virgin Mary.

"In addition to bringing together numerous contributions on the subject of Sophia, it has also been a primary concern of this work to put forward the thesis that Sophia became a human being in Mary. The ontological identification of Sophia with Mary raises the question of how such a union is to be theologically explained, and whether it relates, for example, to the hypostatic union of the Logos with Jesus Christ.

It can be answered that union between Sophia and Mary is not hypostatic, for in the *Unio hypostatica* a divine uncreated nature and a human created nature are united in the divine Person of the Logos, whereby the two natures are essentially different. With Sophia and Mary, there are not two essentially different natures, but only one created nature, which appears in two different forms - a spiritual, eternal form, and an earthly, human form.

When Sophia incarnates, Her personal essence remains the same, but the existential form changes. Her spiritual form gives way to an earthly form in the temporal and spatial world. Sophia's spiritual nature is present, but it is concealed in Her incarnated and earthly form and in effect is only virtually present.

The union between the two natures of Sophia and Mary is similar to the union between the soul and body. When the soul is incarnated in the material world and bound by a human body, it is constrained by the bodily nature. This is also the case with Sophia's spiritual nature. While bound by a human nature in the material world, Her spiritual nature cannot fully

manifest its inherent power. In Her humility and willingness to serve, She was prepared to take on human form and the lowliness of human existence along with Christ (Phillipians, II:7-8). She was prepared to conceal Her splendor during Her time on earth and subject Herself to the conditions and limitations of human existence. She experienced every stage of human growth and development. Her knowledge, power, and splendor remained latent, though in some instances they did become manifest (in the strength of Her faith and virtue and in Her wisdom, purity, and beauty).

Thus, the union of the spiritually powerful Sophia

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with a human nature similar to the way in which the body and soul unite with the human being. Mary's body and human nature are ensouled by the elevated spiritual nature of Sophia. In this sense, Sophia is Mary's soul, and Mary is the *Sedes Sapientia* or the seat of Wisdom. Sophia incarnated in Mary's body.

The glory of Sophia-Mary's dignity and splendor only became apparent during the Assumption into heaven, when the human nature was transfigured or freed from the confines of the temporal and spatial world. Only

then did She become manifest as the Queen of Heaven and Earth and the Lady of all Nations, the fulfillment of the yearning of all people for the perfected feminine and maternal nature, the *charme eternal*. Only then did She fully manifest all the dignities and beauties of

the ideal woman which were prophetically perceived and promised in Israel's Books of Wisdom, and by many other peoples. Only then did She represent the celebration of

the triumph of good over evil, of beauty over ugliness, of nobility over coarseness, of unity over division, of harmony over chaos, and of life over death. She humbly empties Herself of Her grandeur in order to become a human being, making the victory and splendor of Sophia-Mary even more radiant. In the Revelation of John, this victory is proclaimed by the woman clothed with the sun (Revelation XII:1) who is victorious over the dragon.

The union between Sophia and Mary is symbolically portrayed in the many depictions of Mary with a book (representing Wisdom), and it is also expressed in liturgy by the use of texts from the Books of Wisdom on Marian feast days can also only be fully understood from the point of view of Her relationship to Sophia.

Just as the full name of the incarnated Logos is Jesus Christ, the name of the incarnated Sophia is

Sophia-Mary.

In summary, the following points can be made in support of the hypothesis that Sophia became a human being in Mary:

1.) The prophetic revelation about Sophia's appearance on earth (Bartholomew III:37) finds its personal fulfillment in Mary (and through Mary in the Church)

2.) It provides a more comprehensive and profound vision of Mary's participation in the plan of salvation. Mary works together with Christ just as Sophia was involved with creation and the world's preservation.

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3.) It provides a basis for making more intelligible the so-called hyperdulical devotion to Mary which understands Her as more elevated than the Angels and saints.

4.) It integrates the three primary forms in which Mary is understood and honored: A.) as the holy and archetypal Woman, Mother, and Housewife; B. as our Mother the beloved Blessed Lady, Mother of the Church, Mother of Mercy, Salvation of the Sick and Helper of Humanity; C.) as Queen of Heaven and Earth (the World Soul), the Lady of All Nations, and the justified Bearer of the titles of the Litany of Loreto and The Akathist (Church Slavonic: *Akafist*) Hymn (see above).

Each of the above points focuses on a particular dimension of Mary:

- ❖ The natural and human dimension;
- ❖ The supernatural and hyperdulic dimension, which is understood and honored by Catholics and the Orthodox peoples;
- ❖ The cosmic and Sophian dimension, which is understood and honored in the Russian tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church (in other words, in the Russian Orthodox Church).

All of the above thoughts about the union of Sophia with Mary are intended as a stimulus toward a closer understanding of this mystery. (235)

IMAGES OF SOPHIA IN HINDUISM

In the previous chapter we noted the presence of Wisdom or Sophia in Zoroastrianism, under the Avestan name *Daena*. We also note the presence of Sophia in Islam, especially in Sufism and Shi'ism. However, Sophia is also found in other religions, including Hinduism and Buddhism, as we shall see below.

"Scripture teaches that Wisdom (Latin: *Sapientia Increatea*; Greek: *Sophia*; Church Slavonic: *Sofia*) is an experience of holy soul throughout the ages (Wisdom VII:23). St. Paul teaches that Wisdom manifests in an infinite variety of forms (Ephesians III:10). It is no
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wonder then that Wisdom's traces are also found in the religious and philosophical traditions of the East. Though striking similarities are found there to the image of Wisdom (Sophia) that has emerged in the Christian (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) tradition, differences which may seem at first unusual are also found. This, however, is advantageous to the development of the kind of understanding of Wisdom-Sophia that is truly Catholic and universal. We begin with Hinduism.

Hinduism is a complex religion containing diverse orientations and practices. Of particular interest to the present study is the role in Hinduism of images relating to the feminine and maternal. The most prominent Mother Goddess figure in Hinduism is Kali, the wife of Shiva (Sanskrit: *Om Nama Shivaya*, Hail the Name of Shiva).

Kali can be mythologically understood as Shiva's Shakti, the power of the Absolute which creates, permeates, and enlivens everything. Some sects even honor Shiva's Shakti above Shiva, and She is known by many names which reflect different aspects of Her power. Kali can represent a destructive and terrifying side of Shiva's divine energy. She has been portrayed as a cruel woman or as a cruel force of nature, although in this guise She also represents catharsis and renewal.

The great holy man Ramakrishna understood Kali as the Divine Mother and consecrated himself to Her. Ramakrishna had yearned for a vision of Her for a long time and had even bloodily castigated himself. But finally one day, when he was at the end of his strength, She appeared to him:

I was overpowered with a great restlessness and a

fear that it might not be my lot to realize Her in this life. ... Life seemed not to be worth living ... and I determined to put an end to my life. ... when suddenly the blessed Mother revealed Herself. The buildings with their different parts, the temple, and everything else vanished from my sight, leaving no trace whatsoever, and in their stead I saw a limitless, infinite, effulgent Ocean of Bliss. ... within me there was a steady flow of undiluted bliss, altogether new, and I felt the presence of the Divine Mother.(236)

Once when engaged in conversation about whether God with form is as real as God without a form, he said:

(3278)

Yes, both are true. God with form is as real as God without form. Do you know what the describing of God as formless **ONLY** is like? It is like a man's playing only a montone on his flute, though it has seven holes (in other words, it uses a *heptatonic* or seven-tone scale, like all Hindustani music). But on the same instrument another man plays different melodies. Likewise, in how many ways the believers in a Personal God enjoy Him! They enjoy Him through many different attitudes: the serene attitude, the attitude of a servant, a friend, a mother, a husband, or a lover.(237)

(In the above, Ramakrishna is dealing with the question of what is called in Latin: *Via Negativa*; in Greek: *Apophatic Theology*, in Sanskrit: *neti, neti* i.e., "not this, not that", which is so debated in both Hinduism and Christianity [Catholic and Eastern Orthodox] and which we touch on several times in the present book.) Father Schipflinger continues:

God and God's power (*Shakti*) are not two but one divine principle, expressed by two figures which are masculine and feminine. Ramakrishna viewed all women as the manifestations of the Divine Mother, and he even saw a glimmer of her in bad wives. He often said:

I call to (God) as my Mother. Let Mother do whatever She likes. I shall know Her if it is Her

will; but I shall be happy to remain ignorant if She wills otherwise. The young child wants only his mother. ... All he knows is, "I have a mother; why should I worry?" ... My attitude, too, is that of a child. (238)

He prayed to Her:

I have taken refuge at Thy feet. I have sought protection in Thee. O Mother, I pray only that I may have pure love for Thy Lotus Feet, love that seeks no return.

O Mother, I throw myself on Thy mercy; I take shelter at Thy Hallowed Feet. ... Be gracious and grant that I may have pure love for Thee, a love unsmitten by desire, untainted by any selfish ends - a love craved by the devotee for the sake of love alone.

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...

Mother, make me mad with Thy love ...
Make me drunk with Thy love's wine;
O thou who steals Thy bhaktas' (devotees) hearts,
Drown me deep in the sea of Thy love! ...
Jesus, Buddha, Moses, Gauranga,
All are drunk with the wine of Thy love.
Mother, when shall I be blessed
By joining their blissful company? (239)

Ramakrishna's famous pupil Vivikananda once exclaimed:

O Mother, You walk the streets in one form and exist in the universe in another. Above all else I greet you, O Mother. (240)

Ramakrishna's religious orientation was very profound, but more practical than philosophical. His simple and even childlike teachings are at the same time wise, full of love and deeply moving.

Sri Aurobindo is another important figure in Hinduism who revered the Divine Mother. Like Gandhi, he also fought for India's independence. He later dedicated himself completely to the spiritual life, founding an *ashram* in Pondicherry and beginning a prodigious activity whose influence has extended beyond India to the entire world. In a work titled The Mother, Sri Aurobindo wrote the following words:

The one original transcendent *Shakti*, the Mother

stands above all the worlds and bears in her eternal consciousness the Supreme Divine. ... The Supreme is manifest in Her forever as the everlasting *Sachchidananda*, manifested through Her in the worlds as the one and dual principle of *Purusha-Prakriti*, embodied by her in the Worlds and the Planes and the Gods and their energies and figured because of Her as all that is in the known worlds and in the unknown others. All is her play with the Supreme; all is Her manifestation of the mysteries of the Eternal, the miracles of the Infinite. ... Nothing can be here or elsewhere but what She decides and the Supreme sanctions; nothing can take shape except what She moved by the Supreme perceives and forms. (241)

He distinguishes between three levels of the Mother Shakti's activity:

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There are three ways of being of the Mother of which you can become aware. ... Transcendent, the original supreme Shakti, she stands above the worlds and links the creation to the ever unmanifest mystery of the Supreme. Universal, the cosmic *Mahashakti*, she creates all these beings and contains and enters, supports and conducts all these million processes and forces. Individual, she embodies the power of these two vaster ways of Her existence, makes them living and near to us and mediates between the human personality and the divine Nature. (242)

These forms of the Mother's appearance effect the transformation of the human being and the divinization of the world, but only in harmony with the human being's cooperation:

There are two powers that alone can effect in their conjunction the great and difficult thing which is the aim of our endeavor [divinization], a fixed and unfailing aspiration that calls from below and a supreme Grace from above that answers. (243)

Only two inseparable things are necessary for traveling safely along life's road: the Divine Mother's grace and an attitude of faith, sincerity and surrender. Sri Aurobindo writes:

If you desire this transformation, put yourself in the hands of the Mother and her Powers without cavil or resistance and let her do unhindered her work within you. Three things you must have, consciousness, plasticity, unreserved surrender. (244)

He also says:

If you want to be a true doer of divine works, your first aim must be to be totally free from all desire and self-regarding ego. All your life must be an offering and sacrifice to the Supreme; your only object in action shall be to serve, to receive, to fulfill, to become a manifesting instrument of the divine Shakti in her works.(245)

In this service of devotion (*bhakti*) three stages are distinguished. In the first stage one is a self-confident and sometimes headstrong worker or servant; in the second the devotee becomes a flexible and accomodating instrument in the Mother's hands; and in

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the third stage one becomes a child of the Mother and a part of Her consciousness and strength, doing everything in, with, for, and through Her:

The last stage of this perfection will come when you are completely identified with the Divine Mother and feel yourself to be no longer another and separate being, instrument, servant or worker but truly a child and eternal portion of her consciousness and force. Always She will be in you and you in her; it will be your constant, simple and natural experience that all your thought and seeing and action, your very breathing or moving come from Her and are Hers. You will know and see and feel that you are a person and power formed by Her out of Herself, put out from Her for the play and yet always safe in Her.

In the above work, Sri Aurobindo portrays an eloquent, poetic and philosophical vision of the feminine and maternal side of the Divine that has profound implications for spiritual and religious life: the basis and fulfillment of religion consists in the human being's full devotion to God's Shakti and union with Her.

Though Shakti devotion to the Divinity's feminine, divine power also took on some degenerate forms (in Vajrayana, for example), in its legitimate forms Shaktism represents an attempt to relate to the Divinity in a meaningful way by worshipping the Divinity's Ahakti, the "Great Mother" and the power of knowledge (*jnana*) and love who created and preserves the cosmos.(246)

RADHA IN KRISHNA BHAKTI

Hinduism's Bhakti [or *Bhakti Vedanta*] devotion (especially the kind initiated by Chaitanya (1486-1534), a Bengali Brahman) is another form of Hinduism that is important to the present theme. [The Hindu mystical poetess Mirabai, of whose works I am very fond, was a devotee of Bhakti Vedanta] In Bhakti devotion (*Bhakti* means devotional love) Krishna and His Shakti Radha are the central figures. In an ancient *Purana* or Hindu legend Krishna says of Radha:

I bring about creation through Her, I create Brahma and the other Devas through Her, the cosmos comes into being through her, the world is released through Her, the world would be nothing without Her. ... She is what burns in fire, She is the radiance of the sun, the light of the moon, the coolness in water,
(3282)

the power which makes grain grow. ... She is the power of devotional love. ... She is the one who continually devotes Herself to me in Bhakti. ... She is the power which allows the ocean of the world of appearances (*Samsara*) to be traversed. She is the Holy Wisdom of Those who are (the Holy Ones), she is presence of mind, She is the art of interpreting Sacred Scripture, She is the power of giving in those who give. She is the love of noble women to their spouses. ...

...She is the life of everything, She is Krishna's Beloved, who is more faithful to Him than His own life, in no way less than Him. She rules over Krishna's heart. ... She is the knowledge (*jnana*) of the cosmos, its light and radiance and creative genius. ... She inspires human beings to write books about Krishna. ...

...When the Krishna of intimate love, the flute-playing Krishna, gazes into His own eternity, He sees before Himself Radha as His true self. And when He "who has no inside nor outside" looks outside, He sees Radha before Him. Everywhere He seeks Her, He sees Her. (247)

In the Padma Purana, Krishna reveals to a practitioner of Bhakti the inner mystery of His love for Shakti Radha (whom he nicknames *Radhika*):

[Note: the Sanskrit word *lila* means game, particularly in a cosmic sense as God's game and dance. Understood as a game of love, Krishna plays the game with Radha His Beloved and with all

the devout *Bhakta-s* (practitioners of *Bhakti*) and *Gopi-s*
(shepherds symbolizing the loving souls that seek Krishna.)

In joyful *lila* I play with Her,
Loyal to Her holy love,
Eternally. Know, that my Beloved
Radhika is the highest Divinity ...

Those who seeks refuge with us
Or with Her alone,
And serve us in the manner of *Gopi-s*,
Without a doubt they will come to me. ...

(3283)

Therefore, take refuge zealously
At Radha's feet.
And if you find refuge with Her,
You will rule over me.

And since you took refuge
With Radha, my Beloved,
Whispering of the sacred word of the two,
Remain everlastingly in my kingdom.

What is particularly interesting about these verses is that they reveal the heights to which the dignity of the Feminine and Maternal love is raised. Radha is of an equal status with Krishna, She is the highest Divinity and essential to attaining Krishna's love. In a verse from the same Purana a devotee of Shakti says:

I am yours, O Beloved of Radhika (Krishna)
My body and spirit, my words and deeds.
Krishna's Beloved (Radha), truly I am Yours.
Both of You are my only goal.

Beholding the eternal and divine union of Krishna and Radha the devotee becomes ecstatic and only wants to be entirely devoted to them and to participate in their love. The experience of their mutual devotion and love is so strong that Krishna is called "Radha's Beloved" and Radha "Krishna's Beloved."

In the above passages Radha can be understood as a symbol for the human soul who loves God, but especially the first of the souls who love God. Bhakti devotees of the Chaitanya school proclaim that all devotion to God comes from Radha's power. Radha is called *Bhakti Devi*, the Goddess Bhakti who represents

the primordial principle of love of God. The Bhakti tradition indicates that no one succeeds in coming to God without Her gracious nod and the strength and support that She gives to the soul. There would be no devotion to God or love of God - even no love at all in the universe - if Radha did not exist. Radha's nature is the substance of love, the essence of God's joyful ecstasy and power of knowledge. The Upanishads say of the Eternal God that "He has no joy in being alone." This is mythologically formulated in the following way:

Atman was there in the beginning. He looked around and only saw Himself. He spoke the first words: "I am". This is where the name "I" comes from. He desired an additional someone. He embraced within Himself the dual nature of woman and man, which were joined together. He split this nature of His into two
(3284)

parts, and so husband and wife came into being. However, Radha and Krishna are also eternally one:

They are one like the light of fire is one with the fire, like the scent of the rose is one with the rose.

This formulation of God's love is found many times in the traditional scriptures of India. The rhythm *bheda-abheda* (separated and unseparated, different and yet not different, divided and never divided) which pulsates throughout all divine existence relates above all to the primordial relationship between Krishna and Radha. The Chaitanya school of Bhakti devotion understands the divine couple Radha-Krishna as two and yet one, the archetype of all existence and the most intimate, divine, and primordial form at the enter of all existence. The myriad worlds are essentially a reflection of the Divine Couple's revelation. In Shiva's kingdom they are also represented by Shiva and Parvati, and in the realm of cosmic being by *Purusha* and *Prakriti* (the primordial masculine and the primordial feminine).

[In The Legend of Prakriti, the great French Catholic poet Paul Claudel, of whom we shall more to say in the course of the present work, compares Sophia with *Prakriti*, who represents Sophia in Her role as the Soul of the world. Obviously, Paul Claudel, in the words of Frithjof Schuon, "turned to Plato and

to Vedanta - i.e., *Advaita Vedanta* and *Bhakti Vedanta* rather than to Aristotle", though he never attacked the followers of Aristotle.]

Human lovers can also be understood as a reflection of Krishna and Radha. The Rasa texts state:

Radha's love is so powerful that Her own body, the body which consists of condensed, divine ecstasy and pure knowledge (*jnana*: the "N" in *jnana* is pronounced as though it were "NY", like the Spanish "N" with a *tilde* or "wavy line" over it; thus the "N" in *jnana* reveals the kinship with the Greek *gnosis* [knowledge] and the Latin *gnoscere* [to know]) is not sufficient for

(3285)

Her desire to love Krishna increasingly and to make Him happy. And so out of the fullness of Her over-abundant love She takes on other forms without giving up Her own. The *Gopi-s* come into being, who are all transformations of Radha's endless power of love.(248)

The Chaitanya school of Bhakti continues to exist, impressing Westerners with its selfless devotion to God.(249)

Some clarifications are in order. *Advaita* is composed of the Indo-European root for "two" or "dual" (see Sanskrit: *dva*, *dvau* [feminine & neutral: *dve*]; Old Gaelic: *da*; Latin: *duo* [feminine: *duae*]; Persian: *do*; Greek: *duo*; Old Bulgarian & Old Church Slavonic: *dva*; Gothic: *twai* [feminine: *twos*, neutral: *twa*]; Lithuanian: *du*, etcetera) and "a" used in many Indo-European languages as a prefix of negation, for example, in English we say "a-moral", "a-logical", "a-scientific", and a very long etcetera; the same is true in a great many other Indo-European languages, including Sanskrit. Note that *Advaita* does NOT mean, "One", but rather "Not Two", "Not Double" or "Not

Dual"; when all is said and done, "One" is still a numeric, and therefore spatio-temporal category. Therefore, *Advaita Vedanta* means: "the Vedanta of that which transcends all spatio-temporal categories, including the numeric". There also exists *Bhakti Vedanta*, i.e., "the Vedanta of Devotion". Thus, a man can for example, follow *Advaita Vedanta* and *Bhakti Vedanta* at one and the same time, because one may be at one and the same time a philosopher or metaphysician and devoted to God.

Says Fr. Schipflinger:

(3286)

It can be said that together with Christianity and Amida Buddhism (as well as Sufism), Bhakti devotion represents a form of religion whose central focus is love. Its sensual and erotic images, though appearing bold and provocative to Western peoples, are primarily the symbol for a profound and intimate love of God.

...
...In its own way Hinduism presents the mystery of Sophia, or the Feminine Divine. Though the perspective that it offers may in some respects seem unusual (at least to a Christian or a Muslim), every religion has its unique contribution to make in revealing Sophia." (250)

HOLY WISDOM AND BUDDHISM

It is said by some that Buddhism is merely "Hinduism for export". For a long list of reasons, I do not agree with this, any more than I would agree that Christianity and Islam are merely "Judaism for export", but this would take us very far afield indeed.

Also, I do not necessarily agree with Fr. Schipflinger that *Hinayana* or *Theravada* Buddhism is earlier than *Mahayana* Buddhism, though *Vajrayana* Buddhism is unquestionably later than

either *Hinayana* or *Mahayana* Buddhism, but once again a discussion of

this would lead us very far afield indeed. I will only comment that, ironically, (as Fr. Schipflinger is a Catholic priest), that his assumption that *Hinayana* or *Theravada* Buddhism is earlier than *Mahayana* Buddhism seems to me to be the result of reading too many works which put forward a "Protestantized Buddhism" (such as Edwin Arnold's The Light of Asia), as it reflects a Protestant mentality, and is not supported by the facts.

We will discuss this point in more detail later, but I wish

(3287)

to warn the reader to beware of what one might call

"Protestantized Buddhism". Fortunately genuine, unprotestantized Buddhist source material is readily available, as we shall discuss later.

Fr. Schipflinger continues:

"It is generally known that Buddhism initially did not conceive of the dimension of the Absolute in personal terms, and that the Buddha and the original (?) Buddhist *Hinayana* tradition were not well-disposed toward women and the feminine. Women were understood to represent the thirst for life which binds human beings to *Samsara* (the circle of rebirth [here one is reminded of the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer) and makes salvation impossible.

Gradually, however, changes took place. In the *Mahayana* and *Vajrayana* traditions, which appeared later(?), it was possible for the Buddha to take on the semblance of a god(?), and for his most distinguished qualities, such as wisdom and compassion, to become personified and be understood as having been incarnated in the *Bodhisattva*-s. At first personifications of Buddha's qualities were thought of as masculine due to the influence of *Hinayana* Buddhism(?) [ancient Hinduism was quite patriarchal, as one may note by

reading the Rig Veda]; but under Hinduism's influence some were later considered to be feminine. In the so-called *Vajrayana* (Diamond Vehicle) tradition, the cult of the Feminine Divine became particularly ritualized and was called *Prajna*, which, in Buddhist Sanskrit means "Wisdom" or "profound knowledge". (251)

**PERFECT WISDOM
AND THE NAMES OF HOLY TARA**

The following hymns are directed to the *Prajna Paramita*, or Perfect Wisdom, and the Goddess Tara (who leads over from *Samsara* to *Nirvana*). They are songs in praise of Wisdom, and they echo Sophia's role as the Mistress and Mother of all creatures.

Hymn to Perfect Wisdom

Homage to thee, Perfect Wisdom,
Boundless, and transcending thought!
All thy limbs are without blemish,
Faultless those who thee discern.
(3288)

Spotless, unobstructed, silent,
Like the vast expanse of space;
Who in truth does really see Thee
The Tathagata perceive.

[In Buddhist Sanskrit *Tathagata* is a title of honor for the Buddha (and the Bodhisattvas) meaning: "He who has thus come", as other Buddhas have come.]

Those, all pity, who came to Thee,
Buddhadharmas heralding,
They will win with ease, O Gracious!
Majesty beyond compare.

Pure in heart, when once they duly
Look upon Thee, surely then
Their complete success is certain -
O, Thou fruitful to behold!

To all heroes who of others
Have the welfare close at heart,
Thou a mother, who dost nourish,
Gives birth, and gives love.

Teachers of the world, the Buddhas,
Are Thine own compassionate sons;
Then art Thou, O Blessed Lady,

Grandam thus of all beings.

Those in need of light considering,
The *Tathagata-s* extol
Thee, the Single One, as many,
Multi-formed and many named.

By all, Single Buddhas,
By Disciples courted, too,
Thou the one path to salvation, There is no other,
truly.

Who is able to praise Thee,
Lacking signs and featureless?
Thou the range of speech transcending,
Not supported anywhere.

In such words of current language
Constantly we laud Thee, whom
None of our acclaim concerns;
So we reach beatitude.

(3289)

By my praise of Perfect Wisdom
All the merit I may rear,
Let that make the world devoted
To this wisdom without peer.

Om. Homage to the Holy Tara!

"Om, you who are bright, of the beautiful eyes, Tara,
joy of starlight, full of pity for all beings,
Savior of all beings, thousand-armed, thousand-eyed ...

...Look down, look down on me,
On all beings, and also me ...
"Om, pure, quite pure, cleanser, purifier,
...heart of friendliness, immaculate ...

"Of great wisdom, excellent, beautifully adorned,
invincible ...

"... *Sarasvati* (Goddess of Wisdom), with large eyes,
who increases wisdom, beauty and intelligence.

"Om, giver of fortitude, giver of prosperity. ... Who
labor for the weal of all beings! Savior and victor in
battle,

"Protector ... calm, dear and well-loved, lovely ...

"Porpitious, auspicious, gentle, knowing all created
beings, swift as thought ...

"Leader of the caravans, of the pitiful looks, who shows the way to those who have lost it, Granter of boons, instructor, teacher, of unbounded valor with a woman's form,

"...Laboring only for the weal of the world, a worthy refuge, affectionate to your devotees,

"Mistress of language, fortunate, exquisite, constant, the mother of all projects, The assistant in all projects, a gracious defender, a nurse, a conqueror of wealth,

"Fearless, a Gautami (Buddha daughter), the worthy daughter of the holy *Lokesvara* (*Lokesvara*: Buddhist Sanskrit, "Lord of the World")

From the same hymn the following verses speak of the effects

of reciting the names of the Holy Tara:
(3290)

"These names ... remove all evil, bring merit and happiness, and increase one's glory,

"Make for wealth and riches, increase one's health and prosperity. ...

"...People who correctly repeat them become men of princely wealth,

"Free from all kinds of disease, endowed with all the virtues of sovereignty. They avoid an untimely death, and, when deceased, go to the Happy land.

"A man who, risen early in the morning, will recite them, He will win prosperity for a long time.

The similarities between this song of praise to Wisdom and Wisdom as She is praised in the Old Testament are striking:

From me come advice and ability; understanding and power are mine. Through me kings hold sway and governors enact just laws. ... Those who love me I love, and those who search for me will find me. In my hands are riches and honor, boundless wealth and prosperity. ... I follow the course of justice and keep to the path of equity. I endow with riches those who love me; I shall fill their treasuries. (Proverbs

VII:11-14)

In fact, the similarity between the texts is almost perplexing. It seems unlikely that any borrowing took place. Though if this had been the case, the Buddhist Mahayana texts, which appeared later, would have been influenced by the Old Testament. Considering the philosophical differences between the two traditions, it is more likely that any apparent similarity is due to a common experience of the one, eternal Wisdom whose delight is in humanity (Proverbs VII:31) and who holds sway over every nation (Ecclesiasticus XXIV:6), entering age after age into human souls (Wisdom VII:27). In their yearning for Wisdom, great seekers and seers found and beheld Her, for She:

... shines brightly and never fades; she is easily discerned by those who love her, and by those who seek her she is found. (Wisdom VI:12) (252)

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ARYA TARA - THE NOBLE TARA

Tara, the one who leads over the sea of Samsara to the other-worldly shore of *Nirvana*, can be understood like *Prajna* to be a Buddhist representation of Wisdom; and just as St. Paul speaks of Wisdom in a variety of forms (Ephesians III:10) so too is Tara depicted in various forms which represent different aspects of Wisdom's dignity, beauty and goodness.

A *Yantra* is a symbolic form that is meant to affect in the observer (and in the artist) a profound experience of what it represents; and this golden statue of *Arya Tara* (Buddhist Sanskrit: *The Noble Tara*), is meant to inspire the elevated world of Wisdom's nobility, goodness, beauty, harmony and power.

Her right hand is open and extended, symbolizing the favors She bestows, the hope that She awakens and the courage that She gives. Her left hand is raised in a teaching gesture, indicating that She imparts knowledge and insight.

She is sitting on a lotus throne which symbolizes her noble birth from an ancient and pure (*Aryan*) race. The lotus is a sign of purity and beauty, and its blossom winds around her hips and blossoms at the side of Her head. She sits in a loose but upright *Asana* or yoga posture, signifying strength, composure and freedom.

Her breasts testify to Her feminine nature and signify a mother's goodness, love, tenderness, and

nourishment. Her head is tilted in sympathetic humility, and yet is full of grace, dignity, and charm. Her jewels reflect Her beauty and elevated status.

This is a form which breathes stillness and control, fulfillment, and inner bliss, healing the beholder and inspiring the nobler value of the attainment of true and everlasting happiness. (253)

SITAPATRA TARA - THE THOUSANDFOLD HELPER

Standing on a lotus and surrounded by a large flaming halo (remember this detail) is the radiant white goddess Sitatapatra. She is one of the forms of *Sitatara* (The White Tara) and here She has a white parasol and a thousand heads, arms, and legs. Each of Her faces has three eyes, and each of Her thousand hands (as well as Her body) has eyes of compassion, which gaze upon all the beings of the three worlds (earth, air, and heaven). In the left hand She holds the long, golden rod of a radiant white parasol, and in the right hand the golden *Dharma-chakra* the teaching

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wheel which symbolizes Wisdom, The rows of Her thousand heads, lying closely on top of one another, alternate in color (red, yellow, white, green, etcetera). Her thousand feet stand on a lotus where all classes of humanity and many kinds of animals are present. All seek the protection of the Sitatapatra. She grants refuge from all manner of dangers - from thieves, enemies, and weapons, from the elements, earthquakes, and plagues, and from demons and evil spirits.

Sitatapatra represents the thousandfold, endless compassion of the white Tara who brings well-being and is always prepared to help. She is the female counterpart of *Aryavalokiteshvara*, the noble and beneficent Lord of the World with eleven heads and a thousand arms who gazes downward. A legend relates that the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara* smashed his head to pieces out of compassion and concern for those suffering in *Samsara*. His father *Amitabha*, the *Jina* (victorious) Buddha, formed ten heads from the pieces, set his Own above it, and gave him one thousand arms so that he could provide assistance always and everywhere. The legend also says that the Sitatapatra came from a tear of the *Avalokiteshvara* which was shed out of compassion for the sufferings of those in the three worlds. This is the origin of the many eyes with which She compassionately gazes upon all suffering.

Above the Sitatapatra is the *Jina Buddha*

Amitayus, the Buddha of Eternal Life, sitting on a throne in a lotus position. He holds in His hand a Kalasa bowl [remember the Holy Grail, the Cup of Jamshid, the *krater* in Mithraism, etcetera] with the water of eternal life. At the center below is the *Usnisa Vijaya*, the victorious Goddess of Enlightenment (*Vijaya* = vistor;

Usnisa = enlightenment, i.e., the head protrusion resulting from enlightenment). She also carries a Kalasa bowl with the water of life and thus, like *Amitayus*, She also represents eternal life. She has three heads, and the gestures of Her six arms and the objects that they hold symbolize Her dignity, power, and activities. The bow and arrow signify strength in battle and victory over all foes; the bowl [or Holy Grail] with the water of life symbolizes healing and the gift of eternal life; the teaching wheel [*Dharma-chakra*] symbolizes that her teaching leads to perfection. The gestures of Her arms accentuate these meanings.

In the four corners are various red *Dakinis*, air spirits who are like fairies or muses. The effect good, although they sometimes appear in terrifying and shocking forms. They provide knowledge about a more elevated life and inspire human beings to heroic deeds. They also serve as initiators into the paths which lead

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to enlightenment and to the highest planes of *Sambhigakaya* and *Dharmakaya* and their divinities.

The four *Dakinis* symbolize the four streams of life bestowed by *Sitatapatra* together with *Usnisa Vijaya* and *Amitayus*. *Sitatapatra* Herself strengthens those who belong to Her for the difficulties encountered on the paths which lead to the higher life and She protects them from all danger. *Amitayus* and *usnisa Vijaya* are both carrying the vessel with the nectar-like water of life which is an indication that they bestow this gift. Each of the four *Dakinis* are initiators into their particular stream of life.

The initiation of the *Dakini* in the upper left corner involves initiative, persistence, and perseverance, and the boldness that results in victory.

The initiation of the *Dakini* in the upper right corner brings awareness of the transcendent realm and devotion to it. She dissolves egotism, awakens higher powers and bestows freedom, openness, ascendancy, and the capacity to transcend taboos and conventions.

The *Dakini* in the lower right corner represents enlightenment and victory over the lower desires. She bestows victory, power, dignity and beauty.

The Dakini in the lower left corner dances with enthusiasm, representing exultation and divine ecstasy. All of the whirlpools of existence unite through Her into a joyful celebration of life.

Together the Dakinis hint at the fullness, intensity, and perfection of life in the Sambhogakaya and Dharmakaya that Sitatapatra Tara wants to bestow. This artistically detailed image with seven figures full of symbolic content depicts the Buddhist belief in the divine powers of meditation and life.(254)

ASTAMANGALA DEVI - THE GODDESS OF THE EIGHT FAVORABLE SIGNS

The gilded figure of Astamangala Devi, the goddess of eight signs promising happiness, is another example of a *Yantra*, rich in content and simple in form, whose creation and contemplation is meant to effect a sublime experience.

The Goddess is sitting on a lotus flower in a meditation position. Her four heads are decorated with Bodhisattva ornaments and each of Her eight hands holds a symbol of happiness. The hand of the right arm at Her chest holds a circular banner which is the Buddhist symbol of victory. Her other right hands (beginning with the lowest) hold the teaching wheel (*Dharma-chakra*) with eight spokes (also called the wheel of life), a lotus flower and an oyster. The hand of the

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left arm at Her abdomen holds a vessel with the water of life. The left arms (beginning from the bottom) hold knots, two golden fishes, and a parasol.

The four heads signify that She watches over all directions in order to keep Her gaze on those who belong to Her. The round banner indicates that She is the world's axis and apex, the Soul, Mistress and Mother of the universe. The teaching wheel or wheel of life symbolizes Her role as the Teacher of the Dharma, the true teaching which leads to true life. The lotus flower and oyster signify that She conceals within Herself a precious jewel, the wondrously beautiful pearl which is the Buddha (recalling the mantra: **Om mani padme hum** - O, the jewel in the lotus flower, Amen!). The vessel with the water of life indicates that She is Herself the vessel which contains the waters of life and salvation. The mysterious knots indicate that She is the power which binds and unites everything together. The two fishes symbolize the love and wisdom which She extends to the Mistress and Queen who protects Her own.

In keeping with the thesis that figures like the

Astamangala Devi represent Sophia, it is worth considering what She reveals about Sophia, and even (the Virgin) Mary who is Sophia's human form.

The four heads signify that Sophia watches over the entire world and is attentive to the distress of Her people always and everywhere. From all directions She graciously receives those who approach Her. The four heads can also be interpreted as indications of Her relationships to creation and the Trinity. One head is turned to creation and the others to the Trinity, signifying (according to Bulgakov's phrase) that She is the Daughter of the Father, the Icon of the Holy Spirit and the Bride of the Son.

The points of Her crowns (four crowns with five points each) and the central protrusion between them (not visible) signify the twenty-one qualities enumerated in the Book of Wisdom (VII:22-24).

The symbols in the hands indicate the greatness of Her power and dignity, as well as Her love and concern for humanity. The round banner of victory recalls Mary's title as Our Lady of Victory. The teaching wheel symbolizes Sophia as the Torah, or Law, and Mary Hodegitria - who leads us and accompanies us on the path (in Islamic terms: *Tariq*). The pure and mysterious lotus flower recalls Mary's association with the **Rosa Mystica (The Mystical Rose** - Litany of Loreto, see above). ... (255)

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Recall the words of the Irish poet William Butler Yeats to the effect that the **rose** is the mystical flower of the West - in this case very much including Persia - as the **lotus** is the mystical flower of India and those countries under her influence. Hence the prominence of the rose in the poems of William Butler Yeats as well as the poems of the Persian Sufis. See preceding chapter.

...The oyster symbolizes that Mary Herself conceals the precious pearl who is Jesus Christ. The vessel with the water of life recalls Mary's association with the *Vas Spirituale*, the spiritual vessel (Litany of Loreto, see above) containing the waters and graces of salvation and perfection (She heals the sick and then mediates all graces). The mysterious knot signifies that Sophia is the greatest

and most perfect Mystery of God. The ten squares of the knot signify that She is the mystery of the unity of God's union with humanity and creation, and of the unity between human beings. The two golden fishes point to Her *hierogamous* union with Christ. She is the Mother of Honorable Love, and as the Bride of the Lamb She protects those who love one another and allows

participation in the bliss of the *Hieros Gamos* or Sacred Marriage. The parasol is an indication that we can always flee to Sophia's protection and find refuge; and it also recalls Mary's role as the Madonna with the Protective Cloak (see preceding chapter).

That it is possible to make such associations from Astamangala Devi to Sophia and Mary attests to Sophia's universal significance. (256)

SYAMA TARA - THE GREEN TARA

The Tibetan image of the Syama, or Green tara, combines Indian and Chinese symbolology. The four-cornered base depicts a turtle (very Chinese image) standing on a lotus flower (Indian image). Upon the turtle's back is a four-sided pillar at the top of which is a lotus flower (Indian image) extending downward. The pillar (representing the Tree of Life) has two dragons (Chinese image) winding around it. Above the lion (Indian image) is a nimbus of flowers and stars, and another lotus (Indian image) upon which the four-handed Tara sits in a relaxed (typically
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Indian) meditational position. Her upper body is decorated with jewels. Her head is youthful and is crowned by a radiant diadem.

The four-cornered base and lotus flower (Indian image) symbolize the world in an undifferentiated and primitive stage. The turtle (Chinese image) above the base indicates the world's differentiation into heaven and earth, but they remain joined together (the turtle is a Chinese symbol for the unity between heaven and earth; its arched carapace represents the heavens and the body underneath the earth).

The concept of differentiated unity extends in a different way into the image's next level, which is made up of the two dragons (Chinese image) and the lotus (Indian image). The two polarities (*yin* and *yang*) which the dragons symbolize have now become separate. They oppose one another but also complete one another. The lotus-flower crown which is above them protects them, binds them together, and draws them upward. In conceptual terms, one can speak of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. The four-sided

pillar indicates that the quality of the synthesis at this stage remains predominantly earth-bound or *yin*, and the protective lotus flower extending downwards also adds to an overall feminine or *in* quality to this stage.

The majestic lion (very Indian image) above the dragons represents a more masculine synthesis, but his triumph is not absolute, for above him towers the Tara.

She represents a perfected synthesis. The wreaths of flowers surrounding Her are joined together by a middle wreath of stars. The Tara sits the (very Indian) *Lalitasana* position, a restful and sovereign position atop a lotus flower (Indian image). Each of the two hands in front are extended in the *Mudra* gesture (very Indian) of teaching and offering. Her youthful head is crowned by a diadem with five flames.

The flowers and stars around the Tara and the rest of the symbols comprising Her figure express the full content of the (Buddhist Sanskrit) word *Siddhi*, which means power and perfection. What She teaches is knowledge about the law of universal polarity; and what She offers is the power to effect the *Siddhi* synthesis that She embodies.

In spite of the initial philosophical perspective which did not view the Absolute in personal terms, and which was unfriendly [a la Arthur Schopenhauer] towards femininity, the devout within Buddhism did attain a profound knowledge of Wisdom in Her feminine and maternal form, proving both the human need to truly understand Wisdom's nature and the effects of Her own irresistible and victorious activity." (257)

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It would be very wrong to say that the role of Fatima *al-Zahra* (The Radiant), daughter of the prophet Muhammad, wife of Ali ibn Abi Talib, the First Imam, and mother of the Imams Hasan and Hussein, is identical to the role of the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, in the Catholic and Orthodox Churches: the expression "Mother of God" (Greek: *Theotokos*, Latin: *Mater Dei*: Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) is simply unthinkable in an Islamic context. Nevertheless, there are parallels between the role of the Virgin Mary in the Catholic and

Eastern Orthodox Churches on the one hand and the role of Fatima Zahra in Shi'a Islam on the other.

The feminists (or *feminazis*) frequently chide the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches because they resolutely refuse to ordain women as priests. However, the truth is that women play a very crucial role in the tradition of the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches; besides the Virgin Mary, also recall Ste. Anne, mother of the Virgin Mary, Ste. Elizabeth, mother of St. John the Baptist, Ste. Mary of Magdala (better known as "Ste. Mary Magdalene"), the sisters of St. Lazarus of Bethany, id est, Ste. Mary of Bethany and Ste. Martha of Bethany, Ste. Salome, wife of Zebedee and mother of the apostles St. James the Elder and St. John the Evangelist, and Ste. Photina, known as "the woman at Jacob's well" or "the woman of Samaria", the Samaritan woman with whom Jesus spoke at Jacob's well outside the city of Shechem or Neapolis, today known as Nablus. In the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches, the number of female saintes is roughly equal

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to the number of male saints.

Ste. Salome is often called "Ste. Mary Salome" in order to avoid confusion with the notorious Salome, daughter of Herodias, "Salome of the Seven Veils". Herod Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee and a territory on the East Bank of the Jordan known as *Peraea*. St. John the Baptist had denounced the adulterous marriage of Herod Antipas with Herodias, who was the wife of Philip, Herod Antipas' own half-brother. Furious at St. John the Baptist for denouncing her adulterous marriage, Herodias persuaded her

beautiful daughter to beguile Herod Antipas by means of the famous "Dance of the Seven Veils" and thus persuade him to order the beheading of St. John the Baptist.

Women also play a great role in Shi'ism. For reasons that will become clear, we are, in this chapter, doing an in-depth study of Fatima Zahra, daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, wife of Ali ibn Abi Talib, the First Imam, and mother of Hasan and Hussein, second and third Imam respectively. Before delving into this, we will give an overall view of the role of women in Shi'ism, id est, Zaynab and Umm Kulthum, the sisters of the Imams Hasan and Hussein, Shahrbanu, wife of Imam Hussein and mother of Ali Zayn al-Abidin, the Fourth Imam, as well as Sughra, Fatima Kubra and Sakina, daughters of Imam Hussein. Of course, these figures will be dealt with in the following chapter.

Imam Hussein's sisters, Zaynab and Umm Kulthum, have become symbols of defiance to tyranny. This is, in part at least, because at Karbala the males of Imam Hussein's family and his close

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retinue had died in battle. The only important exception was Imam Ali Zayn al-Abidin, Imam Hussein's eldest and only surviving son, who at the time was deathly ill and was not expected to survive, though, after days of wavering between life and death, he eventually recovered. Therefore, Zaynab and Umm Kulthum became symbols of defiance at least to some extent by default. Men who have died in battle or are deathly ill can hardly be accused of cowardice or passivity.

It was Umm Kulthum who first showed a spirit of defiance.

After the slaughter of Karbala, when the people of Kufa offered bread and dates to the survivors, Umm Kulthum angrily refused it, in effect saying that cowards and traitors had no right to offer charity to Imam Hussein's family. As Majlisi said:

"She (Umm Kulthum) snatched it (the bread and dates) from the hands and the very mouths of the children and threw it on the ground. And all this happened while the crowds were weeping and wailing." (258)

Later, in the court of the Umayyad Caliph Yezid in Damascus, a "red-haired Syrian" demanded that Fatima Kubra, the beautiful daughter of Imam Hussein, be given to him as a gift. Umm Kulthum silenced the Syrian with withering scorn:

"Shut up, most depraved of men. May God cut out your tongue. The children of the Prophet are not meant to be the slaves of the children of bastards and pretenders." (259)

Though nothing indicates that the "red-haired Syrian" was a relative of the Banu Umayya, "bastards (in every sense of the

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word) and pretenders" expresses the opinion of the Shi'as in reference to Banu Umayya.

Yet, it is Imam Hussein's other sister, Zaynab, who has emerged as the archetypical symbol of defiance. Zaynab is credited with being the first to hold a *majlis* or assembly to mourn Imam Hussein (197). Perhaps most important of all, it is Zaynab who is credited with saving the life of Imam Hussein's son Ali Zayn al-Abidin and thus making possible the continuation of the line of the Imams. Following Majlisi once again, Ibn Ziyad, governor of Kufa, ordered Ali Zayn al-Abidin to be put to death. However, Zaynab

rushed to her badly ill nephew and embraced him.

“By God, I will not let go of him. If you are going to kill him, you will have to kill me as well” (260)

Zaynab figures prominently not only in the Shi'a *taziyeh* or “passion plays” typical of Iran, but also in other Shi'a devotional literature. The great Urdu poet of Lucknow, Mir Anis, wrote in a *marsiyya* composed to mark the 40th day after Ashura, the day of the martyrs of Karbala:

Today is the 40th-day lamentation ceremony,
At the burial site of the exalted lord.

Bareheaded is the Prophet upon whom be peace.

The people of the Household have been released from
Prison and have come to the battlefield
To lift up the corpse of the grandson of the Prophet
Of all mankind.

They are ready for the burial of the pure martyrs;
The graves are ready for each of the renowned ones.

The servant Fidda cried out, ‘O Lady, come and take
part;

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Sajjad (a title of Ali Zayn al-Abidin) is burying
The Imam's corpse.’

‘Would that you could bury me, too, beside my
brother!’:

These were the words of the joyless Zaynab. (261)

The earliest sources say that the corpses of the martyrs of Karbala were buried by sympathetic local inhabitants. In any case, it would have been some time before the survivors could have returned to Karbala from captivity in Damascus. The above is an example of “symbolic truth”, of which we shall have more to say below.

In another *Marsiyya*, Mir Anis continues:

The killer on mounted on horseback rides against
The breast of the Prophet's grandson.
From the tent Zaynab cries out, 'Halt, accursed one!
My brother's breast is afflicted with wounds.'

...Zaynab cried out, 'Do not cut off the head
Of the Prophet's grandson
Shimr, fear God, what shamelessness is this?' ...

...How will I lift up your corpse?
My head lacks any veil which I might spread out for you.
Dust of the wasteland covers your body.
Alas, beloved son of Fatima (Zahra), O Hussein!

...Your corpse did not even receive a shroud, o my
brother, alas!
Nor does my head have a veil to cover it; what shall I
do, O Hussein?

...His sister (Zaynab), Ali's daughter, then covered her
face and cried
"O my beloved brother, you are being slaughtered while
I watch so helplessly!" And then she heard the cry,
"Great God!"
She fell, face downwards on the ground and swooned from
grief,
And when she rose again and ran, saw an awful sight -
The head of the Holy Prince of Martyrs raised upon a
lance!

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And there she stood beside that lance, lamenting
bitterly,
'O great Hussein, my martyred brother, they rejoice
while I
Can hardly see from shock of grief, the world has
turned all dark!
I could not reach you in those sad last moments of your
life!
O look at me how I am caught in this calamity
I stand bareheaded, barefoot amidst these fierce and
faithless foes.'
(Mir) Anis, you cannot write more of Zaynab's
lamentations!
The body of (Imam) Hussein lay there, unburied, in the
sun;
Alas, the Prophet found no peace in his last resting
place!
His holy progeny imprisoned and his house burnt down!
How many homes (has) Hussein's death left ruined and
desolate!
The Prophet's progeny, thus never prospered after him.
...Who gave this cry, 'Sister, do not come this way!
Indeed, now the journey (to the next world) is near!

For the sake of God, go home!
Now the barque of the family of the Prophet is sinking!
O Chosen one, save the ship of these unfortunate ones!
Do not abandon Hussein now in the wilderness of
calamity!
O Fatima (Zahra), conceal Hussein in the mantle of your
protection!
Thus while the daughter of Ali wandered beating her
breast bareheaded,
There the throat of the light of the eyes of Ali was
being cut.
Even though the evil ones forbade Zaynab
Yet she ran thither, clutching her heart.
When she reached the place of his murder in spite of the
hindrance,
She saw the head of Hussein on the point of a spear!
Going beneath that spear, the grieving one cries out,
O Hussein, I sacrifice myself for your blood-drenched
features!
Woe, woe! Brother, the blade of the knife has passed
across your throat!
You have forgotten your sister, o scion of the Lion of
God (Ali).
I am devoted to you; the house of Ali has been looted at
'the place of the promise.'
Even yet do your lips move in the mention of God!
Brother, your sister greets you! Give answer!
The daughter of Hayder (Ali) cries out to you! Give
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answer!
For the sake of the Prophet, give answer with your
parched tongue!
How can this wretched Zaynab live? Give answer!
Except death, there is no remedy for the pain of
separation.
Now there is nothing to aid me in this world!
O!O! Why did your sister not pass away before you?
Brother, tell me what you suffered under this dagger!'
Imam Hussein's voice came to her from beyond the grave,
'Ask not what transpired with me!
A hundred thanks to God for what happened, happened for
the best!
Now that my head has been severed, there is release from
sorrow.
If there is any sorrow, it is only the grief of
separation from you!
Now the wretched army of our foes will come to loot our
home.
Say nothing with your tongue, except gratitude to the
Creator!
When the tyrants will set fire to the tent,
You must care for my orphaned Sakina,
For that heartbroken girl is sick of her life,

Let no one bind her neck with the cord of slavery!’

Of course, Mir Anis was not the only poet to write of Zaynab.

Below is a selection by an anonymous poet of Hyderabad:

The banner of Abbas (brother of Imam Hussein), the
cradle of the infant lacking milk (Ali Asghar, young son
of Imam Hussein)
All the wealth remaining of the majesty of Islam.
Zaynab rescued these from the flaming tent
Zaynab made Islam safe from the flames.
Farid, even today this sorrow is the responsibility
entrusted to Zaynab.
She who endured every injury and outrage after the
martyrdom.
Zaynab safeguarded the goal and aspirations of (Imam)
Hussein.
Zaynab made Islam safe from the flames.

Imam Hussein’s young daughter Sughra is not much mentioned in
Shi’a devotional literature, because she was not present at
Karbala. When Imam Hussein was leaving Medina for Kufa, Sughra was
ill, and so had to remain behind. However, Sughra is not

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forgotten. Once again Mir Anis:

‘May Allah restore you to health soon, dear daughter!
The thought of his child’s suffering is enough to
sadden a father.
Soon I am to embark on a desert journey full of hardship
and travail.
Only Allah knows what lies ahead of me;
My heart burns at your consuming fever, Sughra;
The agony of the languishing thought is consuming.
How can I get reconciled to leaving you behind in this
state?
But taking you along would be playing with your life.
My dearest child, you know it all too well;
But, parting is my fate in this helpless pass.
Separated I shall cry in anguish and bewailing;
Journey’s end will overwhelm me with pain’
Sughra replies:
‘For such tender love I could lay down my life;
Who else will shower love and care on a dutiful
daughter?
My life will be your offering. Health too will be
restored.
The Lord’s loving glance will cure all ailments.

When the world's Messiah casts a benevolent look,
Even chronic patients recover their health.' (262)

We now come to Shahrbanu, also known as "Harar" and "Shah-i-Zanan", this last meaning, roughly, "Queen of Women" or "Ruler of Women", daughter of Yazdigird III, the last Sassanian Emperor, wife of Imam Hussein and mother of Ali Zayn al-Abidin, the 4th Imam.

Some have cast doubts as to whether Shahrbanu was a real person rather than a legendary figure. I personally believe that Shahrbanu was a real person, a topic which I have dealt with in another place in this book. First a brief digression.

In Spain some have cast doubts on the real existence of the Spanish Celtic hero Brigo or Breogan. It should be noted that those who claim that Breogan never existed have "an axe to

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grind" in this case an leftist political agenda.

In order to "prove" that Breogan (or Breoghan) never existed, they note that many fantastic legends have accumulated around him and his name. Now, were the above a proof that someone never existed, other other figures whose historicity no one doubts, would have to be proclaimed as merely legendary or fictitious. Some that come immediately to mind are: Alexander the Great, Ardashir, founder of the Sassanian Dynasty, Charlemagne, Brian Boru, William Wallace, James Douglas, Robert the Bruce, Shah Ismail Safavi, founder of the Safavi Dynasty, Oliver Cromwell, Prince Rupert of the Rhine and George Washington. No one doubts the real existence of the Plantagenet Dynasty, yet all sorts of

fantastic legends are told concerning its origins.

The Plantagenets are often thought of as being Normans; however, this is not really true. The founder of said dynasty was Geoffrey V, Count of Anjou, who acquired the nickname "Plantagenet" from his habit of wear a sprig of yellow broom (*Planta Genesta*) in his helmet. Hence, The Plantagenet Dynasty is often called "Angevin". The family name of the Counts of Anjou was "Lusignan", which name indicates a Celtic origin, probably Gaulish, possibly Breton. Geoffroy V of Anjou married Matilda, daughter of Henry I of England and Granddaughter of William the Conqueror. Thus, Henry II, first king of the Plantagenet or Angevin Dynasty, was indeed a Norman on his mother's side, but a Celt on his father's side. This may account for the predilection for Welshmen and Bretons typical of the early Plantagenets.

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Raymond de Lusignan, one of the early counts of Anjou, married a beautiful forest maiden named "Melusine", after promising that he would never see her on Saturdays. It was a happy marriage until Raymond's curiosity led him to hide himself in her boudoir on a Saturday. He then saw, to his horror, that, from the waist down, Melusine had taken the form of a blue and white serpent. Melusine died as a result of this, but her spirit continued to haunt the Lusignan castle, terrifying people with the sound of her swishing tail.

There was another Lusignan or Plantagenet female ancestor who was known as the "witch-countess" who had to be forced to attend Mass by four of her husband's knights. One Sunday at Mass

the witch-countess vanished into thin air during the Consecration, leaving the four knights holding the corners of her robe, from which came a strong odor of brimstone. (263)

There you have it. Many fantastic tales are told concerning the origins of the Plantagenet or Angevin Dynasty; therefore, according to a certain type of person accurately defined by some as "hyper-rational tight assed geeks", the Plantagenet or Angevin Dynasty cannot possibly have existed.

Those who claim that Breogan never never lived then claim that his name was unknown in Spain until some 19th century romantics learned of him from Irish sources. To this I replied that those who said this were either ignorant or dishonest ("lying for justice" as Lenin said), and I demonstrated numerous citations which showed that Breogan was known in Spain since quite

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early times. Finally I said:

"You may say that my proofs of the real existence of Breogan are inconclusive. Very well. My arguments may not be conclusive, but they are neither deniable nor negligible. You have no arguments whatever to prove that Breogan never existed; your arguments are worse than inconclusive, they are non-existent. Therefore, the weight of evidence is on my side."

The case of Shahrbanu is exactly similar to the above. Those who deny her real existence always have some sort of agenda, hidden or otherwise. The arguments in favor of her existence, which I give in another place, may not be conclusive, but neither are they deniable nor negligible. The claim that Shahrbanu is not mentioned in early sources is demonstrably false. Those who attempt to deny the real existence of Shahrbanu even claim as

"proof" that the source which claim to present the story of the tragedy of Karbala in purely historical terms do not mention her as having been present. Of course Shahrbanu was not present at Karbala; she had died some years before. Once again, my arguments in favor of the real existence of Shahrbanu may not be conclusive, but, once agin, they are neither deniable nor negligibile, while those who say that she did not exist have no proofs at all.

Among the early sources that mention Shahrbanu is al-Ya'qubi (9th century):

"Among the sons of al-Hussein were Ali Asghar, who was killed at al-Taff (Karbala) and left no offspring, whose mother was Layla, the daughter of Abu Murra ibn Urwa ibn Mas'ud ath-Thaqafi, and Ali Akbar (Ali Zayn al-Abidin, 4th Imam), whose mother was Harar, the daughter of Yazdigird, whom al-Hussein used to call Ghazala ("the Gazelle")." (264)

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Shaykh al-Mufid (11th century), author of Kitab al-Irshad, the earliest collection of the biographies of the Twelve Imams, simply took it for granted that Shahrbanu really existed, that she was the daughter of Yazdigird III, the wife of Imam Hussein and the mother of Imam Ali Zayn al-Abidin.(265) Please note that Shaykh al-Mufid was an Arab, not a Persian, so he had no particular motive to affirm and acknowledge the existence of Shahrbanu. In fact, it is only quite recently that anyone, Arab or Persian, Sunni or Shi'a, has cast doubt on the the real existence of Shahrbanu.

As al-Ya'qubi's quote indicates, Shahrbanu must have been a classic Persian beauty. Apparently Shahrbanu was Imam Hussein's

first wife, the mother of his eldest son. Majlisi attributes to Shahrbanu the following speech:

"Before the Muslim Army arrived, I dreamed that Muhammad, God's messenger, entered our house and sat with Hussein and proposed to me on Hussein's behalf and married me to him. When morning came the matter stirred my heart and I could think of nothing else. The next night I saw Fatima, Muhammad's daughter, who came to me and introduced me to Islam. So, I became Muslim, and then she said: 'Victory will go to the Muslims and soon you will come unhurt to my son Hussein. No one will harm you.'" (266)

In the *taziyyeh* or **passion play** titled "The Passing of Shahrbanu", she is made to speak thusly:

"Born of the race of Yazdigird the King
From (Khusrau) Anushirvan my origin I trace.
What time kind Fortune nothing but joy did bring
In Ray's proud city was my home and place.
There in my father's palace at night
In sleep came to me Fatima Zahra;
'O Shahrbanu - thus the vision cried -
I give you to Hussein to be his bride!'
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Said I, "Behold Mada'in (Ctesiphon) is my home,
And how shall I to far Medina roam?
Impossible!" But Fatima cried, 'Nay,
Hasan shall come here in martial array,
And bear you there, a prisoner of war,
From this Mada'in to Medina far,
Where, joined in wedlock with Hussein my son,
You shall bear children who will be my joy.
For nine Imams shall owe their birth to you,
The like of whom has not been seen on earth!' ...

...But when at last I reached Medina's town
A whole world's sorrow seemed to weigh me down,
One cried, 'This girl a serving-maid shall be!'
Another, 'No, she is of high degree!'
The women thronged the roofs; the men the mosque;
O Mother! They bore me to Umar (the Caliph) then,
Who spoke a word that caused me pain untold:
'These hapless wretches shall as slaves be sold!'
But Ali (ibn Abi Talib) then appeared upon the scene,
And cried, 'Be silent, fool and base coward!
These gentle women, o vile traitor, devoid of honor,
These gentle women shall not stand naked in the market
place!'
Light of my eyes! After such vile treatment,

They gave me to (Imam) Hussein, your noble sire.
Who did advise wretched me, in order to spare me pain,
That after him I should not remain here;
Should I remain, enslaved, in a low station,
I would be driven through each market place.
You my dear Imam and Sovereign,
In your hands I place my fate.
Bid leave, my heart filled with pain,
Or bid me tarry, and here I will remain!" (267)

Great is the importance of Shahrbanu. As Mary Boyce notes:

"Many Iranian converts (to Islam) espoused the Shi'ite cause, which enabled them to oppose the Umayyads with their harsh exactions and narrow Arab nationalism, and to uphold the claims of the heirs, through the princess Shahrbanu, of the Sassanian royal house; and so it was no longer the Zoroastrians alone who stood for patriotism and loyalty to the past." (268)

In another place we have noted that in Iran Zoroastrians call Imam Hussein "son-in-law" because of his marriage to Shahrbanu,

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and join Shi'as in mourning for him.

Since the tragedy of Karbala is a real historical occurrence, and since all of the main characters really lived, no literature dealing with the tragedy of Karbala can be pure fantasy. Some Iranian *taziyeh* and other Shi'a devotional literature dealing with Karbala strives to be purely historical, but by far the bulk of it is a mixture of history, novelesque elements and fantasy. The same may be said of the Shahnamah of Firdausi, the Chanson de Roland and Cantar de Mio Cid. Though pure fantasy may be rare in Cantar de Mio Cid, novelesque elements are abundant enough.

Much Shi'a devotional literature portrays Fatima Zahra, Shahrbanu or both as having been present at the tragedy of Karbala. Many or most of the audience or readers of this

literature must have been aware that both Fatima Zahra and Shahrbanu had died years before Imam Hussein's martyrdom at Karbala. One is reluctant to label these examples as "novelesque elements", or else one must recognize that they are novelesque elements of a very special type. Or, it could be said that these elements are "didactic", but not in the sense of the fables of Bidpai, Aesop or La Fontaine. In effect, what said elements attempt to do is to express, not a literal truth, but rather a symbolic truth. As we shall see later, this same sort of thing appears in some Christian devotional literature, an example being the placing of Ste. Brigid of Ireland in Palestine in the time of Jesus, though in fact she lived some centuries later, something of which the audience or readers must have been well aware. I believe

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that the reader knows what I am getting at without belaboring the point.

As is true of many historical figures, many legends have collected around the memory of Shahrbanu. Below is given one such legend.

"In the time of the Umayyad) Caliph Yezid, after the massacre of Imam Hussein and his followers at Karbala, Shahrbanu was once again in flight from the Arabs, finally reaching the city of Ray (near Tehran). She was mounted on Zuljaneh ("the Winged"), the horse of Imam Hussein, after whose death the horse spontaneously appeared before the tent of Shahrbanu, in order to save her. Riding behind was her daughter Bibi-Zobeida, who was pregnant. At their passage the people were astonished, saying: 'My Lord! I have become pensive; the mother is a virgin and the daughter is pregnant.' As the Arabs were approaching, Shahrbanu said to Zobeida: 'As you belong to the Holy Family, the Arabs must never lay hand on you. You must dismount, so that Zuljaneh can run faster.' She obeyed, while Shahrbanu fled towards the mountains. Her enemies were

about to seize her when she remembered the advice of her martyred husband: 'When the infidels come near, say 'Oh He!' (in Arabic *Ya Hou*) help me!' But, due to her fear, she said, "O Mountain! (*Ya Khou* in Persian) help me!"

(according to another version, the mountain understood only Persian, and therefore understood her to say *khou* in place of *hou*)

The mountain then opened and Shahrbanu and her horse entered, but a piece of the veil which covered her head remained outside. This was seen by the enemy. As the sun was about to set, her pursuers put three stones on the piece of cloth to mark its location. But the next day, by the will of God, the whole mountain was covered with piles composed of three stones, so that none could find the original marker. To this day, the women who go on pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Shahrbanu still pile up three stones as they make their wish.

When the enemy had gone, a woman and her husband became the keepers of Shahrbanu's hiding place. The woman mysteriously received an order: each Friday evening take a jar of pure water, a towel and a bar of soap to the entrance of the sanctuary, but not to

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inform anyone of this. The woman did as she was instructed, and the following morning found a fistful of silver coins on the towel, which she took. So, every Friday evening she repeated this action, and so made her living. The woman had a married son. Before dying, the woman transmitted the instructions which she had received to her daughter-in-law. The daughter-in-law continued the task, but one Friday evening her husband surprised her in the act: at midnight the woman and her husband hid near the entrance to the hiding place. While performing her ablutions, Shahrbanu noted the presence of the man, and shouted "Son of Adam! Be blind and do not look!", and the man lost his sight.

Following this happening, the woman continued her service to Shahrbanu, and according to what is said by some people, she is still living. That is why men are not permitted to approach the sanctuary of Shahrbanu. Should a bastard make a pilgrimage to said sanctuary, he will get nosebleed; should a man in a state of impurity cast a glance at the canal of the same sanctuary, its flow will diminish." (269)

Henri Masse continues:

"In reference to the sanctuary of Shahrbanu, it is well to go into detail concerning its specific

characteristics. Although the hoof print or horseshoe print attributed to her horse (Zuljaneh) is still visible, one can no longer see the hem of her robe, because it has little by little sunk into the earth (or, according to one of my female informants because the sainte has withdrawn it into the tomb by turning over). With the exception of the sayyids (descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) and of boys who have no yet reached the age of puberty, men must never enter the sacred enclosure (*haram*) under any pretext, but must content themselves by chanting the special litany (*ziaret-name*) in the courtyard and then take their leave after they have made an invocation (*do'a*) or a vow (*nadze*). Women may enter the *haram*, read the *ziaret-name*, kiss the grillwork of the tomb, make a vow or an invocation, then light candles, sacrifice a sheep or give money to the custodian (*motavalli*). They may also sit in the courtyard and drink tea. One day a man attempted to enter the *haram*, but the sainte turned him into a statue, and the rock can still be seen nearby. The sainte has caused a spring of particularly sweet water to gush forth. If a woman, after the sexual act, performs her ablutions there, the spring would dry up: this is the reason why the *motavalli* brings a wash
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basin, so that the water of the spring will not be contaminated. People go to the sanctuary of Shahrbanu particularly on Friday." (271)

Sakina, young daughter of Imam Hussein, survived the slaughter at Karbala, but was among the captives taken to Damascus. Poignant indeed was the plight of a four-year old girl in these circumstances, which would have been agonizing for anyone of whatever age or sex. Some Shi'a devotional literature claims that Sakina died as a result of ill-treatment at the hands of Yezid's soldiers, though Shaykh al-Mufid says that she survived and gives the name of her son. It should be noted that the sources also say that Sakina died in captivity are popular rather than scholarly. Below is a *nauha* (what would be called *marsiyya* in Lucknow) written by an anonymous member of a *guruh* or, in Spanish *cofradia* (English has no exact equivalent; to translate *guruh* as

"guild" is misleading) of Hyderabad:

All those in prison wail and lament:
The innocent has departed this world. Weep, yes. Weep in
grief.

Sakina, Sakina!, her mother keeps saying,
Slapping herself in sorrow; weep, yes, weep in grief.
For the sake of this four-year old girl,
All those in the women's quarters beath their breasts;
Weep, yes, weep in grief.

Her cheeks still appear red, but alas!
It is the red of blood spilled in slaughter;
Weep, yes, weep in grief.

O what outrage, that there is still visible on the
girl's meck
The mark of the rope; weep, yes, weep in grief.

Her hands still cover her ears, alas!
The blood had dried on her shoulders; weep, yes, weep
in grief.

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What tyrant's oppression, what violence did she endure
At such a young age, and so innocent?
Weep, yes, weep in grief.

She was only four years of age, alas!
She was imprisoned, and she departed this life;
Weep, yes, weep in grief.

For how long could this child's spirit, at such ayoung
age,
Endure affliction and tragedy?
Weep, yes, weep in grief." (272)

In the last strophe, the unknown author seems to indicate
that he has heard that Sakina somehow survived and lived to
adulthood, but that he finds this difficult to believe.

Though she apparently survived, still the sufferings of
Sakina at such a tender age are enough to move even the coldest-
hearted person. As David Pinault says:

"Of all the children said to have been present and
suffered at Karbala, Sakina is one of the most
frequently cited in the recently authored *nauhas* I have
examined. Just as Zaynab symbolizes defiance and

resistance in defeat, and Fatima Zahra passive endurance throughout Eternity, Sakina becomes emblematic of all the sufferings visited on the *Ahl al-Bayt*. Her youth and innocence make her perfect for this role, insuring an indignant response on the Congregation's part as they hear the catalogue of what she underwent: thirst during the siege, slaps and scourging by Yezid's men, a frantic search among the battlefield's corpses for her dead father.

The *nauhas* conjure forth excruciating close-up views of all these sorrows, and so familiar with Sakina's agonies is the audience assumed to be that the poet can indulge in oblique allusion in describing her torments. For example, the verse cited above, 'Her hands still cover her ears, alas! The blood has dried on her shoulders', alludes to one of the well-known indignities undergone by Sakina in captivity. The enemy soldiers stripped her of her jewelry, tearing the (ear)rings from her ears so that her earlobes spouted blood.

It is hard to overstate how closely bound up Sakina's name is with the notion of innocent suffering.
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In Muharram *majlis* sermons I attended in India, when the preacher reached the *masa'ib* portion of the talk (where the agonies of the martyrs are enumerated and enlarged upon), it was sufficient for the speaker merely to refer to Hussein's daughter ("And then we come to Sakina ...) - a phrase followed by a sighing pause on the preacher's part and at once the congregation would burst into moans. (273)

According to Majlisi, while held captive in Damascus at Yezid's court, Sakina had a dream in which she sees the gates of Heaven open. There she finds a place in a garden. Standing around her is a multitude of the "servants of Paradise", one of whom approaches her:

"The servant took me by the hand and led me into the palace. Within were five women whose appearance had been glorified by God and whose forms were radiant with divine light. In their midst was one woman in particular of wondrous appearance; her hair was disheveled; she was dressed in black garments; in her hand was a tunic stained with blood. Whenever she stood up, the other women stood up with her. When she sat, so did they.

I said to the servant, 'Who are these women whose appearance God has glorified?' He replied, 'Sakina, this person here is Eve, the mother of humankind, and

this is Mary bint Imran (the mother of Jesus); and this is Khadija bint Khuwaylid (the Prophet Muhammad's first wife); and this is Hagar, and this is Sarah. And this woman here, in whose hand is the bloodstained shirt, who whenever she stands, the others stand with her, and whenever she sits, so do the others: why, this is your grandmother, Fatima Zahra.'

So I drew near and said to her, 'Grandmother! By God, my father has been killed, and even though I am so young, I have been left an orphan.' Then she hugged me to her breast and wept bitterly. All the women wept with her and said to her: 'Fatima, may God judge between you and Yezid on Judgement Day.'" (274)

We have already mentioned Imam Hussein's oldest daughter, the beautiful Fatima Kubra. As David Pinault notes:

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"Reference to Fatima Kubra appears in Kashifi's description of the battlefield death of her fiancé, Qasim ibn Hasan, son of the Second Imam. ... Both Fatima (Kubra) and Qasim are young, of beautiful appearance (this is part of the tragedy of their fate); both have traveled in Imam Hussein's entourage to Karbala. Shortly before the final defeat, Kashifi tells us, Qasim begs his uncle (Imam Hussein) to let him go forth to fight, but (Imam) Hussein, along with Qasim's mother (also present at Karbala), refuse the boy permission. At a loss as to what to do, Qasim withdraws to his tent. Thereupon he remembers an amulet he is wearing, bound to his upper arm, given (to) him years before by his father. 'Open it', Hasan had instructed him long ago, 'only in a moment of great sorrow and distress.' Now is that time, Qasim decides, and he opens the amulet, (only) to find a message in his father's handwriting. 'Qasim, I leave you this legacy and command, that when you see my brother Hussein in the desert of Karbala, in the hands of treacherous Syrians and faithless Kufans, then exert yourself on the battlefield. Offer yourself as a ransom for Hussein. This is the key to the gate of martyrdom and the means of attaining heavenly acceptance and happiness.'

Racing from the tent, Qasim shows his father's request to Imam Hussein. The Imam now yields to Qasim's wish, but reminds him that he, too, has a command to fulfill from Hasan: that the families of the two Imams be further united through first-cousin marriage. Hussein then takes his nephew to Fatima Kubra's tent and orders Qasim's mother to dress the boy in his father's clothes. 'With his own sacred hands', Kashifi

says, 'Hussein fastens a beautiful turban atop Qasim's head.' Kashifi continues:

'He performed the wedding (ceremony) and joined the girl to Qasim in marriage and gave her hand to him and then left the tent.

His hand in hers, Qasim was gazing at her, when suddenly a cry came from the army of Umar Sa'd (commander of the enemy forces): "No other champions remain!"

Qasim released his bride's hand and started to leave the tent. She seized the skirt of his garment and said: 'Qasim, what are you thinking? Where do you intend to go?'

Qasim replied: 'O light of my eyes, you know what I intend to do. I intend to try to ward off the enemy. Release the skirt of my garment, for our wedding feast will take place on the Day of Resurrection.'

Fatima Kubra obeys, but the young woman's
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affection, her fear, her desire not to lose her husband, all are conveyed implicitly by the words Kashifi has her speak in response:

'Qasim, you say that our wedding will take place at the Resurrection. But on the Day of Resurrection where shall I seek you? By what sign shall I know you?'

He replied, 'Seek me in the company of my father and grandfather. By this torn sleeve shall you know me.' Then he raised his hand and tore his sleeve.

Thereafter, amidst the wailing outcries of the attendant women, Qasim leaves the tent to be killed in battle, and Fatima Kubra is left to face humiliation and imprisonment. Kashifi's chapter on Qasim and Fatima (Kubra) close with the young bride lamenting her husband's death in verse.

The emotional force in the Qasim-Fatima (Kubra) episode is generated by Kashifi's juxtaposing of tragic antitheses: love/warfare, wedding/sudden death, celebration/lamentation, union/loss." (275)

Below is scene XVIII of the Iranian *taziyeh* or "passion play" (see following chapter) The Miracle Play of Hasan and Husain which deals with the death of Qasim at Karbala, which left Fatima Kubra a widow. Said *taziyeh* is anonymous, (it may have had more than one author), and its date of composition unknown, though it was translated into English from the original Persian in 1879.

Hussein:

Adversity is again knocking at the door of my heart with the hammer of sorrow; the host of grief is inviting souls to the banquet of lamentation. Moses on Mount Sinai is shedding tears at my pitiable condition; and Jesus the son of Mary is groaning loudly over my miserable state. The turn of Qasim has arrived, and changed the mirth of the whole world to grief; yes, the sad tragedy of Qasim has set the two worlds in flames. O Solomon, leave Bilkis, the Queen of Sheba, and the idea of rejoicing in her society, since my Qasim discourses on mournful subjects with his bride.

Zainab:

The heart-rending words of her brother make Zainab distressed; she therefore repeatedly beats her own head with her hands. She had two lovely sons, two new moustached
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youths, smelling like musk, both of whom she saw cruelly beheaded in this wilderness. And now the lot is cast on Qasim, the spouse, the bridegroom, to suffer martyrdom. Would to God Zainab had not been born of her mother to witness such things.

Umm Lailah, the mother of 'Ali Akbar:

O dear son, how much I wished to have the pleasure of seeing your wedding; to illuminate the city of Bat-ha (Medina) on the night of your marriage; that your grandmother, the best among women, (Fatima, daughter of the Prophet Muhammad) should attend your joyful feast, and that the chosen Prophet should bring connubial garments for you from Paradise. But Alas! The grave became at last your bed-chamber. Oh, what a pity! My eyes, dear child, are getting blind by separation from you. Alas! Alas!

Sakina:

What else can I do if I do not yield voluntarily to death? My back is broken since I have lost my dear brother. I am not alone groaning sadly; in every corner of the camp one can see a girl wandering about and moaning and desolate. When I look out on a field with a sorrowful glance, I behold in every place an elegant body, bright as the moon, immersed in blood.

Umm Lailah:

I am not but a weak woman, destitute and without any help; a mother bereaved of a dear son, sighing and lamenting his death. My hands are too feeble to do any work, my body is quite bent and crooked; all this is from the death of a youthful son such as 'Ali Akbar. Have mercy on my afflicted

heart, O God, seeing 'Ali Akbar, my son, has vanished from my sight.

Hussein:

O poor Zainab, I moan from grief and sorrow; fire cannot indeed be concealed in anyone's bosom. Go then from me to Umm Lailah, and tell her to leave off lamenting. What has happened has been our fate from the beginning, and none can complain against Heaven.

Zainab (to Umm Lailah):

The arrow of my sigh has hit the dome of the spheres, while the burden of calamity has turned my back into a bow. O Umm Lailah, Hussein, the sultan of religion, says, "leave
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off your mourning for a time. And how long must Sakina cry out,
"Alas separation! Oh for peace!"

Umm Lailah:

Demand, O Zainab, in the presence of his majesty, that he will excuse me; for it is known to him that the vernal season of my life is suddenly turned into autumn. Tell him, o helpless king, we are destitute creatures; you ought to have some compassion for the desolate. Do not forbid us to sigh and lament; fire cannot indeed be concealed in anyone's bosom.

Sakina:

O dear aunt, please tell my father I must certainly mourn for ('Ali) Akbar. On one hand I am thirsty, on the other hand I am about to be led to Syria; what can a father do in the meantime? No, dear father, how long shall I remain in exile? We ought to be sent back to Bat-ha (Medina).

Zainab (retiring to her tent):

Woe is me! The injustice and cruelty of the spheres! They have deprived the bird of my heart of its nest. Sakina desires to go to Medina. Alas, poor thing! Alas! She must wail, for it is impossible. She desires to go to the city of Bat-ha (Medina), not knowing her destined abode is in Damascus.

Qasim (to Hussein):

My tears, o uncle, are flowing down to my cheeks; the sun of my soul is enveloped in sorrow. O king of men, my sighs throw up fire to Heaven through excessive grief of

mind! From hearing frequent lamentation and wailing, the bird of my heart is far removed from its nest. Give me permission to go to battle, and suppose Qasim to have been already made a sacrifice for Hussein, the king of the whole world.

Hussein:

My dear Qasim, the scar of your sorrow has caused a wound in the heart of the holy angels. How can I have patience and endurance after your body has rolled in blood? I shall never give you permission to go to battle, because the death of 'Ali Akbar has left such a scar on my soul.

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Qasim:

May I be a sacrifice for you, o sorrowful uncle! Behold the miserable state of your own family! On one hand, 'Abiddin is lying sick, moaning, as it were a bird whose wings are broken; on the other hand is Umm Lailah with tearful eyes, and hair disheveled like the curls of 'Ali Akbar. Please give me the permission I seek, and do not suffer me to be so sad and melancholy, o uncle. I beg of you, do not allow me to undergo so much pain on your account, while I can avoid all by dying for you.

Hussein (to Qasim):

O rose of Hasan's culture, you are a keepsake to me, and how can I suffer autumnal blasts to blow over you? I shall never permit you to go to war to be killed, lest on the Day of Judgement I should undergo shame in the presence of yourself and of Hasan your father. You are young; why should you be weary of your life, poor thing? Return to your tent, for you have an unhappy old mother.

Qasim:

Dear uncle, I am fatherless! Do not let the heart of an orphan, therefore, be broken, for it is very delicate and soft. Martyrdom is to me much pleasanter than this abasement of soul. Yes, death is a thousand times sweeter than the bitter life I lead!

Hussein:

O orphan, let the anguish of your destitute condition suffice you! Enough for you that you are fatherless, and therefore feel miserably distressed. Do not grieve, o brightness off my eyes, your poor uncle's heart; give up this wish of yours at once, o you who are dear to Hussein.

Qasim:

O uncle, none of your companions have been left to help you, and I should be delighted to render you any service in my power. Now, o thirsty-souled Imam, it is my turn; 'Ali Akbar has already made his offering. Oh, may I be sacrificed for you! Oblige me with the favor of acting towards me as Abraham did towards his son when he gave him up for a sacrifice.

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Hussein:

O beloved of Hussein, you are the light of Hasan's eye, you are the young cypress, no, the fruitful tree planted by the side of the river. I adjure you, by Hasan your honored ather, the king of the righteous, to abandon the thought of asking me permission to goto fight against the infidels.

Qasim:

May I be a sacrifice for you! I cannot give up the idea at all; I must obey the will of my father. Oh, do not put me to shame before your illustrious progenitor 'Ali (ibn Abi Talib), for Hasan will be ashamed of such a son if I die a natural death, and not be slain for you!

Hussein:

Oh! You aggravate the pain of my broken heart with this your saying; you remind me suddenly of Hasan's will. Your father, the green flower of the garden of faith, when on thepoint of death, desired that at a certain period I must have his Qasim married to my daughter, in order that mirty and mourning should be my fate.

Qasim:

O dear uncle, do not make me lose patience by talking to me of marriage; speak of offering sacrifices, please, and not of nuptial affairs. What room is left for joyous feasts now tha 'Ali Akbar is gone from the world? It is preferable to wallow in one's own blood than to marry after such a calamity.

Hussein:

Seeing that my brother has requested it, I cannot but obey his order. You need not shed tears from your eyes. I

myself will decorate the marriage-bed for you.

Qasim:

O uncle, certainly you are in the place of my father. I am convinced the you care for me very much; but as for my marriage-bed, it is laid in the grave already. O uncle, no wedding is necessary for me!

Hussein:

Come to me, o Zainab, you bleeding at heart! Come, for it is now time for Qasim's marriage. Sprinkle water on the
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fire of my soul with your tears before Fatima, my afflicted daughter. Go and congratulate her on her intended marriage with Qasim, and see that the matter be carried out.

Zainab (to Fatima, the bride):

May I be offered for you, o unfortunate maiden! I wish you happiness and communal bliss in this plain of Karbala. Know you that your illustrious uncle Hasan, the Imam of the age, has requested your father, the thirsty-lipped Hussein, to marry you in this plain of trial to your cousin Qasim (unhappy as he may be at such a time), who on this account is called the bridegroom.

Fatima, the bride:

Ah me! You are unaware of what has happened to 'Ali Akbar, whose body has fallen headless there in the dust. The body of 'Ali Akbar is in the midst of a stream of blood; it cannot be rights to hear nuptial songs and the sound of music. Umm Lailah being in great distress on account of her son's decease, we should take into account that even the fowls are forbidden from feeding on grain and water. It is not proper, now that 'Ali Akbar is gone, that friends should set out for trips of pleasure in the meadows. What joy can we have, seeing he is dead? It cannot be called happiness, but misfortune.

Zainab:

May I be a ransom for you and your perfumed locks! May God bring it to pass that I may be a sacrifice for your beautiful head. It is better for you now to comply with the imperative request of the Imam of the age, by yielding simple assent to the demand, and then be at rest.

Fatima, the bride:

Return, dear aunt, with my best compliments to my

father, saying, "Thus says Fatima your daughter, "Oh Imam of the age, I most dutifully yield obedience to your command, without the least sign of reluctance, it being my father's wish."

Zainab (to Hussein):

May I be a sacrifice for you, O chosen from among the illustrious! May the spirit of Zainab be a ransom for your dear soul! Thus does Fatima humbly state, with tears in her eyes, "The choice of marriage is in my father's hand."

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Hussein:

Go, sorrowful sister, with tearful eyes, and inform the whole family of what is about to be done; and tell all of them to come together and decorate a nuptial-bed for my dear Qasim.

The Mother of Qasim:

O spheres! What kind of marriage is this? And what sort of wedding? How can it be lawful at such a time to rejoice? If Qasim, the ill-starred, unfortunate youth, had a father now, everyone would by this time have received and invitation.

Zainab:

O Qasim, why do you lament so? Why are you dull, like the evenings of the mournful?

The Mother of Qasim:

Why is Sakina not present with us? Why do you not inform 'Ali Akbar's mother? Must a poor one, who happened to be fatherless, be despised and insulted by the whole world?

Zainab (to Kulsum):

O my sore-hearted and lonely Kulsum! Umm lailah is sitting in Sakina's tent. Come along with me, poor distracted sister; perhaps we may prevail upon them, and bring them to the wedding banquet.

Kulsum:

I am greatly troubled with grief. O base Heavens! The painful separation of 'Ali Akbar has made me so uneasy. Every now and then there comes a new grief to congratulate me. I have repeatedly been a mark for the arrow of cruelty.

Sakina (weeping over the corpse of 'Ali Akbar):

O dear brother, I did never heartily rejoice in your wedding banquet! Oh, may I be a ransom for your adverse fortune and fruitless efforts! How can I see a shroud in lieu of a wedding dress? Oh, what a stony heart must I have! May I be a sacrifice for your heart, dear brother!

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Umm Lailah:

Oh, how often I have watched all night long till the morning light, nursing you; waiting anxiously at your cradle, full of expectation! Hownights have I tended you, not knowing that you were to be slain, when a youth, by the malevolent sword!

Zainab (to Umm Lailah:

O my worthy matron, how long will you have wet eyes? It was your lot that today you should be without a son. You need not groan so sadly as to burn the heart of the world with your fervent excitement. Cease troubling yourself, and render a thousand thanks to God that Hussein, your husband, is alive. He intends today to cheer up the heart of Hasan's orphan; also be ind enough to come to this joyful entertainment, to witness the ceremony.

Umm Lailah:

What you have said, O Zainab, has overwhelmed my heart with sorrow; it has pained my mind, and filled my eyes with tears! Blood is still flowing from the thirsty throat of 'Ali Akbar: how can I come to any marriage-fesat, O dear sister? The bare idea of matrimony is distressing. How can a woman, whose son has died this very day, attend wedding festivals with propriety?

Zainab:

O Lord, could I not make rivers of blood run down from my eyes? Why should I not mourn and lament over such a marriage? Well, all of us must, for the sake of his poor troubled mind, try to make Qasim cheerful at this feast.

Umm Lailah:

Come along with me, my dear friends, for I have many complaints against cruel time. Let us ornament a marriage bed for 'Ali Akbar! Heaven has, at length, indeed granted me my

wish! Oh, I cannot but complain of the innocent spheres,
which make sorrow and joy grow up together!

*(On the one hand they bring Qasim's marriage-couch, well
decorated, and on the other hand a similar bed, covered with
black to signify 'Ali Akbar's misfortune, while Umm
Lailah and Sakina mourn over the slain.)*

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Umm Lailah:

My beloved child is, to my great sorrow, headless! Alas!
My son, my son! My disappointed youth has fallen there like a
wingless bird! Alas, dear ones, alas!

Zainab and Qasim's mother (at the marriage-couch):

After all, I have lived to see you happy under this blue
vault, o my noble son, and had the pleasure of joining the
chorus on the day of your rejoicing.

Umm Lailah:

O my rose-cheeked son, the place of your execution has
become a rose-garden with your blood. I am sore-hearted, I am
restless, I am scarred with grief, my son, my son!

Qasim's mother with Zainab:

I have hopefully decorated your marriage-bed at last. I
have fortunately laid aside my grief in this world, and am
merrily singing for my son.

Hussein:

O Lord, be you witness of the thing which I have done;
behold I have performed the promise I once made with Hasan.
At such a time, notwithstanding that my 'Ali Akbar is lately
killed, I have married Fatima (Kubra), my daughter, to Qasim,
my nephew. *(Addressing Zainab)*. O my faithful sister, who is
my only solace in this land of trial, draw near to me, o
light of the glory of God's servant; you may take my Fatima
to the house of the bridegroom.

Zainab (to the Bride):

Ah me! Rather condolence than nuptials: the dust is the
fittest marriage-bed for me. The talk of marriage has
withered my soul even to death. Would to God Fatima had died
this very day!

The mother of Qasim:

The conjunction of the moon and the sun has taken place, call it a blessed time, o men, o friends; say, all of you, "Be it a blessed thing."

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The Bride (to the Bridegroom):

March forth from the pavion, o Qasim, for your spouse approaches you. O cousin of mine, the sad-hearted one, peace be upon you, who has not seen any joy in life, peace be upon you!

Qasim (to Fatima):

O lamp of my dark night, on you be peace! You are welcome, my thornless rose. Place your feet on the tearful eyes of Qasim! My destitute spouse and helpless thing, on you be peace!

Fatima and Qasim sing together:

O 'Ali Akbar, where are you? How your absence is felt by us! O dear one, your seat is quite vacant in this delightful abode! O God, let no youth ever suffer disappointment in his projects.

Shimr (to Hussein):

O flower of the rose-garden of creation, I wish you joy! May the marriage of Qasim be attended with happiness! Such a marriage-feast as has been held by you today, has never been witnessed at any time! I wish you many happy returns. In short, having congratulated you on the new connubial tie, I beg you to send his highness, your son-in-law, to fight with us in the field.

Hussein:

Fate is ever ready to strive with me! It has played a hundred tricks in order to entrap me. On the one hand it paints the face of the bride with red colors, on the other hand it makes the stature of the bridegroom roll in blood! Since these men do not allow me to go back to Hijaz, I wish to God that they would let me proceed to Europe!

Ibn Sa'd:

O poor, sad-hearted, tear-shedding Qasim, how pleasantly

and comfortably are you seated in your bride-chamber! You have nicely lain down on your nuptial bed; you have very beautifully dyed your hands and feet with henna. I do not know with what charms your bride ensnares you, that you do not bestir yourself. I congratulate you on this happy day, which, we think, you would like to continue till the Day of Judgement. Arise, young man, set your face towards the field of battle. A young bride or spouse ill-becomes you on
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such a day.

Qasim:

There is none in this land of trial to help the family of the Prophet of God, or to protect them. I will arise, therefore, and, proceeding to the field of battle, give my life as an offering and sacrifice for the sake of Hussein.

Fatima (to Qasim):

Oh, where are you going, you pearl of the shell of my life? This is your new spouse talking with you, please look up at her.

Qasim:

O my poor spouse, let me apprise you that your royal falcon has today fallen from his flight.

Fatima, the bride:

O light of my eye, tell me where are you going; let not the bride perish from grief owing to your absence.

Qasim (to Fatima):

Oh! Do not set me on fire with this your conversation, o you who shines as though you were a burning candle, while I am like a moth. Behold the miserable state of my uncle, and the cruelty of the enemy! See how he is leaning on his spear with bended neck! What benefit can I derive from youth if I spare my soul from being made a sacrifice at the stirrup of my dear uncle?

Fatima, the bride:

O spheres, how long will you be at enmity with me? May God make you as miserable as myself. I could not enjoy the company of the bridegroom; yes, I did not delight myself in his society for a minute!

Qasim (to Hussein):

May I be a sacrifice for you, o brightness in Zahra's (Fatima, daughter of Muhammad) eye! Now permit me to go to the field of battle, that I may offer my soul as a sacrifice to the dust of your road, and make my sacred body turn to the dust of Karbala.

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Hussein:

O Qasim, your face shall be drenched in blood at last with the swords of the tyrant; your body shall fall at length in the plain of Karbala. Oh! How can I see these your locks soaked in the blood of your throat? But these your hands have to be dyed, o Qasim, with some blood-tinged henna at last.

Qasim:

Oh! I do not say, dear uncle, that I am Hasan's child! But rather that you are a king, and I am your servant, o you to whom the sovereigns of the earth pay homage as slaves! No matter if I be killed for the sake of your grandfather's people, for in that case God, and His chose Prophet, and Ali (ibn Abi Talib) His elect, will be the avengers of blood.

Hussein:

O blessed-natured Zainab, bring a winding-sheet for Qasim the bridegroom; but take care that his mother and bride know nothing about the circumstance.

Zainab:

How long shall I suffer in Karbala from endless sorrow? I have to conceal the winding-sheets in the same way that I hide my griefs from others. Here is the shroud, which I have brought away from the view of Qasim's mother, to put it as a nuptial garment on Hasan's orphan boy.

Hussein:

Dear Sister, put it on poor Qasim; yes, wrap the winding-sheet round his body. In dressing this good-natured youth with shrouds, care must be taken that his mother and his spouse should not see him.

Zainab:

Oh God, I hope that Qasim's mother will not come to know this! Oh Lord, how hard it is for a parent to be suddenly deprived of a grown-up son! Oh! Woe be to Zainab! Woe be to Zainab! She has become a shroud-woman for martyrs!

Qasim's mother (appearing suddenly):

Do not put on shrouds, oh light of my eyes! Do not dress yourself in winding-sheets, child; it makes me shudder. Throw away away these things, dear son; let not my broken heart burn with fervent grief.

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Qasim:

Dear mother, may I be a sacrifice for you! I beg your pardon; forgive me, good mother, from the bottom of your heart and soul. Come, mother, Heaven is about to lay a grievous scar on your heart! Yes, it is going to scatter the rose-bud of your joy with a stormy wind.

Qasim's Mother:

How can I turn aside my eyes from you, and permit that you should go to the field of battle, my child? I am a stranger here, and have no one else beside you. I shall never allow you to join the fray, though you be quite ready to do so. Oh Qasim, if I be removed but an instant from your presence, excessive weeping will soon make me blind.

Qasim:

Oh my sorrowful mother, (remember the Latin "Mater Dolorosa"), the business is now ended; the day of my presence with you is far spent, it is now time for us to part. My measure-glass is full with destiny's pure wine; my turn is already over; the period of life is at its close. Adieu to you, dear mother; goodbye, my dear aunt; life is making way for death with rapid strides.

Qasim's Mother

Oh my young sone, linger a little, that I may once more see your face. Oh my sorrow-portioned youth, mercy! Oh you, my physician in every malady, have pity on me!

Qasim:

There is not much time left ere my name will be blotted from the volume of this world's life; and I shall lie down in the lap of the earth, seeing young martyrs lying around me on every side.

The Crude (Fatima Kubra):

My beloved spouse, I fear that you may not come back. I suspect this from what you have said. In whose hand or to whose care do you commit us? You must consider the pain of separation as slight.

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Qasim:

Oh mother, you must not leave my dear spouse a minute alone after I have died. Oh dear love (*turning to his wife*), it is the time of departure: the hour of separation between you and I has arrived.

The Bride:

Tell me, dear thing, where I am to find you on the great Day of Resurrection? And how am I to gather a rose from your blooming face?

Qasim:

You may recognize me on that day by this shroud that I now wear, when I stand amid the party gathered around Hussein.

The Bride:

Oh dear Qasim, I pray you do not go to fight with the infidels; return to your chamber; do not hurt my heart more!

The Bridegroom:

For God's sake, give up crying, dear love; let not my poor mind be troubled! Behold your unhappy father standing in the midst of an unbelieving nation, all alone!

The Bride:

I will not go to my chamber at all; but will sit here in this place beating sadly on my head till I die from grief.

The Bridegroom:

Oh my dear spouse, oh light of the eye of the righteous. I adjure you by my soul to lift your head from the dust of the road. Oh my afflicted aunt, Zainab, come out of your tent to see, if but for an instant, the sad condition of my dear spouse.

Zainab (to Qasim):

No, dear nephew, do not grieve the poor dear bride to such an extent; go and sit by the sorrowful creature for a

while.

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Qasim (riding away):

Come, let me kiss your hand and beg your pardon; forgive me with all your heart and soul. Come, let me kiss your hand, oh prisoner of sorrow; go and blacken the marriage-couch, o Zainab!

Qasim's Mother:

OH, do not make my days dark by your departure! Your poor mother is shelterless! Go not! Hear my saying, oh my Alexander; the path is enshrouded in thick darkness, and there is no way at all; depart not! The wolves are on all sides lying in wait for their prey! My dear Joseph, do not set out towards the well.

Qasim:

Oh family of the offspring of him who is the king of all nations, God preserve you! Oh ye sadly afflicted in this cruel country, may God keep you! If I have left any sad impression on your minds by my ill-conduct, I beg your pardon, and meanwhile bid you adieu!

Qasim's Mother:

Oh my elegant-statured youth, may God be with you! Today you are going to consume me with the fire of separation. Oh you the hope of my tomorrow, may God be with you!

Qasim (addressing the unbelievers):

Oh ye people devoid of shame and remorse, ye who have given the name of Islam to infidelity; it is not at all proper that you apostates should be called Muslims, while your unbelief is so manifest. Are you not the descendants of the prophets? You are indeed worthy of a robe of honour from the Divine Judge. Yezid the tyrant is from the seed of adultery and a base-born is not fit to hold the Caliphate, that which is the due only of Hussein and his holy family, which you are cruelly exterminating for the sake of a bastard, on whose profane origin may God's curse alight!

'Umar the son of Sa'd:

Who are you, vaunting so proudly of your lineage? Are you so wounded in your heart that you appear so excited and

cry out continually? I think that you are one newly married, for you are finely dressed, upon my word; but tell me why you are so slender and pale, so thin and sickly?

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Qasim:

I am one whose ancestor is the Messenger of God, the chief and the first link of all the prophets. My name is Qasim, the son of Hasan; my grandfather's name is the Lion-hearted Champion. I do not care at all if I be slain, martyrdom being the heritage of my forefathers.

'Umaribn-Sa'd:

Oh people, deprive him of the sweetness of life, and make his companions lament his death! Go forth to the field and fight this miserable wretch, so as to deprive his bride of his further society.

Qasim prepares to fight:

Oh owner of this famous sword Zu'lfakhr, it is the time of help! Oh begetter of the seven and four (*the eleven Imams who Succeeded Ali ibn Abi Talib*), it is the time of help! (*Returning from the battle and addressing Hussein*). Uncle, uncle, I thirst, I thirst!

Hussein:

Come, let me put the ring of the glorious Messenger in your mouth, to quench your thirst withal, oh decorator of the florid meadow of hope!

Qasim:

O dear spouse, come, let me see you once again! Let me cull Blossoms of delight from the rose-garden of your cheeks! But as my great-grandfather is anxiously expecting me in Paradise, I am constrained not to hold a long conversation with you, and so I bid you adieu.

Qasim (in the field, calling to Hussein):

Oh hope of your people, come and save Qasim, who is submerged in his own blood!

Qasim:

Oh, bring out the marriage-couch from the decorated chamber, for Qasim has returned prosperously from his journey! Tell the bride to come out to meet the bridegroom, that she may observe how her beloved is deluged in blood.

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Zainab (to Qasim's Mother):

Come, for the fates are against you, you have become desolate! Arise! Put on black, for you are sonless. Your cypress is hewn down with the axe of tyranny! The newly married son is covered with gore.

Qasim's Mother:

Alas Oh Muslims! Alas for this cruel and unjust event! Oh! Heaven after all has caused the enemy to prosper! Oh God, it was but today when I decorated his nuptial couch, and in a few hours time I am made to lament his death!" (276)

David Pinault gives an account of a "Bridegroom of Karbala" procession during Ashura in Hyderabad:

"In a brief sermon the preacher reminded his congregation of the hurried marriage and violent death of the Second Imam's son (Qasim). No sooner had the sermon ended than everyone rose and the gold *alam* of Hazrat Qasim emerged from a storeroom in the rear of the ocean of men. Thereafter followed a kine of boys carrying silver trays which contained fruit, henna leaves and rows of lighted candles. These are the accoutrements of what is known as the *maynhdī* procession; as the author Athar Abbas Rizvi explains in his survey of Muharram practices, 'In India the *maynhdī* is carried from the bridegroom's to the bride's house before the actual wedding.' Thus the iconography of the Seventh of Muharram involves a disfunction apparent to all observers who know the story of Qasim and Fatima Qubra. The flowers, henna and fruit are meant to render imaginatively present to us the joyous setting forth of a young man on his wedding day to encounter his bride; but the procession advances against a dark background of certain knowledge: our awareness of the violent death awaiting the bridegroom the next morning. The disjunction draws our attention to the frustrated hopes suffered by the Karbala martyrs and thus deepens the pathos of the liturgy.

To the accompaniment of chanted *nauhas* and breast-beating by the congregants, the procession traversed the roofed interior of the *ashurkhana*. Louder even than the *nauhas* came a cry from some of the mourners: '*Dulha! Dulha!*' ("Bridegroom, O Bridegroom"); the cry continued as men pressed forward to touch the *alam* for its blessing as it passed.

Reaching the shrine's open courtyard, the

procession circumambulated the yard several times, the
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garlanded *alam* held high on its pole. Then the bearers crossed the square to the doorway of the *zenana* or women's quarters of the sponsor-family. The pole was briefly dipped and thrust through the *pardah*; and through the half-parted curtain I glimpsed arms stretched forth to caress the worn metal. Then the battle-crest was withdrawn and once more raised aloft.

But now the bearers halted motionless. An old man stepped forward and snuffed the candles on their tray. At this time the *alam* was slowly lowered from its upright position and placed reverently on a long wooden plank. This, then, was the martyr's bier. Two boys advanced with a long white cloth which was spotted all over with red stains. Gently mourners wrapped the *alam* and plank in this cloth. Then once more the *alam* was raised up; but now it rested horizontally on its bier. Numerous marchers stepped forward to join in carrying the prostrate *alam* on their shoulders as if it were a coffin. The procession retraced its steps from the courtyard to the roofed *ashurkhana*, then to the interior of the storeroom at the rear of the shrine. A moment later the mourners reemerged empty-handed and carefully locked the door shut. This *ala mould* now remain hidden away until next year.

Wedding procession, death, shrouding, entombment; the ritual actions of the Seventh of Muharram comprise mimetic representations which can be characterized as a form of liturgical drama. In the light of such findings, it seems advisable to widen the definition of Shi'ite drama beyond (Iranian) *ta'ziyeh* and to look beyond the geographic confines of Iran in future studies of Shi'ite drama.

One further note from this drama merits discussion. As the bridegroom of Karbala's procession ended, a final dirge in honor of Qasim was recited. The following are some of the verses from this *nauha*:

Our hearts, too, are houses of lamentation for the king
In lamentation for Qasim are gift-offerings of tears;
O Ali, the cry has gone forth: Qasim has been slain! ...

...The sound of *matam* (lamentation) is a message of wakefulness;

For this reason flows the life-blood in our veins.

Our life is lamentation for the king;

He himself takes part in the *majlis*, innocent and wretched.

O Ali, the cry has gone forth: Qasim has been slain!" (277)

There has always been some doubt as to whether the wedding between Qasim and Fatima Kubra really occurred. Early sources do not mention it. Shaykh al-Mufid, though he goes into some detail concerning Qasim's death in battle, makes no mention of any such wedding. (278) One can think of various practical reasons why said wedding was unlikely under the circumstances. However, no one doubts that Qasim and Fatima Kubra were real people, and that both were present at Karbala where Qasim was slain. Therefore, one cannot say that said wedding was impossible.

Having Ste. Brigid of Ireland present in Palestine in the time of Jesus and having Fatima Zahra and Shahrbanu present at the tragedy of Karbala are no doubt effective novelesque and dramatic elements, but, far more important, they serve as vehicles for the expression of symbolic truths. The unlikely, though not totally impossible, wedding of Qasim and Fatima Kubra, while it does not serve as a means to express any particular symbolic truth, by its poignancy is very effective as a dramatic device.

Kashifi gives a moving tribute to the heroic women of Karbala, relatives of Imam Hussein:

"They say that two days later (id est, two days after the slaughter of the martyrs of Karbala) Umar Sa'd's army departed, taking away the severed heads of the martyrs, abandoning their headless corpses in the desert of Karbala. News of this reached the people of Ghadiriyya (village near the site of the slaughter) and they came and beheld the headless corpses lying there.

Then they heard the sound of lamentations and mourning, but they could see no one. This was a gathering of *jinn*, who declaimed lamentation verses and recited poems (*marsiyya*) as a sort of elegy for them. Among these poems is the following verse (in Arabic in Kashifi's text):

The women of the *jinn* help the women of the Hashemites,
The daughters of the Chosen One,
Muhammad, foremost of all created beings.

That is (here Kashifi gives a Persian paraphrase), the women of the *peris* (Persian fairies; the two words spring from the same Indo-European root) have engaged in funeral laments and weeping in solidarity with the women of the Hashemites." (279)

Even the *jinn* and the *peris* (the Arab *jinn* and the Persian *peris* are by no means the same; in fact they are radically different) are moved by the tragedy of Karbala, and express their solidarity with the women of Imam Hussein's family. The tragedy and heroism of the women of Imam Hussein's family has reached even the *jinn* and the *peris*, who join them in mourning. If the women of Imam Hussein's family have been led away as captives, and so are unable to mourn their dead on the battlefield, are unable to weep and lament over the corpses of their dead, then the *jinn* and the *peris* will do so.

Below is a brief definition of the Arab *jinn*:

"*Jinns* may be invisible or take any shape, including that of a gigantic human. They may be beautiful or hideously deformed. When a *Jinn* appears as a beautiful woman, the deception may be detected by noting the vertical eyes and the feet of a goat or camel. However, by the time a human is close enough to observe this, it is usually too late for them to be saved. *Jinns* may be beneficent or thoroughly evil, but even those using their supernatural powers for human benefit cannot be trusted. *Jinns* inhabit the desert, isolated, ruined places; or remote islands where they may be solitary or congregate to work mischief on the community." (280)

Contrast the above with the definition of the Persian *Peris*:

"In the Zoroastrian religion, these beautiful, tiny, shimmering female fairies were regarded as originally the demon *Parikas*, who were members of a group of spirits known as the *Drujes*. This representation later developed to the gentler image of the *Peris* who became the (Persian version of) the fairies of folklore. In this guise they existed only on the choicest perfumes and were persecuted by the evil *Deevs*, which waged constant war on them. When caught, the *Peris* were locked in iron cages strung in the tops of trees, where their own companions sustained them with perfumes." (281)

In an earlier chapter we spoke of the meteorological phenomenon typical of the Camargue area of Provence and known in modern Provençal as the *Fado Morgano*, literally "Morgan the Fairy". A similar meteorological phenomenon occurs around the straits of Messina, where it is called in Italian (or Sicilian dialect) to be precise) *Fata Morgana*. As we have said in another chapter. Provence most certainly has a Celtic background, as we noted earlier, which Calabria and Sicily do not. Since the word or name *Morgano* or *Morgana* is unquestionably Celtic, one is inclined to believe that the word or name *Fata Morgana* originated in the Camargue, but was taken to Messina by Provençal troubadors who came to Sicily when that island was ruled by the Normans and later in the time of Frederick II. Said Provençal troubadors inspired the "Sicilian school" of poets, whose works, though written in the Sicilian dialect, are thoroughly troubadoresque in other all respects, even borrowing many Provençal words, particularly, though far from exclusively, technical terms relating to prosody and rhetoric. (282)

In an earlier chapter we have spoken of the obvious kinship

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between the Baltic *veles*, the Slavic *vila*, the Celtic *fairy* and

the Persian *peri*. It is obvious that *peri* and *fairy* derive from the same Indo-European root.

Says Caitlin Matthews oncerning the Celtic fairies:

Gin [if] ye ca' me imp or elf,
I rede [advise] ye look weel tae yourself;
Gin ye ca' me fairy,
I'll work ye muckle tarrie [much trouble];
Gin guid neibour ye ca' me,
Rhen guid neibour I will be;
But gin we ca' me sellie wicht
[blessed wicht or being]
I'll be your freend baith day and nicht.

Robert Chambers, Popular Rhymes of Scotland

"This advice from the mouth of a fairy reminds us that respect is the basis of all relation ships. Nowhere in Celtic lore is this more important than in our dealings with the fairie, especially now that so mighty a gulf lies between traditional and 21st century understandings of fairies. What are now considered to be imaginary dragon-fly winged beings of tiny size, of no account, in traditional lore are considered to be dangerous, capable of inflicting harm or death upon people and livestock. Their haunts were, by common consent, avoided by humans. Few would now be afraid of, or respectful to, any modern fairy concocted by human imagination. This is why the true people of peace are called "fairies" in this book, to distinguish them from the trivialized 'fairies' of modern delusion.

Fairies are traditionally held to be the elder race that inhabited the earth before humankind. They are beings of power and influence, who have the primary governance of the earth, sea and air. They are neither tiny nor insubstantial, and their influence is so powerful that it can be deadly if the contract between humans and fairies is not impeccably upheld. Many Irish stories tell of earthly conflicts that begin as a result of an injury to individual fairies, brought about by human greed or thoughtlessness.

Considerable bodies of fairy lore exist throughout Britain and Ireland [and also France], relating the nature of fairies, called the *si* or 'pwole of peace' in Ireland and *tylwyth teg* or the 'fair folk' in Britain [*id est*, Wales]. There is a common belief among the Gaels that fairies are the elder race, and that

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they came to earth after Lucifer and the fallen angels began the descent to their own realm. When the Creator saw that heaven's doors were open, and that others of

the heavenly realm were being sucked out of it, a command was given that those who were out should remain out, and those who were in should remain in. The beings who had been sucked out in Lucifer's wake, found themselves exiled in the middle realm of earth, where they made their home.

The elder fairies of Ireland, the *Tuatha de Danaan*, are 'the lordly ones of the hollow hills'; rather than being of diminutive size they are somewhat larger than humans. The reported size of fairies has shrunk over centuries of different accounts, for they can be whatever size they wish: that which was thought small is large, that which was thought large becomes small. The further into the otherworld we go, fairies and other beings that we encounter grow larger; the further into our own world we travel, the smaller such beings appear. When ever we encounter 'little/bigness' it is connected therefore to the seer's inward vision. It is also a feature of the greater dead, the ancestors, as St. Patrick learns when he and his priests are approached by two Fenian heroes of the ancient time: 'they were seized with fear and horror at the sight of these enormous men, the warriors of an earlier age, together with their great dogs.'

The link between the fairies and the ancestors has always been a close one. It was often thought that those who pass into the realm of the dead became part of the fairy realm, a concept that we see in many Celtic accounts of the greater dead feasting in the hoolow hills of the world beneath. Reverend Robert Kirk, whose 17th century 'anthropological study' of fairies and seership, The Secret Commonwealth of Elves and Faeries, confirms that 'several who go to the siths [fairy hills] ... before the natural period of their lyf expyr, do frequently appear to them.'

Fairies reside at specific locations, although they may move from one dwelling place to another, in the manner of early hunter-gatherers, as the season changes. Wherever you are on earth, then you stand on some fairy clan's turf, and the way you behave there is noted by the fairies. Because of this, the early Celtic attitude to them was one of respect and fear, not of familiarity and disbelief. The site of a building was carefully decided, to regard those whom such disruption might displace. The haunts of fairies were left well alone, and those whose work took them up into the hills to shepherd the beasts during the summertime used precautions of talismans, charms and prayers.

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The places between the worlds where humans and fairies might meet are frequently the threshold zones: where springs gush out, where two trees make a gateway. All of these are 'doors to fairyland'. Negotiating these

threshold zones by walking between worlds in dream, vision or on foot, was the work of seers and visionaries. Sometimes people strayed into fairy regions at their peril. This invocation was made by 14th century Welsh seers when they needed to enter the forest where fairy spirits lived:

To the King of the Kindly Ones
And to his Queen:
Gwyn ap Nudd, who lives within
The forest yonder,
For love of your lady, permit us
To enter your dwelling.

Gwyn ap Nudd is the fairy king whose spirit is seen in the Neath Valley of South Wales, and who has his dwelling in Glastonbury Tor. He is also a leader of the Wild Hunt, a retributive band of spirits who chase those who have broken faith with the fairies, or violated their unseen boundaries.

In keeping with the traditional connections between humans and fairies, Kirk remarked that the conflicts and wars of the human world are often preceded by a war among the *si*. Gaelic lore abounds with such stories of conflict between the fairies, so that some fairy hosts are called 'the seelie (or blessed) court' while their opponents become 'the unseelie court'. The 12th century Irish Accalam na Senorach (The Colloquy of the Ancients) speaks of the war between the *si* of Ibrece of Assaroe and Lir and of the Si of Finnachad. Lir sent a bird with an iron beak and a tail of fire to lodge on a window of the Si of Assaroe, until every weapon in the place fell onto the heads of the people. It continued hurling missiles for the course of a year until the Fenian hero Cailte stopped it.

From earliest times, human respect for the fairies was shown by a sense of neighborliness, as here in Lady Augusta Gregory's account of Old Deruane, a man who lived on an island of Aran, in the west of Ireland, with his faultless sense of hospitality to the fairies:

This island is as thick as grass with them,
or as sand; but good neighbors make good
neighbors, and no woman minding a house but
should put a couple of the first of the
potatoes aside on the dresser, for there's no
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house but they'ss visit some time or other.
Myself, I always brush out my little tent
clean of a night before I lie down, and the
night I'd do it most would be a rough night.
How do we knoe what poor soul might want to

come in.

From antiquity, the fairies were honored by the custom of making offerings in milk or cream, in this case to a *gruagach* or brownie on the Western Isles of Scotland:

They had a universal custom, of pouring a cow's milk upon a little hill, or big stone, where the spirit called Brownie was believed to lodge: this spirit always appeared in the shape of a tall man, having very long brown hair. There was scarce any the least village in which this superstitious custom did not prevail. I inquired the reason of it from several well-meaning women, who until of late, had practised it; and they told me, that it had been transmitted to them by their ancestors successfully, who believed it was attended with good fortune.

The gifts did not come from humans alone, for the fairies were good givers to those who did them honor. The most famous pipers in all Scotland were the MacCrimmons, whose gift was first bestowed upon Iain Og MacCrimmon: he was playing his pipes when a fairy woman came and gave him a silver chanter, along with this prophecy:

Your beauty and the music of your pipes
Have won a fairy lover to you;
To you I hand the silver chanter
To be sweet and faultless under your fingers.

Another source relates that two fairy women came across the young MacCrimmon asleep and one blinded him in one eye. The second *banshee*, however gave him the gift of the chanter in order to compensate for this loss. This latter story relates to the tradition of the *corrquineacht* and of Boann, in which one side of the body was believed to be in the otherworld, while the other walked in the apparent world.

Many of the greatest bonds lay between the true fairies and human seers; not only are fairies 'clearly seen by those men of the Second Sight', but they also bestow it upon those whom they favor.'

The gift of second sight or seership was bestowed
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on Christian Lewinstoun of East Lothian (Scottish Lowlands) in 1597, whose divinatory skill derived, she said, from her daughter who 'was tane away with the Fairy Folk'. Alison Peiron, from Fifeshire, in 1588 claimed that fairies would come and sit beside her when she lay sick in bed and promised that she would never

want if she would be faithful and keep promises.

The keeping of promises and a truthful heart required a great deal of human beings, who are not best known for either ability, but they remain the touchstone of all fairy alliances, as we can see from looking at any fairy story where the human partner in the contract is required to do, or refrain from doing, an action that will break the contract. Cunning woman, Elspeth Reoch from the Orkneys, swore that she gave up her powers of speech in order to gain the help of her fairy spirit's skills.

A curious way of calling upon a man's fairy allies, in order to force them to be an oracle, is given by Martin Martin:

It was an ordinary thing among the over-curious to consult an invisible oracle, concerning the fate of families, and battles, &c. This was performed three different ways; the first was by a company of men, one of whom being detached by lot, was afterwards carried to a river, which was the boundary between two villages; four of the company laid hold on him, and having shut his eyes, they took him by the legs and arms, and then tossing him to and again, struck his hips with force against the bank. One of them cried out, 'What is it you have got here?' Another answers, 'A log of birchwood.' The other cries again, 'Let his invisible friends appear from all quarters, and let them relieve him by giving an answer to our present demands'; and in a few minutes after, a number of little creatures came from the sea, who answered the question and disappeared suddenly. The man was then set at liberty, and they all returned home to take their measures according to the prediction of their false prophets, but the poor deluded fools were abused, for the answer was still ambiguous. This was always practiced in the night, and may literally be called the works of darkness.

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Many bodies of healing and herbal lore are said to derive from the fairies. Rory O'Flaherty, who wrote a description of West Connaught (Ireland) in 1700, had this to say about Morough O'Lee, a notable Irish healer:

There is now living Morough O'Lee who imagined he was himself personally in Hy

Brasil for two days. By that visit about seven or eight years afterwards, he began to practice surgery and physic though he never studied either in all his lifetime before, as all we that know him since he was a boy can confirm.

Morough had fallen asleep on a fairy fort, and when he awoke he found himself in Tir na nOg, remaining there for a year studying with the fairies. On returning home he was given a book that contained the cures for all diseases, but was told not to open it for seven years and then he would find all the secrets of healing. His visit had taken three mortal days or one fairy year, which is the inverse of what is usual in otherworldly time-slips. Three years after his return, an epidemic swept through the land and many begged him to open the book. As a result of not waiting the full term, he was not able to help them all. Morough O'Lee's book, which is number 453 in the library of the Royal Irish Academy and known as the Book of Hy Brasil, has 93 vellum pages written in Gaelic during the 15th century. It may have been one of the books of the well known medical family called Mac an Leagh (Lee), who practiced medicine for at least two centuries before the year 1600 in the area of Sligo and north Roscommon.

Another book was compiled by the physicians of Myddfai in Wales; they were the descendants of the otherworldly Lady of Llyn y Fan Fach, who married a Welsh farmer. Their descendant currently works as a pharmacist in South Wales. The book contains herbal cures commonly practiced by country people, but its transmission is remembered as a fairy gift.

Lachlan MacDonald, a crofter from Benbecula, told the story of how the fairy queen had been saddened by the lack of wisdom among women, and so she breathed an invitation to all women, by pressing her lips to the stalks of every blade of grass, and every leaf of every plant and tree, to come to her hill. Some scorned the invitation and others deemed themselves wiser than she, but those who answered with their presence, were given a drink from her blue limpet shell containing the essence of wisdom. Those who arrived late lost their

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share.

But such confident gifts and exchanges between fairies and mortals were about to come under a different scrutiny when King James VI of Scotland wrote in his Daemonologie against witchcraft, knowing well that the witches commonly resorted to the fairy queen and not, as Reforming (Proestants) ministers believed, to the devil:

They have been transported with Phairie to

such a hill, which opening, they went in, and there saw a faire Queene, who ... gave them a stone that had sundrie virtues, which at sundrie times hath been produced in judgement.

The fruits of such fairy friendship were about to be used against those whi consulted the fairies and spirits of the local hills and groves.

Beyond the firmament in which He fixed the shining stars, He placed the ethereal heaven and gave it as a habitation to troops of angels whom the worthy contemplation and marvelous sweetness of God refresh throughout the ages. This also He adorned with stars and the shining sun, laying down the law by which the star should should run within fixed limits through the part of heaven entrusted to it. He afterwards placed beneath this the airy heavens, shining with the lunar body, which throughout their high places abound in troops of spirits who sympathize or rejoice with us as things go well or ill. They are accustomed to carry the prayers of men through the air and to beseech God to have mercy on them, and to bring back intimations of God's will, either in dreams or by voice or by other signs, through doing which they become wise.

The beings that ply between earth and heaven, in this extract from Geoffrey of Monmouth's 12th-13th century Life of Merlin, are modelled upon the *daimons* of classical belief. These are the 'spirits between' the divine and human realms, called *daimons* by the ancients, a term that was to be radically remodeled into demons. A report about seership, sent to John Aubrey in the 17th century, relates how the correspondent's father met the seer John MacGrigor and asked him if he might obtain his skill, to which the

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seer responded:

He would not advise him nor any man to learn it; for had he once learned, he would never be a minute of his life but he would see innumerable men and women night and day round about him.

To witness such teeming presences forever, was judged to be undesirable and the corresp[ondent's father declined the transfer of the sight. ...

...Writing in the late 17th century, Reverend Robert Kirk speaks of the fusion of the seer with his co-walker, or *co-choisiche*, literally 'the one who steps with you':

Some men of that exalted Sight, whether by art or nature have told me that they have seen at these meetings (ordinary funerals, banquets, etc. at which fairies may attend) a 'double-man' or the shape of the same man in two places, a Superterranean and Subterranean Inhabitant, perfectly resembling one another in all points, who (the seer) could easily distinguish one from the other ... and so go speak to the man his neighbor, passing by the apparition or resemblance of him.

In Kirk's parlance, a Superterranean is a human being who lives above ground, while fairies are known as Subterraneans, those who live below ground.

Kirk also calls this being 'a reflex man', or *coimimeadh*, literally a 'co-traveller', who is the part of the soul that may go forth and visit other times and places, which may explain how the image of someone living far distant may also appear in another location.

[Seers] avouch that every Element and different state of being, has in it animals resembling those of another element ... They have told me they have seen ... a double-man, or the shape of the same man in two places ... they call this Reflex-man a *coimimeadh* or Co-walker every way like the man, as a twin-brother and companion, haunting him as his shadow and is oft seen and known among men, resembling the original, seen and known among men, resembling the original, both before and after the original is dead ... If invited and earnestly required, these companions make themselves known and familiar to men,

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otherwise, being in a different state and element, they neither can nor will easily converse with them.

The *coimimeadh* is the co-walker or ally who accompanies each of us. Kirk further speaks of the co-walker as a being who 'accompanied that person so long and frequently ... whether to guard him from the secret assaults of some of his own folks, or only as a sportful Ape to counterfeit all his actions'. Kirk relates that a fairy co-walker accompanies every living human, though few are aware of it. ...

...When the time came for the Tuatha de Danaan to retire from the affairs of the world and to enter the hollow hills as the fairy folk, Manannan, the great god of the otherworld arranged how things would be. He assigned a special house to each family and gave three gifts that would protect them: by means of the *Feth-Fiadha* or 'the invisible protection', no mortal could see them; by means of the feast of Goibniu, they would escape age and decay; by means of an ever-renewing pig, they would be eternally nourished. Then the Tuatha could be safe within Land of Promise.

This cordon of invisibility about the otherworld typifies our everyday approach to it, which is generally to ignore anything not apparent to our senses. But from the perspective of the seer, the physical and other worlds are not diametrically opposed as our society holds, thinking the visible world alone to be 'the real world'. The dialogue between both shores is forever calling, although many regard steering our lives by that dialogue as fey and chancy. Daring to enter into dialogue with both sides of reality requires courage and faithfulness, certainly.

What we see and what we imagine have one connected life, but it is only when we enter into dialogue with the otherworld that we understand this. Seers and visionaries receive feedback from their ambient surroundings and condition, though they perceive also what lies beyond the *feth-fiadha*. They know that the spiritual and emotional meaning of life is not found just on one shore of reality, but is brought to us by tides originating on the further shore, by way of dream, and impressions that we tend to neglect as irrational promptings of no account.

What if we were to live as if that dialogue were the truest thing we ever did? As a hunter examines the grass for the track of the deer, as a lover looks for response in the face of the beloved, so we, too, need to search the hinterland of that further shore with

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imagination and intelligence.

The dialogue between our world and the other takes place at the thresholds and crossing places of both realms, at notable land features, such as springs, mountains or rivers, or it can happen in dreams, vision and meditation, when the seer attunes the vision of both realms. Dynamic images of that dialogue spring up archetypically wherever we look in the sources, creating matrices of vision, patterns of landscapes that can be entered in spirit, wherein we meet the fairy teachers of the seership traditions. As we enter deeply into these patterns and images, they yield their truth.

One such shape is found within the Irish *immram*

tradition. *Immram* literally means 'rowing about' and is the word used for the stories of voyages, told in many different periods, that visit otherworldly islands and locations. The earliest *immram* concerns the voyage of Bran mac Febal, who is invited by a fairy woman to visit the Land of Women, an island that is inhabited only by women, whom we can recognize as fairy women, akin to the Ninefold sisterhood that bestows inspiration and wisdom. The 8th century Irish Voyage of Maelduin visits 32 locations. Both 32 and 33 are important numbers that appear throughout Celtic myth, representing the totality of the divine powers. These islands provide a pattern for meditational exploration, for each has a gift to bestow or a wisdom to teach.

The legacy of the *immram* stories is seen in the Arthurian tradition, where Arthur himself makes a voyage into the otherworld of Annwfyn (the In-world) to claim the hero-feasting cauldron of the Lord of Annwfyn in the 9th century Preidden Annwfyn. The sevenfold caers or towers of the In-world invite their own visitation.

Visions of the Celtic otherworld abound with paradisaical wonders and paradoxes. We encounter again the vision of inwardness, where the small becomes large and the large is reduced to the small, where the juxtaposition of ordinary and extraordinary vision reveal the true reality of seership. The otherworldly tree of the Welsh Perceval text (*Peredur*) is both green and red - one half in leaf, the other half in flame, yet it is never destroyed. The voyaging hero, Maelduin, encounters white sheep who graze on black fields, while black sheep graze on white fields, until the shepherd moves a white sheep onto a white field, whereupon it becomes black. King Cormac's four-sided cup of truth is shattered by the telling of three lies, but is restored to wholeness by the utterance of three truths.

All of these motifs are powerful doorways that invite us to explore deeper, so that we enter into the
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otherworld in truth. With all the power of dreams, these images dissolve the *feth-fiadha* that keeps us from seeing the bright vision of the otherworld. But the chief instrument of vision is the branch of the *crann beatha* or 'tree of life'; in the earliest Irish *immram* story of Bran mac Febal, the fairy woman shakes it over Bran, causing him divine disquiet until he agrees to visit the land of women.

The silver branch, a branch with bells upon it, that was also a token borne by poets, was a scion of the *crann beatha*, which grew in everlastingness. The shaking of the branch betokened the silence of attention. It was the means of entering the otherworld, a skill known well to the vision poets or *fili* of the Gaelic world." (283)

The English word "fairy" derives from the Old French *faerie* or *faierie*, sometimes shortened to *fae*. Readers of Arthurian romances will recall *Morgan le Fae*, half-sister of King Arthur. The name *Morgan* is derived from the Celtic *mor*, meaning "sea", and is the origin of the common Welsh surname *Morgan*, meaning "of the sea". So, *Morgan* was originally associated with the sea, though this could easily be extended to rivers, lakes and springs. The word and proper name *Morgan* must have occurred in Gaulish as well as Welsh, Cornish and Breton, since fairies named *Morgan* abounded (and perhaps still do; as readers of The Golden Bough by Sir James Frazer know, Celtic folklore to this day abounds in all regions of modern France, and the great Frederic Mistral spoke of Celtic folklore in modern Provence) throughout medieval (and perhaps modern as well) France and Occitania, part of the vast amount of Gaulish (in the strict, precise sense) or Celtic (in the broader, more general or ethnic sense; all Gauls were Celts, but not all Celts are Gauls) folklore and legends which survived in

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medieval France and Occitania, and still survive in modern France and Occitania.

Morgan le Fae, Morgan the Fairy, appears in the fine novel The Cornerstone, by Zoe Oldenbourg, the action of which takes place in northern France in the 12th century. In the Middle Ages what is today northern France was the land of the *Langue d'Oil* or Old French, while Occitania, today southern France, was the land of the *Langue d'Oc*, or Old Provençal. It should be noted that only what is today northern France, the land of the *Langue d'Oil*, was

considered to "France" in the Middle Ages; Occitania, the land of the *Langue d'Oc*, or Old Provencal, was not thought of as being part of France. To put it in more modern terms, only where Old French, the *Langue d'Oïl*, was spoken, was considered to be "France". In other words, in the Middle Ages the name "France" was essentially a linguistic term.

Part Three of said novel is introduced with a poem to *Morgan le Fae*:

Now the wind, which sings and weeps
Down the dark road swoops and leaps.
Crow's wings ripping through the clouds
Tear the heavens into shrouds.
Naked tree with shaking boughs
Black and dreadful mops and mows.
Morgan the Fairy sings and sighs,
Morgan sings and Morgan cries,
Morgan moans and Morgan weeps.
Down the dark road swoops and leaps. ... (284)

Eglantine, one of the main characters of said novel, tells her brother Haguenier of an encounter with *Morgan le Fae*, Morgan the Fairy:

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"I feel much better alone in the forest than among men. I know that the Little People watch over me and sometimes I go to the edge of the marshes and talk with them as if they were my sisters. I would tell you why too, but it is not proper to speak of that to a man. Only the other evening I went to the faeries' clearing and I put my bread out on the white stones for the crows to eat. They will eat from my hand and are not afraid. And then I saw Morgan, who came and sat on the stone opposite to me. I was not frightened, and she spoke to me gently and told me she would teach me many things. If I had been like everyone else I should have been afraid, shouldn't I?"

'And what was Morgan like?', Haguenier said, still more curious than scared.

'very pretty. Not as she's supposed to be ; a lady, small, well-made, very fair and dressed in bright red. She has a crown of laurel on her head, and her eyes - so strange, and burning with a small red fire.'" (285)

Of course the Persian word *peri* or *pari* is derived from the same Indo-European stem as *fairy*.

In any case, by the device of his bilingual paraphrase, Kashifi meant to indicate that the women of both the Arab *jinn* and the Persian *peris* were moved by the tragedy of Karbala and the weeping of the women of the family of Imam Hussein and came to lament, or, in Persian *kin* (pronounced "keen"; compare this with the Gaelic *coinn*, which has the same pronunciation and the same meaning) over the bodies of the slain of Karbala.

Jacob of Serug, known as "flute of the Holy Spirit and harp of the faithful church", was born in 451 AD, died 519 AD. Though born at Curtem on the Euphrates, but became Bishop of Serug, also in Syria. He is best known for his Syriac homilies on the Virgin Mary. Below is given one of said homilies.

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A wonderful discourse has now moved me to speak; you who are discerning, lovingly incline the ear of the soul!

The story of Mary stirs in me, to show itself in wonder; you, wisely, prepare your minds!

The Holy Virgin calls me today to speak of her; let us purge our hearing for her luminous tale, lest it be dishonored.

Blessed of women, by whom the curse of the land was eradicated, and the sentence henceforth has come to an end.

Modest, chaste and filled with beauties of holiness, so that my mouth is inadequate to speak a word concerning her.

Second Eve who generated life among mortals, and paid and rent asunder the bill of Eve her mother.

Virgin who without marital union marvelously became a mother, a mother who remained without change in her virginity.

The image of her beauty is more glorious and exalted than my composition; I do not dare let my mind depict the form of her image.

It is easier to depict the sun with its light and its heat than to tell the story of Mary in its splendor.

Perhaps the rays of the sphere can be captured in pigments, but the tale concerning her is not completely told by those who preach.

While I seek to reckon her in the order of virgins, behold the sound of birth pangs striking her, comes to me.

I see her who bears the son of a fertile mother, yet it seems to me that she belongs in the order of virgins,

She is virgin and mother and wife of a husband yet unmated; how may I speak if I say that she is incomprehensible?

Then He sent a Watcher (term used for angels in the Syriac tradition) from the Heavenly legions, that he might bring the good tidings to the blessed one, most fair.

Gabriel (Qur'anic *Jibril*), the great chief of the hosts, descended; he went down to her as he had been sent from God. Because she alone was worthy of the great mystery which was rich in divine revelations.

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With prayers and in limpidity ("shayfuta" in Syriac, which term indicates a receptivity to revelation) and in simplicity, Mary received that spiritual revelation.

She being holy and standing in wonder in God's presence, her heart was poured forth with love in prayer before Him.

She was in prayer, as also Daniel was in prayer, when this same Watcher of light descended to him.

The Watcher had descended while Mary was standing in prayer; he gave her the greeting which was sent to her from the Most High.

"Peace to you, Mary, blessed one, our Lord is with you; blessed are you and blessed is the fruit of your virginity."

Then when she heard it, she was prudently reflecting on what might be the cause of this unusual greeting.

Mary said: "How then will what you say happen, since man has never been known to me, how will I bring forth?"

You have announced a Son to me but I am not conscious of marital union; I have heard of nativity but I see no marriage."

A pure virgin and a fiery Watcher spoke with wonder; a discourse which reconciled dwellers of earth and Heaven.

The two had sat between heavenly beings and earthly ones; that spoke, attended to and made peace for those who were wroth.

Maiden and Watcher met each other and conversed in argument on the matter until they abolished the conflict between the Lord and Adam.

The great strife which occurred amidst the trees came up for discussion, and it all came to an end; there was peace.

An earthly being and a heavenly one spoke with love; the struggle between the two sides ceased, and they were at peace.

The evil time which had killed Adam was changed; another good time came in which he would be raised.

Instead of that serpent, Gabriel arose to speak; instead of Eve, Mary began to consent.

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Instead of the treacherous one who brought death by the tale he set forth, the truthful one arose to announce life by the tidings which he brought.

Instead of the mother who wrote among the trees what she owed, the daughter paid all the debts of Adam, her father.

Eve and the serpent with the Watcher and Mary were transmuted, that affair was put right which had become distorted from the beginning.

See how Eve's ear inclines and hearkens to the voice of the deceiver when he hisses deceit to her.

But come and see the Watcher instilling salvation into Mary's ear and removing the insinuation of the serpent from her and consoling her.

That building which the serpent pulled down, Gabriel built up; Mary rebuilt the foundation which Eve broke down in Eden.

Two virgins who received the message from two messengers; two by two, generations were sent forth, one against another.

Satan sent a secret to Eve by means of the serpent; the Lord sent the good tidings to Mary by means of the Watcher.

A confutation of the discourse which the serpent spoke, Gabriel made against the evil on in the ear of Mary on account of Eve.

He renewed the discourse but refuted the arguments with his words; he spoke the truth and removed all falsehood.

A virgin was beguiled by the mischief maker in Eden; her ear piped the sound of the great deception.

Instead of this virgin another was chosen; truth was spoken to her in her ear from the Most High.

By the door which death entered, by it entered life and loosened the great bond which the evil one had bound there.

Where sin and death had abounded from the beginning, also grace was made to abound which would vivify Adam.

The serpent did not salute Eve when speaking to her, for there is no peace in the way which is full of death.

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He chanted deception to her, fanned falsehood upon her, on her virginity poured forth evil counsels and deceitful answers.

Enmity, conspiracy to kill and desire for blood, he placed in the midst of the discourse which he had delivered to the house of Adam.

He saluted her, implanted life in her, proclaimed peace to her; he encountered her with love and brought to an end the former things.

On this account, the Watcher had saluted Mary as a pledge of great peace for the world.

"Hail Mary, our Lord is with you," he was saying to her, "you will conceive and bear a son in your virginity."

She said to him: "How will this be as you say, since I am a virgin and there is no fruit of virgins?"

In that moment it was very necessary to question, so that the mystery of the Son dwelling in her might be explained to her.

Mary enquired in order that we might learn from the angel concerning that conception which is a sublime matter beyond understanding.

Behold how most fair is Mary to the one who beholds her, and how loveable these things of hers to the ones who are capable of discerning.

This one inquires that she might learn from him about her conception, because it was hers and for the profit of the one who listens to her.

Eve had not questioned the serpent when he led her astray, she who by her will kept silent and firmly believed the treachery.

The latter maiden heard truth from the faithful one, nevertheless in this way she had sought out an explanation.

The former heard of becoming a goddess from a tree, but she did not say: "How will what you mention ever happen?"

The Watcher told this one that she would conceive the Son of God, but she did not accept it until she was well informed.

That she in her person would ascend to the divine rank, the virgin wife of Adam did not doubt the liar.

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It was easy for her to keep silence and easy also to ask questions; by her discernment she learned the truth from the angel.

As reprehensible as Eve was by her deed, so Mary was glorious, and as the folly of this one, so that one's wisdom is shown up.

As much as the former is despicable because of that affair, so the latter has no need to be ashamed by the matter of the Son.

As much as the former is foolish, the latter is wise to the one who understands, for whatever that one owed, this one repaid.

By that former the fall, by the latter resurrection for all our race; sin by Eve but righteousness from within Mary.

By Eve's silence, guilt and fouling of a name; by Mary's discourse, life and light with victory.

She answered the Watcher: "How will what you tell me take place?" He began explaining the way of the Son and His descent within her:

"The Holy Spirit will come to you with solemnity, and the Power of the Most High will overshadow you, O most blessed one."

Here all speech of the tongue is superfluous; one does not speak except with the wonder of faith.

This matter requires powers of the mind more sublime than usual; it requires merciful love to speak of it without dispute.

First the Spirit and then the Power dwelt in the pure one, as he said to her: "The Spirit will come and the Power will descend."

In this way, the Watcher announced to her that he had come from the house of the Father: "The Spirit will come and then the Power of the Most High will descend."

Indeed, the Holy Spirit came to Mary, to let loose from her the former sentence of Eve and Adam.

He sanctified her, purified her and made her blessed among women; He freed her from the curse of sufferings on account of Eve her mother.

(3356)

The Spirit freed her from that debt that she might be beyond transgression when He solemnly dwelt in her.

He purified the Mother by the Holy Spirit while dwelling in her, that He might take from her a pure body without sin.

On this account, the holy one of renown and most blessed one, the pure Virgin, He sanctified with the Spirit.

He made her pure, limpid and blessed as that Eve, before the serpent spoke with her.

He bestowed on her that first grace which her mother had, until she ate from the tree which was full of death.

The Spirit who came made her like the Eve of old, though she did not hear the counsel of the serpent nor his hateful speech.

In that condition where Eve and Adam were placed, before they sinned, He placed her and then descended in her.

As our father generated our mother without marital union, she also generated because she was as Adam before he sinned.

That purity which was in Adam, Mary also acquired, by the

Spirit who came and she gave birth without impulse of lust.

Adam chastely generated the virgin, Eve; he called her by the name, mother of life, and so he was a prophet.

He sanctified her body and made her without hateful lusts, as the virgin Eve had been until she lusted.

That increase of evil inclination which the serpent effected, he wiped from her and filled her with holiness and integrity.

Blessed Mary, who by her questions to Gabriel, taught the world this mystery which was concealed.

The beauty of the matter which appeared openly is because of her; she was the reason that it was explained to us by the angel.

By that question, the wise one became the mouth of the Church; she learned that interpretation for all Creation.

For if Mary had not had sublime impulses, she would not have arrived to speak before the Watcher.

(3357)

If she had not possessed inner and outer beauty, Gabriel also would not have answered her with eloquence.

She rose up to this measure on her own, until the Spirit, that perfecter of all, came to her.

Mary appeared to us as a sealed letter, in which were hidden the mysteries of the Son and His depth.

She gave her body as a clean sheet; the Word wrote His essence on it, corporeally.

She was the letter, not because she was sealed after she was inscribed, but the Divinity sealed her and then wrote on her.

They sealed her and inscribed her; she was also read although not being opened, because the Father revealed in her, mysteries more sublime than usual.

With her the Father sent us tidings full of good things, and through her, forgiveness to all condemned for their bonds of sin.

By her, emancipation was sent to Adam who had been enslaved; he became an heir and came in among the sons, as he had been.

By her, heavenly beings made reconciliation with those below,

and the sides which had been at enmity were in great peace.

Because of her, confusion of face was lifted from womanhood;
the reproach of all women passed away from the nations.

Because of her, the way to Eden, which had been blocked was
opened; the serpent fled and men passed along it to God.

Because of her, the Cherub had removed his lance that he
might no longer guard the Tree of Life which offered itself
to those who ate it.

She gave us a sweet fruit, full of life, that we might eat
from it and live forever with God.

The Great Sun of Righteousness shone forth from her, and a
glorious light which banished darkness from the region.

"All nations henceforth will call me blessed," Mary said, by
the light of her soul on account of her fruit. (286)

Below are two hymns to the Virgin Mary from the Scottish
Highlands. I regret that I do not have access to the Scottish
(3358)

Gaelic originals:

Praise of Mary

I say the prayer
That was given with anointing
To Mary Mother
Of Joy;

Along with the Pater (Noster) and Credo,
The Prayer of Mary (Ave Maria) besides,
And the Prayer of God's Son
Of the Passion;

To magnify thine own honor,
To magnify the glory of God's Son
To magnify the greatness of the God
Of grace.

Thou Queen of the angels,
Thou Queen of the kingdom,
Thou Queen of the city
Of Glory:

...

Thou shining Mother of gentleness,
Thou glorious Mother of the stars,
Blessed hast thou been of every race
And people.

O thou, alone praised, worthy of praise,
Make fervent prayer for me
With the Lord of the worlds,
The God of life.

Thou Mary, gentle, fair, gracious,
I pray that thou for sake me not
In the sharp pang
Of my death.

Shield of every dwelling, shield of every people
That are sorely calling
On the gracious mercy
Of thy dear son:

Thou art the Queen-maiden of sweetness,
Thou art the Queen-Maiden of faithfulness,
Thou art the Queen-maiden of peacefulness
And of the peoples.

(3359)

Thou art the well of compassion,
Thou art the root of consolations,
Thou art the living stream of the virgins
And of them who bear child.

Thou art the tabernacle of (Jesus) Christ,
Thou art the mansion of (Jesus) Christ,
Thou art the ark of (Jesus) Christ:
Of Him alone.

Thou art the Queen-maiden of the sea,
Thou art the Queen-maiden of the kingdom,
Thou art the Queen-maiden of the angels
In effulgence.

Thou art the temple of the God of life,
Thou art the tabernacle of the God of life,
Thou art the mansion of the God of life
And of the forlorn.

Thou art the river of grace,
Thou art the well-spring of salvation,
Thou art the garden and the paradise
of the virgins.

Thou art the star of morning,
Thou art the star of watching,
Thou art the star of the ocean
Great.

Thou art the star of the earth,
Thou art the star of the kingdom,
Thou art the star of the Son of the Father
Of glory.

Thou art the grain of the land,
Thou art the treasury of the sea,
The wished-for visitant of the holes
Of the world.

Thou art the vessel of fullness,
Thou art the cup of wisdom,
Thou art the well-spring of health
Of mankind.

Thou art the garden of virtues,
Thou art the mansion of gladness,
Thou art the Mother of sadness
And of clemency.

(3360)

Thou art the garden of apples,
Thou art the full-song of the great people,
Thou art the fullfillment of the world's desire
In loveliness.

Thou art the sun of the heavens,
Thou art the moon of th skies,
Thou art the star and the path
Of the wanderers.

Since thou art the full ocean,
Pilot me at sea;

Since thou art the dry shore,
Save me upon land.

Since thou art the gem of the jewel,
Save me from fire and from water,
Save me from the sky-hosts of evil
And from the fairy shafts.

There is none who utters my song
Or puts it into use,
But Mary will show herself to him
Three times before his death and his end. (287)

Praise of Mary

Flower-garland of the ocean,

Flower-garland of the land,
Flower-garland of the heavens,
Mary.
Flower-garland of the earth,
Flower-garland of the skies,
Flower-garland of the angels,
Mary.
Flower-garland of the mansion,
Flower-garland of the stars,
Flower-garland of paradise,
Mary. (288)

Perhaps the most widespread hymn in the Eastern Orthodox Church is the 7th century Byzantine hymn usually known by its Greek name *Akathist* (or *Akafist* in Church Slavonic). Said hymn is very long, and deals with various topics. Here is a strophe which deals with the Virgin Mary:
(3361)

Rejoice, through you joy rings out again.
Rejoice, through you sorrow is put to flight.
Rejoice, O resurrection of fallen Adam.
Rejoice, O redemption of the tears of Eve.

Rejoice, O sublime peak of human intellect.
Rejoice, O profound abyss even for Angel eyes.
Rejoice, for in you the King's throne was elevated.
Rejoice, for you bear the One Who sustains everything.

Rejoice, O star that goes before the Sun.
Rejoice, O womb of the Incarnate God.
Rejoice, for through you all creation is renewed.
Rejoice, for through you the Creator became a baby.
Rejoice, O Virgin and Bride!

In the 11th century the Cluniac monks composed one of the most widely known of Catholic hymns, generally known by its Latin title "Salve Regina". I do not have the original Latin to hand, but here is a translation:

Hail Holy Queen, Mother of mercy!
Hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope.
To you we cry,
Poor banished children of Eve.
To you do we send up our sighs,
Mourning and weeping in the vale of tears.
Turn then, most gracious Intercessor,

Your eyes of mercy toward us.
And after this our exile
Show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.
O clement, o loving, o sweet Virgin Mary!

From the above, one understands the sense of the following
Aragonese jota from the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39:

The Requetes (Carlist soldiers) of Spain
When they go to fight
Always pray a Salve (Regina)
To Our Lady of the Pillar.

Our Lady of the Pillar is Patroness of Aragon, and, by
extension, of all Spain. The above jota was especially popular
with the Aragonese Carlist Tercio de los Almogavares, who also had

(3362)

another song:

Awake iron!
I am an Almogavar, I like it rough. ...

Yes, the name "Almogavar" is of Muslim origin, as is the
music of the Aragonese "jota".

A more recent example has to do with the Beatles. The Irish-
Catholic Paul McCartney was known as the "mystical Beatle" and by
many girls as the "cute Beatle". No doubt Mr. McCartney's
Irishness or Celticness was the key factor in both the above
aspects. In the song "Let It Be" by Paul McCartney we hear:

When I find myself in times of trouble
Mother Mary comes to me
Speaking words of wisdom
Let it be, let it be.

And in my hour of darkness
She is standing right in front of me
Speaking words of wisdom
Let it be, let it be.

The expression "Mother of God", (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek:
Theotokos; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) is

simply inconceivable and unthinkable in an Islamic context, as we said above. However, there are certain similarities between the role of the Virgin Mary in Catholicism, particularly in Spain and Ireland, and that of Fatima bint Muhammad, called *al-Zahra*, "the Radiant", mother of the martyred Imams Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib, and Hussein ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib, the second and third Holy Shi'a Imams. Fatima bint Muhammad *al-Zahra* appears as the *Mater Dolorosa* (Sorrowful Mother), weeping for her martyred sons.(289) It is said that Fatima's tears in Paradise for her

(3363)

martyred son the Imam Hussein transformed the celestial abode of bliss into a house of mourning.(290) The following poem was composed by Sa'id ibn al-Nili (died 1169) for a *ta'ziyeh* majalis (commemorative service for the martyrdom of Imam Hussein. The words in the poem are supposedly spoken by Fatima Zahra:

How great is my grief for you, oh my child, you are
who are the one lost of friends and family.
Again I say how great is my sorrow, o my child, for
after you I shall desert sleep and even sleeplessness.
Woe is me, who took care of his shrouding, who
beheld his face, throat and eyes.
Woe, woe is me, who did wash him and walk behind
his bier.
Woe, woe is me, who did pray over him and lay him
in his grave.(291)

Another source says:

"... for truly Fatima continues to weep for him (Imam Hussein), sobbing so loudly that hell would utter such a loud cry, which, had its keepers (the angels) not been ready for it, ... its smoke and fire would have escaped and burned all that is on the face of the earth. Thus they contain Hell as long as Fatima continues to weep.
... for Hell would not calm down until her loud weeping had quieted."(292)

We have already spoken of the importance of wild rue (Persian: *Sodab Kohi*, scientific name: *Ruta graveolens*) in the folklore and popular piety of Iran. Below is an incantation used in Iran:

Sodab Kohi, ki kasht?Muhammad
Sodab Kohi: ki chid? Ali
Sodab Kohi, ki chud kard? Fatima
Sodab Kohi, az baraya ki? az baraya Hasan va Hussein.

Wild Rue, who planted it? Muhammad
Wild Rue, who gathered it? Ali
Wild Rue, who burned it? Fatima
Wild Rue, for whom? For Hasan and Hussein.

(3364)

In Jannat al-Khulud, Mullah Muhammad Reza Imami says that the Shi'a jinn are the "holy Jinn". In Iran, the pure Persian word *peri* or *pari* (plural: *Paryan*), often translated as "fairy", is often used to refer to "good jinn" (though, as we said earlier, the Arab *jinn* are, in reality, radically different from the Persian *peris*). In the category of "good jinn" or "peris" would certainly be included the "Shi'a jinn" of Mullah Muhammad Reza Imami. In his Rawdat ash-Shuhada, Kashifi says that the jinn and the houris consoled and comforted Fatima and wept with her when her son the Imam Hussein was martyred at Karbala. No doubt these were Shi'a jinns or Shi'a *Paryan*.

Compare the above to any of many Catholic and Eastern Orthodox songs, poems and prayers relating to "The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin (Mary)".

Here are four examples of the above, translations of traditional Irish-Gaelic songs dealing with the sorrows of the Virgin Mary. They are one of the many things which prompted even the irreverent non-Catholic George Bernard Shaw to exclaim:

"Holy and beautiful is the soul of Catholic Ireland."(293)

The songs given below evoke both the Spanish "saeta" and the Urdu *marsiya*, of which we shall speak in the next chapter.

Seacht n-Dolais na Maighdine
(The Seven Sorrows of The Virgin)

The first sorrow that was on the Virgin and she looking
on her child,
When He was born in the stable without clothes under
Him nor about Him.

Curfa (Chorus):

(3365)

Och ochon, Jesus, You are my child.
Och ochon, Jesus, You are the bright king of the
Heavens.

The second sorrow that was on the Virgin and she looking on
her child,
When she got news from Egypt that their child would be
taken from them.

Curfa (Chorus)

The third sorrow that was on the Virgin and she looking
on her child,
When He was stripped of His garments and fury was put on
the fair day.

Curfa (Chorus)

The fourth sorrow that was on the Virgin and she looking
on her child,
When the crown (of thorns) was pressed on Him with spite
until the blood came in a stream.

Curfa (Chorus)

The fifth sorrow that was on the Virgin and she looking
on her child,
When He was put on the cross of torment and sharp nails
binding Him.

Curfa (Chorus)

The sixth sorrow that was on the Virgin and she looking
on her child,
When He was taken down from the cross of torment to her own
bosom and He dead.

Curfa (Chorus)

The seventh sorrow that was on the Virgin and she looking on
her child,
When He was put into the earth cold and lifeless and He
dead.

Curfa (Chorus) (294)

(3366)

Caoineadh Mhuire (Mary's Keen)

Peter, Apostle, have you seen my love so bright?
M'ochon agus m'ochon o!

I saw him with his enemies - a harrowing sight!
M'ochon agus m'ochon o!

Who is that just man upon the Passion Tree?
It is your Son, dear Mother, know you not me?
M'ochon agus m'ochon o!

Is that the wee babe I bore nine months in my womb
M'ochon agus m'ochon o!

That was born in a stable when no house would give us room?
M'ochon agus m'ochon o!

Mother, be quiet, let not your heart be torn
M'ochon agus m'ochon o!

My keening (Irish) women, mother, are yet to be born!
M'Ochon agus m'ochon o! (295)

Caoineadh na hAoine (Good Friday's Keen)

Sweet Jesus who suffered
The Passion on the tree of the Cross
Defeated unto death, great was your distress until the day
came

Dearly you paid for the sins of Adam's clan

Och ochon i! Och ochon o!
Och ochon i! se mo bhron go deo,
Och ochon i! Och ochon o!
Ochon i! 'Tis my eternal sorrow.

How is it you did not weep when you thought of the Passion?
How did you not weep and you sought by your betrayer?

Was it not a wonder you did not weep as the spear went
through your
Side when you wept for the sinners' being bound to Hell for
eternity.

Och ochon i! Och ochon o!
Och ochon! Tis my eternal sorrow.

(3367)

The Blessed Virgin was behind him in the street on the trail
Of his blood - and it plentiful to be had, "John, my treasure
My child cannot be found." "Good and blessed lady, you will
Hear news of him soon."

Och ochon i! Och ochon o!
Och ochon! Tis my eternal sorrow. (296)

Caoineadh na Maighdine (The Blessed Virgin's Keening)

(Chronicler)

The Virgin (mary) is keening for her only son
Och ochon! agus ochon o!

The three wise kings were they to come
Och ochon agus ochon o!

(The Three Magi)

Could we see him now we would go and ask pardon
For all our sins and our hearts that are hardened
As (Ste. Mary) Magdalene was forgiven
And (Ste.) Veronica forgiven
Or she who for years in a fever had lain
Before God's grace made her whole again
Or the blind one who pierced His side with a spear
And saw the torrents of blood appear
Each drop so dear he would fain have stemmed the tide
Or the black thief on his right side

(The Virgin Mary)

My child must go the the garden (Gethsemani) tomorrow
And in his hand a Book of Sorrow

(Jesus)

Call my Apostles, the Passion I will read

(St. Peter)

"Lord", said peter, "thy side I shall not leave."

(Jesus)

"Thrice before daybreak you will make me grieve,"

(Chronicler)

Dark Judas came with a greeting and a kiss;

(3368)

(Jesus)

"Accursed one to sell me first and now do this."

(Chronicler)

With rope of cruel hemp He was bound
And brought at once to Pilate who looked around.

(Pilate)

"What is it this just man has done, I pray
That all of you should guard him in this way?"

(The Synagogue)

"He claims to be the King of Jews, the source of every
grace."

(Pilate)

"Then I shall wash my hands of him, if such be the case."

(Chronicler)

They brought him straight to Herod Antipas, making no delay.

(Herod Antipas)

"What is it this just man has done, I pray
That all of you should guard him in this way?"

(The Synagogue)

"He claims to be the source of grace, the Son of the Most
High."

(Herod Antipas)

"According to my judgement, I deem this man should die
Bind him to a pillar and leave him there till noon.
Bandage both his eyes and dress him like fool

With a rope of cruel hemp and have him tightly bound
Spit on him and rail at him with every mocking sound.
Beat him and flog him - Mary's only son.
Cut down a tree from the garden - the very tallest one.
Let him suffer there his Passion high up on the cross
Drive the sharp nails through his palms without remorse."

(3369)

(Chronicler)

They raised him on their shoulders, his precious arms and
feet
And hurled his despicably on the cold and stony street.

(The Virgin Mary)

"It is time", said the Virgin, "that I my love shall seek.":

(Chronicler)

Her hair was all undone, no shoes were on her feet
And she gathered up the blood that through the grass has
seeped
She dashed among the (Roman) soldiers, in and out (as though)
in a race.

(The Virgin Mary)

"God be with you, son - and do you know His face?"

(Jesus)

"Only be patient and you will receive grace."

(The Virgin Mary)

"Child, thy burden is heavy, come and give me my share."

(Jesus)

"For all of Adam's children evermore in my care
No, mother, each one his own cross must bear."

(Chronicler)

When the Jews heard these words, they thought it
would be appropriate
To raise her on their shoulders, take her arms and feet
And hurl her despicably on the cold and stony street.

(The Synagogue)

"If he is the Son of God, let him raise his mother from the street."

(Chronicler)

And this Our Saviour did by a miraculous feat
They brought him to his Passion Hill
His broken body there to kill.
(3370)

(The Synagogue)

"Behold him now and cry your fill."

(Ste. Brigid [early Irish saint])

"O truly", said Ste. Brigid, "he is a shadow nothing more.
Where are the three Marys to keen his awesome gore?"

(Chronicler)

And the three angels came with keening loud and sore.
For their Father and His Mother they keened both loud
and long
And then they keened most piteously for all Adam's
descendants
And then for the sinner who repents not his wrong.

(The Virgin Mary)

"This is the Virgin's keen, in sorrow may you pray
Let him who utters it this way
In reverence, day by day
Know that my son will never look away." (297)

Of course, Ste. Brigid of Ireland lived more than four centuries after the time of Jesus. In the following chapter we will encounter this same sort of anachronism in the "T'aziyeh" of Iran and the Urdu "Marsiya" of Lucknow. In all these cases, the authors sought symbolic rather than literal truth.

In Catholic and Eastern Orthodox iconography, the "Seven Sorrows of the Virgin" are symbolized by an image or icon of the Virgin Mary showing her heart pierced with seven swords.

Says The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium concerning the Akathistos (Church Slavonic: *Akafist*) Hymn:

"Akathistos Gymn, and anonymous *kontakion* sung in honor of the Theotokos (Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) while the congregation stands (i.e., *akathistos*, "not seated"; a recollection of the all-night vigil during which, according to tradition, the
(3371)

Akathistos Hymn was first sung in thanksgiving for the lifting of the Avar siege of Constantinople in 626). Despite the liturgical developments of the 8th century AD, when performance of *kontakia* in their entirety was abandoned, the Akathistos Hymn continued in use, at first at the Feast of the Annunciation (25 March) and subsequently during Lent. The Akathistos Hymn consists of a *prooimion* (three of which, probably, exist) and 24 *oikoi* or stanzas, linked by an alphabetic acrostic. The *oikoi* follow two alternating structures, one shorter with the refrain "Allelouia", the other longer and with a set of 12 *Chairetismo*i (Salutations) to the Theotokos, ending in the refrain "Hail, wedded maiden and virgin". The first 12 *oiko*i give the biblical narrative on the Incarnation; the remaining 12 meditate upon its mysteries. The whole coalesces to create a subtly interwoven net of images that is one of the high points of Byzantine poetry. The author and date of composition remain uncertain. One *prooimion*, "To the defender and commander", and hence the entire Akathistos Hymn, is attributed in the *synaxaria* to Patriarch Sergios I in 626 and in the Latin translation (8th or 9th century) to Patriarch Germanos I in 717/718; metrical patterns and theological considerations, however, point rather to a date in the early 6th century AD. Despite the temptation to ascribe this masterpiece to another craftsman working in the same genre at approximately the same time, Romanos the Melode probably did not write the Akathistos Hymn. The hymn survives in a rich manuscript tradition.

Four illustrated copies of the Akathistos Hymn are preserved. Two are Greek: in Moscow (historical Museum, gr. 429), probably a product of the Hodegon monastery from the third quarter of the 14th century, and in Madrid (Escorial R.I. 19), whose late 14th or early 15th century decoration shows Western influence. Two are in 14th century Church Slavonic Psalters: the Tomic Psalter in Moscow (Historical Museum manuscript 2752) and the Serbian Psalter in Munich (Bayern Staats Bibliothek, slav.4). The cycle is found somewhat earlier in monumental painting, but may be Palaiologan in origin. Illustrations of the first 12 *oikoi* rely on traditional iconography of the life of the Virgin and consequently

are relatively standardized. The next 12 required greater imagination on the part of artists, and results varied." (298)

Says Greek Orthodox Archbishop Joseph Raya concerning the Akathistos Hymn:
(3372)

OFFICE OF PRAISE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD OR AKATHIST HYMN

"This Office, probably composed in the year 532, is to the Byzantine Church what the Rosary and the Litanies of the Blessed Mother are to the Latin Rite. There is in the Oriental Church no better prayer expressing love and veneration for Mary: all the figures under which she has been represented in the Scriptures are repeated here, in the second part, not in the form of a dry enumeration, but as applied to her by the living people of the Gospel, who thus participate in the universal concert of praise and personally glorify the Virgin Mother. The episodes of Holy Scriptures come back to life before our very eyes; they set our hearts aflame, and lead us to join the chorus of the saints who, at the time of Mary, witnessed the great mystery of the Incarnation. The excellence of the Akathist Hymn is seen in this, that it always brings us back to theological truth: to the fact that Mary is great because she is the Mother of God, the bridge between heaven and earth, for her intercession is all-powerful with God, her Son; her holiness and beauty are such that even the angels in their glory fall in admiration before her.

This hymn also exalts the mystery of the Incarnation in its plenitude: the miraculous maternity and perpetual virginity of Mary cannot be admired without concurrent adoration of the condescension, wisdom and omnipotence of God who enclosed his infinite Word (*Logos*) in the virgin's womb. (299)

Says Egon Wellesz:

"The Akathistos (Hymn) holds a unique place in Eastern (Orthodox) Worship, for it is as mentioned before, the only Kontakion which has escaped the
(3372)

liturgical reform, by which the Kontakia were reduced from their original size of twenty-four or more stanzas to only two: the Prooimium (*koukoulion*) and the first stanza (*oikos*). It is also unique of its kind in its

poetical form. The hymn is a combination of a Kontakion and a group of twelve Chairetismoï, of "Salutations", attached to the twelve stanzas (1, 3, 5, etc.) of the Kontakion.

The Kontakion tells, in the first part, the story of Christ, from the Annunciation to the flight into Ehypt, and gives in its second part the theological
(3373)

interpretation of the coming of Christ as Savior of the world, and in the third part praises the Virgin as Theotokos (Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) and Christ, the Holy King.

The oldest layer is obviously that contained in the first part of the Kontakion (stanzas 1 - 12), the story of the infancy of Christ. The second and third parts (stanzas 13 - 24) seem to be a later addition.

The Chairetismoï belong to a different poetical genre. The "Salutations" can be traced back to the liturgy of the Hellenic Synagogues. In early Christianity they were connected with the name of Jesus Christ. The prototype of the twelve Chairetismoï in the Akathistos Hymn dates probably from the time of the Council of Ephesus in Ad 431.

The question now arises: when and by whom were these divergent elements brought together and the Akathistos-form created, in which a poetical homily, originally in honor of Christ, was united with the "Salutations" addressed to the Blessed Virgin?

Though the Akathistos Hymn is one of the most famous of the Eastern (Orthodox) Church, neither the date when it was written nor the question of its authorship has been definitely settled. There are two facts which are responsible for this difficulty:

1.) In most manuscripts of the text the hymn is transmitted anonymously, in the others it is ascribed to various authors: Pisides, Sergios, Germanos; only in one manuscript, Codice Thessalonic, Blataion 41, folio 193, does one find the rubric ... from which we learn that some people thought the hymn was written by Sergios, Patriarch of Constantinople, other by Rmanos, deacon and Melodos, i.e., poet-musician.

2.) In the Synarxia the singing of the Akathistos Hymn is mentioned in connexion with each of the three sieges of Constantinople: the first in 626 by the Persians, Avars and Slavs in the days of the Emperor Heraclius: the second, in 673, by the Arabs in the reign of Constantine Pogonatus: the third, 717-718, under Leo III, the Isaurian's reign, culminating in 718 in the decisive victory over the Arabs.

Reference to the singing of the Akathistos Hymn at

a thanksgiving service is made in the descriptions of the first and third siege. When the first occurred in 626 the superiority of the enemy was, according to Synaxar, ten to one. But Sergios, Patriarch of Constantinople, who took command in the absence of the Emperor, bearing in his hands the most precious relics
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- the icon of Christ 'not made by human hands' and that of the Theotokos - walked ceaselessly round the walls of the city inspiring the defenders and urging them to trust in the Blessed Virgin who would not abandon Her City, the City in which it was believed the Virgin actually dwelled. All assaults were repelled and finally atempest threw the enemy's fleet against the shores of the Blachernae quarter, and all its ships went down. To celebrate this victory, which the citizens attributed to the miraculous intervention of the Virgin, the population streamed to the church at Blachernae and standing throughout the night sang the Akatistos Hymn.

After describing the third siege and the destruction of the Arab fleet in the Aegaen Sea, the Synaxar ends with a short reference to the establishment of a feast to commemorate the victory, and the explanation of the term Akathistos.

Nowhere, however, is mention made in the Synaxar to the legendary report that Sergios, or according to others Germanos (who played an equally important part in the defence during the third siege), composed the Akathistos Hymn. We only hear that the hymn was sung at the thanksgiving service in the church at Blachernae, the church which among all the many churches in Constantinople dedicated to the Virgin, held the first place in Mariological devotion. For 'if there had been any private or public good fortune, all classes - patriarchs, emperors, those in high rank or public office and ordinary citizens - would hasten to Blachernae to give their thanks to God and to the Virgin; and if they were burdened with disasters, they came in confidence to Blachernae to be relieved of the weight of these burdens.'

There is however, one source in which Germanos is mentioned as author of the hymn; this is the Latin version of the Akathistos Hymn first published by P. v. Winterfeld from a 9th century manuscript, written at (the monastery of) St. Gall, now Codex C. 78 of the Zuricher Zentralbibliothek. The manuscript gives the Synaxar, the Prooimium, and the beginning of the first stanza, but breaks off after the first few lines. Fortunately, the complete Latin version is preserved in a number of manuscripts of which Codex Paris, Biblioteque Mazarin 693 is the prototype. This is, according to Dom M. Huglo, a late 12th or early 13th century manuscript copied from an early 9th or late 8th century original

which is lost.

The Synaxar begins with the description of the siege by the Arabs by land and sea under Maslamah, the general of the caliph. The superiority of the enemy in
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numbers was so overwhelming that the fate of Constantinople seemed sealed. But a miracle occurred. Maslamah and his men suddenly saw the apparition of the Virgin, followed by a host of angels (which) saved the city just as, from the height of the two earlier assaults by the enemy, salvation came from the icon, and the Virgin's shroud.

The Synaxar then turns to the fate of St. Germanus who, according to the legend, was put to death by the iconoclast Emperor Theodosius, and relates the institution of the singing of the Akathistos Hymn on the feast of the assumption to this.

Hereafter follows thee 'Hymnos'.

It was necessary to deal explicitly with the Old Latin version because of the fact that the 'Victory Prooimium' in the Latin version was copied from a Greek text which must be ascribed to the middle or beginning of the 8th century, excludes Photios (820-897) as author, and the siege by the Russians in 860 as the event to which the Prooimium refers.

The question now arises: was the Akathistos Hymn originally a 'Song of Victory', and should Germanos or Sergios be regarded as author of the hymn?

This question was raised nearly fifty years ago by P.F. Krypiakiewicz in his study De hymni Akathisti auctore in the Byzantinische Zeitschrift where, since 1905, the problem of the authorship of the Akathistos Hymn has been touched on by P. Maas in his review of > de Meester's articles on the Akathistos Hymn, and A. Baumstark's review of J. Strzygowski's book on the miniatures of the Serbian Psalter in Munich. Indeed, Krypiakiewicz's question already anticipates his answer, namely, that this Prooimium is a later addition to the Akathistos, composed to celebrate the victory over the enemy, and that it replaced the original Prooimium, which figures in the Office of the Akathistos Hymn as Apolytikion, i.e., Communion chant. The original Prooimium is akin to the diction of the hymn; one finds here not only the same similes but even the same words as in the hymn.

The soundness of Krypiakiewicz's argument can be seen if one compares the Koukoulion - this is the usual term for the Prooimium - with the hymn proper, which in Kontakion poetry always has its own metre, but is connected with the Koukoulion by the same refrain: "The Angel, understanding the secret command, appeared suddenly in Joseph's dwelling and said to her who knew not wedlock: He, who with his descent has bowed down the

heavens, finds room in Thee, unaltered and whole. Seeing him taking a servant's form in Thy womb I marvel and cry out to Thee: Hail, Bride unbridled."

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However the strongest argument which Krypiakiewicz produces in favor of the coherence of the Koukoulion with the hymn seems to me to be not so much the stylistic similarities, which can always be explained as inconclusive, but the dogmatic significance of the line: "The Word of God finds room in Thee, unaltered and whole", which is paralleled in the first line of stanza XV: "While fully present amid those below, the infinite Word was in no way absent from those above, for what happened was a divine condescension, and not a moving from one place to another."

The profession that 'the Infinite Word was wholly present on earth, yet not wholly absent from heaven' is directed against the teaching of Apollonius of Laodicea (died circa 390) that Christ had a human body and a human soul (*psyche*) but not a human mind (*nous*) and that the Word was his *nous*. This statement of the Orthodox view on the Christological drama leads inevitably to the conclusion that the Akathistos Hymn embodies a poetical layer which goes back to the period when the Christological question was passionately discussed. This discussion is characteristic of the metrical homilies and hymns of Ephraim the Syrian (306-373), whose influence upon Romanos (Melodos) has been shown by T.M. Wehofer, A. Baumstark. And P. Maas. Krypiakiewicz, therefore, comes to the same conclusion as Maas, that Romanos must be regarded as the author of the Akathistos Hymn, though curiously enough, without mentioning him. Indeed, P. Maas has already pointed out that Romanos, describing in his Pentecost Kontakion the descent of the Paraclete from heaven, says of Him that he was wholly present in heaven and wholly present on earth, and everywhere, and no change or diminution occurred to Him.

The resemblance of these lines to those of the Akathistos Hymn is unmistakable and suggest Romanos as the author of the hymn. Maas supports this view in his next study on the date of the hymns of Romanos by showing that of all the problems of Christian dogmatics, Romanos is interested only in Christology and the defence of its Orthodox view against Monophysites, Nestorians, Arians, Docetists and Manichaeans..

Pursuing his argument in favor of Romanos's authorship in his study on the Kontakion, Maas shows the influence of the homilies of Basil of Seleucia upon Romanos and, in particular, that on the feast of the Annunciation (*Oratio* 39 in manuscript *Deiparae Annuntiationem* upon the Akathistos Hymn. Indeed, taking Basil's refutation of the Apollinarian heresy in this

homily, one is struck by a passage which is almost
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identical with that of stanza XV of the Akathistos Hymn.

It is, however, not only Basil whom Romanos used as a model. An even more striking prototype is the dialogue between Mary and the Archangel Gabriel in the eleventh *Oratio de Laudibus Mariae* by Proklos of Constantinople (died 447) which itself must be based on an older poetical homily to which Proklos added a running commentary. When these additions are removed a dialogue form becomes apparent, linked together by an alphabetical acrostic from A - M. The questions of the angel and the answers of the Virgin begin with the same letter, so that a double acrostic is worked out.

The more Syriac and Greek homiletic poetry is studied, the more obvious are the sources from which Romanos drew the material for his poems. However, I cannot agree with Maas in his change of opinion of Romanos, after his discovery of the homilies of Basil, Proklos and the other homiletic writers. Byzantine hymnography had to follow the same law as Byzantine Chant. It had to fulfill its given function in the liturgy. Byzantine piety saw in the hymns, both words and music, the audible realization of the chants of the angels which are not perceptible to human ears. The hymns were to the monks echoes of the divine harmony and beauty, and it was their artistic obligation not to strive to be 'original' but to follow as closely as possible the patterns handed down by their ancestors. The Akathistos Hymn, like all the homilies which preceded it and the hymns which followed it, was part of the liturgy. The subject matter of the hymn was dictated by the feast just as the text of the prayers of the Office of the day had to commemorate the occasion of the feast.

To support the argument in favor of the authorship of Romanos by other than dogmatic and stylistic evidence, two other points may be added.

In stanza XVII the poet praises the supernatural wisdom of the Theotokos who dissolves 'the word-webs of the Athenians'. The word 'Athenians', del Grande argues, must refer to the philosophers of the Academy of Athens which was closed by Justinian in 529; the hymn, therefore, must have been written before that date; that is in the days of Romanos. I fully agree with this interpretation of the passage, and may add that it has a parallel in the Pentecost Hymn of Romanos, namely in stanza 18 where he thunders against those who worship the pagan poets and philosophers and asks 'why do they not hasten and honor those to whom the All-Holy Spirit appeared?'

In a thesis, at present unpublished,
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Hypapante: Studies in the Festival of the Purification of Ste. Mary the Virgin in the Early Byzantine Church (Oxford, 1951), Miss J.E. Bickersteth investigates the influence of an unedited homily on the Hypapante, ascribed to St. John Chrysostom, on Romanos's Kontakion *In Hypapante Domini* (Pitra Analales Sacra I pp. 28-35). Her careful hortological and philosophical investigation throws some light on two points which must have puzzled everyone who has studied the text of the Akathistos Hymn: 1.) the place of the story of Symeon after the flight into Egypt; 2.) the style and content of the Chairetismoi which differs from that of the traditional "Salutations".

1.) Miss Bickersteth, commenting on Symeon and the *Nunc Dimittis*, states that of all the writers of homilies who deal with the episode, St. John Chrysostom, and following him Romanos, are the only ones to use the apocryphical *Acti Pilati* and to explain that Symeon is sent to announce the approaching redemption and resurrection of all through Christ. The stress is on the prophecies, not on the Presentation in the Temple.

Seen from this point of view the introduction of Symeon into the last stanza of the story of the infancy of Christ in the Akathistos Hymn links the first part to the second, the dogmatical interpretation of Christ as the Savior of mankind.

2.) Commenting on the last section of St. John Chrysostom's homily, Miss Bickersteth comes to the conclusion that the Hypapante homily is a genuine sermon of St. John Chrysostom, taken down by stenographers and written out by later scribes, who may have added the eulogy at the end and introduced the title 'Theotokos' which St. John Chrysostom would not have used.

However, we may add, even if the eulogy is a later addition from the time when the title Theotokos was generally accepted by the Orthodox Church, the 'Salutation' at the end of the Eulogy of the Virgin provides us with a fragment of the missing link which leads from the Doxology in Luke II:14, to the Chairetismoi in the Akathistos Hymn.

There is, finally, the mutilated rubric in the hymn of Romanos on the chaste Joseph which Pitra found in Codex Corsinian, 366 and comments upon it. Pitra attributed the Akathistos Hymn to Dergios, partly on the strength of the Synaxaria, partly because when he wrote it had not been decided whether Romanos wrote his hymns at the beginning of the sixth or the eighth century. Pitra did not believe in the later date, but

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left the question open. However, now that the question

has been definitely been decided in favor of the earlier date, it becomes evident that Romanos wished to inform the singer that the Kontakion about the chaste Joseph should be sung to the melody of the Akathistos Hymn. Romanos obviously referred in the rubric to his own hymn which must therefore be of an earlier date than the Joseph Kontakion. There was, as far as our knowledge goes, no other Melodos living at that time who could have written the hymn of which Pitra speaks.

When we turn to the visual arts we find the first cycles, representing the infancy of Christ, from the Annunciation to the flight into Egypt, in the fifth century. Single scenes, however, existed on fourth century mosaics in the Palestinian churches, erected in the Constantinian era at the Holy Places and dedicated to events in the life of Christ. Replicas of these mosaics, representing the Adoration of the shepherds and the Magi, the Baptism, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ, survive, e.g., on the ampullas of the cathedral at Monza.

The formation of the cycle of mosaic representations of the infancy of Christ coincides in date with the formation of the same cycle in poetry. The elements of both go back to Syrian art and poetry of the fourth century; but it seems it was only at a later stage, after the Council of Ephesus, that the single scenes were joined together into a continuous narrative cycle.

Greatness in an artist reveals itself by his power to give his vision a definite but unforeseen expression. It is the function of the great Byzantine poet to follow his ancestors in their unending stream of hymns of praise to the glory of God, of Christ, of the Theotokos, the miracle of the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Passion and the Resurrection, the lives of the Saints and holy martyrs. The thematic material is given by the Holy Scriptures, the Apochrypha, the Synaxaria, and the writings of the Fathers of the Church. His task is to give it a new significance in his poem; to set the phrases which are the traditional heritage of Christian piety in a new light.

Such a poet was Romanos whom the Church praises on his feat on 1st October.

None of the homiletic writers, his forerunners, nor any of the contemporary hymnographers were equal to him in power of expression, poetical vision boldness of similes, and perfect harmony of line; and in no other hymn does his greatness shine more brightly than in the Akathistos Hymn." (300)

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We will have much more to say about Melodos in the following

chapter.

Below is the version of the Akatistos Hymn presented by Archbishop Joseph Raya.

The priest begins:

Blessed is our God at all times, now and always and for ever and ever.

Response. Amen.

THE CANON: ODES OF PRAISE

FIRST ODE

HIRMOS

I shall open my mouth, and it shall be filled with the Spirit, and I shall sing a hymn of praise to the Mother and Queen; with great joy I shall celebrate and sing her praise.

TROPARIA

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

As the Archangel beheld you, immaculate one, a living scroll of Christ which the Spirit had sealed, he cried out to you: "Hail, vessel of joy, in whom the curse of Eve is lifted!"

The congregation:

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

Hail, O Virgin, bride of God, restoration of Adam and destruction of Hades! Hail, all-blameless one, unique palace of our King! Hail, fiery throne of the Almighty!

The congregation:

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

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The reader:

Hail, O you who alone gave rise to the unfading Rose!
Hail, O you who bore the fragrant Apple in such

perfume as to be pleasing to the King of All! Hail, salvation of the world, O you, the ever-Virgin!

The congregation:

Now and always and for ever and ever. Amen.

The reader:

Hail, treasury of purity who raised us from our fall!
Hail, O Lady, fragrant lily perfuming all the faithful, sweet-scented incense and ointment of great price!

THIRD ODE

HIRMOS

O Mother of God, living and overflowing fountain, strengthen those who sing your praise and who gather now to honor you, and on this occasion of your divine commemoration, deem them worthy of the glorious crown of heaven.

TROPARIA

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

Hail, mystical earth, who without plowing have given forth a Wheat divine! Hail, living table who supports the Bread of life! Hail, O Lady, unfailing fountain of the living Water!

The congregation:

O Most Holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

Hail, O Maiden who have borne a child unto the faithful and yet remained immaculate! Hail, O You who have borne unto the world the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the whole world! Hail, O fervent intercessor for the remission of sins!

The Congregation:

Glory be to the Father and the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

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The reader:

Hail, O radiant dawn who alone have borne Christ the Sun, Source of Light! Hail, O dwelling-place of Light!

Hail, dispeller of darkness and terror of the demons of gloom!

The congregation:

Hail, O Lady, unique gateway through whom the Lord alone has passed! Hail, O you who, through your maternity, have shattered the locks of Hades! Hail, divine access towards salvation for the saved, O you so perfectly worth of our praise!

FOURTH ODE

HIRMOS

He who sits in glory upon the throne of God, surrounded with an ethereal cloud, Jesus the supremely divine, came down, and with His mighty hand, redeemed those who cried out to Him: "Glory to your power, O Christ!"

TROPARIA

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

With faith, we raise our voices in melodious hymns to you who are worthy of all praise: Hail, fertile mountain raised aloft by the Spirit! Hail, lighthouse! Hail, vessel containing the Manna, O you so sweet to the taste of pious men!

The congregation:

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

Hail, immaculate Lady who have brought pardon to the world! Hail, O ladder who through grace have lifted us from the earth! Hail, O bridge who in truth do lead from death to life all those who sing your praise!

The congregation:

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

Hail, O pure one, more lofty than the heavens! Hail, for without pain you have borne within your womb the Foundation of the earth! Hail, O murex shell, who with
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your blood have dyed a robe of purple for the King of Hosts!

The congregation:

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

The reader:

Hail, O Lady, true Mother of the Lawgiver Who granted pardon to those who broke His Law! Hail, O Lady, unfathomable depth, inaccessible summit, O ever-Virgin through whom we have been made divine!

The congregation:

Now and always and for ever and ever. Amen.

The reader:

We sing a hymn of thanksgiving to you who have plaited for the world a crown no other hand can fashion and we cry to you: O Virgin, hail! O fortress and protection, shelter and blessed haven unto all!

FIFTH ODE

HIRMOS

The whole universe is rapt in amazement at the sight of your divine glory, for you are a virgin, and have not known man, and yet in your womb you have borne God, the Master of all; you have given birth to a Son who is not bound by time, a Son who grants salvation to those who sing your praise.

TROPARIA

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

Hail, all-blameless one who have borne the Way of Life, and have saved the world from the flood of sin! Hail, immaculate one! Hail, betrothed to God to Whom was spoken an awesome mystery! Hail, O dwelling-place of the Master of creation!

The congregation:

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

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The reader:

Hail, immaculate one, strength and fortress of mankind! Hail, temple of glory and destruction of Hades, light of every bride and joy of every angel!

Hail, assistance of those who pray to you with faith!

The congregation:

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

Hail, O Lady, fiery chariot of the Word, living paradise holding in your midst the Tree of Life, the Lord Himself! The Lord Whose sweetness revives the sinners who partake of Him with faith!

The congregation:

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

The reader:

Strengthened through your power, we cry out to you with faith: Hail, city of the King of the Universe, of whom songs of praise and glory have been sung and are worth hearing! Hail, O mountain unhewn and depth never fathomed!

The congregation:

Now and always and fo ever and ever. Amen.

The reader:

Hail, immaculate Mother of God, spacious tent of the Word! Hail, O wondrous shell from whom came forth the Pearl divine! Hail, O you who are all-magnificent, and who have reconciled with God all those who bless your name, O Mother of God!

SIXTH ODE

HIRMOS

Come, all you people whose mind is upon God: come, let us clap our hands and celebrate this divine and gracious feast of the Mother of God! Let us send up glory to God Who was born of her!

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TROPARIA

O most hily Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

Hail, O perfect purity, immaculate bridal-chamber of the Word, cause of the deification of us all, sweet-sounding echo of the voice of the prophets! Hail, O glory of the apostles!

The congregation:

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

From you, O Virgin, came forth the dew through which the flame of paganism was made to die, and so we cry out to you: Hail, O Virgin, dewy fleece whom Gideon in olden times had seen.

The congregation:

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

The reader:

Behold, we cry out Hail to you! Be unto us a haven and a shelter, for we are tossed by heavy seas; be a refuge in the ocean of our troubles, save us from the snares of our enemy!

The congregation:

Now and always and for ever and ever. Amen.

The reader:

O cause of our joy, be gracious to us: enlighten our minds, so that we may cry out to you: Hail, O burning and unconsumed bush, all-brilliant cloud spread out above the faithful!

SEVENTH ODE

HIRMOS

The three young men divinely inspired refused to offer worship to creatures instead of the Creator: they had the courage to overcome the threatening fire, and sang out joyfully: "You are worthy of all praise, O Lord, God of our Fathers: blessed are You!"

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TROPARIA

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

We praise you and cry out to you: Hail, mystical chariot of the living Sun! True vine who have given forth a full-grown Cluster, dripping with spiritual wine to fill with joy those who faithfully sing your praise!

The congregation:

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

Hail, o spouse of God who have borne the Healer of mankind! O mystical rod on whom there came to blossom a Flower that never fades! Hail, O our Lady: in you we find the fullness of Joy; through you, we inherit eternal Life!

The congregation:

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

O Lady, the most brilliant speakers fall short when they sing your praise, for you are set above the Seraphim for having given birth to Christ the King! Oh, beg Him to deliver from every snare all those who come with faith to bow before you.

The congregation:

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

The reader:

The extremities of the earth bless you and sing your praise: in their love, they cry out to you: Hail, immaculate one, holy book in whom the Word is written by the hand of the Father. O Mother of God, pray Him to write the names of your servants in the Book of Life!

The congregation:

Now and always and for ever and ever. Amen.

The reader:

We your servants implore you, O immaculate one: we bow before you and surrender our hearts to you. Be kind to us, and save us who are drowning in countless sorrows: protect your flock against the snares of the enemy.

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EIGHTH ODE

HIRMOS

The maternity of the Mother of God, prefigured by the three young men in the furnace, preserved them against the power of fire: but now that this maternity has come to be accomplished, it brings the whole universe together and makes it sing: "Praise the Lord, all you His workd, and exalt Him forever!"

TROPARIA

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

Immaculate one, you have received in your womb the Word Himself, and have borne the Sustainer of the Universe; you have fed with your milk the Nourisher of creation! To Him therefore we sing: "O works of the Lord, praise Him and exalt Him forever!"

The congregation:

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

O holy and all-immaculate Virgin, Moses foresaw in the burning bush the mystery of your tremendous maternity; and the three young men foretold it and described it in clear words as they stood unscathed in the midst of the flames. Therefore we praise you forevermore.

The congregation:

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

The reader:

Through you, the dead are returned to life, forave given birth to the Author of life! Through you, the dumb are made eloquent, the lepers whole; sicknesses are driven away, and the multitude of evil spirits that roam around the world are vanquished, O Virgin, salvation of mankind!

The congregation:

Now and always and for ever and ever. Amen.

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The reader:

O you who have given to the world the salvation through whom we have been lifted from the earth: Hail! Blessed and immaculate one, our protection and our strength, refuge and shelter of those who cry out: "O

works of the Lord, praise the Lord and bless Him forever!"

NINTH ODE

HIRMOS

Let every human being take up a torch, and let him dance with joy in his spirit! Let the whole immaterial creation celebrate this feast of the Mother of God, and cry out: Hail, glorious Mother of God, ever-pure and ever-virgin!

TROPARIA

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

O Maiden, deliver us who through you have become partakers of the eternal joy, so that we may be worthy to hail you: deliver us from all temptations, from cruel assaults, and from all the miseries that threaten us because of our any sins!

The congregation:

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

You are for us an illumination and a safeguard, and so we cry out to you: Hail, unwaning star, heralding the great Sun unto the world! Hail, immaculate one who have opened the gates of Eden! Hail, heavenly pillar guiding mankind towards the life of heaven!

The congregation:

O most holy Mother of God, save us!

The reader:

Let us reverently stand in the house of God, and let us sing: Hail Queen of the universe! Hail, Mary, the Lady of us all! Hail, only immaculate one, most beautiful among women! Hail, vessel who have contained the everlasting perfume that was poured into you!

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The congregation:

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

The reader:

Hail, eternal Virgin, dove in whom Mercy was born!
Hail, pride of every saint, and crown of every martyr!
Hail, divine beauty of the just, salvation unto all of
us the faithful!

The congregation:

Now and always and for ever and ever. Amen.

The reader:

O Lord, spare your inheritance and dismiss our sins; O
Christ, accept the supplication of the Woman who,
without seed, conceived You in her womb, when in your
great mercy you deigned to assume a human form.

KONTAKION OF THE ANNUNCIATION

I am your own, O Mother of God!
To you, Protectress and Leader,
My songs of victory!
To you who saved me from danger,
My hymn of thanksgiving!
In your invincible might,
Deliver me from all danger,
That I may sing to you:
"Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!"

The congregation:

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

CHANTS OF PRAISE

PREAMBLE

As soon as the angel had received his command
He hastened to Joseph's house
And said to the ever-virginal one:
"Behold, heaven was brought down to earth
When the Word Himself
Was fully contained in you!
Now that I see Him in your womb,
Taking a servant's form,
I cry out to you in wonder:
'Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!'"

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Make a deep bow

First Part

To be recited during the First Week.

The First Part describes the Annunciation by the Archangel Gabriel to the blessed virgin Mary, her conversation with him and her submission to God's will; her charitable visit to her cousin Elizabeth; Joseph's doubts, and his joy when an angel told him that the Virgin had conceived through the action of the Holy Spirit.

FIRST CHANT

The priest begins:

An archangel was sent from heaven to greet the Mother Of God. And as he saw You taking a body, O Lord, at the
Sound of his bodiless voice, he stood rapt in amazement and cried out to her in these words:

Hail, O you through whom joy will shine forth;
Hail, O you through whom the curse will disappear!
Hail, O restoration of the fallen Adam;
Hail, O Redemption of the tears of Eve!
Hail, O Peak above the reach of human thought;
Hail, O Depth even beyond the sight of angels!
Hail, O you who have become a kingly throne;
Hail, O you who carry Him who carries all!
Hail, O Star who manifest the Sun,
Hail, O Womb of the divine Incarnation!
(3389)

Hail, O you through whom creation is renewed;
Hail, O you through whom the Creator becomes a babe!
Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

Make a deep bow.

SECOND CHANT

Knowing that she was a virgin, the blessed one courageously answered the angel: "Your surprising expression seems hard for my mind to accept. How can you speak of a birth that is to come from a conception without seed? And why do you cry, Alleluia!

(3391)

The congregation:
Alleluia!

THIRD CHANT

Trying to grasp the meaning of this mystery, the Virgin asked the holy messenger: "How is it possible that a son be born from a virginal womb? Tell me." And he answered her with awe, crying out in these words:

Hail, O hidden Sense of the ineffable Plan!
Hail, O Belief in Silence that must be!
Hail, O Forecast of the marvels of Christ;
Hail, O Fountainhead of truths concerning Him!
Hail, celestial Ladder by whom God came down;
Hail, O Bridge leading earthly ones to heaven!
Hail, O Wonder, ever-thrilling to the angels;
Hail, O Wound, ever-hurting to the demons!
Hail, O you who gave birth to Light ineffably;
Hail, O you who told no one how it was done!
Hail, O you who surpass the wisdom of the wise;
Hail, O you who enlighten faithful minds!
Hail, O Brie and Maiden ever-pure!

The congregation:

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

FOURTH CHANT

When the power of the Most High overshadowed the one who had never known the nuptial bed, her fruitful womb conceived, and she became for all a delicious field: for those who wished to reap salvation by singing: Alleluia!

The Congregation:

Alleluia!

FIFTH CHANT

Pregnant with God, the Virgin hastened to Elizabeth: and her unborn child rejoiced, immediately knowing her embrace. Bouncing and singing, he cried out to the Mother of God.

(3392)

Hail, O Tendril whose Bud shall not wilt;
Hail, O Soil whose Fruit shall not perish!
Hail, O Tender of mankind's loving Tender;
Hail, O Gardener of the Gardener of Life!

Hail, O Earth who yielded abundant mercies,
Hail, O Table full-laden with appeasement.
Hail, for you have greened anew the pastures of
delight;
Hail, for you have prepared a haven for the souls.
Hail, acceptable Incense of prayer;
Hail, Expiation of the whole universe!
Hail, O you Favor of God to mortal men;
Hail, O you Trust of mortals before God!
Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

The congregation:

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

SIXTH CHANT

Filled with a storm of contradictory thoughts, the wise Joseph was greatly disturbed: until then, he had seen you a virgin, and now he suspected you of secret guilt, all-blameless one! Learning that your conception was of the Holy Spirit, he cried out: Alleluia!

The congregation:

Alleluia!

KONTAKION OF THE ANNUNCIATION

I am your own, O Mother of God!
To you, Protectress and Leader,
My songs of victory!
To you who saved me from danger,
My hymn of thanksgiving!
In your invincible might,
Deliver me from all danger,
That I may sing to you:
"Hail, O Nride and Maiden ever-pure!"

The Congregation:

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

(3393)

Second Part

Here is recalled the story of the adoration of the Shepherds and of the Magi, their secret warning and their return to Persia by another way, announcing to all the coming of Christ. Idols fall and errors are dispelled in Egypt. The Child is presented to Simeon in the temple, revealing to him his divinity.

SEVENTH CHANT

The shepherds heard the angels singing hymns of praise to the coming of Christ in the flesh. And running to Him as to a shepherd, they saw him as a spotless Lamb grazing at Mary's breast. They sang a hymn to her and said:

Hail, O Mother of Lamb and Shepherd;
Hail, O Handmaid of holy delight!
Hail, O Land of the promised good;
Hail, O you who flow with milk and honey!
Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

The congregation:

Hail O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

Make a deep bow.

TWELFTH CHANT

As Simeon was about to leave the present deceitful world, You were entrusted to hi as an infant, but You made Yourself known to him as the perfect God. Wherefore he marveled at your wisdom beyond words, and cried out: Alleluia!

The congregation:

Alleluia!

(3394)

Third Part

Here is given an account of the new life established by the divine Son of the Virgin: the attention of the

people is drawn from earthly to heavenly marvels. Indeed, Christ came down to show us the way to heaven, to the celestial abode where, because of His divinity, He was fully present at all times during His life on earth. With great wonder, the angels behold the Son of God taking flesh and becoming man. Philosophers and theologians are amazed at this condescension, and even to this day they are unable to express or even understand this mystery of divine love. As for us, we glorify it by proclaiming our faith.

THIRTEENTH CHANT

The creator displayed a new creation to us who had come from Him: He came forth from a womb that had received no seed, and He left it intact as it had been, so that at the sight of this marvel, we would sing to her and cry out:

Hail, O Blossom of incorruption;
Hail, O Crown of self-mastery!
Hail, O you who shone forth as a Sign of resurrection;
Hail, O you who displayed the life of angels!
Hail, fruitful Tree from whom believers feed;
Hail, shady Glen where many are sheltered!
Hail, O you who have borne the Guide of the lost;
Hail, Source of life to the captives' Release!
Hail, O you who unsettled the just judge;
Hail, Indulgence of many who have fallen!
Hail, O **Stole** for those who lack freedom to speak;
Hail, O Tenderness who exceed all desire!
Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

Make a deep bow to the floor.

[The Byzantine Greek expression "**Parresia**" designates the right free citizens had to speak in the legislative assembly and before a court of justice, where they could defend themselves against an accusation or appeal to a higher authority for revision of a sentence imposed upon them. In parliament and before the courts, free men wore the "**stole**": a sleeveless robe, open on both sides. Slaves and young boys were not allowed to wear it: they were naked (**gymnoi**), stripped of the right to speak in public. Before the throne of God, the Virgin acts as a "**stole**" for men enslaved by sin: for mankind is "naked" since original sin. (Cf. Genesis 3:7)]

(3395)

FOURTEENTH CHANT

Now that we have seen this strange birth, let us estrange ourselves from the world and turn our minds to heaven: indeed, it is for this that God most high appeared on earth as a lowly man, desiring to draw up to heaven those who cry out to Him. Alleluia!

The congregation:
Alleluia!

Bow profoundly.

FIFTEENTH CHANT

While fully present amid those below, the uncircumscribed Word was in no way absent from those above: for what happened was a divine condescension, and not a moving from one place to another; and it was a birth from a Virgin inspired by God, who heard these words:

Hail, O Space of the spaceless God,
Hail, O gate of the sublime Mystery!
Hail, O Message unsure to men without faith;
Hail, O Glory most certain to those who believe!
Hail, O sacred Chariot of the One above the Cherubim;
Hail, perfect Dwelling of the One above the Seraphim!
Hail, O you who reconciled opposites;
Hail, O you who combined maidenhood and motherhood!
Hail, O you through whom transgression was erased;
Hail, O you through whom Paradise was opened!

(3394)

Hail, O Key to the Kingdom of Christ;
Hail, O Hope for the ages of bliss!
Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

The congregation:
Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

Bow profoundly to the floor.

(3396)

SIXTEENTH CHANT

The whole order of the Angels marveled at the great work of your becoming a man: for they saw the One inaccessible as God become a Man accessible to all, living with us and hearing all cry out; Alleluia!

The congregation:
Alleluia!

Bow down.

SEVENTEENTH CHANT

O Mother of God, we see the best of speakers become as mute as fish in your regard, for they could not explain how you could give birth while remaining a virgin. As for us, while marveling at the mystery, we cry out to you with faith:

Hail, O Container of God's wisdom;
Hail, O Treasury of His providence!
Hail, O Reproof of foolish philosophers;
Hail, O Confusion of speechless wise men!
Hail, for you perplexed the inquisitive minds;
Hail, for you dried up the inventors of myths!
Hail, for you ripped the Athenians' meshes;
Hail, for you filled the Fisherman's nets!
Hail, O Retriever from the abyss of ignorance;
Hail, O Lamplight of knowledge to many!
Hail, O Ship for those who seek salvation;
Hail, O Harbor for the sailors of life!
Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

The congregation:
Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

Bow down to the floor.

EIGHTEENTH CHANT

Desiring to save the world, the Creator of All came down to it of His own will. Being at the same time our Shepherd and our God, He appeared among us, a man like us. And so the like called upon the like, and as God He heard: Alleluia!

The congregation:
Alleluia!

(3397)

Fourth Part

The following contains invocations to the Virgin Mary

considered as the unique vessel of such graces as prepared her to become the Mother of the Creator of All. She stands as a beam of light guiding us all to her Son in Whom we will find forgiveness and salvation.

NINETEENTH CHANT

O Virgin Mother of God, you are the Bastion of Virgins and of all those who have recourse to you. For the Maker of heaven and earth covered you with his shadow, O Pure One, and came to dwell in your womb, and taught us all to cry out to you:

Hail, O Pillar of virginity,
Hail, O Gateway of salvation!
Hail, O Principle of the new creation;
Hail, O Dispenser of God's bounties!
Hail, for you restored those born in shame;
Hail, for you gave sense to those who had lost it!
Hail, O you who stopped the corruptor of minds;
Hail, O you who bore the Sower of Chastity!
Hail, holy Chamber of virginal wedlock;
Hail, O you who join the faithful with God!
Hail, O gracious Foster-Mother of virgins;
Hail, O Bridesmaid of holy souls!
Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

The congregation:

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

Bow down to touch the floor.

TWENTIETH CHANT

Every hymn falls short when it attempts to sing the multitude of your mercies: we could sing to You as many songs as there are grains of sand, O Holy King, without ever doing anything worthy of what You have given to those who cry out to You: Alleluia!

The congregation:

Alleluia!

TWENTY-FIRST CHANT

We see the holy Virgin as a brilliant luminary enlightening those who live in darkness; for having kindled the immaterial Light, she leads men to the knowledge of God and fills their minds with radiance, so that she is worthily praised in these words:

Hail O Beam of the Mystical Sun;
Hail, O Radiance of the Light without setting!
Hail, Lightning-Flash that brightens the souls;
Hail, Thunder-Clap that strikes down the foes!
Hail, for you have raised the many-lighted Star;
Hail, for you have opened the many-coursed Stream!
Hail, O you who traced the living Model of the Pool;
Hail, O you who erased the stain of sin!
Hail, flowing Water that cleasnses the conscience;
Hail, holy Vessel overflowing with joy!
Hail, O Fragrance of the sweetness of Christ;
Hail, O Life of the mystical banquet!
Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

The congregation:

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

Bow down to the floor.

TWENTY-SECOND CHANT

Because He wished to grant release from all the ancient debts, the One who pays men's dues came down Himself to those who had spurned his grace; He tore up their obligations, and heard from all of them this cry: Alleluia!

Congregation:

Alleluia!

TWENTY-THIRD CHANT

By singing praise to your maternity, we all exalt you as a spiritual temple, O Mother of God! For the One Who dwelt within your womb, the Lord Who holds all things in His hands, sanctified you, glorified you and taught all men to sing to you:

(3399)

Hail, O Tabernacle of God the Word;

Hail, Holy One, more holy than the saints!
Hail, O Ark that the Spirit has gilded;
Hail, inexhaustible Treasure of life!
Hail, precious Crown of rightful authorities;
Hail, sacred Glory of reverent priests!
Hail, unshakable Tower of the Church;
Hail, unbreachable Wall of the Kingdom!
Hail, O you through whom the enemies are routed!
Hail, O Healing of my body;
Hail, O Salvation of my soul!
Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

The congregation:

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

Bow down to the floor.

TWENTY-FOURTH CHANT

O Mother worthy of all praise, you who have given birth to the Word, the Holiest of the Holy, accept this present offering, deliver all men from every affliction, and save from the future punishment those who cry out to you: Alleluia!

The congregation:

Alleluia!

Bow down.

KONTAKION OF THE ANNUNCIATION

I am your own, O Mother of God!
To you, Protrectress and Leader,
My songs of victory!
To you who saved me from danger,
My hymn of thanksgiving!
In your invincible might,
Delievr me from all danger,
That I may sing to you:
"Hail O Brid and Maiden ever-pure!"

The congregation:

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

Bow down to the floor.

(3400)

The priest holds up the icon of the Mother of God, and

all the people present approach to kissit, saying:

Gabriel was rapt in amazement as he beheld your virginity and the splendor of your purity, O Mother of God, and he cried out to you: "By what name shall I call you? I am bewildered; I am lost; I shall greet you as I was commanded to do: 'Hail, O Woman full of grace!'"

HERE ENDS THE OFFICE OF THE AKATHIST

(301)

There is another Akathistos Hymn, later in date, and much shorter, known as The Akathistos Hymn: Office of Praise of the Name of Jesus. Says Archbishop Joseph Raya concerning it:

The Akathistos Hymn to the name of Jesus was first composed in the ninth century. The present rendition contains twelve Odes, or lyric poems. Each is divided into three parts.

The first part of the Ode, called "Breath of the Gospel" is a quotation from the Holy and Divine Gospel book of our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, any part of the divine Gospel is a breath of fresh air because it stirs in me the memory of Jesus, my Savior, and adds to my heart tenderness towards every human being in this world and towards creation. It is also a way that leads humanity to the Trinity. Every time I say or hear the word "Jesus", I encounter the Father and hear him say "This is my beloved Son ... (Luke III:22). I encounter also the Holy Spirit whom Jesus promised to send upon those who believe in Him. It is in the holy and divine Gospel that humanity and creation meet the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Transfiguration and the Eucharist.

The second part of the Ode is entitled "Song of my Soul". Here I tell My Lord and my God, Jesus, of my faith, I sing of his tenderness. I repeat again and again that his love and his generosity in forgiving have no limit nor any condition. I am the poor knocking at the door of my rich Lover, and the sinner begging for salvation. Jesus, my Lord, is not only the Giver. He is the very Gift. He is real Food and Drink to those who hunger and thirst for the Kingdom. His name pronounced peacefully, trustfully, without anxiety or hurry is a life-giver, a sure sign of immediate forgiveness of sins. When I call his name, Jesus offers himself to me and unites with me. I become one with

(3401)

him, sanctified and perfectly holy.

The third part of the Ode is called "Sighs of my Heart". When I accept his revelation, Jesus my God penetrates every fiber of my faculties. His inspires me, he elevates me to his divine level. I become all aflame with love, eloquent and even poetical. With delight and ecstasy, I enumerate the human and divine titles of my Savior. I wrap them with superlatives that befit his majesty. Superlatives predicated to my Redeemer and Savior, Jesus, do not intimidate me in the least. They rather make me feel secure in his presence. They are waves the Holy Spirit blows to the shores of my soul to bathe every grain of my being. I know that the glories and riches of my God are my very own. Jesus, my Lord, belongs to me as much as I belong to him. Whatever I say of him is like a mirror where my own face shines and where I recognize my own dignity and worth. Inspired by his beauty, my enthusiasm becomes a play of delight and my prayer intoxication.

Every strophe of this Akathist Hymn has been designed to lull to reverie. Harmony and balance in this English rendition are intended to calm inner motions of my body and free my soul to rise and soar and find what my heart sighs for. By combining in short bursts adoration and compunction, praise and glorification, I may see the face of my God - and see it reflected in every human face I encounter. Then the Christian saying will become reality in my life, "My brother is my life", "My brother is my joy>'

This office is to be recited slowly. The rhythm of each strophe has to be tressed with harmony and balance. And, in order to obtain more psychological effect, I will sway my body gently and with dignity while pronouncing the words in a pitch just audible to myself. Should I feel tired or anxious about time, or any other thing, I have to stop immediately, promising myself to come back to it whenever I can.

Only those who seek a most intimate relation with the Lord Jesus, and those who are already aflame with longing to see his face, can be invited to recite this office. It should be kept a secret from the uninitiated who would not understand such lavish tenderness expressed to the Lord. Finally, it is to be recited in the privacy of one's own intimate life, and not in public.

Jesus, my Lord, my Savior and my God, you are the Lover of every human face in this world. Show me, a sinner, the beauty of your face. Reveal yourself to every one of my sisters and brothers who will recite the present office. I offer them as a gift of my concern and of my love.

PREAMBLE

Leader in triumph, Protector and Lord,
Conqueror and Master,
Sweetest Jesus, glory of the holy ones, save me!
Sweetest Jesus, Lover of every human face,
Have mercy on me a sinner!
Since you have overwhelmed me with love,
I, your beloved, offer you a hymn of glory.
Because you have sheltered me in your tenderness,
I sing to you a song of praise,
A song of joy, saying:
Alleluia!

ODE ONE

Breath of the Gospel:

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph ... and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her: "Hail Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with you. Listen! You are going to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus" ... "I am the handmaid of the Lord" said Mary. "Let what you have said be done to me" (Luke I:26-38).

Glorious Jesus, my Lord, Oh, how glorious you are!

Song of my Soul:

Let me live in this world, O Jesus,
With my eyes and my heart in heaven.
For the wish no one would have dared to wish
Has been granted:
The undreamed has happened
And you, O my God, have become man,
So that I may sing to you
Alleluia!

Sighs of my Heart:

O Jesus, you the infinite God became a baby in the
womb of a chaste and loving girl,
And chaste and loving she remained forever.
You came out of her womb as you came from the grave,
Without breaking the seals,
And as you appeared to the apostles
While the doors were all locked.
You ascended into heaven
And you seated me at the right hand of the Father.
In amazement before all these miracles,
I sing to you:

Jesus, incomprehensible Word (*Logos*) of God,
Jesus, impenetrable Mystery,
Jesus, Baby sleeping in the night!

Jesus, immense Divinity,
Jesus, Lord of the universe,
Jesus, Child teaching the teachers!

Jesus, Master of all nations,
Jesus, infinite Kingdom,
Jesus, Man in a crowd!

Jesus, Leader of princes,
Jesus, Power without limit,
Jesus, condemned criminal!

Jesus my Creator, have mercy on me.
Jesus my Redeemer, my Savior, save me.
Jesus, my Reward, let me in.

Jesus, Son of the living God,
Have mercy on me a sinner.

O THEOTOKOS, SAVE ME!

Breath of the Gospel;

The Lord Jesus came to a village (Bethany, near
Jerusalem), and a woman named Martha welcomed him into
her house. She had a sister called Mary who sat down
at the Lord's feet and listened to him speaking. Now
Martha, who was distracted with all the serving, said:
"Lord, do you not care that my sister is leaving me to
do the serving all by myself? Please tell her to help
(3404)

me." But the Lord answered: "Martha, Martha, you worry

and fret about so many things, and yet few are needed,
indeed only one. It is Mary who has chosen the better
part; it is not to be taken from her"
(Luke X: 38-42).

Glorious Jesus, my Lord! Oh, how glorious you are!

Song of my Soul:

Jesus, you invitrf women to listen to you and you
blessed the works of their hands.
You called them to emulate the angelic choirs
Who enjoy in endless ecstasy the beauty of your face.
Forever, never stopping, they sing of your glory,
saying: "Holy, Holy, Holy!"
I too, far from angelic as I am,
Praise you, saying:
Alleluia!

Sighs of my Heart:

O Jesus my Savior,
I see the most eloquent speakers
Reduced to silence when they try to talk about you.
They can naver explain how you became man,
And yet remained perfect God.
But I, full of admiration for the mystery cry out:

Jesus, God from all eternity,
Jesus, King of kings,
Jesus, who bears my burdens!

Jesus, Lord of lords,
Jesus, Hope of those without hope,
Jesus, Consolation of the sorrowful,
Jesus, whose power is loving!

Jesus, Glory of the poor,
Jesus, Counselor of the rich,
Jesus who raises up the lowly!

Jesus, do not judge me by my deeds.
Jesus, do not weigh me by your Gospel perfections.
Jesus, treat me with your compassion!

Jesus, lift me up to the height of your beatitudes.
Jesus, open my hands to the freedom of receiving.
Jesus, enlighten my heart to desire only you!

Jesus, Son of the Living God,
Have mercy on me a sinner!

(3405)

ODE THREE

Breath of the Gospel:

And they brought to Jesus a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech (I.e., he was a deaf-mute); and they asked him to lay his hands on him. He took him aside in private, ... put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue ... and he said to him, "*Ephphata*", that is, "Be opened". And his ears were opened, and the ligament of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly (Mark VII: 32-25).

Glorious Jesus, my Lord! Oh, how glorious you are!

Song of my Soul:

Blinded by fear and doubt because of my sins,
A thousand times a day I fall.
Each time you open my eyes, O Jesus,
Each time you touch my tongue.
Oh, send your Holy Spirit o me now
As you sent him to your apostles
To cover my nakedness with a mantle of light
And open my eyes to the beauty of your face
Let him lift my body and soul
Beyond the blue depths of the sky,
So that my tongue may be loosened, and my mind set
free
And that I may sing in thanksgiving and praise,
saying:
Alleluia!

Sighs of my Heart:

O Jesus, Creator of Angels
And Lord of majesty,
You made the deaf-mute hear and speak.
Let me now speak of your goodness poured over me and say:

Jesus, most beautiful, Glory of angels,
Jesus, most powerful, Wonder of worlds,
Jesus most gentle, Comfort of children!

Jesus all-knowing, Hope of patriarchs,
Jesus all-meekness, Courage of martyrs,
Jesus all-caring, Love of all lovers!

Jesus most bright, Dawn of the prophets.
Jesus most strong, Might of your people,
Jesus most sweet, Song in my heart!

(3406)

Jesus the radiant, Joy of the hermits, Jesus the faithful,
Companion of priests,
Jesus the tender, Delight of parents!

Jesus most generous, Healer of the sick,
Jesus most giving, Generosity of lovers,
Jesus most tolerant, Hope of us all!

Jesus my Shield, protect me.
Jesus my Salvation, save me.
Jesus my Fulfillment, watch over me.

Jesus, Son of the Living God,
Have mercy on me a sinner!

ODE FOUR

Breath of the Gospel:

And she touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, "If I can only touch his cloak I shall be well again." Jesus turned around and saw her, and he said to her, "Courage, my daughter, your faith has restored you to health." And from that moment the woman was well again (Matthew IX: 21-22).

Glorious Jesus, my Lord! Oh, how glorious you are!

Song of my Soul:

Unworthy as I am, I come to you
To sing a hymn of thanksgiving and repentance.
Like the woman in the crowd, I reach out,
Knowing that you will make me whole;
Like the Canaanite woman, I call to you;
Like the blind man, I ask for healing,
So that I may say to you:
Alleluia!

Sighs of my Heart:

O Jesus, healing Fire
Whose touch no one can feel and remained unchanged;
O Jesus, shining light who enlightens those in darkness,
O Jesus, heavenly Music, true Song of my soul:
You healed the woman who touched you,
You converted Paul who persecuted you,
(3407)

You loved Mary who listened to you.
In like manner, heal my infirmities,
And shed light upon my darkness,
Let me sit at your feet
And sing to you:

Jesus, my powerful King,
Jesus, my mighty God,
Jesus, Fire in my heart!

Jesus, my eternal Lord,
Jesus, my glorious Creator,
Jesus, Light of my eyes!

Jesus, my Guide most gentle,
Jesus, my Pastor most caring,
Jesus whose touch is my health!

Jesus, my Master most compassionate,
Jesus, my Savior most merciful,
Jesus who leads me to peace!

Jesus, burn in my heart with your cleansing flame.
Jesus, shine in the darkness within me.
Jesus, restore me who am worn down by sin.

Jesus, rid my mind of every vain thought.
Jesus, shield my heart against evil desires.
Jesus, guard my will against self-love.

Jesus, Son of the Living God,
Have mercy on me a sinner

ODE FIVE

Breath of the Gospel:

But at once Jesus called out to them, saying, "Courage! It is I: do not be afraid!" It was Peter who answered, "Lord", he said, "if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water." "Come." Said Jesus. Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus across the water, but as soon as he felt the force of the wind, he took fright and began to sink. "Lord, save me!" he cried. Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. "Man of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" (Matthew, XIV: 28-32).

Glorious Jesus, my Lord! Oh, how glorious you are!

Song of my Soul:

Shaken by fear and doubt
Peter began to sink,
But he saw it was really you, O Jesus,
Walking on the water.
He understood that you were God,
And taking the hand that saved him, he cried out:
Alleluia!

Sighs of my Heart:

When Peter began to sink in the waves,
He cried out to you in fear,
And you reached out
And caught him by the hand.
When the blind man of Jericho heard you were passing by,
He shouted, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"
You called him to you, O Lord,
And opened his eyes.
Catch me quickly, O Jesus my Lord!
Call me to you, O Jesus my Master!
I need your tenderness, O Jesus my Love!
Open my heart that I may cry out to you:

Jesus, Creator of heavenly beings,
Jesus, Redeemer of every form of life,
Jesus, respond to my anguished cry!

Jesus, Sanctification of things below the earth,
Jesus, Light that shines upon the universe,
Jesus, my heart's ease and my mind's repose!

Jesus, Consolation of my soul,
Jesus, Brightness of my spirit,
Jesus, Love of my life!

Jesus, Joy of my heart,
Jesus, Health of my body,
Jesus, Song on my lips!

Jesus my Savior, save me.
Jesus my Light, enlighten me.
Jesus my Love, embrace me.

Jesus, deliver me from bondage to myself.
Jesus, preserve me from cowardly deeds.
Jesus, give me the courage to love.

(3409)

Jesus, my Security,

Jesus, my Salvation,
Jesus, my Expectation!

Jesus, Son of the Living God,
Have mercy on me a sinner!

ODE SIX

Breath of the Gospel:

People brought children to the Lord for him to lay his hands on them. ... The disciples turned them away, but Jesus said: "Let the little children alone, and do not stop them from coming to me, for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of heaven belongs" (Matthew XIX: 13- 15).

Glorious Jesus, my Lord! Oh, how glorious you are!

O Jesus who calls children to come to you,
Call me, look at me: I am your child.
O you who accepts every one who comes to you,
Receive me, childish as I am.
You accepted Peter who denied you,
You accepted Paul who persecuted you:
Accept me also whose life is filled
With cowardice and fear.
Call me to you and fill me with courage,
Answer my heart's desire
that I may sing to you:
Alleluia!

Sighs of my Heart:

As a child at the end of the day,
I come to you,
My Home, my Comfort, my Shelter.
I praise you and celebrate you,
My Lord and my all.
With Thomas, whose anguish you turned into joy,
I declare you are my Lord and my God,
One with the Father and One with the Spirit.
When you come to judge the living and the dead,
Call me to stand at your right hand
And bid me enter your Kingdom.
As for now, allow me to open my mouth
And sing to you:

(3410)

Jesus, gentle Heart, give my heart tenderness.
Jesus, Home of the just, shelter me.

Jesus, comforting Arms, ease my childish fears.

Jesus, Sweetness of heaven, make me loving.
Jesus, Robe of glory, wrap me in your warmth.
Jesus, unfailing Strength, carry me through my life.

Jesus, golden Light, inspire me.
Jesus, Song of the universe, delight me.
Jesus, Brightness of day, illuminate me.

Jesus, Son of justice, gladden my mornings.
Jesus, unwearied Watcher, keep me in your sight.
Jesus, precious Pearl, glow through my nights.

Jesus, spare me from falling.
Jesus, shield me from harm.
Jesus, save me from my own foolishness.

Jesus, Son of the Living God,
Have mercy on me a sinner!

ODE SEVEN

Breath of the Gospel:

The Lord Jesus went to a town called Nain. ... When he was near the gate of the town, it happened that a dead man was being carried out for burial, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. ... When the Lord saw her, he felt sorry for her. "Do not cry", he said. Then he went up and put his hand on the bier and the bearers stood still, and he said, "Young man, I tell you: get up!" And the dead man got up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him to his mother (Luke VII: 11- 16).

Glorious Jesus, my Lord! Oh, how glorious you are!

Song of my Soul:

O Jesus, when you saw the widow
Weeping by the body of her dead son,
Your heart ached with her pain
And you returned his life to him.
Bear my pain now with me,
Jesus my Lord,

(3411)

And give zest to my life
And strength to my soul,
That I may sing praise to your loving goodness, saying:

Alleluia!

Sighs of my Heart:

Seeking to comprehend
The incomprehensible,
Philip asked you, "What is God?"
You answered him, "Look at me, Philip,
He who sees me sees the Father."
O you, God beyond comprehension,
And yet as human as myself,
let me cry out to you:

Jesus, God from all eternity,
Jesus, Lord and Master of all,
Jesus, a Man passing by!

Jesus, Poet of creation,
Jesus, Ordainer of the universe,
Jesus, small-town Carpenter!

Jesus, Guardian of humanity,
Jesus, Shepherd of Nations,
Jesus, Sharer in my life!

Jesus, wash me clean of my sins,
Jesus, overlook my shortcomings.
Jesus, help me overcome my cowardice.

Jesus, pardon me.
Jesus, watch over me.
Jesus, stay with me.

Jesus, my Creator, do not forget me.
Jesus, do not forsake me.
Jesus, my Counselor, do not let me go astray.

Jesus my Hope, do not abandon me.
Jesus my Help, be always close to me.
Jesus, my Love, welcome, most welcome.

Jesus, Son of the Living God,
Have mercy on me a sinner!

(3412)

ODE EIGHT

Breath of the Gospel:

Now John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing, and he sent his disciples to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?" Jesus answered, "Go back and tell John what you have heard and seen; the blind see again, and the dead are raised to life, and the Good News (Greek: *Euangelion*, Latin: *Evangelium*, Gospel) is proclaimed to the poor, and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me"

(Matthew XI: 2 - 6).

Glorious Jesus, my Lord! Oh how glorious you are!

Song of my Soul:

O Jesus, you came down from heaven
To heal and redeem me with your love.
You are the infinite God,
And yet you lived my human life
And healed my human miseries.
Now that you have made me whole,
I learn to sing to you
Alleluia!

Sighs of my Heart:

When you came down to earth, O Jesus,
Your light shone on every human face.
You showed me how to forgive and how to love,
And you unfolded the meaning of "neighbor".
As for me, I have accepted your salvation,
And I cry out to you:

Jesus, Truth who destroys error,
Jesus, Light brighter than the sun,
Jesus, Beauty beyond all hope and dreams!

Jesus, King more powerful than kings,
Jesus, God whose goodness no sin can discourage,
Jesus, Lord who are all love!

Jesus, Bread of life, I am hungry: feed me.
Jesus, living Water, I am thirsty: give me to drink.
Jesus, Shelter of strength, I am frightened: shield me.
(3413)

Jesus, Garment of deligt, I am naked: enfold me.
Jesus, Breath of my body, I am dying: sustain me.
Jesus, Fire of my heart, I am cold: warm me up.

Jesus, you give to all who ask:
Give me tears of repentance and thanksgiving.
Jesus, you are found by anyone who looks for you:
Find my soul and keep me in your love.
Jesus, you open your heart to anyone who knocks:
Ready my heart to vibrate at your touch.

Jesus, Redeemer of sinners, save me.
Jesus, Helper of those in need, care for me.
Jesus, Harbor of the lost, take me in.

Jesus, Son of the Living God,
Have mercy on me a sinner!

ODE NINE

Breath of the Gospel:

One of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance; and immediately there came out blood and water
(John XIX: 34).

Glorious Jesus, my Lord! Oh, how glorious you are!

Song of my Soul!

O Jesus, when your blood was shed,
You redeemed me and made holy all creation.
Free me now from the unhappy prison
Where sin holds me captive;
Release me from the misery
Of my self-made aloneness;
Deliver me who offers you
A hymn of thanksgiving and praise, exclaiming:
Alleluia!

Sighs of my Heart:

The children of your own people saw you,
O Lord, a real human being in the flesh.
You the very one who made this flesh.
Recognizing you as Lord,
They waved palm branches
And glorified the birth of your Kingdom,
(3414)

Singing hosannas.
When I look into the faces of others,
I see you in the flesh.
Recognizing your divine reality,

I glorify you,
Offering you my hymn of praise,
Saying:

Jesus, God of God,
Jesus, Son of David,
Jesus, Human like me!

Jesus, King of glory,
Jesus, Lamb without blemish,
Jesus, good shepherd!

Jesus, Guardian of my childhood,
Jesus, Leader of my youth,
Jesus, Glory of my old age!

Jesus, Hope when I am dying,
Jesus, Light of the new dawn,
Jesus, Life after this life!

Jesus whose judgement is consolation,
Jesus who is my heart's desiring,
Jesus who opens the doors of the Kingdom!

Jesus, Son of the Living God,
Have mercy on me a sinner!

ODE TEN

Breath of the Gospel:

But Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The (Roman) centurion, who was standing in front of him, had seen how he had died, and he said, "In truth, this man was a Son of God" (Mark, XV: 37 - 39).

Glorious Jesus, my Lord! Oh, how glorious you are!

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Song of my Soul:

O Jesus, because you wanted
To save the world,

You took on my fragile nature
And submitted yourself to death.
Because of this,
Your name is exalted above all names,
And all voices in the heavens and on earth
Sing a hymn of glory to you, saying,
Alleluia!

Sighs of my Heart:

O MY Christ, Creator and Savior,
You assumed my death and gave me your eternal life.
As you cleansed the ten lepers,
Cleanse me too of every stain of sin.
As you healed Zacchaeus and the Publican,
Heal my soul, weary and sick.
As you never rejected anyone who asked for help,
turn not away from me.
Help me to repent and sing to you:

Jesus, Treasure always abundant,
Jesus, Wealth beyond measure or limit,
Jesus, delight me with your richness!

Jesus, Food for both the strong and the weak,
Jesus, Drink who quenches the thirst of all,
Jesus, fill me who hungers and thirsts for you!

Jesus, comforting Shelter of the poor,
Jesus, Defender of the lonely and the helpless,
Jesus, protect me and all my brothers and sisters!

Jesus, supporting Arms when I labor,
Jesus, smiling Face when I pray,
Jesus, share with me every moment of my life!

Jesus, Peace of the anguished,
Jesus, Repose of the weary,
Jesus, I fall: lift me up!

Jesus, Guide of pilgrims,
Jesus, Pilot of those at sea,
Jesus, my North Star, my Beacon and my Way!

Jesus, Son of the Living God,
Have mercy on me a sinner!

(3416)

ODE ELEVEN

Breath of the Gospel:

And so the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven; there at the right hand of God he took his place (Mark XVI: 19).

Glorious Jesus, My Lord! Oh, how glorious you are!

Song of my Soul:

O Jesus, when you surrendered yourself
To crucifixion and death,
You revealed a mystery
That had been hidden from all eternity.
You rose from the dead because you are God
And you raised all humanity with you.
In glory, you ascended into heaven
Seating me with you at the Father's right hand,
So that I may sing to you a new song, saying:
Alleluia!

Sighs of my Heart:

You became one with me, O Lord,
While keeping the fullness of your divinity.
You willingly suffered every human pain
And by your death, you destroyed death.
By your resurrection, you gave me life;
By your Ascension, you sat me at God's right hand,
So that I may sing to you my hymn of thanksgiving,
Saying:

Jesus, Sweetness of my life,
Jesus, vigor of my body,
Jesus, Splendor of my soul!

Jesus, Clarity of my mind,
Jesus, Power of my song,
Jesus, Music of my dance!

Jesus, Joy of my heart,
Jesus, Root of my faith.
Jesus, my only hope!

Jesus, Wellspring of courage,
Jesus, Source of all beauty,
Jesus, my eternal glory!

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Jesus, my Creator, show me your loving face.
Jesus my God, gather me in your gentle arms.
Jesus my Protector, shield me with your eternal care.

Jesus, give me the eyes of the Gospel.
Jesus, give me the heart of a child.

Jesus, give me the gentleness of a dove.

Oh, let me sing to you and repeat my song for ever and ever!

Let me offer you a hymn of glory, a hymn of love, a hymn of gold, frankincense and myrrh, to you my Life, my love and my End, saying again and again:

Jesus, invincible Mercy,
Jesus, infinite Kindness
Jesus ever beside me!

Jesus splendid Beauty,
Jesus, boundless Love,
Jesus, constant Truth!

Jesus, teach me about you.
Jesus, light up my darkness.
Jesus, lead me to wisdom.

Jesus, cleanse me of my faults.
Jesus, restore me to innocence.
Jesus, enfold me within your Holy Spirit.

Jesus, give me your repose.
Jesus, give me your peace.
Jesus, give me your light.

Jesus, Son of the Living God,
Have mercy on me a sinner.

ODE TWELVE

Breath of the Gospel:

A woman came in who had a bad name in town. ... She was weeping and her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them with her hair; and she covered his feet with her kisses and anointed them with ointment. ... Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace"

(Luke VII: 36 - 50).

Glorious Jesus, my Lord! Oh, how glorious you are!

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Song of my Soul::

As you accepted the tears of the adulteress, accept this prayer as a gift of my love,

And let me hear you say,
"Go in peace,"
That I may sing to you:
Alleluia!

Sighs of my Heart:

O Jesus, as you forgave Mary of Magdala because of her
love,
Forgive me also who speak to you.
Jesus, as you called Zacchaeus and visited with him,
come to me and abide with me.
Jesus, as you revealed yourself to the Samaritan woman,
Reveal yourself also to me.
Jesus, as you touched Peter's heart with one look,
Let me always see your eyes fixed on me.
Jesus, as you showed your love to Martha and Mary,
Draw me close to you.
Jesus, as you heard the cry of the Canaanite woman,
Hear the sighs of my heart.
Jesus, as you healed the man who was born blind,
Clear my sight that I may see your face.
Jesus, as you moved your disciples with your message,
Let me always be attentive to your voice.
Jesus, as you made the paralytic walk and run,
raise me to walk with you.
Jesus, as you revived the daughter of Jairus,
Bring me back to life with you.

* * *

Jesus, at the last supper, you were beautiful.
Oh, how beautiful you were, my Lord!
You gave your Bread to Judas
And called your apostles "little children".
You drew John close to your heart.

In the evening of my life,
Jesus, give me your Bread.
Jesus, call me saying, "My Child!"
Jesus draw me close to your heart,
And let me hear you say
What you said to the thief:

"Today you will be with me in paradise."
Amen! Amen! Amen! (302)

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A tradition related by many sources, including the highly
respected historian al-Tabari, reports the following:

"Khadija, wife of the Prophet Muhammad and mother of Fatima Zahra, reported that when she was about to give birth to Fatima Zahra, the Quraishi women of Mecca, who were still pagans, refused to help her because she was the wife of Muhammad. However, the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, called "The prophet Isa" by Muslims, appeared as an incredibly beautiful woman whose head was surrounded by a halo, identified herself and proceeded to act as midwife for the delivery of Fatima Zahra."(303)

Below are two examples of tributes to Fatima Zahra in Shi'a literature:

"Peace be with you, o you who were afflicted with trials by the One who created you. When He tested you, He found you to be patient under affliction. ... Peace be with you, o mistress of the women of the worlds. Peace be with you, o mother of the vindicators of humankind in argument. Peace be with you, o you who were wronged, you who were deprived of that to which you were entitled by right. ...

God's blessings on the immaculate virgin, the truthful, the sinless, the pious, the unstained, the one who is pleasing to God and acceptable, the guiltless, the rightly guided, the one who was wronged, the one who was unjustly overpowered and dispossessed by force of that to which she was entitled, the one who was kept from her lawful inheritance, she whose ribs were broken, whose husband was wronged, whose son was slain, Fatima (Zahra), daughter of your Prophet (Muhammad), O God, flesh of his flesh, innermost heart of his heart. ... Mistress of women, proclaimer of God's friends, ally of piety and asceticism, apple of Paradise and Eternity. ... You, O God, drew forth from her the light of the Imams."(304)

"He showed them a Being, adorned with a myriad of glittering lights of various colors, who sat on a throne, a crown on her head, rings in her ears, a drawn sword by her side. The radiance streaming forth from her illumined the whole garden. When the first humans asked, 'Who is this?', the following answer was given to them: 'This is the form of Fatima (Zahra), as she appears in Paradise. Her crown is Muhammad, her
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earrings are Hasan and Hussein, her sword is Ali (ibn Abi Talib)." (305)

In Al-Kafi, his monumental collection of the sayings of the

Shi'a Imams, Al-Kulayni cites Imam Hussein as commenting thusly on the "Light Verse" of the Qur'an, of which we have spoken at length in the previous chapter:

"Abu Abdullah (Imam Hussein) said, concerning the words of Allah the Sublime: 'Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth: the likeness of His Light is as a niche, Fatima (Zahra); wherein is a lamp, al-Hasan, the lamp in a glass, al-Hussein, the glass as it were a glittering star, Fatima (Zahra) is the glittering star among the women of the world; kindled from a blessed tree, Ibrahim. An olive that is neither of the East nor of the West, neither of Judaism nor of Christianity, whose oil would shine, knowledge would burst out of it, even if no fire touched it. Light upon Light, Imam after Imam from the tree; Allah guides to His Light whom He will; Allah strikes similitudes for men.'" (306)

Commenting on the above, David Pinault says:

"In accordance with the Shi'a tradition of viewing the Imams as the believer's means of access to God, al-Kulayni here takes the Qur'anic vocabulary of radiance and applies it to Hasan and Hussein and their descendants. In this exegesis, the lamp-niche is allegorized as Fatima (Zahra), within whom repose her sons Hasan and Hussein, "the lamp" and "the glass". In this womb metaphor she is described as the birthplace and source of the light of the Imams.

Al-Kulayni takes this exegesis further, describing Fatima (Zahra) as a celestial being, foremost of the women of this lower world, linked in a kind of mystical geneology with her spiritual forefather Abraham: starfire kindled from olivewood. Fatima the Radiant (Zahra), conveyer of illumination to her future offspring, unites celestial hierarchies, light upon light, with their earth-origins from the Abrahamic past." (307)

The Shi'a scholar S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali gives a summary of the role of Fatima Zahra in Shi'ism:

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"The Holy Prophet Muhammad had two sons and a daughter, but sons he did not need, for his apostleship had to conclude with his ministry, and if any son of the Holy Prophet had survived, it would have given the chance to the people to hail the son of the Prophet also to be another prophet of God, whereas there was no

prophet to come after him. It may be said that this was the reason of the male issues of the Holy Apostle leaving this world, in their very infancy. But the Holy Prophet needed a daughter of his own purity of spirit and body, to reflect the divine light of guidance in her ideal character and present the authentic model of the correct Islamic womanhood to the world. Hence Fatima, the Lady of Light, was born to the Holy Prophet, who, for her godly qualities, is known in the Islamic World by the following epithets:

- ❖ 1.) Az-Zahra - The Shining (or The Radiant)
- ❖ 2.) Al-Batul - The liberator of Sinners
- ❖ 3.) Al-Azra - The Clean, the Pure.
- ❖ 4.) Sayyeddatur-Nisa - The Chief of Women.
- ❖ 5.) Afzalun-Nisa - The Superior-most of women.
- ❖ 6.) Khairun-Nisa - The Best of Women.
- ❖ 7.) Mariam al-Kubra - The Senior Mary.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was the mother of only one heavenly guide to the children of the House of Israel, whereas Lady Fatima besides her being the daughter of the Holy Apostle of God, was the mother of the Eleven Divinely Commissioned Guides, (i.e., the Holy Imams). It is a unique instance in the history of the world that the issues of a single pair to have Eleven Heavenly Guides, consecutively one after another.

- ❖ 8.) Al-Muharaka - The Blessed One of God.
- ❖ 9.) As-Sadiqa - The Truthful.

❖ 10.) Al-Muhaddisa- The one who talked to her other from the womb of her mother even prior to her birth. (When God could make Jesus talk from the cradle when He was born, there cannot be any wonder if the Almighty causes another one blessed by Him, to act in a similar manner.) Note: In the Qur'an it states that Jesus spoke from the womb. There are several other

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epithets of this great heavenly being who was the Lady of Light. Naturally Hussein, the King of Martyrs, could not have been born of any ordinary woman other than the one like Lady Fatima with the divine attributes she was exclusively blessed with. It has already been said that one of the unique distinctions of the family of the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, is that from the Holy Prophet down to the Eleventh Imam, including Lady Fatima, all the Holy Thirteen were Martyrs." (308)

Below is paragraph III from the *Dawazdeh Imam* (Doxology of the Twelve Imams) by the 12th century Persian Shi'a thinker Nasruddin Tusi:

"Oh my God! Honor and greeting, abundance and blessings be upon the Glorious Lady, (Fatima) the beautiful, the most pure, the oppressed, the generous, the noble, who suffered so many afflictions in the course of her brief life, the Queen of women, She of the great black eyes, the Mother of the Holy Imams, the daughter of the best of the prophets, the Immaculate Virgin, the Most Pious: honor and salvation be upon you and your descendants, Oh Fatima the radiant, Oh daughter of Muhammad the Messenger of God; Oh witness of God before His creatures, O Our Lady and Our Sovereign, intercede for us before God." (309)

Here we are reminded of the Latin prayer "Ave Maria" or "Hail Mary":

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventre tui Jesus. Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc et hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God (latin *Mater Dei*: Greek: *Theotokos*: Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen"

Below is given a treatise on Fatima Zahra by Henry Corbin. As Henry Corbin makes clear, the reader is advised that what is said

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below is typical of the Shaikhi School of Shi'a theology and philosophy. Fascinating, renowned and prestigious though the Shaikhi School may be, all of its views are not necessarily applicable to nor representative of Shi'ism as a whole.

The reader will also note the influence on the Shaikhi School of the great Hispano-Muslim Sufi Ibn Arabi al-Mursi and of Suhrawardi. We have noted the influence of both Ibn Arabi al-Mursi and Suhrawardi on St. John of the Cross, though for chronological reasons one cannot consider St John of the Cross as having been influenced by the Shaikhi School, nor the Shaikhi School influenced by St. John of the Cross, though there are a great many affinities between them. Henry Corbin's treatise proceeds:

"Perhaps we can appreciate today, even more than in the last century, philosophies that did not confuse the Imaginary, or rather the Reality corresponding to imaginative perception, with the unreal. Between a universe constituted by a pure physics and a subjectivity which inflicts isolation on itself, we foresee the need of an intermediate world to join the one with the other, something in the nature of a spiritual realm of subtle bodies. Such an intermediate world was ceaselessly medietated, particularly in Islamic Iran, by the masters of Sufism, by the adepts of the Suhrawardian philosophy of light, and by the adepts of Shaikhis. This intermediate world is no longer only the center of *the world*, like Eran-Vej, but the center of *the worlds*. The world of the imaginable, of imaginative Reality, the world of archetypes-Images, is established as mediator between the world of the pure, intelligible essences and the sensory universe. This world is the *eighth keshvar*, the eighth climate: the "earth of the emerald cities", the mystical Earth of Hurqalya.

Whoever is familiar with the organ knows what are referred to as "stops". Thanks to these stops, each note can cause several pipes of different lengths to "speak" simultaneously; thus, besides the fundamental note, a number of harmonic overtones can be heard.

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Among the contrivances that regulate them, the *progression harmonica* designates a combination of stops which allows more and more overtones to be heard as one ascends toward the upper register, until at a certain pitch the fundamental note also resounds simultaneously.

This is described very briefly and without any claim to technical accuracy, but for a definite purpose. It is just that this phenomenon seems to us to be the parallel most helpful in understanding the

subtitle of this book: From Mazdean Iran to Shi'ite Iran. As a result of the connection which was effected between the old Mazdean (Zoroastrian) Iran and Shi'ite Iran - a connection in which we shall have to pay special attention to the spiritual school that has reactivated traditional Shi'ite gnosis in Iranian Islam since the end of the 18th century - something like a *progressio harmonica* takes place. The higher we "ascend", the more harmonics we hear. Finally, the fundamental, which gave the preceding chapter its tonality, will become audible again.

The analogy suggested may at least enable us to understand certain features of the spiritual history of Iran. So little study has thus far been devoted in the philosophy of Iranian Islam, whether Shi'ite or not, that those who specialize in the study of ancient Iran, as well as specialists in Muslim philosophy as such, sometimes seem surprised, if not annoyed, when a connection is pointed out which till then was not seen in their scheme. On the other hand, there are very few cultivated Iranians who are insensitive to this connection. To succeed in representing it adequately, we shall probably have to give up certain of our customary categories that take only outer history into account, where everything is studied with a view to discovering major currents, deducing influences and causal explanations, trying in all ways to reduce things to a common denominator. If a phenomenon does not lend itself to such reduction to identity by way of cause and effect, if it refuses to fit the preconceived label, one will readily be suspected of having been led astray by some material that is not authentic. This is what has made it so difficult to discuss *spiritual facts* as such, especially those that took place in Iran, because spiritual facts, as such, are discontinuous and irreducible; they do not succeed one another in an homogenous time; they are, each of them, their own time.

We shall now consider briefly two of these "times". On the one hand, the "time" of Suhrawardi, whose work, chronologically, belongs to our 12th

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(Christian) century. In it, the author pursues the aim of reviving in Islam the wisdom, the *theosophia*, of ancient Persia. His metaphysical outlook is dominated, on the one hand, by the motif of the *Xvarnah*, the Light of Glory, and by the Mazdean angelology through which he interprets the Platon Ideas (or "Forms"); and, on the other hand, by the "time" of Shi'ism, determined as to quality by the idea of the hidden Imam and his *parousia*. This idea resounds like the harmonic of a fundamental note that we have already heard in the Zoroastrian idea of the eschatological Savior or *Saoshyant*. But neither Suhrawardi nor the Shi'ites are

Zoroastrians. They are and intend to remain in Islam, in a spiritual Islam to be sure, which is profoundly different from the legalistic Islam, the official religion of the majority. If one is limited to the positive history of external things, without knowing how to effect phenomenological reduction, how can one possibly give "historical" authenticity to a phenomenon that expresses, in a given world, the values and reality of certain perceptions received in a world that is foreign, even heterogenous, to the former? Such an attempt will give rise to talk of syncretism, dialectical conciliation, artificial transposition. And that will be the end of it.

Our Spirituals, indeed, do not indulge in syncretism, nor do they have to attempt dialectical conciliation, because they have at their disposal a mode of perception different from the one to which we have been reduced by our one-dimensional historical consciousness ("single vision and Newton's sleep", as William Blake said). In the first place, they have at their disposal a world of several levels that the present book is trying to describe and to situate. In the course of this book we shall come across the following expression by one of our authors: "To see or perceive things in Hurqalya". Therein lies an allusion to the bringing into play of the faculty of perception, which also and necessarily is available to these Spirituals. The bringing into play of this faculty is designated by the technical term *ta'wil*, which etymologically means "to bring back" the data to their origin, to their archetype, to their *donor*. For this, the same data must be recaptured at each of the degrees of being or levels through which they had to "descend" in order to reach the mode of being corresponding to the plane on which they are evident to our ordinary consciousness. This practice has the effect of causing these planes to symbolize *with* one another.

Hence, the *ta'wil* is preeminently the hermeneutics of symbols, the ex-egesis, the bringing out of hidden
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spiritual meaning. Without the *ta'wil*, Suhrawardi's *Oriental Theosophy* would not exist, nor yet that spiritual phenomenon in general, namely Shi'ite gnosis, by which the meaning of Islam is transfigured. And conversely, there would be no possibility of a *ta'wil* without the world of Hurqalya, which we are at present studying; that is, without the world of archetypal Images where that imaginative perception functions and is able, by transmuting the material data of external history into symbols, to penetrate to the inner meaning. In short, this concerns the "spiritual history" whose events take place in Hurqalya. *Ta'wil* presupposes the superposition of worlds and interworlds, as the

correlative basis for a plurality of meanings in the same texts.

This "technique", to be sure, was known at one time in the West. There, however, it rapidly degenerated into an artificial technique, but in fact for reasons which were extrinsic to its nature and which distorted its practice, both because it was cut off from the *theosophia* of which it is the correlative, and because it was deprived of spontaneity by a dogmatic authority. Today, in the eyes of the philologists and historians, it is thought of as something artificial and negligible, if not unbearable. I do not believe that there is any profit in discussion aimed at reconciling the two points of view. Regardless of what happened to this technique in the West, the fact remains that its practice in Islamic theosophy (the *hikma ilahiya*) has continued to be supported by quite other means, and to preserve its spontaneity. If one does not understand from what it springs, all the spiritual facts connected with it remain incomprehensible. The *ta'wil*, without question, is a matter of *harmonic perception*, of hearing an identical sound (the same verse, the same *hadith*, even an entire text) on several levels simultaneously. One hears or one does not hear. But he who does not possess the inner (*Hurqalyan*) ear cannot be made to hear what he who does possess it is able to hear. Because, for that matter, the secret of the progression of chords, in harmony, depends on the *ta'wil* of a given chord.

Later in this book we shall read a few pages of Suhrawardi, the young master who died a martyr at the age of thirty-eight (587 AH/1191 AD) and who came later to be called the "Master of Oriental Theosophy" (*Shaikh al-Ishraq*) because his great aim was the renaissance of ancient Iranian wisdom. We have already mentioned his name and shall do so again, since his work is of such capital importance to our theme the "Celestial Earth". In the present context, we intend

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only to draw attention to a few pages from his work, which explicitly mention the rank and function of the feminine Archangel of the Earth under the name that Mazdean hierosophy traditionally confers upon her, *Spenta Armaiti*. This name, in Middle Iranian or Pahlavi, becomes *Spendarmat*, which in Modern Persian gives us *Isfandarmuz*. In the preceding chapter we were shown how the constellation of the other Angels of the Earth were arrayed around her.

In the Suhrawardian doctrine, the schema of the spiritual universes appears in broad outline as follows: from the first Victorial Light (*Qahir*), or first Archangel emanated from the Light of Lights, whose traditional Mazdean name is Bahman (*Vohu-Manah*), there

issues a pleroma of innumerable beings of light, pure intelligible Lights, quite independent of any material body; this is the world of the *Jabarut*. From it there emanates another pleroma of substances of light, some of which have to take upon themselves the guardianship of a material species, which is their "theurgy", while the others have to fill the role of Souls, which for longer or shorter periods animate a material body. The first are the archetype-Angels or Angels of species, among which the Zoroastrian Amahraspands are referred to by name: Suhrawardi interprets the Platonic Ideas (or "Forms") on the plane of this angelology. The second are the Souls of the Spheres (*Angeli coelestis*) and human souls. These two categories together form the world of *Malakut*, and the Earth of *Malakut* is the celestial earth of Hurqalya.

Isfandarmuz figures among the Angels of the species. It is significant and confirmative that Suhrawardi, in his turn, employs the characteristic Old Iranian term by which, as we have seen the Avesta already designated the function of Spenta Armaiti, namely the *kad banu'iya*, the function of the "mistress of the house". As the Angel of the Earth, Isfandarmuz assumes in particular the guardianship of the natural realms in which the telluric element predominates, since the Earth is the "theurgy" of its Angel. The Earth is "she who receives"; as the receptacle of the influx and effects of the celestial Spheres, it assumes the feminine role with respect to the masculine. This is one of the themes which will be further developed by Suhrawardi's profound commentator, Sadruddin Shirazi (d. 1640) when he was teaching at Shiraz. On the one hand, the relationship between the Earth as we know it and the other Forms that are objects of sensory perception is analogous to that which exists between the ideal Earth, that is, the Angel of the Earth, and

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the other separate substances or Angels of species. This does not mean, of course, that we can speak of "passivities" (*infi'alat*) in the world of Intelligibles: the femininity of the Angel of the Earth rests on the fact that she is "the one who receives", the one in whom is manifested the multitude of the effects and influences of the Cherubic "active Intelligences" according to an ontological gradation and an intelligible structure, in the same way as, on this Earth, the effects of the heavenly bodies of which these Intelligences are the motive powers, through the intermediary of their Souls, are manifested according to a chronological succession and a structure perceptible to the senses. On our Earth, this is how the function of *kad banu'iya* is seen to make our Earth symbolize, with its Angel, Isfandarmuz.

This simple example which we have chose from amongst others should suffice to show how the speculative theosophy of Islamic Iran, from Suhrawardi in the 12th century to Sadruddin Shirazi in the 17th century (and we should include their successors up to the present day), preserves and continues to meditate the figure of the Angel of the Earth, whose person the ancient Iranians had been taught by the Mazdean (Zoroastrian) religion to recognize. This figure, the *Gestalt*, has completely retained its identity, even though the elements of the context have changed. What is admirable is the power of the *ta'wil* of the spiritual hermeneutics, which is able to give value to all the symbols and "bring them back" to the archetype. This is the initiatic function which spiritual Islam assumes, in the person of the "master of Oriental theosophy", and his emulators.

This is not all. When we again find Suhrawardi using the name Isfandarmuz, the Angel of the Earth and the Sophia of Mazdaism, we have no difficulty in recognizing her features, since even the characteristic name of her function has been carried over from the Mazdean liturgy into the Islamic, Neoplatonic context of Suhrawardi. But it may happen that her name is no longer pronounced, that a Figure with an entirely different name appears in an entirely different context, and that nevertheless we can still identify the same features, the same *Gestalt*. Let us take careful note, however, of the specific nature of the spiritual phenomenon which is about to claim our attention. As it happens, we cannot simply say that this is a Figure that is merely a new exemplification of the archetype personified by Spenta Armaiti. On the height of the plane where we shall be enabled to perceive this Figure, we should rather speak of an archetype-Figure
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of the archetype, as though we were approaching the peak of the *progresio harmonica*, and that there at last - and only there - it were given to us to hear once more and simultaneously the fundamental sound in the base. It is the feminine Archangel of a *supercelestial* Earth, assuming the rank and privilege of the Divine Sophia (or *Daena*), that it is suggested that we may perceive, on the level of the world of the *lahut*, the eternal reality of the dazzling Fatima, daughter of the Prophet, as she is meditated in Shi'ite gnosis, or, more exactly, in that of the Shaikhi School.

It is true, alas, that in the absence until now of a comprehensive work on Shi'ite doctrines, and especially those of Shaikhism, to which we could refer, we may be suspected of a too easy acceptance of obscure allusions. Shi'ism - this word comes from the Arabic *shi'a* and designates the community of the *adepts* ho

follow the Imams of the Prophet's family - Shi'ism, which for five centuries has been the form of Islam in Iran, where from the beginning it had its centers of radiation, is still very little known in the West. Too often, influenced by contemporary fads, people reduce its origins to questions of political succession. By so doing, they completely overlook the important body of literature consisting of the conversations of the first adepts with successive Imams until the 9th century of our era. These conversations bear witness that the flowering of Shi'ism was essentially the flowering, or rather the resurgence, of gnosis in Islam (if one were to go back and study the origins of the doctrines, one could not separate Twelver Shi'ism and Ismaili Shi'ism). Shi'ite gnosis is preeminently the esotericism of Islam, and when it was made the state religion by the Safavids in the 16th century, this resulted in the formation of a kind of official clergy almost exclusively concerned with jurisprudence. The chief effect of this ordeal was to render the Iranian adepts of Shi'ite gnosis, even today, still more rigorous in their practice of the "discipline of the Arcanum".

While prophetology is an essential element of Islamic religion as such, in Shi'ite theosophy it is divided into prophetology and Imamology. Beside the prophetic function, which delivers the message of the literal Revelation, there is the initiatic function, which initiates into the hidden meanings of revelations and which is the function of the Imam. After the cycle of prophecy (*da'irat al-nubuwa*) that ended with Muhammad, the "Seal of the Prophets", there comes the cycle of Initiation (*da'irat al-walaya*), the present cycle, placed under the spiritual rule of the

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Twelfth Imam, the hidden Imam, "present in the hearts but invisible to the senses".

The Shaikhi School, which flourished at the end of the 18th century under the stimulus of the lofty and strong spiritual personality of Shaikh Ahmad Ahsai (d. 1826), marked an extraordinary revival of primitive Shi'ite gnosis. Its literature is enormous, for the most part still in manuscript. Here we cannot even outline all the doctrines, but in the course of the following pages we shall see how and why the theme of Hurqalya is one of its essential themes. In it, the meaning of Imamology has been closely examined in great depth (or height). The twelve Imams who assumed the initiatic function subsequent to the prophet message of Muhammad, his person, and the person of his daughter Fatima, from whom the line of the Imams originated, this pleroma of the "Fourteen Very-Pure" is understood and meditated not only as regards the ephemeral appearance

on earth of their respective persons, but in the reality of their precosmic eternal entities. Their persons are essentially theophanic; they are the Names and the divine Attributes, that which alone can be known of the divinity; they are the organs of the divinity; they are its "operant operations". From a structural point of view, in Shi'ite theology, Imamology plays the same role as Christology in Christian theology. That is why whoever has known only Sunni Islam, is confronted in Iran by something unexpected, and becomes involved in a dialogue the richness and consequences of which are unforeseeable.

Thus, the twelve Imams, in their theophanic persons, together with the Prophet and the resplendent Fatima, form the pleroma of the "Fourteen Very-Pure"; when meditated in their substance and their preeternal person, they assume a mode of being and a position analogous to the Aeons of the pleroma in Valentinian gnosis. As regards the subject of our concern here, namely, the theme of the celestial Earth, the position and role of Fatima in the pleroma now take on a predominant significance. In the aforementioned schema of Suhrawardian "Oriental Theosophy", we were shown how our Earth and its feminine Angel, Isfandarmuz, ranked in the world of archetypes, the world of the Soul or *Malakut*. Thus, we had a threefold universe: the earthly human world, which is the object of sensory perception; the world of the Soul or *Malakut*, which is, properly speaking, the world of imaginative perception; and the world of pure Cherubic Intelligences, the *Jabarut*, which is the object of intelligible knowledge.

In the Shi'ite theosophy of Shaikhism, another
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universe (as in Ibn Arabi al-Mursi), is superimposed on the above three universes: the universe of the *lahut*, the sphere of the deity. But the characteristic of Shi'ism and Shaikhism is to conceive this *lahut* explicitly as constituting the pleroma of the "Fourteen Very-Pure". One might say that it allows us to hear the theme of the celestial Earth, like all the other themes, in a still higher octave. Each octave is a new world, a new beginning, where everything is rediscovered, but at a different height, that is, in a higher mode of being. This succession of octaves is what allows the *ta'wil*, or spiritual hermeneutics, to be practiced authentically. Moreover in the transcendent Person of Fatima as a member of the supreme Pleroma, we shall be hearing something like the motif of the *supracelestial Earth*; and through this supercelestial Earth, we are led to the idea of a Shi'ite Sophiology, by which we shall perceive afresh something that Mazdean Sophiology already perceived in the person of the Angel of the Earth, but this time at a new and higher level,

since the *progression harmonica* produces the resonance of harmonics which until then had remained silent.

We shall summarize here a few essential pages of a great work in Persian, in four volumes, composed, as well as many others, by the eminent Shaikh Hajj Muhammad karim Khan Kirmani (D. 1288 AH/1870 AD), second in the line of succession from Shaikh Ahmad Ahsa'I as head of the Shaikhi School. His "Spiritual Directory" abounds in glimpses that are opened to the reader thanks to his profound and original thought. In order to understand the structure of the pleroma of Shi'ite theosophy and the role played in it by Fatima, one must be guided by the basic idea, of which we are constantly reminded in the text, that all the universes symbolize with one another. Here again we meet the Heavens and an Earth but these are not the Heavens and the Earth of our world, nor those of the *Malakut*, nor those of the *Jabarut*, but the Heavens and Earth of that *hypercosmos* which is the sphere of the Deity, the *lahut*. The rhythm that determines its architectonic structure is then developed in the dimension of terrestrial time. To discover in this historic dimension itself a structure which makes it possible to see the succession as homologous to the structure of the pleroma - this will be essentially the esoteric hermeneutic, the *ta'wil*; it will be a discovery of the true and hidden meaning, the spiritual history that becomes visible through the recital of external events. It will mean to "see things in Hurqalya".

Clinging as we do in the West to the materiality
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of historical facts, lacking which we fear to lose our foothold, it is perhaps difficult for us to understand that the origin of all Islamic faith and hope, as well as of the responsibility on which the conscience of the believer is based, lies not in a fact of history, but in a *fact of metahistory*, the preeternal pact concluded when the divine Being asked the totality of human beings present in the Anthropos, the celestial Adam: "Am I not your Lord?" (*A-lastu bi-rabbikum?* 7:171). We have already seen also that the Mazdean faith and ethic are based on a *fact of metahistory*: the Lord Wisdom's questioning of the Fravartis as to whether they were willing to descend to earth, there to fight against the Ahrimanic powers. But here there is something more: the same metahistorical event in which the *spiritual history* of the Adamites originates is itself only the reappearance, on the plane of Adamic humanity, of an Event that resounds from descending octave to descending octave, but whose primordial scene is the supreme pleroma. In fact, the interrogation encodes for the imaginative perception the unfathomable mystery of the origin of origins. Ibn Arabi al-Mursi suggests the

approach to this when he declares that the Divine Being was at one and the same time the questioner and the respondent.

This question is, indeed, the key to the mystery of the primordial theophany, the revelation of the Divine Being who can only be revealed to Himself in *another* self, but is unable to recognize Himself as *other* or to recognize that other as Himself, except in that he *Himself* is the other's God. The fact that the beings of the supreme pleroma appeared in an order of ontological precedence corresponding to the order in which they answered the primordial interrogation is a way, for the imaginative perception, of deciphering the structure of the pleroma as the place of the primordial theophany. Just as the visible Heavens are created by the contemplative acts of cherubic Intelligences emanating one from another, so the "heavens of the pleroma", in the sphere of the *lahut*, are brought about by theophanic acts.

These theophonic acts coincide with the progressive differentiation of the drops of the primordial ocean of being, that is, of being given its imperative by the creative *Esto*. The *vis formative*, immanent in each drop, enables it to give the answer that concludes the divine preeternal pact. Since the order of ontological succession of the answers determines the structure of the pleroma of the *lahut*, the result is that the hierarchy of the Fourteen Supreme Spiritual Entities will have its epiphany on

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earth, at the time of the cycle of Muhammadan prophecy, in the succession of the persons who typify it, the "Fourteen Very-Pure": the Prophet Muhammad, Fatima, his daughter, and the twelve Imams.

The first of the spiritual entities to answer is the first of the beings, the "inchoate being", he who will have his sensory manifestation on earth in the person of the Prophet Muhammad. This is why he is the supreme Heaven of the Pleroma, and the one whose homologue in the astronomical Heavens is the Sphere of Spheres, the Throne ('*arsh*), or Emyrean. After him the second of the eternal spiritual entities to answer is the one who will be manifested on earth in the person of Hazrat Amir (id est, the First Imam, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, a cousin of the Prophet and the husband of Fatima); his homologue in the astronomical heavens is the Eighth Heaven, the Heaven containing the "fortresses" or constellations of the Zodiac, the Heaven of the Fixed Stars (*Kursi*), the firmament. Therefore, the empyrean of the pleroma is the Heaven of Prophecy (*nubuwa*); its firmament is the Heaven of Initiation (*walaya*). By virtue of that, this firmament is the Heaven of Intefral Initiation; the First Imam, in his theophanic person,

recapitulates it in its totality.

However, the totality of the Heaven of the Initiation is a conjunction of twelve Persons or primordial hypostases (the astronomical homologues of which are the twelve signs of the Zodiac), id est, of the spiritual entities that will be manifested on earth as the Twelve Imams. Each of them has his distinctive sign in the Zodiac of the pleroma, id est, in the essence of the Initiation recapitulated in the Heaven of the First Imam. But each of them, according to his distinct ontological rank, likewise produces his own Heaven. Two of them voice their response, those two to which, on earth, will correspond that pair of brothers, the young Imams, Hasan and Hussein (prince of martyrs), the sons of Ali (ibn Abi Talib) and of Fatima (zahrz); these two entities produce, respectively, the Heaven of the Sun and the Heaven of the Moon of the supreme pleroma. Then comes the one whose epiphany on earth will be the Twelfth Imam, the Hidden Imam, id est, the Imam of our time, whose person is to the Prophet Muhammad as the last Saoshyant, *Zarathustra redivivus*, is the the prophet Zarathustra (Zoroaster) himself. Later the eight other Imams utter their response in succession, in the order which in the eternal Initiation will be symbolized by the other planetary Spheres and by those imagined in order to account for the movements of the Moon.

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Finally there comes the response of Hazrat Fatima (Zahra) to complete the pleroma of the *lahut* and give it both its plenitude and its foundation. Thus, she is the *Earth* of the supreme pleroma, and this is why it can be said that on this ontological plane she is more than the Celestial Earth, she is the *Supracelestial Earth*. In other words the Heavens and the Earth of the pleroma of the *lahut* are related to the Heavens and the Earth of Hurgalya, about which there will be much to say later in this book, in the same way as the Heavens and the Earth of Hurgalya are related to the Heavens and the Earth of the sensory world. Or again, the pleromatic person of Fatima (Zahra) is to the Celestial Earth of Hurgalya as Spenta Armaiti is the the Mazdean Earth haloed by the light of the *Xvarnah*.

No human being can have access to the vision of the supreme pleroma; to do so, he would need to "catch up with" those spiritual entities who are eternally "ahead" of the totality of creatures. One single atom of the Supercelestial Earth projected into a million of our universes would suffice - because of its beauty, its purity, and its light - to bring them into a state of incandescent fusion. The beings of the pleroma of the *lahut* are visible only in their apparitional forms, which are the receptacles of their theophanies.

Primordial, therefore, is the function of the one who in person is the Supracelestial Earth, the paradise beyond paradise, to the same extent that the Celestial Earth of Hurqalya is the Earth of theophanic visions. In other words, as we shall see, without the person of Fatima (Zahra) there would be neither the manifestation of the Imamate, nor Imamic initiation. For the pleroma of these entities of light is the very place of the divine mystery. Their light is the divine light itself; their transparency allows it to shine through, retaining none of it as their own ipseity. Pure flaming crystals which the eye cannot gaze upon because they manifest the Illuminating Sun, these "Fourteen Very-Pure" are not only the Friends and Loved Ones of God; they are the very substance of pre-eternal Love; they are the identity of love, lover, and beloved, that identity which all Sufis have aspired to live, and which, according to the Shi'ite Spirituals, is inaccessible to anyone not initiated into the secret of Imamology. This can explain, for example, their circumspect attitude, that of Shaikhism, for example, toward non-Shi'ite Sufism.

From this height, we reach a perspective in which the *Sophiology* of Shaikhism will be developed. On this earth, Fatima (Zahra), the daughter of the Prophet, was the wife of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, himself the Prophet's

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cousin. Their exemplary union is the manifestation of the eternal syzygy originating in the eternity of the pleroma of the *lahut*. The First Imam and Faatima (Zahra) are related to each other in the same reciprocal way as the first two hypostases, 'Aql and Nafs, Intelligence and Soul, or in terms more familiar to us (because they go back to Philo Judaeus of Alexandria): *Logos* and *Sophia*.

The couple **'Ali-Fatima** is the exemplification, the epiphany on earth, of the eternal couple **Logos-Sophia**. Hence, we can foresee the implications of their respective persons. The Logos ('aql), in Shaikhi doctrine is the hidden substance of every being and of every thing; it is the suprasensory calling for visible Form in order to be manifested. It is like the wood in which the form of the statue will appear. Better still, it is like the archetypal body, the inner astral mass of the sun, invisible to human perception, in relation to the visible Form, which is its *aura*, brilliance and splendor. The *maqam* (this word signifying state, rank, degree, plane, also the pitch of a note in music) - the *maqam* of Fatima (Zahra) corresponds exactly to this visible form of the sun, without which there would be neither radiance nor heat. And this is why Fatima (Zahra) has been called by a solar name: *Fatima al-Zahra*, the brilliant, resplendent Fatima. The totality

of the universe consists of this light of Fatima, the splendor of each sun illuminating every conceivable universe.

So one could also speak here of a cosmic Sophianity, having its source in the eternal person of Fatima-Sophia. As such, she assumes a threefold rank, a threefold dignity and function. For she is the manifested Form, *id est*, the very soul (*nafs, Anima*) of the Imams; she is the threshold (*bab*) through which the Imams effuse the gift of their light. Just as the light of the sun is effused by the form of the sun - which is its brilliant splendor - not by the invisible substance of its "archetype-body". Thus, in the second place, she is all thinkable reality, the pleroma of meanings (*ma'ani*) of all the universes, because nothing of what *is* can be without qualification. Qualification and meaning are on the same level of being of the Soul, for it is Soul-Sophia that confers qualification and meaning. That is why the whole universe of the soul and the secret of the meanings given by the Soul is the very universe and secret of Hazrat Fatima. **She is Sophia, which is to say divine wisdom and power, embracing all the universes.** That, lastly, is why her eternal Person, which is the secret of the world of the Soul, is also its manifestation (*bayan*), without which

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the creative Principle of the world would remain unknown and unknowable, forever hidden.

Or yet again: the ontological rank of the Imams in their eternal entity transcends all representation and perception, all means of expression and designation by created beings, whereas the rank of Hazrat Fatima is the plane of their epiphany, because the rank of her being is the very rank of the Soul for each degree of being. Thus the degree of being of Fatima-Sophia recapitulates the whole of the degrees of knowledge, of gnosis, so very completely that the rank of the respective preeminence of the prophets in regard to their knowledge of God is measured by their knowledge of Hazrat Fatima. Even those who were the most eminent from among the hundred and twenty-four thousand *Nabis* (prophets), those who, prior to Muhammad, were entrusted with the mission of revealing a heavenly Book, even they are still below the rank of Fatima-Sophia, because it is she who is the source of all their knowledge, revelations, and thaumaturgical powers, for Fatima-Sophia is the *tabula secreta (lawh mahfuz)*.

Indeed, according to tradition, Gabriel is the Angel of Revelation and the Angel of Knowledge, the herald sent to the prophets. But he himself receives the divine revelation, which he communicates to them, through the intermediary of three other archangels, Azrael, Seraphiel and Michael, who are the ports of the

Throne. Only the Archangel Michael receives directly part of the knowledge concealed in the *tabula secreta*, which indicates the rank itself and the position of Fatima-Sophia as the heart of the transcendent spiritual world.

In the Qur'an there are verses whose complete meaning cannot be understood except by means of the spiritual hermeneutic, the Shi'ite *ta'wil*; for example, the verse (which we translate as required by this *ta'wil*) in which God declares: "Yes, I swear it by the Moon, and by the night when it retires, and by the dawn when it rises, this Sign is one of the greater Signs, one of those which warn human beings" (74:35-39). This Sign among the greater Signs is Hazrat Fatima in the midst of the "Fourteen Very-Pure".

After recapitulating the ontological prerogatives of Hazrat Fatima-Sophia with our eminent Shaikh, we can say of her through whom earthly existence is transfigured into the dawn of a supracelestial Earth, that she is the THEOPHANY. The theme rises and expands to such magnitude that our Iranian Shaikh (to whom, however, we are also indebted for a treatise on colors) reaches heights foreshadowed by Goethe at the
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conclusion of the second Faust: an Eternally Feminine, preceding even terrestrial woman because preceding the differentiation of male and female in the terrestrial world, just as the supracelestial Earth rules over all the Earths, celestial and terrestrial, and exists before them. ***Fatima-Sophia*** is in fact the Soul: the Soul of creation, the Soul of each creature, *id est*, the constitutive part of the human being that appears essentially to the imaginative consciousness in the form of a feminine being, *Anima*. She is the eternally feminine in man, and that is why she is the archetype of the heavenly Earth; she is both paradise and initiation into it, for it is she who manifests the divine names and attributes revealed in the theophanic persons of the Imams, *id est*, in the Heavens of the Pleroma of the *lahut*.

Here one begins to understand the resurgence of a theme of primitive Shi'ite gnosis, more exactly of Ismaili gnosis, in which Fatima is called *Fatima Fatir*, Fatima the *Creator* (in the masculine gender). Indeed, this suggests that we can perceive, at an extraordinary height of resonance, the meaning of the name which the Shi'ite faithful give today to Hazrat Fatima. In Fatima (Zahra) they hail the "queen of women" (remember this selection from *Ave Maria* [Hail Mary] the Latin prayer to the Virgin Mary: "*benedicta tu in mulieribus*" [blessed art thou among women]). But in this context it suggests that we look for its meaning far beyond and above the sexual differentiation which is the condition of earthly

humanity, a meaning that we have to translate by something like "sovereign of feminine humanity" or "of humanity in the feminine". Indeed, we have to take feminine as meaning, in the first place, the totality of the beings of the universes of the Possible! All creatures have been created out of the Soul itself, out of the *Anima* of the holy Imams; they issue from the "left side" of the latter, as Eve, the *Anima* of Adam, was created from his left side, as the right of the Sun consists of the manifested form and qualifications of the sun.

All creatures being formed from their soul, the ontological status of the universe of creatures in relation to the holy Imams as cosmogonic powers is a feminine status. In this sense the Twelve Imams are the "men of God" alluded to in certain verses of the Qur'an. But at the same time the Imams, who inaugurate on earth the cycle of Initiation into the hidden meaning of the revelations, were created from the soul of the Prophet, or rather they are the soul of the Prophet. This is indicated several times in the Qur'an, as, for example,

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in the following verse: "he has made wives for you out of our own souls" (XVI:74 and XXX:20). In this sense, the Imams are the "brides" of the Prophet. And furthermore, since Initiation is nothing but the spiritual birth of the adepts, in speaking of the "mother of the believers" in the true sense, we should understand that the real and esoteric meaning of this word "mother" refers to the Imams. Indeed, this spiritual birth is effected through them, and the following saying of the Prophet refers to this: "I and 'Ali are the father and the mother of this community".

And so the Twelve Imams, as the instruments and effective causes of Creation, are, on the one hand, the "men of God", and masculine. But, on the other hand, and at the same time, they are the soul of the Prophet, *id est*, the *Anima*, the Feminine aspect of the Prophet through whom Initiation, *id est*, spiritual creation, takes place. Now we already know that the ontological rank of the Soul and the reality of the Soul are the very rank and reality of ***Fatima-Sophia***. The Imams are masculine as agents of cosmogony, since creation is their soul; as authors of spiritual creation they are feminine, since they are the Soul and since the Soul is Fatima (Zahra). This, therefore, is why we read that Fatima (Zahra) is the theophany of the supreme pleroma, and that is why the theophanic and initiatic function of the Holy Imams is precisely their "Fatimic" degree of being (their *Fatimiya*, which we faithfully translate as ***Sophianity***), and this is how Fatima (Zahra) comes to be called Fatima Fatir, Fatima the Creator.

Her functions symbolize with each other, from one

universe to the other: in the pleroma of the *lahut*, as the supracelestial Earth which is its foundation; on the terrestrial Earth, as the daughter and Soul of the Prophet and as the one from whom issue those who in their turn are the Soul of the Prophet, the lineage of the Twelve Imams. She is *the* theophany and she is the Initiation; she is the *majma al-nurayn*, the confluence of two lights, the light of Prophecy and the light of Initiation. Through her, creation, from the beginning, is Sophianic in nature, and through her the Imams are invested with the Sophianity that they transmit to their adepts, because she is its *soul*. From this pleromic height we can distinguish the fundamental sound emerging from the depths: namely, that which Mazdean Sophiology formulated in the idea of *sspendar matikih*, the Sophianity with which Spenta Armaiti, the feminine Angel of the Earth invested the faithful believer.

However, unlike what we found in the "Oriental Theosophy" of Suhrawardi, the name of Spenta Armaiti
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has not been mentioned in the passages we have just analyzed and commented upon. Nevertheless, if our harmonic perception makes it possible to discern spontaneously the chord produced by the Mazdean Earth transfigured by the Light of Glory and the celestial Earth transfigured in the person of Fatima-Sophia, this concordance will be confirmed in another way.

It was made clear earlier (Chapter I, section 4) how the link is formed between Spendarmat, the Angel of the Earth, and the person of the *Saoshyants*, the Saviors of whom the last one is destined to carry out what in Zoroastrian eschatology is called the Transfiguration and Rejuvenation of the world (*Frashkart*): the *apokatastasis*, or restoration of all things in their primordial splendor and wholeness, to the state in which they were until the invasion of the Ahrimanic Counterpowers. Unfortunately, we cannot attempt here a comparative outline that would follow from the analogy suggested, on the one hand, by the relationship between Muhammad, Fatima (Zahra) and the hidden Imam - the one whose *parousia* will also be a prelude to the *apokatastasis* and, on the other hand, by the relationship between Zarathustra (Zoroaster), the mother of the last Saoshyant and the last Saoshyant in person. But what needs to be pointed out, however, is that in the voluminous literature still produced nowadays in Shi'ite Iran, around the traditional sources dealing with the hidden Imam, there are abundant references showing that certain Shi'ite theologians have a direct knowledge of the Old Testament (*Torah*) and the New Testament (*injil*) of the Bible, as well as of Zoroastrian eschatology. Already in the 17th century, when Qutbuddin Ashkivari, one of

the most outstanding pupils of Mir Daamad (the great master of theology in the Isfahan school) was writing his spiritual history in three cycles (ancient Sages and prophets, figures of Sunni Islam, portraits of Shi'ite Islam), he stressed the identity of the features that mark the Person of the Zoroastrian *Saoshyant*, and of the attributes according to the Shi'ite faith of the Person of the Twelfth, or hidden, Imam.

We also encounter passages of this kind in another Persian work by the same eminent Shaikh (or, in Persian, *Pir*) Muhammad Karim Khan Kirmani, from whose teaching we have just reaped such profit. We are thinking especially of the pages in which the Shaikh (or *Pir*) refers to one of the ecstasies of Zarathustra (Zoroaster), in the course of which Ohrmazd gives his prophet the vision of a tree with seven branches, the shadow of which reached out to every place on the

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Earth. The seven branches of the tree were made of gold, silver, copper, bronze, steel, and iron, respectively. Ohrmazd explains to Zarathustra the meaning of each branch: each (as in the vision of Daniel) symbolizes one of the great empires.

With the 7th branch, *id est*, the 7th period, inaugurated by the reign of the 'Abbasids (indicated by their symbolic color, which is black), catastrophes follow in rapid succession, among them the whirlwind descent of the Mongols. But Ohrmazd consoles Zarathustra by announcing the advent of the eschatological hero, Bahram Varjavand, who will come from the East, from Central Asia. Certain traditions specify that he will come from the "city of the maidens" (*shahr-I dukhtaran*), which lies in the direction of Tibet (cf. above, Chapter I, note 126). His name defines his person: *Bahram* is the Persian name for the planet Mars (now we have already seen that in the heavens of the pleroma of the *lahut*, the homologue of the Heaven of Mars is the Heaven of the Twelfth Imam); *Varjavand* means he who possesses the power and sovereignty of the Light of Glory, the *Xvarnah*. The homologation of the Zoroastrian eschatological hero to the person of the hidden Imam, whose *parousia* bursts forth as the sign of the Resurrection, goes back, as we have just recalled, to much earlier Shi'ite theologians.

But other homologations can be made. The Zoroastrian hero and the Imam-Resurrector both have as their comrades-in-arms not only those who, in one period or another, carry on for them the battle of the spirit that brings closer the future of their reign, but also those who, preserved in a mystical sleep, wait to rise up with them when the time comes, and all those from the past who will "return" for the final

battle. For the Zoroastrians, for example, there is Peshotun, one of the sons of King Vishtaspa who protected Zarathustra and encouraged his preaching, and for the Shi'ites, the First Imam in person. These are two great figures of "spiritual knights" (*javanmardan*) mystical eschatological role justifies the homologation suggested by our Shaikh (or *Pir*).

However, let us stress the fact that our authors are thinking not in terms of "historical currents" or "influences", but in the form of cycles, taking into account both the schema of universes symbolizing with one another and also the schema of periods of spiritual history. Thus the homologated forms do not have to be reduced to the same homogenous time; each of them is their time. And that is precisely why they are typifications and why they can rightly be homologated
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to one another, and why each personage has his homologue in each cycle. To make the Saoshyant homologous to the Hidden Imam is not, as we would doubtless tend to make it, a matter of weighing influences in pointing out currents, id est, in taking apart the entire mechanism of external history in order to "explain" its identity by bringing it back to a single plane. Far from it, for this way of thinking in cycles demands a kind of harmonic perception; or, again, the perception of a constant structure, just as the same melody can be produced in different registers. Each time the melodic elements are different, but the structure is the same - the same melody, the same musical figure, the same *Gestalt*.

That is why the progression, which this mode of thought makes it possible for us to conceive, is not a horizontal linear evolution, but an ascent from cycle to cycle, from one octave to a higher octave. A few pages from the same Shaikh (or *Pir*), which have been translated here (part Two, Article X, section 2) illustrate this. The spiritual history of humanity since Adam is the cycle of prophecy following the cycle of cosmogony; but though the former follows in the train of the latter, it is in the nature of a reversion, a return and reascent to the pleroma. This has a Gnostic flavor, to be sure, but that is exactly what it means to "see things in Hurgalya". It means to see man and his world essentially in a vertical direction. The *Orient-origin*, which *orients* and magnetizes the return and reascent, is the celestial pole, the cosmic North, the "emerald rock" at the summit of the cosmic mountain of Qaf, in the very place where the world of Hurgalya begins; so it is not a region situated in the East on the maps, not even those old maps that place the East at the top, in place of the North. The meaning of man and the meaning of his

world are conferred upon them by this *polar dimension* and not by a linear, horizontal, and one-dimensional evolution, that famous "sense of history" which nowadays has been taken for granted, even though the terms of reference on which it is based remain entirely hypothetical.

Moreover, the paradise of Yima in which are preserved the most beautiful of beings who will repopulate a transfigured world, namely, the Var that preserves the seed of the resurrection bodies, is situated in the North. The Earth of Light, the *Terra Lucida* of Manichaeism, like that of Mandeism, is also situated in the direction of the cosmic North. In the same way, according to the mystic 'Abd al-Karim Jili (cf. Part Two, Article IV), the "Earth of the souls" (3442)

is a region in the far North, the one not to have been affected by the consequences of the fall of Adam. It is the abode of the "men of the Invisible", ruled by the mysterious prophet Khizr. A characteristic feature is that its light is that of the "midnight sun", since the evening prayer is unknown there, dawn rising before the sun has set. And here it might be useful to look at all the symbols that converge toward the paradise of the North, the souls' Earth of Light and the castle of the Holy Grail.

Now we must try to understand how our texts unfold to show us this Earth of Light as the Earth of Visions and the Earth through which the resurrection of the bodies or, more exactly, the apparition of the "spiritual bodies", takes place. But as regards this world, described to us as the world of archetype-Images and the world of the soul, we had to have an idea *who* was its soul. By guiding us to the higher octave, to the pleroma of the *lahut*, Shaikhi theosophy has shown us how **Fatima-Sophia** is the supracelestial Earth, because she is the Soul, the *Amina* or manifested form of the supreme pleroma.

As our authors gradually help us to enter into the "eighth climate", we shall also be learning how the *Anima substantive* of the adept, his "spiritual body", is the Earth of his Paradise. Now this Earth of Hurgalya is where the Hidden Imam lives at the present time. Consequently, we shall begin to see the bond of mystical exemplification that associates the soul and person of the Shi'ite adept with Fatima-Sophia, prime origin of the Twelfth Imam, and invests the adept with the Sophianic function of Fatima (Zahra). For, as we shall learn, the *parousia* or manifestation of the Hidden Imam is not an external event destined suddenly to appear on the calendar of physical time; it is a *disoccultation* that gradually takes place as the pilgrim of the spirit, rising toward the world of

Hurgalya, brings about the event of the awaited Imam in himself. The whole of the spirituality of Shi'ism is based on this, as it will become clear to us on reading the fine passages from the writings of Shaikh (or *Pir*) Sarkar Agha given in translation in the second part of this book to help us understand why Hurgalya is the Earth of Visions and the Earth of Resurrection."(310)

Says Abdallah al-Bahrani:

"A white dove entered Fatima's garment at the house of Umm Salamah before her meeting with the prophet (Muhammad) ..."(311)

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This would seem to be an appropriate place to deal with the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox feast day known as *Epiphany*, which we mention in a number of places in this book, and in various contexts, so that it would seem to be a good idea to give the reader a definition of it. Says the Encyclopedia of Religion:

EPIPHANY

"Epiphany is the Christian feast of the manifestation of Jesus Christ. Traditionally celebrated on January 6; it is also celebrated by the Roman rite in some places on the Sunday following the octave (eighth day) of Christmas. The feast is called *Epiphania* ("manifestation") among Western Christians and *Theophaneia* ("manifestation of God") among Eastern (Orthodox) Christians. That the feast is of eastern origin is indicated by the Greek origin of both names. Epiphany is one of the twelve major feasts of the (Eastern) Orthodox church year.

The origins of Epiphany are obscure and much debated. It was originally either a feast of Christ's baptism in the Jordan or of his birth at Bethlehem. The theory that the date of January 6 corresponded to an old date for the Egyptian winter solstice has been largely discredited. The date may have been first observed as a feast of the baptism of Christ among the second-century Basilidian gnostics. In the fourth century it was certainly a feast of the nativity of Christ, celebrated with an octave, or eight days of celebration, at Bethlehem and all the holy places of Jerusalem.

At the end of the fourth century, when the Western feast of the nativity of Christ came to be

observed in the East on December 25, January 6 came to be widely celebrated as the feast of Christ's baptism, although among the Armenians Epiphany is the only nativity feast celebrated to this day. As the feast of Christ's baptism, Epiphany became for Eastern Christians a major baptismal day, and hence it was given the Greek name *Ta Phota* ("the lights"); baptism itself was called *photismos* ("enlightenment").

At the same time as the East was accepting the Western Christmas, the Feast of Epiphany was being adopted in the West. Outside of Rome it was celebrated as the Feast of the Three Miracles, comprising the visit of the Magi, the baptism of Christ, and the

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miracle of changing water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana. In Rome, however, the feast concentrated solely on the visit of the Magi, connoting Christ's manifestation to the Gentiles. With their adoption of the Roman liturgy all other Western Christians eventually came to observe Epiphany as the Feats of the Magi.

Among Eastern Christians the celebration of Epiphany is notable for several reasons. At Alexandria the patriarch would solemnly announce the date of Easter for the current year on January 6. Throughout the East, Epiphany, together with Easter, was a special day for performing baptisms. The most enduring custom, however, has been the blessing of the waters on Epiphany. These are two blessings. The first takes place during the vigil of Epiphany in the evening and is followed by the priest's sprinkling of the town or village with the blessed water. The second blessing takes place on the day of Epiphany itself, when the local waters of stream, lake, or sea are blessed by having a cross thrown into them, after which young men dive into the waters to retrieve it.

The Western observance of Epiphany has centered on the figures of the Magi, popularly called the Three Kings. Their cult was especially strong at Cologne in the Middle Ages, for their supposed relics had been brought there in the twelfth century. The idea that the Magi were kings (which, as we shall see, is obviously false) was derived from several verses of scripture (*Psalms* 71:10, *Isaiah* 60:3-6). The tradition that there were three of them was probably derived from the number of gifts mentioned in the biblical account of their visit (*Matthew* 2:1-12). The account of the visit of the Magi and of the miraculous star that guided them

inspired several mystery plays during the Middle Ages. The story of their visit also gave rise to the custom of gift giving on Epiphany: in Italy gifts are given on that day by an old woman named Befana, and the

feast is also an occasion for gift giving in Spanish cultures. (In Spain, Epiphany is commonly called "*Dia de los Reyes*, i.e., "Day of the Kings", or *Dia de los Reyes Magos*, i.e., "Day of the Magi Kings"). (312)

Says the New Catholic Encyclopedia:

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EPIPHANY, THE SOLEMNITY OF

"A feast celebrated for most of Christian history on January 6, though - since the reform of the liturgical calendar - marked by most Christian churches on the Sunday between January 2 and 8, where January 6 is not a holy day of obligation.

Names for the Feast

One of the most ancient annual liturgical feasts, Epiphany has been variously called, in the East, *epiphania*, *epiphanies*, *theophania*, all suggesting divine appearances or manifestations. Other names for the feast - such as *hemera ton photon*, or "day of lights" - have emphasized the images of sun, stars, and light, long associated with Epiphany and perhaps connected to the period of "illumination" in the process of initiation in the early Church. Parallel terms in the Latin West were *dies epiphaniarum*, the "day of revelations"; *dies manifestationis*, the "day of manifestations"; and simply *apparition*, "appearance". Also connected to the light liturgy was the Latin phrase *dies luminum*, the "day of lights".

Before their use in Christian liturgy, the Greek *epiphany* or *theophany* designated a manifestation of a divinity and, later, important events in the life of a ruler, such as birth, ascension to the throne, or even a visit to a city. The word "epiphany" was first used in a Christian sense in the New Testament, referring to both the first and final comings of Christ (see, e.g., Titus 2:11, 13). The word was soon after used of the miracles of Christ as manifestations of divine power.

Origins in the Calendar

A feast on January 6 is first mentioned by St. Clement of Alexandria (around A.D. 215), who said that the Basilidians, a gnostic group, commemorated the baptism of Christ on this day (*Stromata* 4:12; *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte* [Lepizig 1897] 2:284-287). The feast of the Epiphany certainly originated in the East, and it is found in the Brevarium Syriacum of 411 AD (editor and translator Mariani [Rome 1956] 28). In the West the journals of Ammianus Marcellinus describe a visit in 363 of the Emperor Julian to Gaul "on the day of the festival in January which the Christians call 'epiphany'" (LCL 2:98-101). The feast was listed in
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the Calendar of Carthage, in North Africa (Dictionnaire d'archeologie chretienne 8.2:2286), but not in the Roman Chronograph of 354, where one finds the earliest evidence for Christmas.

Narratives in the East

It is difficult to ascertain if there was originally a single narrative or image for the feast, or if the feast celebrated a variety of epiphanies or manifestations from its origin. By the fourth century the feast embraced the narratives of the birth of Christ, his baptism, the adoration of the Magi, and the miracle at Cana. Epiphanius, fourth-century bishop of Salamis, described the pagan feasts and accepted January 6 as the date of the birth of Jesus, and he also speaks of the Magi and sign at the wedding in Cana (Panarion 51:16).

Two writers of Latin Christianity who traveled in the East give witness to early narratives for the feast. First, the fourth-century travel-diary of Egeria describes the Palestinian celebration of January 6 and its octave. Though a folio is missing, the narrative was likely that of the nativity of Jesus, for the people, monks, and the bishop had gone up from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. There is no mention in Egeria's journal of the baptism or of Cana for this feast (Journal, chapter 25). Second, according to John Cassian (Conferences 10.2), the Alexandrian "day of epiphanies" commemorated the birth and baptism of Christ.

In ancient Syria the narrative included the birth, the (adoration of) the Magi, and the baptism, and the Apostolic Constitutions (8.33.7) command that slaves not work "on the festival of the Epiphany, because on it there came to pass the manifestation of the divinity of Christ ... at the baptism (translator

Grishbrooke, 51).

Narratives in the West

Though some scholars assume that there had been a single narrative at the start to which others were added, it seems more likely that a plurality of objects, all "manifestations" of God's presence in Christ, was there from the start. This is supported by the testimony of Bishop Filastrius of Brescia, whose Diversarum hereseon liber (date 383) simultaneously declared that there is only one proper narrative for the feast (the visit of the Magi) and named the feast (3447)

with the plurak *dies epifaniorum*, "day of the manifestations", the plural likely capturing the earlier stratum of more than one narrative even though Filastrius was himself legislating only one for Orthodox belief.

Sermons of St. Augustine indicate that the feast existed in North Africa in his time (Patrologia Latina 38:1026-1039), and eight sermons of Leo the Great (Bishop of Rome, 440-461) witness the feast's observance in Rome in the middle of the fifth century (Sermons 31-38; Patrologia Latina 54:234-263). By the time of St. Augustine and Leo, the date of December 25 for the birth of Christ had been received by most churches, and the narratives of Epiphany had been pared down to the single one of the visit of the Magi, as narrated in the Gospel According to St. Matthew (2:1-12).

Liturgy

The multiplicity of narratives earlier attached to Epiphany was not manifest in the liturgies of Epiphany in Rome. There the principal narrative was from the earliest sources and still is the visit of the Magi to adore the Christ child. The narratives of Christ's baptism and of the sign in Cana turning water into wine are secondary.

Early Mass formularies are found in the Wurzburg Lectionary (Dictionnaire d'archeologie chretienne 8.2:2286) and in the old Gelasian Sacramentary (edition Mohlberg 61-68). Although the diary of Egeria testifies to an octave of Epiphany in Palestine, and the Wurzburg Lectionary indicates a triduum following January 6, an octave did not enter the Roman liturgy until the eighth century (Gregorian Sacramentary). This octave, together with the vigil, was suppressed in 1956. In the present liturgical calendar of the Roman Catholic

Church, the Sunday after January 6 is the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, a narrative that had been proclaimed on Epiphany in Egypt in the early Church.

In the Liturgy of the hours for the feast of Epiphany, the manifestation of Christ's power in the miracle of Cana is commemorated in the Magnificat Antiphon on January 6 and in the Gospel of the second Sunday after Epiphany. The espousals of Christ and the Church are mentioned in the same antiphon. This theme enters the Epiphany liturgy because Christ is believed to have sanctified water at his baptism, and it is through the waters of baptism that the Church exercise spiritual maternity.

Today the multiplicity is not evident in the texts

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for the Eucharistic liturgy for the celebration of Epiphany. The prayer texts draw only from the Matthean (i.e., of the Gospel According to St. Matthew) narrative of the Magi. While the prayers maintain the imagery of light and stars, one step removed from the baptismal origins, these are dissociated from their original connection to baptism and the process of illumination. The multiplicity of the feast of manifestation is expressed well, however, in the antiphon for the canticle at morning prayer:

Today the Bridegroom claims his bride, the Church, since Christ has washed her sins away in Jordan's waters; the Magi hasten away with their gifts to the royal wedding; and the wedding guests rejoice, for Christ has changed water into wine, alleluia. This is also so in the antiphon for the canticle at evening prayer:

Three mysteries mark this holy day: today the star leads the Magi to the infant Christ; today Christ wills to be baptized by St. John (the Baptist) in the river Jordan to bring us salvation.

Customs

The fourth canon of the Council of Saragossa, Spain in 380 legislated that "for 21 continuous days, from December 17 until the day of the Feast of Epiphany, which is January 6, no one should be absent from church, or hide at home, withdraw to a dwelling in the country, move to the mountains, or go walking with bare feet. Rather, all should assemble in church."

(translation of Mansi, Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collection [Parism 1889-1927; reprinted Graz 1960] 3:634). These prescriptions both indicate the gravity of the feast and suggest that Christmas itself was not yet observed in Spain in 380, for the three weeks of discipline, during which December 25 would have occurred, would not otherwise have been "continuous".

From ancient times the Eastern Church has blessed baptismal water on Epiphany. Antonius of Piacenza (circa 570) testifies that in Palestine the Jordan river itself was blessed (Itinerarium 11-12; Patrologia Latina 72:903-904), this in commemoration of the baptism of the Lord in the same stream. Antonius testifies that a baptism took place, ships were blessed

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with with the holy water, and "all descended into the river for blessing, dressed in woven clothes as if for burial".

As attested by John Cassian, on Epiphany the Church of Alexandria announced to other churches the date of the following Easter. Elsewhere the dates of Easter and other movable feasts were announced after the Gospel on the feast of Epiphany. St. Ambrose testified to a Milanese custom at Epiphany for the enrollment of catechumens. Today, this custom has been revised in some parishes." (313)

Says The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium:

EPIPHANY

"Epiphany (*ta* 'Epiphania) (Church Slavonic: *Epifani*; *Bogoyvlenie*; *Kreshenie*), the feast of lights (*ta phota*), also called *ta theophania*, celebrating the baptism of Christ in the Jordan River. Epiphany originally commemorated not a single event, but a mystery, the appearance of salvation in Jesus revealed in a cluster of New Testament events, principally Jesus' birth and his baptism. Historicizing tendencies in the 4th century AD led to a separation of the cluster: the Nativity was moved to 25 December and the Baptism was then celebrated by itself on January 6. The feast gained importance during the controversies over the divine origins of Christ and with the subsequent definitions of the First Council of Nicaea.

Epiphany is celebrated with a solemnity matched, among the fixed Great Feasts, only by that accompanying the Nativity. There is a preparatory

Sunday, a four-day forefeast, a *paramone* vigil (as before the Nativity) that includes a blessing of the waters, a *SYNAXIS* honoring St. John the Baptist on the day following the feast (January 7), and eight days of afterfeast (Mateos, *Typicon* 1:174-191). The blessing of the waters, an important part of the ritual, is attested already in 387 AD at Antioch by St. John Chrysostom (PG 49:365f). According to a 10th century ceremonial book (*De cer.*, bk.1, chapter 3, 25-26), the patriarch and the emperor celebrated the vigil at the Church of St. Stephen the Protomartyr at the Daphne Palace and the Epiphany rite itself in the Church of Hagia Sophia; on the day of Epiphany the emperor, honored at a number of receptions by the factions, confirmed new *MAGISTROI* to office.

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Representation in Art

The feast of the Baptism of Christ was represented by the 3rd century AD and had acquired its standard composition by the 6th century (Cathedra of Maximian): Christ frontal or in profile in the water, St. John the Baptist to one side, angels on the other, the dove descending in a light-burst from above, the personified (River) Jordan below. Post-Iconoclastic versions added a cross in the water, referring to the cross at the pilgrimage site in Palestine (*Hosios Loukas*); two disciples and the axe at the root of a tree (cf. St. Luke 3:9; *Menologion of Basil II*, p. 299); swimmers, linking this with St. John's other baptisms; and a dragon in the depths, associating Christ's descent into the water with his descent into Hades (see *Anastasis*). The Baptistery at Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (by 1200) embedded the Baptism in a cycle of scenes of St. John's ministry. In Palaiologan art the Baptism was incorporated in such a five- to seven-scene cycle, and Christ's precipitous descent into the water was emphasized to permit analogies with his descent into the cave at birth and into Hades at death. Only in miniatures in the 12th century Manuscript, Chicago, University Library 965 (folios 37r, 61v) is the Baptism separated from the descent of the Spirit in accordance with Scripture (St. Luke 3:21-22)." (314)

I have personally witnessed the Blessing of the Waters of Epiphany, January 6, on various occasions. The priest blesses the waters of the stream or pond, and throws a large metal

cross into the waters. Youths then dive into the stream or pond to retrieve the cross. On one occasion, the water was so cold that the youths had to wear scuba diver's wet suits. Of course, there are many places where the climate simply does not permit throwing the cross into the stream or pond and having youths retrieve it. I have never personally witnessed the Blessing of the Waters conducted under these circumstances. However, there are descriptions of it. Below is one such description, which takes place in St. Petersburg, Russia:

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"In a rare performance of public ceremonial Nicholas (Tsar Nicholas II) attended the ritual of the Blessing of the Waters, traditionally marking the end of the Christmas festival, held on January 6 in the Orthodox calendar. The key moment came when he descended the Jordan Staircase of the Winter Palace to the edge of the frozen River Neva, to witness the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg dip the gold cross into the water three times through a hole in the ice in commemoration of the baptism of Christ. After this a flagon of the sacred water was presented to the tsar with which to cross himself." (315)

Note the presence of the white dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit, as shown in the depictions of the baptism of Jesus Christ.

As is well known, in traditional Christian (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) iconography, the White Dove is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. In traditional Christian (Catholic and Orthodox) iconography, the Virgin Mary is shown in the presence of the White Dove at the time of the Miraculous Conception of Jesus, and at the time of the Annunciation. Because of its connection with the beautiful *Magnificat* prayer, the Annunciation is a common motif

of traditional Christian (Catholic and Orthodox) iconography. In all icons of the Annunciation, the White Dove is shown in the presence of the Virgin Mary. The White Dove appeared at the Baptism of Jesus. In all traditional Christian (Catholic and Orthodox) icons of the Baptism of Jesus, the White Dove is shown hovering over the head of Jesus. Says the Gospel According to St. John, I: 32:

"And John (*St. John the Baptist: Yahya*) gave testimony saying: "I saw the (*Holy*) Spirit coming down as a dove from Heaven, and he (*the dove*) remained upon him (*Jesus: the Prophet Isa*)."
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The Early Church Fathers wrote a good deal concerning the symbolism of the White Dove. White, of course, is symbolic of purity, but there is more; why a white dove and not a white owl or white sea gull? Said Tertullian:

"The Holy Spirit came in the form of a dove in order that the nature of the Holy Spirit might be made plain by means of a creature of utter simplicity and innocence. For the dove's body has no gall."(316)

With his customary eloquence, St. John Chrysostom said:

"But why in the form of a dove? The dove is a gentle and pure creature. Since then the (*Holy*) Spirit, too, is "a Spirit of gentleness", he appears in the form of a dove, reminding us of Noah, to whom, when once a common disaster had overtaken the whole world and humanity was in danger of perishing, the (*White*) Dove appeared as a sign of deliverance from the tempest and, nearing an olive branch, published the good tidings of a serene presence over the whole world."(317)

As we shall note, in Islam - perhaps more especially Shi'a Islam - Jesus is often called "the Spirit of God".

Shi'a Islam, at least, believes in the Holy Spirit, which, however, is described as created by God in order to avoid any hint

of polytheism. Notes Allamah Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi:

"Some have said that the Holy Spirit was created by God and blown by Him into Jesus. It is recorded in reliable traditions that the Holy Spirit is a creation of God which is higher than the Archangels Gabriel and Michael and all the angels who had relations with the great Prophets and the sinless Imams and who keeps helping them from the time of their birth and guides them up to the last."(318)

As we have seen, in Islam as well as Christianity the white dove is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. I once saw a painting which depicted schematically the martyrdom of Imam Hussein at Karbala.

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In the foreground of said painting were depicted two white doves whose wings were bloodied. The symbolism is obvious: those who martyred Imam Hussein committed a sin against the Holy Spirit. In the Christian Tradition it is said that for a sin against the Holy Spirit there is no pardon, neither on earth nor in Heaven.

The Qur'an (XIX: 22) suggests that the Virgin Mary, fearing the reaction of the people to bearing a child out of wedlock, took the infant Jesus and retreated to a faraway place. Ali Zain al-Abidin, son of Imam Hussain and 4th Imam, when asked concerning the location of her place of retreat, replied:

"She set out from Damascus until she reached Karbala, and there, on the spot of Hussain's tomb, she left the child and returned on the same night."(319)

The above account is not only fantastic, it is at variance with both the Gospel (*Injil*) and Qur'anic accounts of the birth of Jesus.

Jesus often taught in parables. As we shall see, allegory or symbolic rather than literal truth is common in both Islam and Christianity. There is a hymn titled: "Were you there when they

crucified my Lord (Jesus)?" Obviously, no one who was alive at the time said hymn was composed could have been literally present at the Crucifixion. As we have seen, there is an Irish Gaelic hymn for Good Friday which portrays Ste. Brigid of Ireland as being present at the Crucifixion of Jesus, which obviously could not be literally true. Symbols are used to express a truth which transcends the literal, and which cannot be expressed in a literal fashion, due to the limitations of human language.

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The holly tree was sacred to the Celtic Druids as a symbol of eternal life, being the only broad leafed tree which retains its leaves and red berries throughout the European winter. This Druidic symbolism was retained in Christianity, and much added to it. As a medieval Christmas carol "The Holly and the Ivy" says:

The holly and the ivy,
When they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
The holly bears the crown.
 The rising of the sun
 And the running of the deer,
 The playing of the merry organ,
 Sweet singing in the choir.

The holly bears a blossom,
As white as the lily flower,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
 To be our sweet saviour.
 (Refrain)

The holly bears a berry.
As red as any blood,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
To do poor sinners good.
 (Refrain)

The holly bears a prickle,
As sharp as any thorn,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
On Christmas Day in the morn.

(Refrain)

The holly bears a bark,
As bitter as any gall,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
For to redeem us all.

(Refrain)

The thorns on the holly leaves and the bitterness of the infusion made from holly bark, which has medicinal properties, came to symbolize the pain of childbirth and the red berries the

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drops of blood connected with the birth of Jesus. The martyrdom of Imam Hussein was both painful and bloody. Thus, a comparison between the birth of Jesus and the martyrdom of Imam Hussain is by no means so far-fetched as it might appear at first glance.

I cannot resist quoting another medieval Christmas Carol, because of its beautiful symbolism. In this case, the birth of Jesus is compared to a rose blooming in the dead of winter, the rose being a mystical symbol in both Christian mysticism and Sufism:

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's (father of King David) lineage coming
As men of old have sung.
It came, a floweret bright,
Amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
The Rose I have in mind.
With Mary we behold it,
The Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
She bore to men a Saviour,
When half spent was the night.

The allegoric expression "Heart of God" is fairly common in

Christian (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) literature, and from a very early date. The metaphor "Heart of God" is also known in Shi'a Islam, as witness this hadith by Imam Ali al-Ridha, also known as Imam Ali Reza, Eighth Shi'a Imam:

"When God wills to appoint someone to look after the affairs of humanity, He expands His chest and makes His heart the source of realities and wisdom. ..." (320)

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"Heart of God" in Arabic would be "*qalb Allah*", which could very easily be garbled into "Karbala", particularly if the listener was a native speaker of Persian, Aramaic or Syriac rather than Arabic, as could well have been the case with whoever reported the above saying of Imam Ali Zain al-Abidin, Fourth Imam Remember, at the time of Imam Zain al-Abidin most of the population of Syria, Palestine and Iraq still spoke Aramaic or Syriac; indeed, Aramaic or Syriac-speaking nuclei survive in Syria and Iraq to this day, and survived in Palestine and Lebanon until very recently, perhaps as recently as 1948.

The above is another indication of the tendency of someone as close to Imam Hussain as his son to draw Imam Hussain close to Jesus.

Here is a selection from a discourse attributed to the Prophet Muhammad:

"... She (Fatima) shall find herself humiliated after being loved and well treated during the lifetime of her father. Then God will console her with angels who will address her with the words He addressed to to (Virgin) Mary, daughter of Imran (Biblical Joachim). They will say to her, **"OH FATIMA, GOD HAS CHOSEN THEE,**

AND PURIFIED THEE; HE HAS CHOSEN THEE ABOVE ALL WOMEN"

Note the close parallel with the Catholic Latin prayer:

"Ave Maria" or "Hail Mary":

"Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum; benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventri tui Jesus. Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen."

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"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; **BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN** and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*), pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

The above Latin Catholic prayer "Ave Maria" (Hail Mary) is based on the Gospel (*Euangelion, Injil*) According to St. Luke, I: 28:

"And the Angel having come in, said to her (the Virgin Mary): "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: **BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN**

and The Gospel According to St. Luke, Chapter I, Verse 42:

"And she (The Virgin Mary's cousin Ste. Elizabeth, wife of St. Zachariah [Zakariyya] and mother of St. John the Baptist [Yahya]) cried out with a loud voice, and said: **BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN.**

See also Qur'an III:42:

And the angels said: "O (Virgin) Mary! Truly, GOD HAS CHOSEN YOU AND PURIFIED YOU AND CHOSEN YOU ABOVE THE WOMEN OF THE WORLDS.'

The Prophet Muhammad continues:

"As for my daughter, Fatima, she is the mistress of the women of the worlds, those that were and those that are to come, and she is part of me. She is the human *hour* who when she enters her prayer chamber before God, exalted be He, her light shines to the angels OF Heaven as the stars shine to the inhabitants of the earth. Thus when I saw her I recalled

what will be done to her after me. I could see how humiliation shall enter her home, her sanctity shall be violated, her rights usurped, her inheritance denied and her troubles multiplied. She shall lose her child (through miscarriage), all the while crying out, "Oh my Muhammad", but no one will come to her aid. After me she will remain sorrowful and grieved and weeping, at times recalling the cessation of revelation (*wahi* from her house, at other times my departure from her. When night comes upon her, she shall feel lonely, missing my voice which she was accustomed to hearing as I recited the Qur'an by night. She shall find herself

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humiliated after being loved and well treated during the lifetime of her father. Then God will console her with angels who will address her with the words He addressed to Mary, daughter of Imran (Biblical "Joachim"). They will say to her, "Oh Fatima! God has chosen you, and purified you; He has chosen you above all women. (Fatima) be obedient to your Lord, prostrating and bowing before Him."

Then her pains will commence and she will fall and to her Mary daughter of Imran (Biblical "Joachim") to nurse and console her in her sickness. She shall then say, "Oh Lord, I truly despise this life and have become troubled with the people of this world; let me therefore depart to my father." Thus she will be the first to come to me from my family. She will come to me sorrowful and heavy with grief, persecuted and martyred. Then will I say, "Oh God, curse those who wrong her, punish those who persecuted her, humiliate those who humiliated her, and consign eternally into Your fire him who hit her side so that she lost her child." Then the angels will reply: Amen."

A Bedouin of one of the tribes in the neighborhood of Medina came to the Prophet (Muhammad) who was sitting with his companions, reviling him and calling him a magician and a liar. He had hidden in his sleeve a small lizard (*dabb*) which he had caught in the desert. He let the animal go and the Prophet called it to him, asking it, "Do you know who I am?" The animal answered, "You are Muhammad, the Apostle of God." In astonishment and recognition of the Prophet's claims and forbearance, the Bedouin embraced Islam. But he was poor and hungry and none of the companions had anything to give him to eat. Confident of Fatima's generosity and compassion, the Prophet sent Salman, the Persian, to her seeking food for the hungry man. She had nothing but her own clothes, so she sent her cloak to be pawned with Simon the Jew for a bushel of barley and a tray of dates. She baked the barley, after grinding it with her own hands, and sent the bread and dates to feed the new Muslim. With joy the Prophet came to her, but found her

pale with hunger and her two children, Hasan and Hussein, asleep, trampling like slaughtered birds from hunger as no one in the house of Ali (ibn Abi Talib) had tasted anything for three days. The Prophet saw this and his eyes were filled with tears, and he did not know what to do.

Fatima then entered her chamber and prayed a few *rak'ahs* (daily prayer cycles), after which she invoked God saying, "Oh Lord, send to us a banquet (*ma'idah*) from Heaven as You have sent it to the children of Israel. They disbelieved it, yet we will be believers (3459)

in it. As she finished her prayer, a banquet was sent from Heaven and they all ate. The Prophet, with joy and gratitude, exclaimed, "thanks be to God Who had granted me a child like (the Virgin) Mary who, whenever Zechariah went in to her in the Sanctuary, he found her provisioned. "Mary", he said, "How does this come to you?" "From God", she said." (321)

A hymn written by Abbe Gagnet became associated with the pilgrimage to Lourdes, and became known as the "Lourdes Hymn". The strophes of said were originally in French, but the refrain in Latin. Unfortunately I do not have the original French version to hand:

Immaculate Mary, thy praises we sing,
Who reigns in splendor with Jesus, our King.
Ave, ave, Ave Maria! Ave, ave, ave Maria!

In Heaven, the blessed your glory proclaim,
On earth, we your children invoke your fair name.
Ave, ave, ave Maria! Ave, ave, ave Maria!

Your name is our power, your virtues our light,
Your love is our comfort, your pleading our might.
Ave, ave, ave Maria! Ave, ave, ave Maria!

We pray for our mother the (Catholic) Church upon earth;
And bless, dearest Lady, the land of our birth.
Ave, ave, ave Maria! Ave, ave, ave Maria!

Some years ago the song "The Village of Ste. Bernadette", which tells of a pilgrimage to Lourdes, and whose refrain uses the words and music of the refrain of the "Lourdes Hymn", was very popular in USA and Canada. In his velvet baritone voice Andy

Williams sang:

There, like a dream that wonderful night
I gazed at the grotto aglow in the light
A feeling divine swept over me there
I fell to my knees as I whispered the prayer:
Ave, ave, ave Maria! Ave, ave, ave Maria!

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... One little town I'll never forget
Is Lourdes, the village of Ste. Bernadette
Ave, ave, ave Maria! Ave, ave, ave Maria!

When I was a NATO soldier stationed in Germany, I went on a military pilgrimage to Lourdes with the French Army. My group went to Lourdes by bus, but some other groups went by train. One group which left Lourdes before mine did left by train. As the train was leaving the station, the French soldiers were loudly singing:

Ave, ave, ave Maria! Ave, ave, ave Maria!

Though generally denounced as idolatry in Sunni Islam as well as Protestantism, intercession (Arabic; *Shafa'a*: Persian; *Miyanji Gari*) and its corollary, what is known in Catholicism as "praying to the Virgin Mary and the Saints", is known in Shi'ism as well as Catholicism. Ayatollah Murtaza Mutahhari Says:

"In the ziyarats which we all recite and which we regard as part of Shi'ah doctrine we say: 'I testify that you see where I stand; you hear what I say and return my salutation.'" It is to be noted that we address that to an Imam who is dead. From our point of view in this respect there is no difference between a dead and a living Imam. It is not that we say so to a dead Imam only. We say: 'Peace on you (Imam) Ali ibn Musa al-Riza (8th Imam). I admit and testify that you hear my salutation and return it.'" (322)

Indeed, Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari says that denial of

intercession is materialism and denial of the immortality of the soul, and thus very near to pure atheism.(323) In effect, Ayatullah Mutahhari is saying that any Shi'a who denies intercession is not only a heretic but very near to being an atheist, the very worst sort of unbeliever.

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Said the 6th Imam, Jaafar as-Sadiq:

"He (Imam Hussein) sees the one who weeps for him, and so he seeks God's forgiveness for him out of compassion, and asks his fathers (Ali and Muhmmad) to seek pardon for his sins."(324)

Says D.K. Crow:

While Hussein was killed, he (nevertheless) is alive in Heaven, where alongside he other memebtrs of his family, he hears the and responds to the prayers of his Shi'a, and mediates remission of sin."(325)

In Al-Mizan, his monumental commentary on the Qur'an, Allamah Tabataba'i devotes many pages to a defense of the doctrine of intercession.(326) As one might expect, the defense of the doctrine of intercession and its corollary by Ayatollah Mutahhari and Allamah Tabataba'i closely resembles the defense of the same concept by Catholic theologians against attacks against it by Protestants, Modernists and secularists.

The concept of intercession is beautifully expressed by the 19th century Persian poet Qa'ani in reference to Imam Hussein, son of Fatima al-Zahra:

"What rains down? Blood! From where? The eye! How?
Day and night
Why? From grief! What grief? The grief of the
Monarch of Karbala!
What was his name? Hussein! Of whose race? Ali's!
Who was his mother? Fatima! Who was his grandsire?"

Mustafa (Muhammad)!
How was it with him? He fell a martyr! Where? In
the Plain of Karbala!
When? On the tenth of Muharram! Secretly? No, in public!
Was he slain by night? No, by day! At what time?
At noontide!
Was his head severed from his throat? No, from the
nape of the neck!
Was he slain unthirsting? No! Did none give him
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to drink? They did!
Who? Shimr! From what source? From the source of
death!
Was he an innocent martyr? Yes! Had he committed
any fault? No!
What was his work? Guidance! Who was his friend?
God!
Who wrought this wrong? Yezid! Who was this Yezid?
One of the children of Hind! By whom? By bastard
origin!
Did he himself do this deed? No, he sent a letter!
To whom? To the false son of Marjana!
Was ibn Ziyad the son of Marjana? Yes!
Did he not withstand the words of Yezid? No!
Did this wretch slay Hussain with his own hand?
No, he dispatched an army to Karbala!
Who was chief of the army? Umar ibn Saad!
Did he cut down Fatima's dear folk? No, shameless
Shimr!
Was not the dagger ashamed to cut his throat?
It was! Why then did it do so? Destiny would not
excuse it!
Wherefore? In order that he (Hussain) might become
an intercessor for mankind!
What is the condition of his intercession?
Lamentation and weeping!
Were any of his sons also slain? Yes, two!
Who else? Nine brothers! Who else? Kinsmen!
Had he no other son? Yes, he had! Who was that?
"The Worshipper" (Imam Ali Zain al-Abidin)! How
fared he? Overwhelmed with grief and sorrow!
Did he remain at his father's Karbala? No, he went
to Syria!
In glory and honor? No, in abasement and distress!
Alone? No, with the women of the household! What
were their names?
Zaynab, Sakina, Fatima, and poor portionless
Kulthum!
Had he garments on his body? yes, the dust of the
road!
Had he a turban on his head? Yes, the staves of the
wicked ones!
Was he sick? Yes! What medicine had he? The tears

of his eyes!

What was his food after medicine? His food was heart's blood!

Did any bear him company? yes, the fatherless children!

Who else was there? The fever which never left him!
What was left of the women's ornaments? Two things,

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The collar of tyranny on their necks, and the anklet of grief on their feet!

Would a pagan practice such cruelty? No! A Magian (Zoroastrian) or a Jew? No!

A Hindu? No! An idolater? No! Alas for this harshness!

Is Qaani capable of such verses? Yes!

What seeks he (Qaani)? Mercy! From God! When? In the ranks of redemption!(327)

In Al-Mizan, his monumental commentary on the Qur'an, Allamah Tabataba'i devotes many pages to a defense of the doctrine of intercession. Intercession is attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (On Whom Be Peace) and the Ahl al-Bait by the 4th Shi'a Imam, Imam Zain al-Abidin Ali ibn Hussein, himself son of the Martyr of Karbala and therefore a member of the Ahl al-Bait in his own right.(328) This demonstrates that the concept of intercession appears very early indeed in the history of Shi'ism.

Intercession is also attributed to Fatima al-Zahra, the *Mater Dolorosa* (Sorrowful Mother) of the martyred Imam Hussein.(329)

The texts concerning this are far too long and numerous to quote here.

All know of the village of Fatima in Portugal, where the Virgin Mary appeared to shepherd children. That the Virgin Mary should appear in a village named for Fatima bint Muhammad Al-Zahra is so astounding a "coincidence" that many see in it the hand of Divine Providence, and it is difficult to disagree. Of course,

Protestants denounce what they call "worship of Mary": as G.K. Chesterton said in his poem "Don Juan de Austria":

"And Christian (Protestant) hateth Mary, whom God
kissed in Galilee".

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If anyone doubts that Shi'a Islam, and perhaps Sunni Islam is closer to traditional (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) Christianity than is Protestantism, compare the attitude of the Shi'as - and, to a lesser extent, the Sunnis - towards Fatima and the Virgin Mary to the Protestant whining about "worship of Mary", which shows not only the Nestorian basis of Protestantism, but also the Manichaeian base.

Says Moojan Momen:

"Whereas in Sunni Islam there is a direct relationship between the believer and God as revealed in the religion of Islam, in Shi'i Islam there is something of a triangular relationship. While for some things, such as the daily obligatory prayers, the individual is in direct relationship to God, in other matters he looks usually through the mediation of the local mulla) to the marja' at-taqlid who is regarded as being in a more direct relationship with God. Indeed, in the minds of many of the less educated, the ulama and the marja' are intermediaries between them and God and the relationship is not so much triangular as hierarchical."(330)

The parallel with the relationship of the Catholic or Eastern Orthodox layman to his Church hierarchy and that between the Shi'a layman and the Shi'a hierarchy is obvious. It is sometimes said - erroneously - that Islam has no sacraments. However, it is true that there is nothing in Islam which corresponds exactly with the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox sacraments of Confession and Communion or Eucharist. However, even this difference is not so

great as some imagine, since the concept of doing penance for one's sins is very much a part of Islam. The Protestant principle of *sola fide*, i.e., "justification by faith alone", or "faith

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without works" is alien and repugnant to Islam, see Qur'an XI:23:

Truly those who believe and do good works and humble themselves before their Lord, these are the dwellers of the Garden (*Paradise*), they will abide therein forever. and

Qur'an XXIV:33:

"God has promised unto those of you who **believe and do good deeds** that He will certainly appoint them successors in the earth as He appointed successors those before them, and that certainly He will establish for them their religion (*Islam*) which He hath chosen for them, and that certainly He will, after fear, in exchange give them security; "They shall worship Me; and associating not with me anything; **and whosoever disbelieveth after this, these!, they are the wicked ones.**"

Here is clearly denounced the *sola fide*, justification by faith alone", or "faith without works" of Luther and Calvin and classical Protestant theology in general.

G.K. Chesterton denounced Protestantism as "hating Mary whom God kissed in Galilee". Indeed I have heard Protestants speak of the Virgin Mary in terms not far removed from Talmud, book Sanhedrin 51A, in which the Virgin Mary is referred to as a whore for the Roman Army. Thus the Irish Catholic joke:

A man climbs to the top of a tall building and yells: "I am going to jump, I am going to commit suicide."

Someone calls the police, and an Irish policeman is sent to handle the emergency.

"For the love of your father, don't jump", says the Irish policeman.

"I don't have a father", says the potential suicide.

"For the love of your mother, don't jump", says the Irish policeman.

"I don't have a mother either, I am an orphan", says the potential suicide.

"For the love of the Blessed Virgin don't jump", says the Irish policeman.

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"What the hell is the Blessed Virgin?", says the potential suicide.

"Go ahead and jump, you Protestant bastard", says the Irish policeman.

Protestants cannot seem to grasp the obvious concept that if you degrade the mother of Jesus, you also degrade Jesus.

In the Qur'an, the Virgin Mary has a whole Surah named for her. In the Qur'an the virgin Mary is mentioned 34 times, more than in the gospels. Below are three references to the Virgin Mary from the Qur'an:

"And recall, O Our Apostle Muhammad when the angels said: "O Mary! Truly, God has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds." Qur'an XXX:42. Note parallel with the Latin prayer *Ave Maria* (Hail Mary): "blessed are you among women."

"And O Our Apostle Muhammad, remember Mary, who guarded her chastity. We breathed into her Our Spirit, and we made her a sign to all peoples." Qur'an XXI:91.

"And Mary the daughter of Imran (Biblical "Joachim"), who guarded her chastity; and We breathed into her body Our Spirit, and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and His Scriptures, and she was of the obedient ones." Qur'an LXVI:12.

Previously in this chapter we noted that the Shi'as have a special reverence for the Virgin Mary, which is linked to their reverence for Fatima, "the younger Mary". If the Virgin Mary is indeed the very touchstone and hallmark of traditional Catholic and Eastern Orthodox truth, there can be no possible doubt for the above reason if no other - though, as we have demonstrated, there are indeed other reasons - Islam, particularly Shi'a Islam, is far

closer to traditional Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christianity

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than is Protestantism.

In another place we have noted that the philosopher Mortimer J. Adler, born into a Jewish family, converted to Christianity because, of the three *Abrahamic* faiths, i.e., Judaism, Christianity and Islam, only Christianity affirms God's Immanence as well as His Transcendence. We also noted that in this Mr. Adler is mistaken, because Islam, save certain aberrant sects, such as Wahhabism and Taliban, vigorously affirms God's Immanence as well as His Transcendence. Mr. Adler is neither an Islamic scholar nor an expert in comparative religion, as were neither Georg Hegel and Oswald Spengler, from whom Mr. Adler very likely derived his concept of Islam, and all three were mistaken.

Also denounced is the "works without faith" of the so-called "social gospel", also known as "the Socialist Gospel According to Karl Marx"; indeed, Protestantism has gone from the "faith without works" of Luther and Calvin to "works without faith", at least among those Protestants who adhere to the "social gospel", which is pure atheism and materialism.

On the two above crucial points, Islam, Sunni and Shi'a, is in complete agreement with Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christianity, and opposed to Protestantism.

Obviously the Shi'as have their own "Sunnah" or Tradition not identical to that of the Sunnis; hence the book The Shi'a, The Real Followers of the Sunnah by Muhammad al-Tijani al-Samawi,

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translated by Hasan Najafi, Qum, Iran, 1955. Obviously, "Fundamentalism" is a purely Protestant phenomenon, based on the "sola scriptura" doctrine, which is not applicable to Islam under any circumstances. An old joke is goes:

"A Protestant Fundamentalist (or, sometimes, Protestant in general) is someone who believes that the Bible dropped straight down from Heaven in the King James translation in a leather binding with a zipper."

The terms "Muslim Fundamentalist", "Muslim Fundamentalism", "Islamic Fundamentalist" and "Islamic Fundamentalism" are oxymorons, and those who use said terms demonstrate their gross ignorance, whatever be their false pretensions to learning or "intellectuality".

At this point it is at least interesting to note that the Christian monuments of Bethlehem, including the Church of the Nativity, as well as the tomb of St. John the Baptist in Damascus and two places in Jerusalem sacred to the memory of the Virgin Mary are considered *Ziarats* (places of pilgrimage) by the Shi'as. (331) Christian pilgrims to Bethlehem should not be surprised to find themselves joined by Shi'a Muslims.

Nearly everyone has heard of Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), great scientist and Catholic thinker. Particularly famous is "Pascal's wager". In summary, Pascal said that if one accepts the Catholic faith and is right, then he gains everything, but if he is wrong

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and the atheists are right, he loses nothing; on the contrary, if one chooses atheism, and is wrong, then he loses everything, but if right he gains nothing. To use a rather banal analogy, accepting the Catholic faith is like entering a sweepstakes in which one risks absolutely nothing, but stands a chance of winning a prize of enormous value.(332) Pascal, a devout Catholic, speaks only of Catholicism; his opinions of other religions (except Protestantism, which he despised) are unknown; indeed, unlike the medieval scholastics, Pascal had almost no knowledge of non-Christian religions, another example of the narrowness and provincialism of modernity compared with the Middle Ages. Compare the devout, but modern, Pascal with at least equally devout (probably more so) medieval figures such as William of Tyre, Ramon Llull, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Dante Alighieri, and the chronologically modern but really medieval St. John of the Cross.

Pascal had a forerunner who lived nearly one thousand years before him. I refer to Jaafar ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq, 6th Shi'a Imam (702-765). Here is the story:

Once during the Hajj in Mecca, the atheist Ibn Abi al'Awja asked Imam al-Sadiq:

"How long will these oxen (Muslims) continue to plow this desert (religion)?"

The Imam responded by citing the Qur'anic verse prohibiting disputatious argument during the hajj. After the hajj season, Imam al-Sadiq came to Ibn 'Awja and said:

"Let me answer with your own style of logic. If there is no God, and everything is absurd, then Muslim
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worshippers lose nothing by their worship; but if there

is a God and Muhammad is His messenger, then woe to you on Judgement Day." (333)

Change the word "Muslim" to "Catholic", and Imam al-Sadiq is repeating "Pascal's wager" virtually word for word, though nearly one thousand years before the time of Pascal. It is most unlikely, very nearly impossible, that Pascal could have known of the words of Imam al-Sadiq. Coincidence? Or, perhaps, another example of the affinity between Shi'ism and Traditional Catholicism?

All Muslims, whether Sunni or Shi'a, have a great reverence for Jesus, as anyone knows who has read the Qur'an. However, Shi'ites do indeed seem to have a special reverence for Jesus, and, compared to the Sunnis, for St. John the Baptist. Jesus, along with the Twelfth Holy Imam, is called "Alive & Awaited". (334)

That among the Shi'as (particularly Iranian Shi'as) Jesus holds a place far superior to that of all the other prophets before Muhammad is clearly expressed here:

"Four thousand years ago the true religion dawned through the obedience of the Patriarch Abraham to the call of Almighty God in Babylonian territory. The world's Creator charged Abraham with the task of leading Babylon's society out of darkness. His was the first apostolate as God's spokesman to rally mankind out of superstition and wrongdoing. Naturally he met with opposition and resistance from those with vested interests in falsehood and evil. But Abraham's prophetic proclamation of Monotheism and ethical worship raised a force of followers far superior to the united front of his adversaries, the advocates of Ahriman (the Satan of Zoroastrianism: though he may correctly be used as a general symbol of evil, the name "Ahriman" was most certainly **NOT** known in Mesopotamia (3471)

in the time of Abraham. - M.Mc.) and the would-be despotic tyrants on the spirit of man. Abraham obeyed

the call to leave his ancestral home, and finally after many thousand miles of nomad travel found haven in the Hijaz where with his son Isma'il he set up Monotheism's central shrine (i.e., the Kaaba of Mecca).

Seven and a quarter centuries before (Jesus) Christ, Rome was founded, and in the succeeding centuries extended her rule far and wide. Not long after Rome's foundation, Zoroaster arose in Iran and substituted for the magic of Magianism a rational and moral relationship between man and the God of Good in the eternal battle against Evil (i.e., Ahriman or Satan). In almost the same century Confucius and Lao-Tse in China and Gautama the Buddha in India laid the basis of the philosophy which was developed by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in Greece during the succeeding century. All this found consummation in the Birth and Life of Jesus Christ, Who proclaimed the call to reform human society, to rescue mankind from the pollutions of Judaic materialism, to extirpate corruption and internecine combat, and raise humanity towards ethical and spiritual purification. This age was marked by the growth of intercommunication, of industries, and of building and medical skills."(335)

In the above, Sayid Lari gives credit to Confucius, Lao Tse and Buddha which, in reality, belongs to the *Rishis*, the "Seers", "Aryan Sages" or "Forest Saints" of ancient India, who were the authors of the Upanishads and founders of Vedanta Philosophy, who lived some time before Confucius, Lao Tse and Buddha. Otherwise, what Sayid Lari says above is perfectly true.

In the following I am going to be using the word "Aryan". Some people believe that the terms "Aryan" and "Indo-European" are interchangeable, but such is not the case. "Indo-European" is a far broader term than "Aryan"; remember your Aristotle: all Aryans are Indo-Europeans, but not all Indo-Europeans are Aryans. In fact, only three Indo-European peoples described themselves as

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Aryans, i.e., the Indo-Aryans, the Iranians and the Celts. Hitler

claimed that the Germanic peoples are the "pure Aryans", but, in fact, **the Germanic peoples, though Indo-Europeans, are not Aryans at all, as the Germanic peoples never referred to themselves as Aryans, and, in fact, the Germanic languages had no word for "Aryan" until they borrowed it from the Sanskrit in the 18th -19th century.** Hitler was an ignorant lout, a muddleheaded gasbag and a congenital liar. It never ceases to amuse me that many people who presume of their intellectuality use the word "Aryan" in the same sense that it was used by Hitler, thus proving themselves to be as ignorant, stupid, muddleheaded and mendacious as Hitler himself. When I use the word "Aryan", I use it in the correct sense, which has nothing to do with Hitler's idiocies.

In the fascinating book The Invention of the Jewish People, the Israeli scholar Shlomo Sand notes:

"The upheaval of the [Babylonian] exile and "return" (to Palestine) in the sixth century BC could have allowed the literate Judean elite - former court scribes, priests and their offspring - greater autonomy than they might have enjoyed under a direct dynastic monarchy [Judea was then not independent, but was a part of the Achaemenian Persian Empire]. A historical contingency of political breakdown [due to the conquest of Judea by the Chaldeans and the resulting Babylonian exile] and the resulting absence of an exigent authority [the Achaemenian Persians did not interfere in the religious and intellectual life of their subject peoples] gave them a new and exceptional opportunity for action. Thus was born a new field of unique literary creativity whose great reward lay not in power but in religion. Only such a situation could explain, for example, how it was possible both to sing the praises of the dynastic founder (David) and at the same time depict him as a sinner punished by a superior divine being. Only thus could the freedom of

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expression, so rare in premodern societies [and modern societies as well; Mr. Sand is so much in love with modernity that at times it destroys his honesty and

objectivity], produce a theological masterpiece.

We may therefore propose the following hypothesis: the exclusive monotheism that stands out on every page of the Bible [obviously, in this context, "Bible" refers only and exclusively to the Old Testament; anything else would be a gross anachronism] was the result not of politics - the politics of a minor local king seeking to expand his realm - but of culture: the remarkable encounter between Judean intellectual elites, in [Babylonian] exile or returning from [said] exile, with the abstract Persian religions. The monotheism probably found its source in an advanced intellectual system but was extruded from it and, like many revolutionary ideologies throughout history, seeped into the margins under political pressure from the conservative center. It is no accident that the Hebrew word *dat*, ("religion") [Modern Persian; *DADAR* - distributor of justice; an epithet of God. *Dad-ZAKKAH* - justice dispensing; *DAD-DIA* - distributing justice [name of God]; *DADAR*, *DADIR* - God; *DAD DADRAD* - creator, God; *DAD FARAY* - God] is of Persian origin. The early monotheism would become fully developed in its late encounter with Hellenistic polytheism." (336)

Thus, at least in its philosophical and theological plasmation, Judaic monotheism was not of Jewish, nor even Semitic origin; rather, its origin was Persian, i.e., Indo-European and Aryan (though NOT, repeat NOT Germanic; it is odd that even so learned a man as Shlomo Sand accepts Hitler's definition of "Aryan". Quite obviously, Shlomo Sand is NOT well versed in Indo-European studies). The relevance of Mr. Sand's words to what we about to say will become obvious.

In the paragraph cited above by Sayid Mujtaba Rukni Musavi Lari, Jesus is seen as far superior to all prophets before Him, and as heir to Zoroaster as well as Abraham. As we shall see, both the Christian and Zoroastrian traditions affirm this. This is

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indicated in the accounts in the Gospel According to St. Matthew of the Wise Men or "Magi", from Old Persian and Avestan *Magav*,

majus or *magh* in Modern Persian, *magoi* in Greek.

Note that in dealing with Epiphany we have dealt briefly with the Magi of *Magoi*. Remember the *Magoi* in connection with Epiphany.

The Gospel According to St. Matthew (II:1-12) speaks of the *Magoi*, who, led by a star, came to visit the newborn Jesus.

Says M.J. Vermaseren:

"Zoroaster was a *Magus* (Latin version of *Magoi* (the dark practices of which Pliny accused the "Magi" should be discounted). According to the Persian scholar G. Messina, SJ, the word *magu* means a person who takes part in the gifts (*maga*), that is to say the religious teachings of Ahura-Mazda. *Magu* originally indicated a Mazda-worshipper, and Zoroaster is to be regarded as the first *Magus* because it was to him that the All-Wise revealed his teaching when, according to Dio Chrysostom (*Or.*, 36, 40-41), the prophet spoke to the God on a burning mountain. Zoroaster was a priest and singer poet, who became a prophet and a reformer.

Gradually, however, the word *Magus* came to mean priest in a general sense, but it does not follow that Zoroaster was a pure Mazdaist. The *Magi* (Latin plural of *Magus*) were the wise men of the Persian court, where they enjoyed great influence. They were the tutors of the crown princes, and Cicero (*De Div.*, I, 41, 90) even went so far as to say that only those who had been taught by the Magi could ascend the throne. The high standing of the Magi was the cause of the adventures of the treacherous *Smerdis*, amusingly described by Herodotus (III, 61 seq.). The palace revolution by which *Smerdis* (or *Bardiya*) seized the throne during Cambyses' absence has been interpreted as an attempt by the Magi to seize power in order to accelerate the spread of Zoroaster's teaching. Herodotus (I, 101), however, thought (that) the Magi were one of the six tribes of the Medes and in that case the attempted coup would be a purely political affair. On this theory Benveniste explains the actions of Cambyses' successor, Darius, who massacred the Magi in revenge, an act which he celebrated in the official decree inscribed on the rocks in Behistun. It seems that the priests were
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chosen from the tribe of the Magi, but not every *Magus* was a priest. This also offers some explanation for the custom of giving the dead to wild animals and birds (a rite typical of the northern Medes) instead of burying them.

In spite of these events the Magi were greatly respected by the common people. According to Herodotus (I, 132) no sacrifice could be made without the Magi who, during the ceremony, sang of the birth of the gods. A relief of the fifth century BC from Dascylium in the west of Asia Minor gives a clear picture of the Magi's activities. With a cloth (*padam*) in front of the mouth, so as not to contaminate the fire with their breath, and a bundle of rods (*baresman* or *barsom*) in the hand, they stand in front of a lofty niche or altar on which hang the heads of a ram and a bull."(337)

In English, *Magoi* is usually translated as 'wise men'; not a bad translation, though imprecise. *Magoi* in Greek refers to Iranian Zoroastrian priests (*Magav* in Avestan and Old Persian, *Majus* or *Magh* in Modern Persian), and in many languages is left untranslated, for example, Latin, Greek, French, Italian and Spanish. Remember the famous painting 'Adoration of the Magi'.

The very earliest sources identify the Wise Men as Persians and Zoroastrians. These sources include very early apochryphal accounts of the childhood of Jesus, which are considered authoritative and reliable, but are not included in the New Testament Canon because, dealing only with the childhood of Jesus, they are therefore incomplete and fragmentary and have little theological importance. These very early accounts leave no doubt as to the Persian and Zoroastrian identity of the Wise Men.

The fullest account is given in The Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus (available in any of several collections of New Testament apochrypha), a very ancient work considered not as apochryphal,

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but rather as supplementary to the canonical Gospels (*Injil*), like some other non-canonical Gospels. It is from these non-canonical sources that it is known that the names of the parents

of the Virgin Mary were St. Joachim (Qur'anic *Imran*) and Ste. Anne. The Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus was accepted as authoritative by St. Eusebius, St. John Chrysostom and St. Athanasius, for example. Says The Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus concerning the *Magoi*:

'And it came to pass, when the Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a city of Judea, in the time of Herod the King; the *Magoi* came from the East to Jerusalem, **ACCORDING TO THE PROPHECY OF ZOROASTER**, and brought with them offerings, namely, gold, frankincense and myrrh, and worshipped Him, and offered Him their gifts. ... And having, according to the custom of their country, made a fire, and they worshipped it.' (338)

In the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches, the *Magoi* are always depicted as wearing Persian garb. Thus, traditional Christianity has always affirmed that the *Magoi* were Iranians and Zoroastrians. Note that neither in the Gospel (*Injil*) according to St. Matthew nor in The Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus are the *Magoi* given names nor is any mention made as to their number. The number three is sometimes given because of the number of gifts, i.e., gold, frankincense and myrrh. However, in the Syrian and Armenian traditions it is said that there were twelve *Magoi* who came to visit the newborn Jesus. (339) The Armenian tradition is particularly significant in this respect, because Armenia has always been under strong Persian cultural influence. The Arsacid Dynasty (Greek: *Arsakisai*; Armenian: *Arshakuni*), was a junior

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branch of the Parthian royal house which ruled in Armenia until the beginning of the 5th century AD, the precise date of their establishment in Armenia being unknown, but obviously long before

the downfall of the Parthians of Persia at the hands of the Sassanians in 226 AD.(340) For a long time there were many Zoroastrians in Armenia.(341)

The Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ is certainly of great antiquity, as the earliest referenes to it so far discovered are from the early Second Century. Various Church Fathers accepted the reliability of this Gospel, including St. Athanasius and St. John Chrysostom,(342) as we said above. It was not included among the canonical gospels because, dealing only with the infancy of Jesus, it is fragmentary and has little theological importance.

Says M.J. Vermaseren:

"Christianity made its first appearance in Rome at about this time. In the new teachings, Jesus, as the Redeemer and Messiah, descended upon (the) earth in human form and the Gospels record how, at his birth, the Magi arrived in Bethlehem, guided by a star, and worshipped the Christ-child and gave him gold, frankincense and myrrh (Gospel Accroding to St, Matthew, Chapter 2). Messina has shown that certain groups of Jews were interested in Zoroaster [remember the words of Shlomo Sand cited above] and even put on the same level as Ezekiel or regarded him as a pupil of Elias. In their turn, the Magi applied themselves to the teachings of the Jewish faith. Though the Christians knew that Zoroaster was not a Jew, they nevertheless conceived him as as a prophet who served God by heralding the coming of the Messiah. And so we read in the Arabian version of the Gospel (commonly known as The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus, distinct from and much later than The Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus, cited above):

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"See, the Magi come from the East to Jerusalem as prophesied by Zoroaster".

According to the Christian writers, this Messiah (*Messiah* in Avestan is *Saushyant*) is indisputedly the same as Jesus."(343)

There are indeed close parallels between the words of

Zoroaster and the words of Jesus, for example:

"Later sources purport to describe how Zoroaster, when he lay dying in the fire temple of Balkh, said to his assassin:

"May Ahura Mazda forgive you even as I do." (344)

Compare the above to the words of Jesus on the Cross, as he speaks of the Roman soldiers who are his tormentors and assassins:

'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.' (Gospel According to St. Luke, Chapter XXIII:34).

Some people - mostly either Protestants or secularists - claim that the sacrament of the Eucharist entered Christianity from Mithraism, by which term I refer to the mystery religion named after *Mithras*, the Latin form of the Vedic *Mitra* and the Avestan *Mithra*, though the Avestan *Mithra* and the Roman *Mithras* are by no means identical. The Roman mystery religion or cult of *Mithras* did indeed have a ceremony very like the Christian Eucharist. This, of course, causes many Protestants to scream "Pagan"; to this, Charles A. Coulombe told a group of Protestants:

"Pagans breathe, don't they? Therefore, you should stop breathing."

Of course, these Protestants who constantly scream "pagan"

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are themselves Judaizers and crypto-Manichaeans.

Were it a fact that the Sacrament of the Eucharist passed to Christianity from Mithraism or the Roman cult of Mithras, I would not be scandalized. However, everything indicates that it is simply not true.

Firstly, there are chronological difficulties. The earliest

evidence of the Roman cult of Mithras has been dated at about 90 AD, (345) many years after the time of Jesus and the Last Supper, which must have been around 36 AD. Also, the early evidences of the Roman cult of Mithras occur at places very far indeed from Palestine. (346) Indeed, the cult of Mithras was never widespread in the Syria-Palestine area; the *mithraeum* in Sidon in Lebanon dates from the end of the 4th century AD. (347) Also, at least until very recently indeed no one ever said that Jesus was the successor of Mithras as well as the Old Testament prophets.

In one Zoroastrian document, Zoroaster says to his followers:

"He who will not eat of my body and drink of my blood, so that he will be made one with me and I with him, the same shall not know salvation." (348)

Compare the above words of Zoroaster with the words of Jesus to his disciples at the Last Supper:

"He who eats of my body and drinks of my blood shall have eternal life." (Gospel According to St. Matthew, XXVI:26-28; Gospel According to St. Mark, XIV:22-25; Gospel According to St. Luke, XXII:19-20)

The Gospels give no specific date as the birthday of Jesus, though the few indications point to hot weather, which, of course,

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would not be December 25. Due to anti-Catholic bias, some Protestants and secularists have claimed that December 25 as the date of Christmas was accepted because it was the date of the Roman *Saturnalia*, a celebration connected with the god Saturn, a time of every sort of debauchery. However, this is totally false; *Saturnalia* was incompatible with Christianity. In fact, December 25 as the birthday of Jesus is derived from Mithraism. On or

around December 21 - 23, the sun reaches its lowest point on the horizon, and on December 25 begins to once more climb on the horizon. Thus, in Mithraism December 25 was celebrated as "the rebirth of the Unconquered Sun". Here was a usable, indeed beautiful symbolism, recalling the resurrection of Jesus and the victory over death.(349)

St. Dionysius, better known as "St. Denis", the "Apostle to the Gauls", said:

"Cut down the sacred groves of the Druids and use the wood to build churches."

Thus is expressed the true Christian teaching: that which is usable, make use of it; that which is not particularly usable, but harmless, ignore it; that which is incompatible with Christian doctrine, reject it and attempt to suppress it.

Those moronic Protestants who are themselves Judaizers and crypto-Manichaeans (*Cathar*, one of the names applied to the Manichaeans or *Albigensians* of what is today Languedoc, means exactly the same thing as "Puritan") whose pathetic, crabbed little minds are poisoned by Nominalism and constantly scream

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"pagan" should be consistent and stop breathing, since pagans breathe.

That Jesus was successor to Zoroaster as well as to the Old Testament Prophets is an indisputable fact, which is manifestly **NOT** the case in reference to Mithras, and also, there are no chronological difficulties; there is some doubt concerning the date of Zoroaster's birth and death, but all agree that he lived

several centuries before the time of Jesus Christ.

Dr. B. Salem Foad is well known and highly respected scholar of Islam who lectures on Islam at various universities. And is a good personal friend of mine. In a private conversation, Dr. Foad noted that the Prophet Muhammad said that there were a multitude of prophets other than Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Dr. Foad then said that he believed that Buddha might be one of the unknown prophets of whom Muhammad spoke. Now, as it is beyond question that Jesus was successor to Zoroaster as well as to the Old Testament Prophets, then Zoroaster certainly must be included among the unknown prophets. If it is possible that Buddha is included among the unknown prophets mentioned by Muhammad, then the *Rishies*, the "Aryan Sages", "The Seers", "The Forest Saints", the authors of the Upanishads, of whom we shall be speaking presently, must also be included among the possible unknown prophets, as their influence on Christianity and Islam was much more extensive and profound than the influence of Buddhism, whose influence on Christianity and Islam, while interesting, is, in reality, rather superficial.

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Zoroaster, Buddha and the *Rishies* had a number of things in common, among which is the fact that not only were they not Jewish, they were not even Semitic, but rather were Indo-Europeans, indeed Aryans: Iranian in the case of Zoroaster, Indo-Aryans in the case of the *Rishies*. The idea that the Jews are "God's Chosen People" is therefore disproven. Anyone who calls himself a Christian and still believes that the Jews are God's

Chosen People should formalize his conversion to Judaism, put on a *yarmulke* and attend the synagogue on Saturday; this is his perfect right and privilege, but let him no longer claim to be Christian, because this is a lie and a fraud.

According to legend, no doubt of Zoroastrian origin, the Island of Kuh-i-Khwaja in Lake Helmand in Eastern Iran, near the Afghan border, called *Daryacheh-ye-Sistan*, is the site of the castle which was the home of the Wise Men. (350) There are indeed the ruins of a castle on said island in Lake Helmand or *Daryacheh-ye-Sistan*. And there is no doubt concerning the antiquity of said tradition, which goes back to pre-Islamic times. Were said traditions mere invention, it would no doubt have had the *Magoi* hailing from some place sacred to Zoroastrianism, not this remote, otherwise undistinguished place of no particular fame nor renown .

In recent times some Jewish and Protestant scholars have claimed that the *Magoi* were from Mesopotamia, subjects of the Parthian kings, but if not Jews were at least Semites rather than Iranians; this is purely tendentious, with absolutely nothing to

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support it. As we have seen, both the Christian and the Iranian - presumably Zoroastrian - traditions affirm that the *Magoi* who visited the newborn Jesus were indeed Iranians and Zoroastrians. Lake Helmand is in an area which is and always was purely Iranian, very far indeed from Mesopotamia.

The Christian Tradition from earliest times always portrayed the Wise Men in Persian garb, as we said above.

So, the Christian Tradition has always affirmed that Jesus

was heir to Zoroaster as well as to the Old Testament prophets, as we said above. Obviously, in Iran much is made of this by Christians, Zoroastrians and Muslims. Remember, according to Islam, Muhammad was the last in a line of prophets which very much includes Jesus.

So, if Jesus was heir of Zoroaster as well as the Old Testament prophets, so, by extension, was Muhammad. Among Muslims, Shi'as make much more of this than do Sunnis, in part because, if anything, Shi'as revere Jesus and the Virgin Mary even more than do Sunnis, and because Imam Hussein was married to Shahrbanu, a Persian princess born a Zoroastrian. Shahrbanu was therefore the female ancestor of nine of the twelve Imams. In Iran, Zoroastrians call Imam Hussein "son-in-law", which is *damad* in Persian, or *damad-e-mahbub*, "beloved son-in-law". Since *damad* simply means "in-law" or "relative by marriage", a more formal and precise way of expressing it would be: *Mard ke shauhar-e-dokhtar-e-man ast*, i.e., "The man who is the husband of our daughter" or *Mard ke shauhar-e-dokhtar-e-man mahbub ast*, i.e., "The man who is the

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beloved husband of our daughter."

The implications of Jesus being the heir of Zoroaster as well as the Old Testament prophets are enormous, and it is strange that, outside Iran, not much has been made of it. The above certainly affects the whole concept of the "Chosen People" and the idea that "salvation is (exclusively) from the Jews". Iranians are not only not Jewish, they are not even Semites, being Indo-Europeans or Aryans. Note that the name "Iran" comes from the same

Indo-European or Sanskrit root as "Arya" or "Aryan", and the Old Gaelic "Erinn", Modern Gaelic "Erin", the native Celtic name of Ireland.

There is a very ancient group called the "Brotherhood of the Lamb", which claims that Jesus was not of Jewish ancestry, but was an Iranian or Aryan, who descended from Persians who came to Palestine when Cyrus the Great allowed the Jews to return from their Babylonian Captivity. Said brotherhood notes the magi who visited the newborn Jesus, asking why they should have cared about the birth of a Jew, even one of the blood of King David. They also note that Jesus' physical type, very tall for that time and place, strongly built though not "beefy" or corpulent, with dark reddish hair, is more Iranian than Semitic, being particularly common among Pathans and Kurds (it has been said that "Kurds look like Irishmen"). However, while said physical type is no doubt more common among Iranian peoples, it is by no means unknown among Semitic peoples, particularly in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine.

In summary, the argumants of the Brotherhood of the Lamb have

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only enough arguments to be interesting and to make one think. Their argument concerning the Magi, while not conclusive, is not negligible either, but their argument concerning Jesus' physical type is worthless. Certainly the arguments in favor of their theory are much weaker than the arguments against it. However, this does not negate the fact that both the traditional Christian and Iranian traditions affirm that Jesus was heir to Zoroaster as well as to the Old Testament prophets, with all the possible

implications of this fact. Also, the words of Shlomo Sand cited above cause one to give pause and to not so lightly dismiss the theories of the "Brotherhood of the Lamb", which suddenly do not appear to be so absurd, so easily discounted, as the words of Mr. Sand could certainly be taken as another argument in favor of the theories of the "Brotherhood of the Lamb"

As we have seen, Christianity had connections with Zoroastrianism from its very beginnings, At an early date, Christianity also had close relations with two other non-Jewish, non-Semitic, indeed, Aryan (though, of course, NOT, repeat NOT Germanic) religions. Notes Charles Allen:

"Silk Road traffic had carried Christianity deep into China in one direction, Buddhism to the shores of the Mediterranean in the other. Towards the end of the second century AD, St. Clement of Alexandria, a Greek Father of the early Christian Church, had questioned a group of Indian traders at the port of Alexandria. They identified themselves as *Sarmanae* - a Latinized version of the Sanskrit *Shramana* - and described themselves as followers of a teacher 'whom by excessive reverence they have exalted into a god.' They worshipped 'a kind of pyramid beneath which they think the bones of some divinity lie buried' and they lived
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in religious communities they called *Vehar* (Sanskrit: *Vihara*), explained by Bishop Clement as '*templum del primarii Buddoe quem Indos ut Deum venrari*; i.e., 'the temple of the primary god Buddo whom the Indians worshipped as a god'. Bishop Clement and his disciple Origen were familiar to eighteenth-century British students of Church History as vigorous defenders of Orthodoxy against the heresies that threatened to split the early Christian Church, One such (heresy) was the teaching of the Egyptian gnostic Basilides, who promoted the quintessentially Buddhist belief that enlightenment could only be achieved through personal initiation from a spiritual teacher - the *guru* in Sanskrit - and that the soul was affected through its transmigration by accumulated thoughts and deeds. In attacking Gnosticism in his *Stromata*, Bishop Clement of Alexandria condemned the heresy that 'the soul has

previously sinned in another life, and endures its punishment here. Students of Buddhism will recognize this as the doctrine of *karma*.'

The degree to which Buddhist philosophy, ritual and iconography influenced the early Christian Church is a fascinating subject, but lies outside the scope of this book. One example of the Church's borrowing from Buddhism deserves to be mentioned, however, if only because it became one of the most popular religious romances of medieval Europe. The tale of the two Christian saints Barlaam and Josaphat tells of an Indian prince, Josaphat, whose father tries unsuccessfully to protect him from the outside world. He becomes so distressed by the suffering he sees that he seeks out a holy man, Barlaam, and finally renounces the world to become a saintly ascetic. The legend of Barlaam and Josaphat became so widely accepted that their names were entered in the Church's roll of Saints and their own day, 27 September, was assigned to them. Josaphat makes his first public appearance in the West in Lives of the Saints, written in Latin by a Byzantine hagiographer named Simeon Metaphrastes - but Metaphrastes was drawing on a Greek version of the story translated from his native Georgian by a monk of Mount Athos named Euthymus. This Georgian text had, in its turn, come to Macedonia from Jerusalem, where it had been translated from the Arabic by Greek Orthodox monks. It is, of course, the story of what Buddhists would term the Great Renunciation. Its original source was probably the Buddhacarita, a popular Sanskrit biography of Gautama Buddha that most probably traveled westwards to Damascus by way of the Manichaean Church, the most inclusive and pervasive of the Christian heresies. As it moved westward, so the original

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Sanskrit *Bodhisattva*, or 'awakened one', metamorphosed by stages into *Budhasaf* (Arabic), *Iodasaph* (Georgian), *Iosaph* (Greek) and finally *Josaphat* (Latin)." (351)

No doubt some readers will be curious concerning the life of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha. However, a bit of caution. In the 19th century, some WASP or Anglo-Saxon types - Englishmen, Englishwomen and New England Yankees - learned of Buddha, but they completely deformed the figure of Buddha and his message by interpreting them in a totally Protestant way. The long narrative poem The Light of Asia by Edwin Arnold has very considerable

literary merits, but its version of Buddha is totally deformed and disfigured; it is a 'Protestant Buddha'. Charles Allen in The Search for the Buddha (cited above) and John Clifford Holt in The Buddhist Vishnu (New York, 2004), among others, have made many very acid comments regarding this 'Protestant Buddha' or 'Protestantized Buddhism'. Fortunately, there is readily available a beautifully written, scholarly biography of Buddha based on ancient Pali and Buddhist-Sanskrit sources; I refer to Old Path White Clouds redacted by Thich Nhat Hanh, himself a Buddhist monk (Berkeley, California, 1991).

One element of Christian iconography which certainly springs from Hindu and/or Buddhist sources is the halo.

The *aura*, sometimes called the *corona* or the *charisma*, is a natural phenomenon, though not well understood. All living things possess an *aura*, as has been proven by *kirlian* photography. There have been experiments in using the *aura* as a diagnostic tool for both physical and psychic illnesses, but this is very much in its

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infancy.

Though kirlian photography was most certainly unknown, in ancient India the existence of the *aura* was well known, and it was believed - and there is no reason whatever to doubt the truth of this - that the *auras* of holy men and women possess special qualities, hence the halo as a symbol of sanctity, found in Hindu iconography at a very early date, from whence it passed to Buddhist iconography, and either directly or by way of Buddhism, to Christianity.

Below is an essay concerning Mahayana Buddhism by Professor Kenneth K. Inada titled "Buddhist Creative Metaphysics and Islamic Thought", followed by "Reply to Kenneth K. Inada" by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. The reader will note that, *grosso modo* all this is also relevant to the relation between Christianity and Buddhism. First, some preliminary observations.

Professor Inada does not distinguish between *Pali* and Buddhist-Sanskrit. *Pali* is the *Prakrit* (vernacular language derived from Sanskrit) spoken by Buddha in which the earliest Buddhist scriptures are written. Hence, said scriptures are sometimes known as The Pali Canon. In general, Theravada Buddhism has tended to make more use of Pali, while Mahayana Buddhism, except for The Pali Canon, has used Buddhist-Sanskrit almost exclusively. The above could cause some confusion. For example, *sutta* (Pali) and *sutra* (Buddhist-Sanskrit) mean the same thing, as do *Nibbana* (Pali) and *Nirvana* (Buddhist-Sanskrit), and also *Dhamma* (Pali) and *Dharma* (Buddhist-Sanskrit). There are, of course,

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numerous other examples, but the above are the ones most likely to be encountered by the reader in a brief essay such as the one above.

The reader will also note that Professor Inada's vision of Buddhism is totally free of being "Protestantized", and also that both Professor Inada and Seyyed Hossein Nasr have not been poisoned by that intellectual and spiritual toxin known as "Nominalism", a venom more deadly than that of a cobra or a coral snake. This means that they both take no note of mere names, but

only of meaning and substance.

BUDDHIST CREATIVE METAPHYSICS AND ISLAMIC THOUGHT

By

Kenneth K. Inada

In considering the thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, I would like to proceed comparatively. First I wish to set out some of the basic principles of creative
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metaphysics in Buddhism, raising a number of fundamental issues along the way, such as the nature of perception, time, eternity, being, becoming, and nonbeing, and the paths to wisdom and Enlightenment. Second, I will begin the comparison and dialogue between Buddhism and Islam by examining some of the ideas of Averroes (Ibn Rushd). Finally, I will pose to Nasr a series of questions for his response.

It is true that the historical Buddha disdained engagement in the metaphysical analysis of things and admonished those who indulged in it because nothing fruitful will come out of it in terms of developing the nature of aversion, detachment, cessation, tranquility, penetrative insight, and ultimate Nirvana. In the famous *Cula-Malunkya-putta-sutta*, metaphysical questions such as the following were raised: whether or not the world is contingent or eternal, whether or not the soul is the same or different from the body, whether or not the soul persists after death, and whether or not the Tathagata (the enlightened Buddha) survives death. To
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each of these questions the Buddha kept his studied silence. Questioned about his silence or oncommittal attitude, he finally replied that if he had answered positively, the listener would then begin to take an objectively realistic approach, and, conversely, if he had answered negatively, the listener would take on an "objectively" nihilistic approach, both of which would have led to the extremes that veer off the true perception of things. Indeed, both extremes would have immediately prevented the the perceiver from ever honing in on the truth of existence, that is, the (Buddhist Sanskrit) *Dharma*, (Pali: *Dhamma*), which the Buddha referred to as the middle way (*majjhima-patipada*).

The concept of the middle way as the truth of existence is naturally a most difficult idea to convey, much less to accept and understand, principally because of past prejudices regarding the terms in use. For example, the term "middle" seems innocuous enough and easy to grasp, but presented in ordinary rational

discourse it lacks the power or force to do justice to this basically ontological term. It is after all an existential term that uniquely qualifies the "way" by depicting the nonattached, pure nature of existence. The term shuns the extremes that the mind seems to thrive upon, that is, positivism and negativism or substantialism and nonsubstantialism. But such a depiction of the "middle" is usually met with a skeptical eye and invariably forces one to renew the search for a more plausible account of the "middle". This of course is not to be found since the "middle" is, in the final analysis, beyond our accustomed rational reach and cannot be located or found in ordinary perception of things. In brief, the concept of the "middle" cannot be reified as an epistemic entity that participates in epistemological functions.

Though an unwilling victim of the prevailing language in use, the Buddha nevertheless had to employ it to expound his new theory of the truth of existence. In this, he consciously indulged in a form of neologism to give new meanings to old terms and to a large extent, in retrospect, he did succeed in keeping alive the spirit that preserved the content of his enlightenment. Nonetheless, problems in hermeneutics started early on in the Buddhist tradition and have continued to the present. We still have to sift the common from the uncommon (neologistic) meanings. Though frustrating in many respects, due to the fact that we consciously or unconsciously revert back to common meanings of terms, nevertheless, we must attempt to resolve the problems by seeking out and focusing on the

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uncommon meanings, especially if we are to engage in a dialogue with another system of thought. Engendering such dialogue has, of course, been one of the primary aims of Nasr's work, and I will end this essay with a series of questions that may, I hope, call forth a new chapter in Buddhist-Islamic dialogue.

Prior to any dialogue, the challenge of a dialogue is first of all to clarify the language in use and, more importantly, its usage in any particular context. Historically, it is alleged that immediately after his nirvanic experience, the Buddha was asked to explain his unusually beautiful and serene countenance so markedly different from his former yogic days of struggles and emaciation. He refused to divulge anything and continued to be suffused in his newly gained peace and tranquility. When asked repeatedly, he said in effect that the content of his enlightenment, the true nature of rational origination (*paticca-samuppada*), is extremely difficult to comprehend, especially for those who cling to things, material as well as immaterial, and are fond of their dependence on these things. Thus the

Buddha put a damper on those who wanted to learn empirically and rationally about his unique experience. Within a few weeks, however, it is told that the Buddha finally relented and divulged to his following the nature and method of attaining Buddhahood, which is recorded in his famous exposition at the Deer park near Benares (present day Banaras) in the form of the Sutra that Turns the Wheel of the Buddhist Doctrine (*Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*).

The Sutra (Pali: *Sutta*), in brief, expounds on the fourfold noble truth of suffering and the way out of suffering, that is, reference to the prescription of the eightfold noble path. There is no need to discuss in detail the noble truth of suffering and its cessation but suffice it to say that the Buddha's exposition is a clear case of going beyond ordinary metaphysics to one of creative metaphysics. He did not condemn outright metaphysics as such but only disdained the use of it in epistemic analysis. Why? It is so because ordinary perception is wholly and indiscriminately reliant on metaphysical elements which are products of metaphysical dichotomization. It should be noted here that the Buddha was the first thinker to understand the origins and ill-effects of dichotomization. When he asserts that merely to be born into this world is suffering, he is exhibiting the fact that a newly born babe is cut off or separated from the mother's womb and must immediately fend for its own existence. Fending for one's existence entails a biological severance which forces one to fragment, the
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initial metaphysical incision so to speak, and thereby cling to its fragmented reality. A fragmented reality may be in the nature of a sense object derived from one of the sense faculties or a combination of the faculties, or it may be an imagery in the early stage of mind-function. Thus the babe, from an early stage, has all the trappings of metaphysical dichotomies although they are not yet to appear in clear or refined terms. The passion to live (*tanha*) is obvious but within the very same passion there exists another subtle dimension that causes one to cling or attach to (*upadana*) the dichotomized element. This dual nature of passion and attachment constitutes the very basis for the origin of suffering (*dukkha*). Suffering has a biological basis but it is vitally connected to the mind at all times. Thus the bio-mental phenomena of suffering continue unrelenting in simple as well as in sophisticated ways. In more developed stages they are expressed in ordinary behavioral patterns which are largely accepted and sanctioned by society at large. However, some of the more complicated patterns may be the result of psychological deviation or irregularities with respect

to the inability to adjust to a normal balanced life. At any rate, the origin of suffering seems simple enough and yet it is so difficult to fully accept it, much less to concentrate on controlling its rise. Indeed, when the child grows up to be an adult, he or she is already a massive phenomenon of passion-attachment, a creature very set in his or her ways.

How do we get out of the passion-attachment bind? The eightfold noble path prescribes the process thus: develop right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. The key word here is "right". It qualifies all the eight aspects of the noble path. Indeed, the Sutra (Pali: *Sutta*) tells us that the noble path is nothing but the middle way. As stated above, the middle way is a neologism. It has an uncommon meaning when tied up with the eightfold path. Again, the term "noble" has not an auspicious meaning but one that is unique and neologistic.

The middle way as a neologism hearkens us back to the notion of Buddhist creative metaphysics in the sense that it goes beyond ordinary metaphysics. Going beyond does not mean the abandonment of metaphysics as such, but rather it means that there is nonattachment to the dicotimized elements. In short, the elements remain as they are but now they do not dominate or dictate the nature of perception. Only when we are nonattached can we say that creativity occurs. This is

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an important point that needs to be elaborated.

An ordinary understanding of metaphysics centers on the two pillar concepts of being and becoming. In the history of Western thought, needless to say, Plato opted for being over becoming and thereby set the tone for the metaphysical mechanics of things. The search for and grasp of reality must be in the nature of permanence and absolutism and not in the impermanence and relativism which belong to the realm of becoming. This view fired the spirit of inquiry into the method and function of epistemology, engendering the never-ending quest for the basic and finite empirical and rational nature of things. To make a long story short, all this resulted in the appearance of Newtonian physics which stood supreme for several centuries until doubts concerning the applicability of concepts of permanence and absolutism began to crop up in the various sciences. The consequence was of course the ushering in of a totally new Einsteinian physics at the turn of the twentieth century. Now reality is no longer seen as steady, reliable, permanent, and absolute, but is viewed as utterly relative in more ways than one. Nearly a century has gone by since Einstein's first pronouncement of a new physics and yet, ironically, we still think and act

as if we never left the Newtonian world. Indeed, our old habits of perception oriented in Platonic metaphysics still dominate our current perception of things. Perhaps, we will continue to act on this older view for the foreseeable future since the brute forces of empiricism and rationalism, crystallized over the centuries, are difficult to modify and change. But the modification and changes will come in time because of the very character of nature itself.

We no longer live strictly in a Western oriented world, although we readily admit the present-day dominance of science and technology. Science is still science only to the extent that it is in proper human hands and we ought to be ever mindful of any sign of the Frankensteinian effect as we engage in it. When we turn our attention to the East, a region relatively untouched by the sciences up to the nineteenth century, we will note that human existence was still holistic and harmonious with respect to the surroundings. Clear signs of all this still persist in the various cultures despite the onslaught of science and technology which came about largely in this (20th) century. An examination of these cultures may prove fruitful in offering some insights into the total nature of things.

In Asiatic metaphysics, the concepts of being and becoming are taken for granted, but as in Einsteinian
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physics the locus of existence is not in being but in becoming. Furthermore, there is a new component relative to becoming, the novel concept of nonbeing, which together with being and becoming form the vital triadic relationship at all times.

With becoming as the locus of existence, a locus which in human terms would be translated into an experiential locus, the two components within it will now be being on the one hand and nonbeing on the other. This framework of dynamic reality is indeed strange to the uninitiated, but further analysis will prove its merits. As intimated earlier, the focus and concentration on being, the Platonic legacy (at least a part of it; Plato's thought has a great many more facets than this) sustains the metaphysical fragmentation of things, unknown to the perceiver especially in the accustomed realms of empirical and rational functions. But the focus and concentration are delimiting phenomena insofar as the dynamics of reality is concerned. Moreover, reality is essentially an open ontology, a windowless phenomenon so to speak, which is always moving, fresh, resilient, accommodative, adaptive, and changing. How is it possible at all for reality to take on such traits? If we turn to the nature of being, it does not supply these traits because it is static,

permanent, and absolute.

It is here that the Asiatic synoptic vision of things allowed thinkers to get to the bottom of the nature of reality. They came up with the concept of nonbeing, a concept not antithetical to being at all but always inclusive and supportive of it. This is the great insight which accommodates and underlies the total holistic nature-human relationship. In Buddhism, nonbeing appears in the form of emptiness (*shunyata*) and in Taoism as nothingness (*wu*). There is no space to elaborate on how this unique concept played a vital role in developing the respective systems of thought; but it can be emphasized that it is the core concept that led to the crystallization of the respective systems, in Buddhist nirvana (Pali: *nibbana*) and Taoist ultimate naturalistic existence (*ming*). It can further be asserted that this concept is the singularly most important factor for the Buddhist and Taoist alignment that contributed so heavily to the Chinese way of life during the T'ang Dynasty (618-906 AD) and thereafter.

Nonbeing then is the other neglected but necessary component in the besomingness of existence. Although being has a greater role to play in terms of providing the flexibility, change, and continuity in becomingness. While being cannot accommodate nonbeing because of its delimiting or truncating metaphysical

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nature, nonbeing, on the other hand, actually incorporates all activities of being because of its adaptive and unbounded nature. Nonbeing is, if you will, the "principle" of continuity and extensiveness in process that allows all human endeavors to be as great and deep as function allows.. Thus the trademark in Buddhist ethics is the unbounded nature of friendliness, loving care, and compassion, all of which are based on and supported by the meditative capture of equanimity, the exquisite grounding for all *bodhisattva* (enlightened) action.

Where the concepts of being and becoming have presented us with the options of focusing on either being or becoming, each thereby limiting the other in mutual ways, now with the introduction of nonbeing as a vital component in the triadic relationship, the options are not only inoperative, but the ontological realm of existence has widened and completely opened up for any dialectical function or movement. This constitutes the essence, essential grounds, of creativity as such, at least as seen from the Buddhist view of becomingness.

To hold the whole universe in the palm of one's hand is a symbolic metaphor for the totality and openness that connects humankind with nature itself, an inviolable bond that exists from the beginning to the

end in any activity. This is the insight (*prajna*) of an open metaphysics which naturally translates into an all-consuming, all-embracing compassion (*karuna*) for all creatures, big or small, sentient, or insentient. The visualization of the various deities, images, and concepts at play is possible because of the creative factor in metaphysical perception provided by the presence of the component of nonbeing. Thus, whether one is ascending in the visionary scale of things that ends in *nirvana* (Pali: *nibbana*) or descending from it to activate the salvific concern for all creatures, all of this owes to the nature of holistic and creative metaphysics. Buddhist metaphysics, in short, allows for the recrudescence of ordinary human activities in a new light by relieving ordinary perception of its occluded nature. So now when the enlightened being is both insightful and compassionate - two sides of the same coin of moving reality as they constantly penetrate and inform each other - the result is a world of harmony, peace, and prosperity.

Perhaps it is opportune here to speculate upon and explore further one more important aspect of the being-nonbeing dynamics in becomingness. Each experiential process has its dynamics, but in the Western sector, owing much to the dominant Platonic metaphysics, the

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dynamic is limited and focused on the understanding of how being, with all its attributes, is accommodated in becomingness. In this accounting, becomingness is left alone or even neglected despite the fact that it is the actual ground (*locus*) in which the dynamic takes place. What is missing, consciously or unconsciously, is the mutuality of being and becoming, for there is no being without becoming and, vice versa, no becoming without being. This mutuality has not been worked out satisfactorily in the Western philosophical tradition, although the scientific tradition in this (20th) century with particle physics is far ahead on this matter.

As stated earlier, in the Asiatic sector, the introduction of nonbeing as a vital component in becomingness has presented a totally new dimension to reality. Now, being and nonbeing are equal partners in exhibiting the features of becomingness. This is a crucial point that needs to be expanded.

As a way of getting a handle on being-nonbeing dynamics, I will resort to two familiar terms, symmetry and asymmetry, to help define their respective natures and roles in the dynamics. Symmetry belongs to being because being represents best the essence of our ordinary perception of things. In other words, ordinary perception is based on and thrives on clarity and distinctness. This means that all objects of perception are spatial, temporal, finite, particular, quantifiable,

causative, and so on, all of which are grists for the empirical and rational mill. Thus, needless to say, objects of perception are quite effective and we rely on them for building up our huge store of knowledge. Yet, as indicated earlier, ordinary perception is delimiting because of its inherent dichotomous nature. To remedy this condition, we need to acknowledge the presence of nonbeing in perception. Nonbeing is the unseen the intangible, the non-manipulable component in becoming which supplements and tones down the excesses of a dynamics known solely in terms of being. Should it be characterized, nonbeing would be nonspatial (aspatial), nontemporal (atemporal), nonquantifiable, infinite, universally extensive, noncausative, and so on. The presence of nonbeing, paradoxically, can only be inferred by way of the nature and behavior of being, so to speak; that is to say, something reveals being's ability to, for example, continue, change, evolve, and repeat itself in ordinary perceptuion. This is indeed mystifying, to say the least, but that is one of the major reasons for our reference to Asiatic mystique but, hopefully, it should pose a real challenge to explore it. In this connection, the real mystery of existence is not why
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there is something (being) rather than nothing (ordinary connotation here) rather than something. With all the above dyadic nature of dynamics, a whole Asiatic culture evolved, but its analysis will have to wait or another occasion.

Coming then to the question of dialogue, how does this Buddhist creative metaphysics fare with Islamic thought? The initial impression seems negative since the Islamic theocentrism does not easily lend itself to a comparative analysis with Buddhist nontheism. Indeed, perusing the whole history of Islamic thought, its philosophers and religious thinkers have always given foremost emphasis to God's creation of the world and the justification thereof, the main justification of God-world-humankind relationship being the doctrine of emanationism. The doctrine is clear and simple enough in terms of everything flowing downward from the Godhead, but astute thinkers have debated long on the nature and function of the relationship between God and the world, that is, between necessity and contingency, to explain the whole scheme of things. Thus, an essential element in this debate focuses on the question of God's pre-eternity and the temporal origination in the world. I will not go into the details of the debates spanning several centuries among such thinkers as al-Kindi (d. 870), al-Farabi (875-950), Avicenna (980-1037), al-Ghazzali (1058-1111), and Averroes (1126-1198). What is more important here is to discuss how two seemingly

divergent systems of thought could meet and perhaps accommodate each other.

In Islamic thought, the doctrine of creation has two aspects: (a) creation out of nothing and (b) creation out of something. The first aspect, which is strictly in the preserve of God, is a popular view held and propagated by religious thinkers that God created this world out of nothing. It is highly speculative and lacks any demonstrative force; indeed its proponents will immediately counter by asserting that it does not require any demonstration because of the very nature of God's ultimacy and supremacy. The acceptance of this view naturally lies in deep faith regarding God's existence. The second aspect, however, subscribed to by (some) philosophers, is much more plausible in that it speaks about temporal origination or the rise of contingent moments in this world. In human terms, it refers to all contingent moments of individuals, that is, singular as well as collective experiences. It is a way to examine the whole gamut of relationships experienced by humankind throughout the world and even reaching into the realm of the Godhead in the case of the true believer. This account falls within the theory
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of emanation, albeit beginning at the lower end of it.

It should be noted that neither aspect questions the creation of the world by God, and within this context there must be a meaningful contact between Islam and Buddhism. The focus of course must be on the second aspect, for here the matter of plausibility must rest on how consistent the comparative analysis is with respect to the contingent nature of things. Buddhist metaphysics, on this point, is thoroughly at home with its empirical and existential character. The Buddhist, as seen earlier, avoided metaphysical flights that have lost touch with empirical grounding.

To be contingent means involvement in space and time. The Islamic thinkers took space to be a necessary ingredient of a contingent being. Likewise, Buddhist thinkers accepted space as a necessary ingredient in all experiences but went further to stipulate that space is uncreative (*asankhata*), that is, it does not play an active role in the making of a contingent experiential moment. But the difference between Buddhism and Islam is rather light so far as ordinary experiences go. On the matter of time, however, there is much seminal activity on both sides.

For the Islamic thinkers, the overriding question on time and the world was, which comes first? Or which is necessary and which is contingent? More specifically, we may ask, does the world function in time? If so, then, time is prior to the world and is therefore necessary to the existence of the world. However, if

time is created with the world, then is the world necessary necessary to the existence of time? Whether a priority and necessity or a posteriority and contingency belong to the world or to time is an argument which can be narrowed down to simple questions on the nature of beginning and end as applied to both. In the analysis of beginning and end, the Islamic thinkers went back to Aristotle for two principles:

(1.) if there is an end, there is a beginning and if there is no beginning, there is no end. These two rather simple principles applied to the temporally originated things point to the conclusion that both the world and time in their dynamic involvement with each other are truly contingent, and they support, all the more, the claim that the world was created by an incomparable God *ex nihilo*.

The Islamic thinkers naturally tended to side with the priority (necessity) of the world over time, that is, time is created in virtue of the existence of the world. The (Some) philosophers, on the other hand, went a step further to argue that the world and time are co-

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creative of each other without assigning priority to either one. The champion of this view is Averroes (Ibn Rushd) and in this respect the Buddhist found an ally. As seen earlier, the Buddhist saw everything within the context of experiential process and sought to accommodate the larger scheme of things (that is, the world) within that process. This process is inherently extendable to the larger scheme because of the unique metaphysics that involves the nature of emptiness. It would seem that Islamic thinkers did not have anything comparable to emptiness but presumably they, especially the Sufis, indulged in meditation to control the empirical (that is, sensory) nature of things. After all, the contiguity of the Indian Subcontinent with its long tradition of yoga practice, among other systems, and the fact that Buddhism had spread well into Persia would suggest strongly that Islamic thinkers and practitioners were not immune or unexposed to Indian meditative discipline [nor were Christian mystics; see what we have said concerning Hesychasm]. What is more, Alexander the Great's foray into India along the banks of the Indus River in the third century BC clearly exhibits evidence of early cultural infusion. From the Buddhist side, images of Buddha and other deities show undeniable Greek influence.

The most striking thing about Averroes' analysis of time is his unique compromise position. That is to say, he did not favor either extreme of necessity or contingency. He did not, in brief, side with the religious thinkers on the contingent nature of time with

respect to the world, nor did he side with the (those) philosophers on the contingency of the world on time. He was able to do this because he did not conceive of time as linear. Instead, he conceived of time as temporally originated (that is, a contingent phenomenon) by what is circular. The cyclic nature of time means in essence that time need not have a beginning nor an end, contrary to the the two Aristotelian principles stated above. Indeed, in one bold stroke, Averroes covered all grounds by this compromise, that is, those elements that function by necessity or contingency, and by priority or posteriority. From this standpoint it can be stated that time originated from a timeless past (that is, eternity, necessity) but at the same time it will continue to be originated in the world (that is, contingency). Time is a perpetually circular phenomenon because it evolves contingently with the world which is a sphere.

This concept of time is remarkably similar to the Buddhist notion that there is no absolute time as such
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but only time in the making, that is, time as a by-product so to speak of the experiential process. The process, in more precise terms, refers to the doctrine of relational origination (*paticca-samuppada*) where there is no beginning nor end. The process perpetually spins, hence the apt phrase, "wheel of life". The Buddhist has conveniently segmented the wheel into a twelve-divided circle where one may begin with ignorance, greed, or desire which propels the wheel to turn and end in old-age and death. But short of the ultimate goal of nirvana, the wheel of life continues to spin due to the empirical quests that "taint" ordinary existence. The Buddhist simply says ordinary beings are in *samsara*, a term used to describe the perpetual turning of the wheel, as contrasted to the quietude or tranquility of nirvana.

Thus we see that the circularity or cyclic nature of time is a singular contribution by both Buddhist and Islamic thought. Averroes states succinctly: "when time is imagined correctly as a cyclic continuum (encircled) within (the movement of) the spheres, it is not necessary for its past to have a completion, for if it had a completion, it would (also) have had a beginning, whereas that which has no beginning (likewise) has no completion".

We have now seen that one point of contact between Buddhism and Islam is most significantly focused on the dynamicity of the individual and the world, both of which are coterminous in cyclic origin and perpetuation, like the axle spinning in unison with the outer rim of the wheel. Buddhist creative metaphysics involving emptiness allows the nature of the spin to

occur with the particular (that is, contingent element) and the universal (that is, necessary element) in an infrastructural sense, permitting the samsaric nature of the wheel to turn but in the hope of eventual nirvana. It would seem highly probable, on the other hand, that Averroes' introduction of the phenomenon of cyclic time would leave the door open for greater contact with Buddhism and even other systems of thought, a challenge and a task for future dialogues.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr has, in his deep reflective writings, presented the fundamental framework in which such dialogues are to take place. He goes back to the basic tenet of philosophy, metaphysics, to focus on and reveal the true nature and function of Islamic spirituality. By metaphysics, he indicates a return to the very original meaning as employed by the early Greeks, that is, the vision or insight into the true nature of things. This means that the subject is the total cosmos. It was what the prophet Muhammad had
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envisioned. Nasr has steadfastly maintained the traditional interpretation of this metaphysical position in order to expound Islamic philosophy, religion, and culture in every conceivable aspect. Without allowing for this metaphysical stance, it would not be possible to understand the various sciences, including mathematics and medicine, in the total scheme of things. Indeed, the metaphysical vision serves to make all disciplines meaningful, effective, and valuable.

At one point Nasr refers to Islam as the "middle people" in terms of geography and metaphysics. Coming late as civilizations go, Islam certainly sat at the opportune middle of the concourse linking the East and West, enjoying commerce as well as cultural interchange. He goes on to point out that Islamic metaphysics, contrary to ordinary thinking, is closer to the Orient than the West. It means that the metaphysical vision of things is, for example, germane to Hinduism (Vedanta), Buddhism and Taoism. Instead of a God, these systems have independently advanced their respective primordial source in terms of the Brahman, *Dharma* (Pali: *Dhamma*), and Tao. Each is unique (very much so), to be sure, but there is much in common in the ultimate ground and quest for the metaphysical vision. Here we might ask Nasr, among other questions soon to follow, for his seasoned reflections on why there had been so few direct religious and philosophical dialogues between Islam and these Oriental systems. Was there any influence of Indian yoga on the Islamic gnostics or Sufis? Historically, we know that Buddhism had a difficult time making inroads into the Chinese culture beginning in the first century but later, during the T'ang Dynasty (618-907), the

Chinese thinkers were able to accept and incorporate Buddhist ideas, aided largely by the presence of Taoism. Indeed, they did it so well that the process of sinicization of Buddhism began to take shape and form and facilitated the establishment of new sectarian schools of thought, notably Ch'an (Zen).

Although the Buddhist *Dharma* (or *Dhamma*) was basically a metaphysical vision of the holistic nature of things, the Buddha allowed for the lesser or relative "vision" of things. He spoke of truth in a dual sense: conventional (rational, logical, empirical) and nonconventional (without human contrivance), the former is covered truth (*samvriti-satya*) and the latter supreme and incomparable truth (*paramartha-satya*). The significant point here is that both are co-terminous or existing in the selfsame realm of existence and this permits the "way out" by uncovering the covered realm
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by meditative discipline. In brief, the rational discriminative faculty (*vijnana*) can be overcome by the penetrative insight (*prajna*). Granted that Islam does not permit the existence of covered nature of truth, we might ask whether Islam does in any way provide for this sort of inner action of the faculties in light of Islamic hierarchy of knowledge.

The middle way doctrine of Buddhism shows remarkable resemblance to the approach, method, and ultimate realization of the Islamic metaphysical vision. The Buddha, it is recalled, admonished those who were eternalists, who subscribed to the substantive nature of things, and those who were nihilists or annihilationists subscribing to the notion that everything is impermanent and thus a void. He went on to assert that by avoiding the extremes (eternalism and nihilism), the enlightened one achieved the middle way (*majjhima-patipada*), pointing at a most unique form of "pure ontology". He then prescribed the famous eightfold noble path that begins with right view and ends in right meditative penetration (*Samadhi*) to achieve nirvana (Pali: *nibbana*), literally the state where all desires have been extinguished. This is the Buddha's way of capturing the primordality of existence, the vision of things as they really are (*yatha-bhutam*). Thus, we may ask, is Islam a "middle way"?

In another influential work, (The Encounter of Man and Nature, London, 1966), Nasr has discussed the problem of man's relationship with Nature. The word, nature, is capitalized to follow Nasr's own reference to the content of the metaphysical vision of things. The problem arises immediately as man tries to manipulate, conquer, or dominate Nature. By so doing, the cosmos is disturbed or vitiated. And yet, we know that not every scientific endeavor is wrong or misguided. Nasr himself

says, for example, that Einstein's theory of relativity is not relativism *per se* but indicates a high order of perception of the cosmos. Indeed, physicists such as Mendel Sachs have asserted that the theory (of relativity) is in reference to the cosmos and applicable to the whole nature of things. In addition to this, there are other physicists who have in the last fifty years focused their attention on the East or Oriental systems to exhibit parallels, similarities, and even correspondences with respect to the larger scheme of things. The vacuum or void which often comes up in describing the universe is no longer an insipid nothingness but a potential ground for the dynamic play of all forms of the particle world. In light of all this, would Nasr favor us by reflecting on the role
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that pure science will play in future endeavors to understand man's place in the universe?

A working philosophy or religion has sustained power proportional to the extent that it harmonizes with the times, however different or difficult the conditions may be. In the last few decades of the twentieth century, we have witnessed the recession of logical positivism (as we say in Spanish, *positivism atontado*, i.e., "idiotized positivism) and the rise of a phenomenon called multiculturalism. It is a phenomenon that is destined to grow despite countervailing forces of all kinds. Needless to say, philosophy and religion are principal roots of this phenomenon and, like it or not, they will have to be involved in significant ways in the actualization of a kind of global culture. What then will be the role of the great systems of the world coping with the inclement elements arising from technology and materialism?" (352)

In accordance with the format of our present source book, we now present Seyyed Hossein Nasr's

REPLY TO KENNETH INADA:

Professor Inada is an expert on Buddhism and most of his paper is concerned with an exposition of his interpretation of Buddhist metaphysics, especially as it concerns the relation between being, becoming, and non-being and the question of the origination of the world, space, and time. At the end Inada turns to a comparative study of time in Buddhism in relation to the views of Ibn Rushd (Averroes). Following this he poses a series of questions for dialogue. Since his final two questions (on the role of science and technology and multiculturalism) are addressed in responses to their essays, I will therefore devote this response to how I

envisage the possibility of a Buddhist-Islamic dialogue and comparisons of basic metaphysical and spiritual issues, in light of the first two questions Inada raises.

It should be mentioned at the outset, however, that Buddhism and Islam have had long contacts going back to the first Islamic century and the spread of Islam into what is today eastern Afghanistan and Pakistan which had a large Buddhist population at that time. In fact Buddhism spread into China before the rise of Islam through the eastern regions of the Persian Empire and one of the first harbingers of the Buddhist message into China was called in Chinese "The

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Persian". Many stories of the life of the Buddha found in the Tripitaka (Three Baskets) found their way into Arabic literature and one can find traces of some Buddhist philosophical ideas such as atomism in certain strands of Islamic thought. Moreover, some commentaries consider the Qur'anic prophet Dhul-Kifl to be none other than the Buddha whose name as *Budh* is found in both Arabic and Persian. Also the term *nirwan* (pronounced "nirvan" in Persian), that is, *nirvana*, has become a Persian word well known in the literature of that language. Even the life of one of the greatest of the early Sufi saints of Khurasan, Ibrahim Adham, resembles that of the Buddha. It is therefore unfortunate that in modern scholarship so little attention has been paid to Buddhist-Islamic dialogue and comparative studies between the two traditions.

Inada begins his article with the discussion of The Buddhist Middle Way or *majjhima-patipada*. Although this term as interpreted by Inada deals with a middle way between taking an objectively realistic approach and nihilism, the term itself has other meanings and reminds one immediately of the Quranic reference to Muslims as the people of the "middle way" (*ummah wasatah*). Although this is usually interpreted to mean avoiding extremes in all matters and especially eschewing both this worldliness and complete otherworldliness in the sense of excessive asceticism, it has other meanings and has also been understood metaphysically as striking a balance between the *via negativa* (Greek: *apophatic theology*) and the *via affirmativa* (Greek: *kataphatic theology*) in theology and metaphysics in one's approach to the understanding of the Ultimate Reality. Even in discussion of the relation to nonbeing and being, being and becoming, the world as veil and theophany, and any form of conceptualization of categories pertaining to the Divine, the Islamic metaphysicians have sought to charter a course which cannot but be called the middle way. In any case there is much to discover in a deeper

comparative study of the meaning of the middle way to the two traditions despite the marked difference between the nontheistic and strongly theistic perspectives of Buddhism and Islam, respectively.

As far as creationism is concerned, in addition to the points mentioned by Inada, one must remember another view concerning creation associated with Sufi metaphysics especially as expounded among others by 'Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani and Mahmud Shabistari. This view asserts that at every moment the world is returned to nonexistence and brought again into existence. This doctrine, called the renewal of creation at every

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instant (*tajdid al-khalq fikulli anat*), has been studied by Toshiko Izutsu, the famous Japanese Zen scholar of Islam, who in many discussions with me expressed his astonishment at how this view was similar in so many ways to Buddhist doctrines.

Likewise in the discussion of space and time there is a wealth of philosophical writings which were not mentioned by Inada and which are perhaps unknown to him since they are only now becoming available in Western languages. In this context the writings of Mulla Sadra and his theory of trans-substantial motion (*al-harakat al-jawhariyyah*) which posits a constant becoming and motion in the very subsistence of the universe is particularly significant. Henry Corbin referred to this theory in a telling manner as "*l'quietude de l'etre*", and interpretation which reveals how relevant this theory by one of Islam's greatest metaphysicians can be for comparison with Buddhist theories. As for the cyclic notion of time which Inada mentions in relation to Averroes, there are other schools of Islamic thought, especially Isma'ili philosophy, which would offer even greater possibilities for comparison with the Buddhist view. The general Islamic view of sacred history itself is also not linear but cyclic punctuated by the appearance of a new prophet at the beginning of each cycle. The doctrine of the ten Buddhas starting with Dhammadassin and ending with Maitreya at the end of this historical period also have a clear correspondence with the cycles of prophecy (*da'irat al-nubuwwah*), which according to Shi'ite gnosis end with the advent of the Mahdi and the return of Christ.

This concept also opens the whole field of comparative studies concerning Buddhist and Islamic eschatologies. Both religions, along with of course such religions as Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity, not to speak of Taoism and the primal religions, expect a divine intervention at the end of the present historical cycle. Specific comparison between the doctrine of the appearance of the Maitreya Buddha and that of the Mahdi and Christ according to

Islamic teachings will reveal remarkable resemblances to which little attention has been paid in general scholarly works on comparative religion.

Although Islam is opposed to the theory of reincarnation, whose popular understanding in Hinduism and Buddhism has been questioned even by sages of those traditions, the question of the centrality of the human state necessary to gain release from the cycles of rebirth and death, of the reality of wandering after death through transmigration in the intermediary worlds, and of the significance of correct thought and

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action in this world in determining the state into which one is born after earthly death all have their correspondences in Islamic teachings. In Islam, however, eschatological doctrines which deal in detail with the meaning of the universal descriptions of the Quran with the afterlife and which are in fact explanations and expansions of the teachings of the Quran and *Hadith*, have been always considered as esoteric knowledge. They remained mostly oral in the early days of Islam and did not find their full explanations until later in Islamic history in the writings of such figures as Ibn Arabi (al-Mursi), Mulla Sadra, Shah Waliullah of Delhi, Mulla 'Ali Zunuzi, and Sabziwari. If one reads carefully a text such as the fourth book of the *Asfar al-arba'ah* of Mulla Sadra, one will realize that Islam has also produced its "book of the dead" which can be profitably compared with the Tibetan Book of the Dead. Such comparisons would reveal remarkable parallels despite the two different spiritual universes with which they deal. It is also interesting to note in this context that in Buddhism also the treatises dealing with eschatological matters were put to writing in the later history of the religion as is the case of Islam. In both cases, however, such works, far from being later accretions, represent crystallizations in written form of doctrines which go back to the origin of the religions in question.

Turning to the spiritual realities which "populate" the spiritual universes of Islam and Buddhism, especially in its Mahayana and Vajrayana forms, one can point to the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and their functions in the Buddhist world and the archangels and angels in the Islamic one. Although of course there are differences, since we are dealing with two different revelations and spiritual archetypes, there are also remarkable resemblances. Islamic art has not produced *thankas* depicting in the form of plastic arts the various celestial and infernal beings of the Buddhist universe. But the descriptions contained in even popular works such as the genre known as *Wonders of Creation* (*'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat*) reveal the

remarkable analogies and similarities between the visions of the two religions concerning the beings which inhabit the multiple levels of existence beyond the earthly domain.

Even the Bodhisattva, this uniquely Buddhist being, has its correspondence in the Islamic universe. The mercy associated with the Bodhisattva and his/her desire to save all of creation has its correspondence with the angelic agencies of Divine Mercy (*al-Ramah*)

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which fill the Islamic universe. Moreover, in both cases mercy does not preclude the reality of rigor, justice, judgment, and punishment which are also terribly real for all beings granted the precious gift of human existence in both the Buddhist and Islamic universes.

Turning to the operative and practical domain, one can again observe many similarities between Buddhism and Islam which offer possibilities for comparative studies. One is the relation between the role of knowledge and love or devotion in the spiritual life. Within the Mahayana School a clear distinction is made between the sapiential and intellectual approach in which knowledge is primary and the devotional approach. The first became crystallized in several schools of which perhaps the most important is *Dhyana* (Buddhist Sanskrit), *Ch'an* (Chinese) or *Zen* (Japanese), and the second is *Sukhavati* (Buddhist Sanskrit), *Ching-t'u-tsung* (Chinese) or *Jodo* (Japanese), which is also known as Amida Buddhism. Each school, however, possesses an element of the other. There are devotional elements in *Zen* and sapiential and metaphysical elements in *Jodo*. The same can be said of the Vajrayana School which is by nature sapiential and based on knowledge, but possesses devotional aspects.

Now, in Islam the path of spiritual realization associated with Sufism also emphasizes both love and devotion (*mahabbah*) and knowledge (*ma'rifah*). Moreover, different Sufi orders are characterized by the emphasis of either one or the other element. But where there is emphasis on gnosis (Sanskrit: *jnana*) or sapience, there is also present also love and vice versa. The works of two of the towering figures of Islamic spirituality, Ibn 'Arabi (al-Mursi) and Jalal al-Din Rumi, who lived within a generation of each other in the thirteenth century, demonstrate this principle clearly. Ibn 'Arabi (al-Mursi) wrote primarily on gnosis (Sanskrit: *jnana*) and his path was that of knowledge, but he also composed many verses of Sufi love poetry and considered love to be very important in the attainment of the Divine. As for Rumi, he was the great troubadour (Provencal: *trobador*) of love and most of his voluminous poetry deals with the theme of love as being central to the spiritual life. And yet his Mathnawi is considered as the "ocean of gnosis" and he is identified with the very

essence of gnosis (*'irfan* in Persian) by those acquainted with the inner meanings of his work. It seems that in both Buddhism and Islam the role of knowledge and love or devotion are like those of *yin* and *yang* in the Far Eastern symbol. Each element contains something of the other. For that very reason

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this whole field offers rich possibilities for comparative study.

There are remarkable parallels between the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path of Buddhism and Islamic teachings. The Four Noble Truths teach the universality of suffering, its cause, its cure and the way to achieve it, that is, following the Middle Way and the Eightfold Path. In the language of the Quran, commented upon by so many Sufi texts, this world is *al-dunya*, which, being separated from the Divine Reality, is contrasted to *al-akhirah* or the celestial world which is the abode of proximity to that Reality. Now, the very nature of *al-dunya* is separation, vicissitude and pain. Islam does not emphasize suffering as much as does Buddhism but its characterization of *al-dunya* is similar to that of Buddhism putting aside the role placed in the Islamic perspective in the positive aspect of the cosmos as symbol and theophany and the lack of this dimension in Buddhism. To overcome the pains and vicissitudes of the world or *al-dunya*, man must detach himself from this world, which means to control one's ego and its desires. The Sufis know fully well that the cause of attachment to the world is precisely the selfish craving or *trishna* of which Buddhists speak. And like the Buddhists, they propose a means for overcoming this pain and suffering of *al-dunya*, this means being overcoming selfish craving and in fact the ego/self itself which is the cause of that desire of the worldly. Finally and corresponding to the fourth Noble Truth, Islamic esoterism in the form of Sufism

possesses a path whose main steps present remarkable similarities to the Eightfold Path of Buddhism.

In the Eightfold Path, there is right mind and right intention corresponding to wisdom (*prajna*); right speech, right conduct, and right livelihood corresponding to morality (*shila*); and right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration corresponding to realization (*Samadhi*). One could draw a parallel between these stages of the path and the grand division in Islam between *al-Shari'ah*, *al-Tariqah*, and *al-Haqiqah*. The first deals with morality, the second with methods and means of spiritual realization, and the third with wisdom. Again in the context of two very different types of religion, namely Buddhism and Islam, there are to be found remarkable morphological resemblances as well as, of course, differences because

of the non-theistic nature of one and the theistic nature of the other.

As for the vices which according to Buddhism must be overcome, namely the three poisons of illusion,
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lust, and pride, they also have their correspondence in classical texts of Sufi ethics such as the Al-Risalat al-Qushayriyyah of Imam Abu'l-Qasim al-Qushayri who, while enumerating the virtues, also points to the vices to be overcome. The Prophet of Islam prayed to God to overcome our ordinary perception of things which possesses an illusory character. He also decried the danger of lust of all kinds which must be controlled by rules of the *Shari'ah* or Divine Law and considered pride to be the source of all the vices in the soul. How interesting it is to compare the understanding of the vices or poisons in the two traditions, one emphasizing marriage and sacralizing sexuality and the other based on monasticism and the *sangha* and excluding at the beginning at least the rest of society. The treatment of the vices and the poisons mentioned in Buddhism and Islam is like the treatment of a physical disease according to two different medical traditions, let us say the Ayurvedic or acupuncture on the one hand and Islamic on the other. Each medical tradition recognizes the disease and each has for its goal its cure. The regimen given, however, is not identical, but the trajectories of the disease in the two cases and its cure follow a pattern ending finally at the same goal which is the cure of the disease in question.

Among the cures offered for the treatment of the poisons that infect the soul, one central to both traditions provides an unusually fecund source for proof and comparisons, again despite the theistic and nontheistic framework of Islam on the one hand and Buddhism on the other. This "cure" is quintessential prayer, invocation or remembrance which is the central practice of the Pure Land School in Buddhism based on the Buddha's "Original Vow" and is central in Islam in the form of *dhikr* (pronounced "zikr" in Persian), which also means invocation and remembrance in Arabic and which is based on the Quran and the practice of the Prophet of Islam. The *mantra* (Buddhist Sanskrit) of the Pure Land School, *Na-mu O-mit'o Fu* in Chinese and *namu Amida Butsu* in Japanese means "I take refuge in the Buddha the Infinite Light and Infinite Life". The Islamic *dhikr* always concerns God and one or several of his Names or the testimony of Unity, *La ilaha illa'Llah*, that is, there is no divinity but the Divine. The Buddhist form appears from the Islamic perspective to be the invocation of the Divine Names, *al-Nur* (Light) and *al-Hayy* (Life). There are extraordinary parallels in this quintessential practice of prayer across various

religious frontiers from the Hesychast Prayer of the Heart in (Eastern) Orthodox Christianity to *japa yoga* in Hinduism to the Buddhist

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and Islamic practices in question. This universal practice and its particular significance for human situation today has already been amply treated by expounders of the traditional doctrines and the perennial philosophy, especially Frithjof Schuon. But much remains to be done in a more detailed manner in studying comparatively this central practice in Islam and Buddhism.

Finally, I wish to return to the question of the Void and Plenitude in the two traditions, a question which I also treated in my response to Sallie King (see below). It is true that the Void is not reified in Buddhism and that in Islam one of God's Names is *al-Samad* which means infinite richness and plenitude. There are moreover other Divine Names in Islam conveying the same meaning, There are to be sure many differences in the metaphysical formulations of the two traditions in question. Yet, there is a profound dialogue to be carried out on the question of fullness and emptiness as well as theism and nontheism between Buddhism and Islam. Here again the *yin-yang* symbols can be used. One religion emphasizes theism and in its esoteric dimension possesses a full doctrine of the Impersonal Divine Essence and the other nontheism and yet manifests strong theistic currents (remember, Siddharth Gautama the Buddha was a high caste Hindu who read and perhaps wrote Sanskrit and whose everyday spoken language was Pali, a *prakrit* or vernacular derived from Sanskrit). That is why when we turn from theoretical considerations to observation of actual living realities and practices of Islam and Buddhism,

one is confronted with so many unexpected parallels. For example, the metaphysical doctrine of the Void has its reflection in Japanese art with its emphasis upon emptiness of living space which one experiences directly in entering a traditional Japanese temple or even private house. But where else in the world is emptiness of interior spaces of architecture emphasized as greatly as in the Islamic world? The interior spaces of the mosque and also the traditional Islamic houses are characterized by their emptiness and the void plays a major spiritual function in Islamic art in general. All of these considerations point to the rich possibilities of dialogue between Buddhism and Islam which for me can only be carried out fruitfully within the matrix of the metaphysics of religious diversity which expositors of the perennial philosophy have formulated in detail in this century in response to the particular needs of present-day humanity.

I am grateful to Professor Inada for providing me the opportunity to expound my views on further
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Buddhist-Islamic dialogue to which his paper draws attention. Among various domains of comparative religious study, the Buddhist-Islamic one has until now not occupied a position of prominence as have the Christian-Buddhist and Hindu-Buddhist fields. Let us hope that along the line mentioned by Inada and other scholars and proposed by myself here in this essay this field can be expounded and deepened in the future. The fruits of comparative studies in this field are not only of theoretical and philosophical interest but are bound to have practical significance for many living in lands such as China, Thailand, Malaysia, Burma, Sri Lanka, and the Caucasus where Buddhists and Muslims co-exist as living and vibrant religious communities." (353)

Above Dr. Nasr dealt essentially with comparisons between Islam and Buddhism. Below is a more general study, with Dr. Nasr's reply.

THE *PHILOSOPHIA PERENNIS* AND THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

By

Sallie B. King

"This essay is a response to certain claims regarding the *philosophia Perennis* made by Dr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr. The claims I have in mind are developed most fully in his Knowledge and the Sacred and succinctly restated in "The *Philosophy Perennis* and the Study of Religion". Let me begin by summarizing that part of Dr. Nasr's thesis that I would like to examine in this essay.

According to Nasr, the key to understanding the relationship among the world's religions is to look at them from the point of view of Tradition. What is Tradition?

Tradition...means truths or principles of a divine origin revealed or unveiled to mankind and, in fact, a whole cosmic sector through various figures envisaged as messengers, prophets, *avataras* (Sanskrit), the Logos or other transmitting agencies, along with all the ramifications and applications of these principles in different realms including law and social structure, art, symbolism, the sciences, and embracing of course Supreme

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Knowledge along with the means for its attainment.

Tradition implies truths of a supraindividual character rooted in the nature of reality as such. ... It comes from the Source from which everything originates and to which everything returns.

Nasr links the meaning of tradition to

That perennial wisdom which lies at the heart of every religion and which is none other than the Sophia whose possession the sapiental perspective in the West as well as the Orient has considered as the crowning achievement of human life. This eternal wisdom ... which constitutes one of the main components of the concept of tradition is none other than the *Sophia perennis* of the Western tradition, which the Hindus call the *snantan dharma* and the Muslims *al-hikmat al-khalidah* (or *javidan khirad* in Persian).

For Nasr the terms, "*philosophia perennis*", "Sophia", "*Sophia perennis*", "*scientia sacra*", "sacred knowledge", "metaphysics", "esoteric knowledge" and "principal knowledge" are all closely related terms, pointing to the eternal Truth, embodied at the core of religions in "Tradition", and accessible in experience to humankind.

Tradition is closely related to the *philosophia perennis* if this term is understood as the Sophia which has always been and will always be and which is perpetuated by means of both transmission horizontally and renewal vertically through contact with that reality that was "at the beginning" and is here and now.

The *philosophia perennis* can be known by humankind in two ways: by means of revelation and the illumination of the Intellect.

The twin source of this knowledge is revelation and intellection or intellectual intuition which involves the illumination of the heart and the mind of man and the presence in him of knowledge of an immediate and direct nature which is tasted and experienced.

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This is an essentially passive, or receiving, experience.

The truth descends upon the mind like an eagle landing upon a mountain top or it gushes forth and inundates the mind like a deep well which has suddenly burst forth into a spring. In either case, the sapiential nature of what the human being receives through spiritual experience is not the result of man's mental faculty but issues from the nature of that experience itself.

As God transcends humankind, so does intellectual illumination transcend the merely human products of reason. True knowledge of the Divine is issued forth from the Divine Intellect and received by the human mind.

Chapter 9 of Knowledge and the Sacred, "Principle Knowledge and the Multiplicity of Sacred Forms", deals most directly with the issue to be considered in this essay, the relationship between the *philosophia perennis* and the multiple religions of the world. Nasr's thesis, in short, states that the world's religions are many manifestations of a single Truth of Divine Origin, the *philosophia perennis*. Since this is the focal issue for this essay, I quote at length.

"Tradition studies religions from the point of view of *scientia sacra* which distinguishes between the Principle and manifestation, Essence and form. Substance and accident, the inward and the outward. It places absoluteness at the level of the Absolute, asserting categorically that only the Absolute is absolute. ... Hence every determination of the Absolute is already in the realm of relativity. The unity of religions is to be found first and foremost in this Absolute which is at once Truth and Reality and the origin of all revelations and of all truth. ... Only at the level of the Absolute are the teachings of the religions the same. Below that level there are correspondences of the most profound order but not identity. The different religions are like so many languages speaking of the unique Truth as it manifests itself in different worlds according to its inner archetypal possibilities, but the syntax of these languages is not the same. Yet, because each

religion comes from the Truth, everything in the religion in question which is revealed by the Logos is sacred and must be respected and cherished while being elucidated rather than being discarded and reduced to insignificance in the name of some kind of abstract universality.

The traditional method of studying religions, while asserting categorically the "transcendent unity of religion" and the fact that "all paths lead to the same summit", is deeply respectful of every step on each path, of every signpost which makes the journey possible and without which the single summit could never be reached."

In order to know this transcendent unity of religions, one must penetrate beyond the forms to that inner Truth of which all the forms are manifestations. This esoteric and experiential knowledge of the *philosophia perennis* brings us the correct understanding of the relationship among the world's religions.

To go forth, the form to the essence, the exterior to the interior, the symbol to the reality symbolized ... is itself an esoteric activity and is dependent upon esoteric knowledge. To carry out the study of other religions in depth, therefore, requires a penetration into the depth of one's own being and an interiorizing and penetrating intelligence which is already imbued with the sacred.

Man cannot penetrate into the inner meaning of a form except through inner or esoteric knowledge. ... One might say that total religious understanding and the complete harmony and unity of religions can be found, to quote Schuon, only in the Divine Stratosphere and not in the human atmosphere.

The fact that this transcendent unity of religions exists, however, does not eliminate the absoluteness of each particular religion.

If there is one really new and significant dimension to the

religious and spiritual life of man today, it is this presence of other worlds of sacred form and meaning not as archaeological or historical facts and phenomena but as religious reality. It is this necessity of living within one solar system and abiding by its laws yet knowing that there are other solar systems and even, by participation, coming to know something of their rhythms and harmonies, thereby gaining a vision of the haunting beauty of each one as a planetary system which is *the* planetary system for those living within it. It is to be illuminated by the Sun of one's own planetary system and still to come to know ... that each solar system has its own sun, which again is both a sun and *the* Sun, for how can the sun which rises every morning and illuminates our world be other than *the* Sun itself?

Principal knowledge can defend the absolute character which followers of each religion see in their beliefs and tenets, without which human beings would not follow a particular religion. Yet principal knowledge continues to assert the primordial truth that only the Absolute is absolute and hence what appears below the level of the Absolute in a particular tradition as absolute is the 'relatively absolute'.

It seems to me that in Knowledge and the Sacred, Nasr is attempting to do three important things: 1.) to base religious theory upon the assumption of the reality of which religion(s) speak(s); and (2.) to locate and articulate a place of unity among the various world religions, while (3.) preserving the integrity of the particularity of each religion.

I must begin by saying that I respect these objectives. The first objective is particularly crucial and I believe that Dr. Nasr's greatest success in Knowledge and the Sacred is in his articulate representation of this approach. This book invites us to recognize the limitations of methods that are incapable of taking seriously the plausibility of the

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phenomena that they study.

There are times when our disciplines become prisoners of our methodologies. One such instance was during the period in which behaviorism dominated psychology, when the observation that scientific method could only properly study human behavior and not something called "mind", led to a reductionism that concluded, in its popular form, that "mind" and the "inner world" of mental life did not exist.

Another classic instance of this phenomenon is the rendering of the universe soulless in the modern mind by science and reason. Clearly, reason can neither prove nor disprove the existence of an intelligence at the root of all existence. Nevertheless, this inability to demonstrate that such an intelligence *does* exist slid, untidily, into the perception in the modern mind that such an intelligence *does not* exist. The fact that this consequence is logically unjustified [It is both a *non sequitur* and an example of what the Spanish call *positivismo atontado*, i.e., idiotized positivism] has not prevented this conclusion from being firmly grasped by the modern mind as fully rational.

One last example: When we turn to what Nasr calls "esoterism" and I call "mysticism", it should be obvious that it is essential to bear in mind the limitations of all our methods in attempting to understand something that is widely described as "ineffable" by those who claim to have direct experience of it. Nonetheless, this point is often overlooked. If I may be permitted to quote myself on the subject, "It would be better, if necessary, to frankly acknowledge that the phenomena of mystical experience are beyond our reach and live with the consequences of that admission than to reduce mysticism to less than it is for the sake of method."

Nasr, it seems to me, is quite right in pointing to the unjustifiability of the ridding of modern culture by means of reason of all that traditional culture held as sacred. Furthermore, as he rightly points out, Western religious studies itself is replete with methods that reduce the phenomena under study, religious phenomena, to nothing by interpreting them as epiphenomena produced by more fundamental, and in that sense more real, psychological, sociological, historical, political, and the like phenomena. Yet in religious studies we are speaking of matters of which, obviously, the whole of human history displays mountains of claim and counter-claim, belief and disbelief, wonder, awe, talk of unknowable mystery, ineffability, and a radical epistemological gap between the human mind and what we seek to know. One does not

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wonder that Nasr appears thoroughly impatient with the modern, secular world and its apparently casual

dismissal of the religious realm. I myself am often appalled by the arrogance of those scholars of religion who, with nothing more than the same puny human mind with which the rest of us are endowed, feel that they are in a position to write off the profoundest mysteries of life. No one has expressed this sentiment better than the ancient Taoist philosopher Chuand Tzu who wrote, "Calculate what man knows and it cannot compare to what he does not know. Calculate the time he is alive and it cannot compare to the time before he was born. Yet man takes something so small and tries to exhaust the dimensions of something so large!" Reason itself, if used properly, should be able to recognize its own strengths and weaknesses, its own potential and limitations. There is a limit beyond which reason is incapable of going - a limit quite recognizable by reason itself - that ought to be respected by reason. Ironically perhaps, postmodern thought is more aware of this than modern thought and thus has the potential (as yet unrealized!) to ally itself with those who share Nasr's concern to put reason in its rightful place. [I am reminded of Blaise Pascal who noted "There is nothing more reasonable than a certain disdain of reason", and of Martin Heidegger who considered reason to be the most implacable enemy of thought.]

Of course, there is a gap between putting reason in its place and acknowledging a transcendent Reality of the kind of which Nasr speaks and it is an important gap to investigate. But to keep the focus on Nasr's work, let us ask with him: What would happen if we took transcendence seriously? What would religious studies, what would human culture look like if our first assumption was the reality of the Absolute? Nasr endeavors at all times to put God, or the Absolute, first and to base all else on that first premise. Granted that reason can neither prove nor disprove the reality of the Absolute, it must be equally reasonable to assume its existence as to assume its nonexistence. So why not give a respectful hearing to this premise and see where it leads? (Of course, a good deal depends upon the precise nature of what we are assuming, as we shall see.)

Accepting this way of proceeding as reasonable, however, does not mean, in my view, that we can do without the "hermeneutics of suspicion". There are, and presumably always have been, quite sufficient numbers of charlatans and dysfunctional people and societies to make us need the analyses of Freud, Nietzsche, and Marx. Here reason has a critical role to

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play even if one accepts Nasr's premise. However, one can arm oneself against manipulation and distortion - and indeed, I would not want to send either my children

or my students out into the world without providing them with some such defense -and still leave vast space for taking religion seriously. Indeed, for those who take religion seriously, It is a religious duty to distinguish the real from the false in the religious domain.

This leads to my first question for Dr. Nasr. (1.) How does he propose that we defend ourselves, and teach our children and students to defend themselves, from charlatans and manipulators in the religious domain? What are the rules for distinguishing between the genuine and the false in a world in which many, but not all, religions are true? What are the characteristics of the genuine? Since charlatans can mouth any words and there have been many "false prophets", I would assume that not only certain teachings, but also certain behaviors would be necessary.

There is a second question regarding criteria for distinguishing the true from the false. I observe in R. Nasr's works a hostility towards certain religions which he regards as syncretisms.

It need hardly be pointed out that this vision of the transcendent unity of religions stands at the very antipodes of the modern syncretisms and pseudo-spiritualities which have been growing during the past few decades as a result of the weakening of tradition in the West. Not only do they not succeed in transcending forms but they fall beneath them, opening the door to all kinds of evil forces affecting those who are unfortunate enough to be duped by their so-called universalism.

I would like to ask Dr. Nasr whom he has in mind in this description. Does he have in mind what is currently called "new Age" religions, in which case the concern might be the shallowness and frivolity evident in much of their speech and behavior? Or, alternatively, does he have in mind such religions as the Baha'I Faith and Unitarian Universalism that, from my perspective, seem as respectable as any other religion and indeed seem to me to come close to embracing the perspective that he articulates. If this latter group is in the group condemned as "modern syncretisms and pseudo-spiritualities", then I must ask how their perspective differs from that of the sage and

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scriptures quoted at the beginning of Chapter 9 of Knowledge and the Sacred:

Verily, to every people has been sent a

prophet (Qur'an)

I meditated upon religions, making great effort to understand them,
And I came to realize that they are a unique Principle with numerous ramifications (al-Hallaj)

They worship me as One and as many because they see that all is in me. (Bhagavad Gita)

It seems to me that the Baha'I Faith and Unitarian Universalism accept precisely these ideas. Again, Nasr cites with approval Ibn 'Arabi al-Mursi's lines,

My heart has become capable of every form: it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christians.
And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'bah and the tables of the Torah, and the book of the Quran.
I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love's camels take, that is my religion and my faith.

But he disapproves of that approach to the world's religions that,

...sees in all religions the same truth, not of a transcendent order as tradition would assert but of an outward and sentimental kind which cannot but reduce religions to their least common denominator. ... What characterizes this type of approach is a kind of sentimentalism which opposes intellectual discernment and emphasis upon doctrine as being dogmatic and "anti-spiritual", together with a supposed universalism which opposes the particularity of each tradition ... thereby destroying the sacred on the tangible level in the name of a vague and emotional universalism which is in fact a parody of the universalism envisaged by tradition.

I must confess that the distinction Nasr is drawing is rather vague to me. This, then, is the second question.

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(2.) When is universalism good and when is it bad? When is religious unity based on transcendence and when on the least common denominator? Can the criteria be stated with some specificity that place a given religion or religious expression either in the category of "modern syncretisms and pseudo-spiritualities" or in the

category of Tradition or authentic religion? He mentions "modernized Hinduism" as falling into the problematic category. I am quite concerned to know whether the Baha'I Faith falls into that same category since from an Islamic perspective it is often condemned yet, for this reader at least, it is difficult to see how one could avoid accepting it as a religious tradition that embraces the transcendent unity of religions.

[Ms. King seems to be unaware of the roots of the Baha'I Faith in Babism, making the Baha'I Faith: "fruit of a poisonous tree". I would also say that Dr. Nasr demolishes Unitarian Universalism very handily in the paragraph which Ms. King has just cited; how often have I heard Unitarian Universalists condemn doctrine as "dogma", bragging that they have no "dogmas" and even on occasion wearing a button which said "Stamp out Creeds".]

Let us skip Nasr's second objective for the time being and consider next Nasr's third objective, namely, the intention to preserve the integrity of the particularity of each religion despite identifying a realm of transcendent unity above them. Here again I wish to underline the importance of this objective. I have observed in many years of interreligious dialogue that people who otherwise are very open to interreligious discussion often become very angry when faced with a theory coming from outside their religion that interprets their religion in a way that they cannot accept from within that religion. Thus it is crucial that Nasr emphasizes, as we have seen, that

...because each religion comes from the Truth, everything in the religion in question which is revealed by the Logos is sacred and must be respected and cherished while being elucidated rather than being discarded and reduced to insignificance in the name of some kind of abstract universality.

The traditional method of studying religions, while asserting ... the fact that "all paths lead to the same summit", is deeply respectful of every step on each path,
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of every signpost which makes the journey possible and without which the single summit could never be reached.

Without this kind of statement, I am sure that Nasr's ideas would have aroused little interest. Jews want to be Jews. Period. Christians want to be Christians. Period. This is my observation. I agree with Nasr that

this is perfectly legitimate. However, this leads me to my third question. While Nasr acknowledges that his concept of the "relatively absolute" may appear to be "contradictory", I believe he has been successful in demonstrating its good sense. However, I do wonder how successful it is religiously. Nasr writes,

If a Christian sees God as the Trinity or Christ as the Logos and holds on to this belief in an absolute sense, this is perfectly understandable from the religious point of view while, metaphysically speaking, these are seen as the relatively absolute since only the Godhead in its Infinitude and Oneness is above all relativity.

This raises the following question. (3.) While Meister Eckhart said something very much like the above, can the ordinary Christian accept it? Can a Christian who wants to understand herself as a Christian accept that Christianity is good and true, absolute in a sense, and yet finally only one form of Absolute Truth? Does this way of conceiving it - in practice for a religious believer, not for a logician - not force upon her an understanding of her religion that in effect psychologically undermines its validity and practical efficacy for her? Does this view not, then, violate its own objective of guarding the integrity of the particular religion? I can see that it perhaps *should* not have this consequence; but I wonder whether for the unsophisticated believer it does anyway. This question applies to all religions.

People give credence to their own religion. Yet, as Nasr states, in much of the modern world it is quite impossible to remain ignorant of the fact that there are many religions in addition to one's own, each claiming to possess *the* true way. Dr. Nasr has stated that the way to resolve this dilemma is through esoterism. Yet at the same time he acknowledges that the path of esoteric knowledge is in practice only truly open to a few. A fourth question that I would like to address to Dr. Nasr, then, is this. (4.) If esoterism will always remain the path of the few, what

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way does he see to educate the many such that they remain, as he advocates, both faithfully devoted to their own religion and capable of respecting the validity of other religions? Does Dr. Nasr believe that some kind of popularization of such ideas as are found in Frithjof Schuon's Transcendent Unity of Religions and related works is the best way forward? Does he, perhaps, envision the various religions themselves, in their educational programs, emphasizing more their own

sapiential and universalistic elements? Does he envision some other way forward?

Let us now turn to Nasr's second objective, his attempt to locate and articulate a place of unity among the various world religions, and devote the rest of this discussion to it. Before responding to this objective, I must introduce the perspective from which I respond. I am a scholar of Buddhism. The perspective from which I view the world is largely shaped by Buddhism. One of the things that strikes me upon reading Knowledge and the Sacred is the relative infrequency of references to Buddhism in this work, though Buddhism is certainly mentioned a number of times. Buddhism does not seem to loom large in Nasr's intellectual world. It may be that Dr. Nasr is less familiar with Buddhism than other religions. Certainly his greatest familiarity and allegiance is with Islam. Hinduism seems to make the second greatest claim on his intellectual and religious orientation, followed perhaps by the other Abrahamic traditions. Buddhism runs distantly behind all these, apparently in last place among the world's major religions, in the amount of reference he makes to it.

Reading from a Buddhist perspective, I am naturally concerned with whether Buddhism fits the picture that Nasr has articulated in his vision of the place of unity among the various world religions. Reading from this perspective, I have had to conclude that it does not. I will mention two ways in which this seems to me to be the case.

First, in Nasr's thesis, revelation plays a key role. "Tradition ... means truths or principles of a divine origin revealed or unveiled to mankind and, in fact, a whole cosmic sector through various figures envisaged as messengers, prophets, avatars, the Logos, or other transmitting agencies. ..." Revelation is essential to Nasr's thesis, both in order to attain the transcendent unity that Nasr asserts and in order to be true to his first premise, the necessity of putting religion first. Religion only deserves to come first if it comes from a divine source. Religions cannot be unified unless they come from the same, unitive, divine
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source. Again, Nasr writes, "Each tradition is based on a direct message from Heaven. ... A prophet or avatar owes nothing to anyone save what he receives from the Origin."

Buddhism, however, is quite lacking in any concept of revelation in the ordinary sense of the word. Nor is there in Buddhism any divine being whose act could cause a revelation. Buddhists have been quite straightforward on this subject over the millennia. There are Buddhist writings that argue against the existence of God or any

supreme being. Buddhists at the World's Parliament of Religions in 1993 adamantly opposed the use of any God language in statements to be issued by the Parliament (much to the dismay of certain other religious representatives, who felt that any statement lacking in such language was worthless).

Nasr, of course, has a broader concept of revelation in mind, as we saw above, as "truths or principles of a divine origin revealed or unveiled to mankind ... through various figures envisaged as messengers, prophets, avatars, the Logos or other transmitting agencies." Thus, Nasr might want to interpret the Buddha's enlightenment experience, for example, as a revelation in this sense. However, a Theravada Buddhist would never so conceive it. Gautama Buddha himself taught that he was a human being who discovered a path to escape suffering by "waking up" to the nature of reality (a view which may be understood as corresponding to Nasr's other point of access to Truth, illumination of the heart and mind). This knowledge was gained, according to the Theravada tradition, through Buddha's arduous practice over many lifetimes, absolutely not through the revealing of that knowledge to him by a divine being. Of course, it is possible to believe that, whether the Buddha realized it or not, that knowledge was revealed to him from a divine source - and it is possible that that belief is correct. However, this cannot be said to be the Theravada Buddhist understanding of itself. The same holds, in the Theravada view, for the Buddhist scriptures. They also cannot be considered revealed scripture because they are the word of the Buddha, and the Buddha is not a god or a divine messenger, but a man - albeit an exceptional one - speaking of his own experience.

I have spoken of the Theravada view. The same understandings would apply to much of the rest of Buddhism. However, there are exceptions. Certain forms of Indian Mahayana, for example, expressed ideas which might be considered amenable to interpretation as revelation in Nasr's sense, for example, the notions of

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tathagatagarbha (embryo/womb of all Buddhas) and the personified *prajnaparamita* (perfection of wisdom) [I am inclined to give much weight to Indian Mahayana; never forget that Buddha was a high caste Hindu, thoroughly steeped in Vedic teachings]. Also in Tibetan and East Asian Buddhism there are notions that might be so interpreted. Without getting into technicalities inappropriate here, I can only say that I think one would have to stretch even those notions to make them fit the category of revelatory agents.

The important point here, however, is that it is invalid, even if one could make the case that the

prajnaparamita or *tathagatagarbha* was a divine source of revelation, to point to those facts and claim on that basis that Buddhism has a notion of revelation. One form of Buddhism cannot substitute for another. Theravada Buddhism stands on its own. I recognize that Dr. Nasr has claimed that because of the variety of ideas and practices in any world religion, "to have lived any religion fully is to have lived all religions". I can only say that a Theravada Buddhist would not accept this. Theravada Buddhism does not accept Mahayana beliefs and scriptures. To many Theravadins, Mahayana is invalid. Thus one cannot in effect impose Mahayana beliefs on Theravadins, saying that it is "all Buddhism". To Theravadins, it is not. Nor will Nasr's way of address this in Knowledge and the Sacred work for Buddhists. To quote him, "The Theravada and Mahayana schools of Buddhism ...

correspond in their own context to the exoteric-esoteric dimensions of tradition." This is simply not true. Theravada scripture, preserving the teaching of Gautama Buddha, and its monastic tradition could be paradigm examples of esotericism in Nasr's sense of the word, that is, the sapiential dimension of religion (the dimension that addresses "the spiritual and intellectual needs of those who seek God or the Ultimate Reality here and now"), though Theravada Buddhists would describe their concern not as God or Ultimate Reality but as experiential realization of knowledge which puts an end to suffering and yields liberation. Indeed, Nasr is correct when he says, in a different publication, that "the major and dominating intellectual traditions of the Orient always have been wedded to a direct experience of the spiritual world and intellectual intuition in the strictest sense." This is correct and fully applies to Theravada Buddhism. The problem lies elsewhere, to which we now turn.

The second problem that a Buddhist will have with Nasr's point of unity among the world religions is the
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particular cosmology that seems to be required by that view. Buddhism's cosmological perspective is fundamentally unlike the cosmological perspective identified by Nasr as universal, and as an essential element in the perennial philosophy.

That Nasr's theory specifies that the perennial philosophy includes a particular cosmology is demonstrated by the following quotation.

Perhaps the most direct way of approaching the meaning of the sacred is to relate it to the immutable, to that Reality which is both the Unmoved Mover and the Eternal. That Reality which is immutable and eternal is the

Sacred as such. ... Man's sense of the sacred is none other than his sense for the Immutable and the Eternal. ...

And again,

The knowledge of the Principle which is at once the absolute and infinite Reality is the heart of metaphysics while the distinction between levels of universal and cosmic existence, including both the macrocosm and the microcosm, are like its limbs.

The Principle is Reality in contrast to all that appears as real but which is not reality in the ultimate sense. The Principle is the Absolute compared to which all is relative. It is Infinite while all else is finite. The Principle is One and Unique while manifestation is multiplicity. It is the Supreme Substance compared to which all else is accident. It is the Essence to which all things are juxtaposed as form. It is at once Beyond Being and Being while the order of multiplicity is comprised of existents. It alone *is* while all else becomes, for it alone is eternal in the ultimate sense while all that is externalized partakes of change. It is the Origin but also the End, the alpha and the omega.

Buddhism reacted not only against Brahmanic ritualism, as Nasr notes, but also against Brahmanic cosmology. Indeed, the above nicely summarizes the very Brahmanic cosmology against which Buddhism rebelled. Where the Upanishads declared the existence of the *Atman* (the Absolute, Infinite, monistic Supreme Substance), the Buddha declared *Anatman*, *not-Atman*, a direct rejection
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of the notion that such a thing as *Atman* exists. What did he declare in its place? Change, becoming, flux, transience, summed up in the doctrine of *pratiya-samutpada*, or dependent origination, without anything in any sense understood as the ground or root of this universal flux. While this doctrine describes the world of *samsara* in which we live, the negation of *samsara*, *nirvana*, is not, in Theravada Buddhism, in any way understandable as the immutable Reality upon which the world of transience is based. Such a thing is expressly negated. Buddhism, named the Middle Way by the Buddha, is presented as the Middle between two extreme views: eternalism, which it identifies with the view that Nasr articulates, and nihilism, which it identifies with simple materialism. Buddhism is said by the Buddha to be

neither of these, but an ineffable Middle between these two "extreme views". Whatever that Middle may be, it is clearly not understood to be the view advocated by Nasr.

Nasr does not directly discuss the cosmology of Theravada Buddhism, nor its forms of expression. However, he does consider the Mahayana concept of emptiness, or *sunyata*, as a potential challenge to his view. Continuing the quotation we saw above, he writes, "It ("the Principle which is at once the absolute and infinite Reality") is Emptiness if the world is envisaged as fullness and Fullness if the relative is perceived in the light of its ontological poverty and essential nothingness".

Let us examine the Buddhist concept of "emptiness". When we consider "emptiness" in its classic formulation by the great Buddhist sage, Nagarjuna, regarded by most Mahayana Buddhists as second only to the Buddha, it is clear that "emptiness" cannot in any way be understood as an alternate term for Nasr's "Principle which is at once the absolute and infinite Reality", expressed as "emptiness" in *contradistinction* to a "world ... envisaged as fullness". For Nagarjuna, the world itself is "empty", since "emptiness" is another term for the dependent origination, or *pratitya-samutpada* that characterizes the world. Nagarjuna writes, "The 'originating dependently' (*pratitya-samutpada*) we call 'emptiness'. This apprehension ... is the understanding of the middle way." In other words, "emptiness" refers to the principle of causal flux, found in this realm - the only realm there is for Nagarjuna - certainly not to a supreme Reality outside of space and time. For Nagarjuna, since all is radical, interdependent flux, we must turn away from all forms of thinking in terms of both being and non-being,

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fullness and nothingness, in favor of the Middle Way. To quote Nagarjuna, "It is' is a notion of eternity. 'It is not' is a nihilistic view. Therefore, one who is wise does not have recourse to 'being' or 'non-being'. Indeed, the central thrust of Nagarjuna's *magnum opus* is a devastating *reduction ad absurdum* argument against the very idea of any 'self-existent thing' or *svabhava*, conceived in any way, including and Absolute or Supreme Substance that could be the root of all things.

What, then, of *nirvana*? Nagarjuna writes, "There is nothing whatever which differentiates the existence-in-flux (*samsara*) from *nirvana* ... There is not the slightest bit of difference between these two." The translator adds,

Nirvana, for Nagarjuna, is not a term which darkly reflects an absolute Ultimate Reality; it, too, is simply a fabrication of the mind

which, if misunderstood as referring to a self-sufficient and independent Ultimate Reality, will misguide the one who seeks release. Only as a conventional, that is, relative, term can it be profitably used to direct the mind from ignorance and greed. The Ultimate Truth to which the term *nirvana* points is that it is without any designation; in actuality there is no "it" and no designation. ...

The observation that there is no "it" is the key point. This is what makes Buddhist thought unique. It also makes it not fit Nasr's paradigm. How does Nasr handle the subject of *nirvana*?

On the one hand, Nasr writes,

The Ultimate Reality which is both Supra-Being and Being is at once transcendent [Sanskrit: *Brahman*] and immanent [Sanskrit: *Atman*]. ... *Scientia Sacra* can be expounded in the language of one as well as the other perspective. It can speak of God or the Godhead, Allah, the Tao, or even *nirvana* as being beyond the world, or forms or *samsara*, while asserting ultimately that *nirvana is samsara*, and *samsara, nirvana*.

And then, on the next page, he writes, "Metaphysics (perennial philosophy) does ... distinguish between the Real and the apparent and Being and becoming. ..." The latter passage shows the error in the former. There is no issue in Nagarjuna's thought of ontological
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transcendence and immanence; these categories do not exist. There is no distinction in his thought between the Real and the apparent or between Being and becoming (though there is in Vedantic Hinduism, whose metaphysics Nagarjuna expressly refutes). Consequently, what Nasr seems to see as only an apparent problem in Buddhist language is a real problem not resolvable by means of the observation that Ultimate Reality (which category Nagarjuna negates) can be expressed either in the language of transcendence or immanence, or both.

Nasr addresses the matter of emptiness further in a footnote where he states,

Some contemporary scholars such as R. Panikkar ... have contrasted the Buddhist (*Shunyata*) and the Christian Pleroma but, metaphysically speaking, the concept of Ultimate Reality as emptiness and as fullness complement each other like the *yin-yang*

symbol and both manifest themselves in every integral tradition. Even in Christianity where the symbolism of Divine Fullness is emphasized and developed with remarkable elaboration in Franciscan theology ... the complementary vision of emptiness appears in the teachings of the Dominican Meister Eckhart who speaks of the 'desert of the Godhead'.

The problem here again is that, for Nagarjuna, the category of "Ultimate Reality", is *emptied* by emptiness such that there is no category "Ultimate Reality" which remains to be empty. That does not make "emptiness" itself an Ultimate Reality. Emptiness is only a tool for eliminating error.

Emptiness is proclaimed by the victorious one as the refutation of all viewpoints;

But those who hold "emptiness" as a viewpoint - (the true perceivers) have called those "incurable".

I hasten to add that Nagarjuna is not teaching nihilism. He hopes to be wielding a tool that aids the disciple to find the Middle Way between eternalism (which is how he would see Nasr's theory) and nihilism. Where, then, does Nagarjuna leave us?

Since all *dharmas* are empty, what is finite?
What is infinite?

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What is both finite and infinite? What is neither finite nor infinite?

Is there anything which is this or something else, which is permanent or impermanent,

Which is both permanent or impermanent, or which is neither?

The cessation of accepting everything (as real) is a salutary ... cessation of phenomenal development...;

No *dharma* anywhere has been taught by the Buddha of anything.

We are left in uncompromising *via negative*: the Buddha taught us not a single thing. Emptiness, as used in the Buddhist tradition, is a tool intended to eliminate the possibility of all conceptualization whatsoever. This is not to say that the religious life bears no fruit. To the contrary, for Nagarjuna and those who follow him, this relentless *via negative* is the necessary condition

for fruition in the religious life. This is not nihilism. Nonetheless, it is strictly opposed to any idea of any kind of Ultimate Reality whatsoever. Incidentally, it is also strictly opposed to any idea of revelation insofar as any kind of revelation has to manifest in some kind of (verbal or other) form.

In short, this is not to say that there is no meeting ground for Buddhist sapiential knowledge and that discovered by the mystics of other world religions. However, it is to deny that that meeting ground can be expressed in the terms used by Nasr, terms of Ultimate Reality, whether Full or Empty, no matter how expressed. Such language is quite outside the pale for arguably the two most important moments in the establishment of Buddhism: the teachings of Gautama Buddha and the thought of the great sage Nagarjuna.

My fifth question for Dr. Nasr is this (5.) Does he see any way to reconcile the languages of Gautama Buddha and Nagarjuna, on the one hand, with the language he has been using for the meeting ground of the religions of the world, on the other? Or does he prefer to articulate this meeting ground in some other way, not dependent upon cosmology? In The *Philosophia Perennis* and the Study of Religion, Nasr writes:

For the traditional school the Buddhist or Taoist vision of the Void does not at all negate the universality of the metaphysics enshrined in the *philosophia perennis* and in fact provides a most powerful expression of this metaphysics in a language which is
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complementary but not contradictory to that of, let us say, Hinduism and Islam.

This statement does not encourage me since Taoist metaphysics is quite different from the Buddhist metaphysics described above insofar as in Taoism there is an "it", the Tao - the fact that it is spoken of in language of the Void does not change the fact that it remains an "it", however "dimly visible", in the language of the Tao Te Ching:

There is a thing confusedly formed,
Born before heaven and earth.
Silent and void
It stands alone and does not change,
Goes round and does not weary.
It is capable of being the mother of the world.
I know not its name
So I style it 'the Way' (Tao).

This is an empty Something that does indeed fit Nasr's

paradigm, not at all like what Nagarjuna was talking about. Could Dr. Nasr spell out with some specificity the way in which Nagarjuna's language "provides a most powerful expression" of the metaphysics of the *philosophia perennis*?

This is a critical question due to the nature of the authority from which Nasr argues in Knowledge and the Sacred, as well as many other works. The authority for his argument cannot, as we have seen, be reason, as reason runs a distant third in usefulness for religious knowledge, after revelation and intellectual illumination. The authority for his argument rests upon revelation and illumination which must, to secure his case, speak with a united voice. If there is any break in the unity of Tradition, Dr. Nasr's case is severely damaged. Yet defining moments in the Buddhist tradition in its sapiential dimension seem to speak a very different language. Can this be demonstrated to be an onluy apparent contradiction?

Conclusion: I agree with Dr. Nasr that, "every determination of the Absolute is already in the realm of relativity"; this must include Nasr's determination as well. It seems to me that Nasr's work is an articulation of what the "transcendent unity of religions" looks like from an Islamic point of view. Beginning, that is, with two primary assumptions, monotheism and universal revelation ("Verily to every people there has been sent a prophet", states the Quran), a person with Dr. Nasr's intelligence and familiarity with the world's religions might well draw

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the conclusions he advocates in Knowledge and the Sacred. Beginning, as a Buddhist would, from different starting assumptions, even if he felt on the basis of what Dr. Nasr calls esoteric experience that there is a common ground among religions, a Buddhist would not articulate that common ground in language of revelation or an essentialist cosmology with God or Being at the core. This reader concludes that what Nasr has given us is a fine Islamic reconciliation of the world's religions, but it is not a truly universalistic reconciliation since it does not include Buddhism. This does not, to this reader's mind, negate the value of what Dr. Nasr has achieved in Knowledge and the Sacred. To have so well articulated an Islamic understanding of the reconciliation of religion is no small accomplishment." (354)

REPLY TO SALLIE B. KING

by

Seyyed Hossein Nasr

"The essay of Professor King is a challenging one in that it negates the universality of the perspective of the perennial philosophy by pointing out the cases of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism which she interprets in such a way that they do not fit into the universal metaphysical doctrines which lie at the heart of that philosophy. But before turning to a discussion of Buddhism she poses certain other questions and elaborates a number of salient points pertaining to religion and the perennial philosophy in general. In answering her, therefore, I shall also divide my reply into two parts: the first dealing with the various questions and assumptions in the first section of her paper and the second with the whole question of Buddhism.

After summarizing my views about tradition and the perennial philosophy, which she interprets correctly, the author alludes to three important goals which she believes my Knowledge and the Sacred attempts to achieve. While I agree with what she mentions, I want to add that in addition to these goals and in fact the main goal of the book was to relate once again knowledge to the reality of the sacred and to overcome the chasm created between them in the West since the fifteenth century. The three goals mentioned by King in fact follow from this primary aim of the book.

I also agree fully with the author in her discussions of the imprisoning effect of the
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methodologies of modern academic disciplines and rationalism which have led to the general denial by the modern mind of "an intelligence at the root of all existence", to quote her directly. I would only add that what she describes is precisely the result of the separation of knowledge and the sacred through the separation within the knowing agent of reason from both the intellect and revelation which belong to the realm of the sacred and which bestow upon reason a sacred dimension as long as it retains its nexus relative to them.

Professor King equates my usage of esoterism with mysticism about whose ineffable goal she speaks. First of all, in my usage of these terms, I do not equate the two. There are domains where they overlap but there are also aspects of esoterism that are not mystical, as this term is ordinarily understood and vice versa. Secondly, sapiental esoterism asserts that while we cannot know that ineffable Reality discursively nor discuss or describe it in discursive terms, there is within us a divine spark associated with the Immanent intellect [Sanskrit: *Atman*] which can "know" that ineffable Reality directly through the transcendence of the

duality of subject and object, although not all this that is thus known can be expressed in human language. Its most perfect expression is through that silence which many works of sacred art such as the traditional Buddha images convey so powerfully and mysteriously.

I also wish to confirm strongly the criticism of the author concerning religious studies in Western academic circles. She points to reducing religion to "epiphenomena produced by more fundamental, and in that sense more real, psychological, sociological, historical, political and the like phenomena." Needless to say, I have always stood for the primacy of the Sacred, present more than anywhere else in religion, over the other categories mentioned by her. The perennial philosophy as understood traditionally is the strongest safeguard against this type of reductionism which has turned religious studies in many places into a tool against religion. Let us hope that with greater interest in the perennial philosophy in religious studies the pitiful state of affairs mentioned by Professor King can be transformed so that the central role of religion in human life becomes clear once again as it has always been in traditional societies.

Having confirmed the necessity "to give a respectful hearing" to those who believe in the primacy of the Transcendent, the author turns, as has Professor Robert Neville in his essay, to the importance of not
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dispensing with "the hermeneutics of suspicion" in order to be able to deal successfully with those whom she describes as "charlatans and dysfunctional people". She furthermore enlists the help of Freud, Nietzsche, and Marx to identify these charlatans. In reality, such figures are the very last to be able to distinguish fake from authentic manifestations of the Spirit and false from true religions because such figures, especially Marx and Freud, deny the reality of the Spirit and religion as traditionally understood altogether.

Long before such men were born, traditional societies had clear criteria for distinguishing the true from false religion. Today all kinds of groups claim for themselves the status of a religious body and expect to be treated by society as such, and modern society is totally helpless in seeking to separate the wheat from the chaff in a world in which orthodoxy as well as heterorthodoxy, truth as well as heresy are no longer fashionable categories. My claim is that in fact only the perennial philosophy as traditionally understood can distinguish for modern man, in the chaotic world in which he lives, truth from falsehood and the authentic practices of religion from the charlatan as well as authentic religion itself from all that passes for religion today. Christ spoke of "false prophets" coming

at the end of time. One can only distinguish a false prophet when one knows an authentic one. In a world in which prophecy is reduced to a psychological complex and religion to a social epiphenomenon, or worse, to the Marxist opium of the people, one no longer speaks of truth and therefore no error in religious thought and in fact in any other domain outside of the sciences. One is left with alternative lifestyles but no sense of the truthful and the authentic which alone determine the false and unveil the charlatan's claims for what they are.

The traditional understanding of the perennial philosophy also stands opposed to all religious syncretism whether current or belonging to an earlier age. When I speak of traditions, I mean the millennial religions of humanity along with their historical confolding which have led to the founding of civilizations, schools of sacred art, traditional social structures, and the like. According to traditional doctrines, the manifestations of the Logos or the appearance of plenary revelations such as Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam or in another context Hinduism, Taoism, and Confucianism came to an end a long time ago in fact with Islam whose prophet is described by revelation itself as the Last

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Prophet. Moreover, history has been witness to the fact that nothing comparable to these major revelations has occurred since the advent of Islam. Now, it is possible to have religious movements which have often grown from the esoteric dimension of the orthodox and traditional religions and which have later made themselves independent. Such movements took place in the nineteenth century in several parts of the globe and the religions the author mentions all belong to this category. Their basic differences with the traditional and orthodox religions are quite clear and here the perennial philosophy in its traditional sense is once again the best guide for distinguishing one category from another as well as distinguishing the orthodox and the traditional expressions of a religion from their modernized versions which must not, however, be confused with religious movements that have broken away completely from existing traditional religions.

The author considers my distinctions between the inner unity of religion and the sentimental universalism so prevalent today to be vague and asks "when is universalism good and when is it bad?" In the domain of the study of religion and religious diversity universalism is good if it concerns the inner, esoteric, supraformal reality of religious forms and doctrines which belong to the universal order, metaphysically understood. It is bad when it identifies universalism

with finding common elements on the formal plane of religious doctrine and practice, emphasizing them and rejecting what is not common on the formal plane. The first type of universalism holds the utmost respect for all traditional religious doctrines, practices, and forms in general on the level of forms and considers them to be sacred and essential as vehicles for reaching the universal and transcendent dimension beyond forms, and not in the formal order itself. The type of universalism that I oppose is willing to sacrifice sacred forms, doctrines, and practices in order to achieve a common set of beliefs and views which is then identified as being universal. It seeks the unity of religions in what is common among them on the formal plane. I hope this makes clear what kind of universalism I espouse and what kind I oppose. In fact, the very meaning of the term "universalism" is different in the two cases.

Dr. King asks a cogent question about ordinary Christians, or for that matter followers of other religions, accepting the idea of the "relative absoluteness" of their own religion without losing sight of the "sense of the absolute" which is necessary for the understanding and practice of religion.

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Ecumenism in depth is essentially an esoteric undertaking and should in principle be undertaken only by those who have been able to live fully through the forms of their own religion and have reached the Formless. For the ordinary believer, the model of such sages should suffice to accept what the Quran says about this matter, namely, that God created different peoples with different religions so that they would vie with each other in good works and that they should leave their differences in God's Hands. One could observe such a situation to a large extent among Muslims, Christians, and Jews in many parts of the world of Islam and during most of the periods of Islamic history as seen in example in Islamic Spain. In Anatolia, Jalal al-Din Rumi, the celebrated Sufi poet who wrote much on the inner unity of religions, even had Christian as well as Jewish disciples in addition to Muslim ones. Now, even among his Muslim disciples not all understood fully or were able to follow his advice to journey from the world of forms to the Formless in order to see the inner reality of religions. But they trusted the great master and held respect not only for Jesus as a Muslim prophet but also for Christians while living as very devout Muslims for whom their religion was religion as such. This example can be multiplied both within the Islamic world and in other religious climates.

This response already covers some of the queries the author has assembled under her fourth question but a

few further clarifications are needed. The many cannot become esoterists but the universal perspective of esoterism can "trickle down" to the level of the many in the form of myths, poetry, popularizations, etc. A prime example of this phenomenon can be found in Islam where many literary and especially poetic works known to the many reflect the esoteric doctrine of the "transcendent unity of religions" in such a way that its general implications can be grasped even for those who cannot understand the metaphysical intricacies involved. Even among those who know Arabic well, very few can understand Ibn 'Arabi al-Mursi's Fusus al-hikam ("Bezels of Wisdom") dealing with the multiple manifestations of the Logos. But many know his poems about his heart having become a temple where forms of various religions are present. Likewise, nearly every Persian speaker knows some poems of Rumi and hafiz alluding to the universality of revelation and the fact that the great religions of the world have all come from God. Such people have not become any less devout by reading, chanting, and memorizing such poems.

In the West I believe that in the academic
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teaching of religion "popularization of ideas are formed in Frithjof Schuon's Transcendent Unity of Religions and related works", to quote the author, should certainly take place provided the principles are not sacrificed. In twenty years of teaching religion in America, I have in fact found such an undertaking to be most fruitful. I also believe that the various religions themselves should emphasize their sapiental and universalist elements as much as possible. This latter task is, however, somewhat different in the West and the East. In the West, opposition to religion arose from within Western society itself. In the non-Western world, religions (other than Christianity and Judaism) are faced not only with the onslaught of modernism which issues from another civilization, but also with the constant pressure of Christian missionary activity drawing from superior financial sources and strong political backing of forces outside of the religious world in question. Therefore, the question of preservation of the identity of religions and their practices looms large on the horizon for them. That is why in non-Western lands modernism and missionary activity usually lead to reactions which emphasize more exclusivism and exoterism than inclusivism and universalism, as one can see in both India and the Islamic world today. But even in these cases I believe that it is of the utmost importance to emphasize the sapiental elements and universal teachings within each religion. This holds true in fact whether the religion in question be of East or West.

Turning now in the second part of this response to the specific field of Buddhism and the questions King poses regarding this tradition, let it be said that the challenge she poses is a serious one. She claims that the teachings of Buddhism, at least of the Theravada School, do not fit into the universal metaphysical perspective of the perennial philosophy. If this claim were to be accepted as true, then one would have to accept one of two consequences: either the vision of religious reality according to the perennial philosophy is not universal, a view chosen by the author, or that the vision in question is true but Theravada Buddhism is not actually a religion, but a kind of philosophy as claimed by many modern secularists who are drawn to Buddhism precisely because they think that it is not a religion, being without the notion of God, revelation, etc., a view which I oppose. I reject also King's claim and therefore both conclusions and will try to respond to all her objections one by one.

Before doing so, however, I must admit that, as she claims, I have not paid as much attention in my
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writings to Buddhism as I have to Hinduism and the Abrahamic religions. But if she had consulted my Religion and the Order of Nature and my review essay on Marco Pallis' A Buddhist Spectrum, she would have realized that there are more references to Buddhism in my writings than those she has found in Knowledge and the Sacred. Despite having known D.T. Suzuki during my student days, having read nearly all his and Coomaraswamy's works on Buddhism followed by many later writings on the subject and especially Zen, having known His Holiness the Dalai Lama for several decades first through Marco Pallis who introduced me to Tibetan Buddhism, and having traveled in Japan and known several Buddhist masters from that land, I consider myself only a humble student of Buddhism, and do not claim expertise on the subject. My responses are, however, based on authorities who have known much more about the subject than I.

The author objects first of all that there is no revelation in Buddhism as one finds in other religions. Surely this cannot be anything more than semantics. The illumination of the Buddha under the Bodhi Tree is surely revelation even if not called by that name by some authors. What is it that brought about the difference between Siddhartha Gautama and the Buddha? Is *Bodhi* anything other than revelation in its deepest sense? What made possible the discovery by the Buddha of the eternal law (*akalika dharma*)? Whatever that something is, that is revelation in the Buddhist context. From the point of view of the perennial philosophy the definition of revelation is vast enough

to include both descent from "above" and the illumination of the Buddha from "within". Buddhism is based on revelation, irrespective of whether this revelation/illumination is seen in Buddhist texts as coming from above or within. It was by virtue of this revelation/illumination that the man Siddhartha became the man the Buddha, a solar being able to guide others. The Buddhist text *Saddhama Pundarika* XV.I states "The Buddha is a solar deity descended from heaven to save both men and gods from all the ill that is denoted by the word, 'mortality', the view that his birth and awakening are coeval time". Even if many Theravada texts do not use such a language, the reality is the same. Siddhartha became the Buddha and discovered the eternal *dharma* and what made this transformation possible, from which flowed the *sangha*, the treasures, the sacred art of Buddhism and a whole civilization is none other than what the perennial philosophy considers a form of revelation in the most universal sense of that term.

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It is interesting in this context to go even a step further and to compare the Buddha with Christ and the Prophet of Islam with whom Christianity and Islam identify the revelations which are the foundations of their religions. It is true that the Buddha does not speak of God as do Christ and the Prophet, a point to which we shall turn shortly, but he does state [speaking in Pali, the *prakrit* or vernacular language derived from Sanskrit which was the Buddha's everyday spoken language], "he who sees the *Dhamma* [Buddhist Sanskrit: *Dharma*] sees me, and he who sees me sees the *Dhamma* [Buddhist Sanskrit: *Dharma*]" (*Samyutta-Nikaya*, III. 120). How similar is this utterance to the saying of Christ, "No man cometh to the Father but by me" and the *hadith* of the Prophet of Islam, "He who has seen me (that is, the Prophet) has seen the Truth (that is God)." This saying also reveals the function of the Buddha as the "Logos" or "Messenger" in the Buddhist universe, fulfilling a role very similar to those of Christ and the Prophet in Christianity and Islam respectively. So not only is there revelation in Buddhism, but there is also a function for the Buddha vis-à-vis the Eternal Law [Buddhist Sanskrit: *Dharma*; Pali: *Dhamma*] within the Buddhist Universe which is similar to what one finds for the founder of Christianity and Islam vis-à-vis God in the Christian and Islamic universes.

King then criticizes my identification of the Mahayana School with esoterism and the Theravada with exoterism. To some extent her criticism is justified in that in this case I have been a bit too schematic. I admit that there are in fact esoteric elements in Theravada and of course exoteric elements in Mahayana.

But this having been said, there is no doubt that many major esoteric perspectives which flowered later in Mahayana and vajrayana Buddhism were, one might say, in a latent state in the early centuries and did not manifest themselves in the Theravada world. That is why a number of authors besides myself have tended to identify the Mahayana with the esoteric and the Theravada with the exoteric dimensions of Buddhism, whereas in reality this is at best an approximation which nevertheless points to an important truth.

The author's reference to Buddhism's opposition of Brahmanic cosmology is certainly correct. In fact, Buddhism sees the world as the abode of suffering (*dukkha*) and not as symbol and theophany. Early Buddhism was singularly acosmic although later on many schools of Buddhism developed elaborate cosmologies. But I agree that the usual cosmological hierarchy associated with the "great chain of being" and so

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central to the perennial philosophy cannot be applied to Theravada Buddhism which emphasizes practice to become free of the bondage of the world rather than the science which would allow us to know the nature of the world. But this lack of possibility of the application of the idea of cosmic hierarchy does not at all prevent the perennial philosophy from being able to understand the perspective of Buddhism and embrace that perspective within the universal metaphysics which lies at its heart. This task has in fact been already achieved as far as essentials are concerned by Coomaraswamy, Pallis, and Schuon. It is enough to understand that Buddhism emphasizes the pole of the subject and the state of consciousness rather than the pole of the object and the state of being to realize that a non-cosmological language is needed to do justice to the Buddhist perspective and also to realize that because of the nature of things the cosmological dimension was bound to manifest itself even within the Buddhist perspective as we see in so many of the later schools.

Another major criticism made by King concerns the doctrine of *anatman* [Buddhist Sanskrit] or *anatta* in its Pali form which she takes to mean opposition to *atman* or the self, and which emphasizes that there is no self but only the change and flux. Now, if there were to be no identity at all of the "self", how could there be the law of *karma* and a particular being be responsible for the fruits of his or her actions? What the doctrine means most of all is that ordinary creatures subject to the "three poisons" of illusion, lust, and pride are devoid of *atman*. Otherwise the Buddha refers often to *Atman* as the immanent *nirvanic* Reality which in the language of theism would be called the Immanent God. For example, he says "Make the Self

your refuge" (*Digha Nikaya*, II, 120).

The Buddhist thinkers did not want to give an objective definition to the soul and emphasized that deliverance is precisely freedom from all that is transient and changing including what is usually called the "self". But the famous and central Buddhist saying:

Of all things that spring from a cause,
The cause has been told by him "Thus-come";
And their suppression, too,
The Great Pilgrim has declared

Would make no sense if it meant the denial of the Self as well as the self. In that case "Thus-come" would mean nothing and the Great Pilgrim being himself but a

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moment or episode in the sea of change could not declare the suppression of the cause which is also the cause of suffering. The *anatta* (Pali form: Buddhist Sanskrit form; *anatman*) doctrine points more than anything else to the apophatic method favored by Buddhism (though derived from Vedanta) and the emphasis of this religion upon practice rather than on any mental conceptualization. For the true devotees of Buddhism throughout history the point was not whether *atta* (Pali form: Buddhist Sanskrit form; *atman*) or *anatta* (Pali form: Buddhist Sanskrit form; *anatman*) is correct, but to remember the Bodhi tree which can be and is in reality everywhere and under whose shade one can attain the state of Buddhahood. The great dialectical efforts of such Buddhist philosophers as Nagarjuna were to prevent any form of objectivization or fixation upon the "self" or any other fixed concept in the mind, to prevent man from using all his effort to seek anything other than release from the suffering of *samsara* leading to attainment of the *nirvanic* state. Needless to say, all of this is perfectly understandable and can be easily interpreted within the perspective of perennial philosophy as understood traditionally.

The heart of King's queries is the metaphysical one dealing with the nature of *nirvana* (Buddhist Sanskrit form: Pali form; *nibbana*) and Sunyata. She insists that Nirvana is not an immutable reality and therefore other than what I call Ultimate Reality. If by reality she means objective reality, then I agree because Buddhism is based on the pole of the subject and not the object. Otherwise *nirvana* (Buddhist Sanskrit form: Pali form; *nibbana*) cannot but be "immutable reality" if its attainment means cessation of suffering which is the result of vonatsnt change and flux of *samsaric* existence. *Nirvana* is actually the cessation of all that is negative and is itself therefore absolute, infinite, and perfect even if not defined objectively as

is *Brahman* in Hinduism or Allah in Islam. That is why Buddhism is non-theistic and not atheistic. If *nirvana* had no reality whatsoever, why then follow the path and why would the Buddha, who had attained it, be called *Tathagata*, that is, "Thus-gone" or "Fully-arrived"? If a Nagarjuna refuses to define *nirvana*, it is for reasons already mentioned. Otherwise all the qualities that "flow from it" including Buddhahood are in perfect accord with descriptions of the Divine Reality in other religions and as understood in the universal perspective of the perennial philosophy.

As for *sunyata* or "the Void", it is none other
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than *nirvana* which is, to paraphrase Schuon, "God" subjectivized and seen as a state of realization. In the Abrahamic traditions, God is the Principle seen objectively while in Buddhism the Void is the same Principle envisaged subjectively. That is what Buddhist philosophers mean when they insist that the "Void" or *nirvana* is not an "it". I agree with this assertion of King but do not believe that the "Void" or *nirvana* is anything other than the Supreme reality even if envisaged only in a subjectivized manner. That is why I mentioned Taoism and Buddhism together wanting to emphasize the non-theistic character of each without being unaware of the fact that Taoism envisages the "Void" objectively and as "it" while Buddhism refuses to do so.

From the point of view of the integral metaphysics at the heart of the perennial philosophy, the Divine Reality possesses an Impersonal Essence as well as the Personal Aspect we ordinarily identify with God. Now most religions emphasize this theistic Principle. Yet, within these religions the manifestation of the Impersonal Essence occurs in their esoteric dimension as we see in Kabbala, Sufism, and many Christian mystics such as Meister Eckhart and Angelus Silesius. The universal law of the manifestation and revelation of religions required that a religion be also revealed on the basis of the impersonal aspect of the Divine Reality. Such was to be Buddhism. But while within religions in which the personal aspect of the Divinity is a central concern the Impersonal Essence appears in various esoteric schools, in Buddhism the reverse takes place. In its later history Buddhism was witness to the appearance of theistic modes as one sees for example in Amida Buddhism and in fact theistic elements are even present in Theravada. But such manifestations remained within the matrix of the Buddhist tradition whose spiritual originality is to consider the Divine Reality in an acosmic and non-anthropomorphic manner as a supra-existential state rather than being, a state which is the Void before the false fullness and plenitude of this

lower world of corruption and suffering. If the Void were not "real", albeit not objectively, how could the Buddha, that central reality of Buddhism, be called *shunyamurti*, that is, the Manifestation of the Void? It is enough to look at a well-executed Buddha image, such as those remarkable masterpieces of the Nara period in Japan, to realize that the Void of which the Buddha is the manifestation could not but be the Divine Reality envisaged as a state rather than as an objective reality.

King also objects to my usage of the term
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"Ultimate Reality? As being able to provide a common ground with Theravada Buddhism. After all I have said I think that the answer to this objection is now clear. If we do not forget such terms as *Dharma*, *Atman* and *Bodhi* even in early Buddhism, not to speak of *Dharmakaya-Buddha*, *Vairochana-Dharmakaya-Buddha* and *Amitabha Buddha*. Even if one says that Mahayana terms denoting Ultimate Reality belong to later manifestations of Buddhism, one has to claim either that this was a later accretion unrelated to the message of the Buddha, a thesis which can hardly be taken seriously, or that the early message also contained seeds of the teachings which flowered in such a way later. In that case later concepts pertaining to the Ultimate Reality are certainly Buddhist and can be easily correlated with concepts of the Ultimate Reality in other religions, while concepts particularly identified with Theravada, such as those mentioned above, can also be correlated with the notion of Ultimate Reality if, as already mentioned, reality is not confined to its objective mode.

Professor King asks if I "see any way to reconcile the languages of Gautama Buddha and Nagarjuna, on the one hand, with the language (I have) been using for the meeting ground of the religions, on the other?" I think that from what I have said, it is clear that I believe such a reconciliation exists if one does not limit the language of the perennial philosophy only to the pole of the object and allows it to be interpreted in a subjectivized manner. Moreover, the aim of the Buddha and Nagarjuna was to lead to spiritual practice and away from theoretical conceptualizations. What I have said about the common ground for the meeting of the religions of the world can certainly accommodate an apophatic perspective and the *via negativa* combined with emphasis upon self purification. This meeting ground would not have to be based upon cosmology as I have made clear above. But then there is also no need for "some other way", to quote King. The full doctrine of the perennial philosophy embraces all traditional and orthodox religions including Buddhism in both its

Theravada and Mahayana forms. And although each religion possesses its own spiritual genius, there are always correspondences and resemblances across religious frontiers. Therefore, various elements of Buddhist teachings have their correspondences in other traditions including *madhyama-pritipad* or the Middle way between conceptual fixation and nihilism on the one hand, asceticism and self-indulgence on the other; although, of course, the accent given to this and other doctrines in Buddhism is unique to that religion as are
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various elements of other religions within the structure of the religions to which the elements in question belong.

My conclusion is that the metaphysical view that I have expressed embraces all the traditional religions including Buddhism if the interpretations I have made above are taken into consideration. I am indeed indebted to Professor King for having raised the questions which I have sought to answer above and for therefore giving me the opportunity to make the necessary clarifications. She concludes that my presentation of the perennial philosophy provides only an "Islamic understanding of the reconciliation of religions." Although being a Muslim, I naturally have my roots in the Islamic tradition which I know better than others, my exposition of the perennial philosophy is not personal and individualistic and has its roots in an anonymous wisdom to be found wherever tradition has flourished. I have known many Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and Confucian scholars and thinkers of note who have found my exposition to be applicable to their own tradition as well, and I have carried out many dialogues on the basis of my understanding of the perennial philosophy with those belonging to other religious traditions. Among them the scholars who have accepted the traditional point of view have been able to identify themselves with my perspectives while they remain firmly rooted in their own traditions. My hope is therefore that my exposition, in addition to being an articulation of the Islamic position, also possesses a universal nature based as it is on the truth which lies at the heart of all religions and that it can serve as a means of creating reconciliation and better mutual understanding among followers of all traditions. (355)

As is well known, Chinese civilization began in the north, in the valley of the *Huang Ho* or Yellow River. Around the 12th century BC or slightly before, there is strong evidence of the influence

of peoples who were "round eyes" or Caucasoid by race and of Indo-European speech. These non-Chinese peoples introduced wheeled vehicles, including the chariot. The earliest known inscriptions in Old Chinese show strong Indo-European elements. There is evidence that both the Shang and the Chou dynasties were of non-

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Chinese, Indo-European origin. (356)

Another element of ancient Chinese culture which may be derived from these early Indo-European peoples is the dragon. The dragon in several variants is a key element of the "animal style" of semi-abstract decorative art of the Celtic and Iranian peoples; it was passed to the Vikings, probably by way of the Goths. The dragon figureheads on the prows of Viking ships are well known, and gave said ships their name "dragon ships". The dragon continued as an element in the arts of various Indo-European peoples, notably in heraldry, heraldry itself being a heritage of the Scythians, Sarmatians and Alans, all nomad Iranian peoples of the Eurasian steppes. King Arthur and his father use the dragon as their heraldic symbol, while in Spain it appears on the shield of Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar, "el Cid", this last perhaps being a heritage of the Alans and Visigoths. The dragon also appears in the folklore and literature of various Indo-European peoples, and, very recently, in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien.

Sinophiles, with their insistence that "China invented everything" will say that the dragon is a Chinese invention that migrated to the West. However, there is one argument, admittedly inconclusive, which puts this in doubt. The "animal style" of

semi-abstract decorative art is certainly not native to China. As an artistic motif, the dragon is a perfectly logical component of said "animal style". So, the evidence, though inconclusive, would seem to favor the theory that the Chinese borrowed the dragon from Indo-European peoples.

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Many believe that Taoism in its origins at least is not Chinese, but rather is yet another element which the Chinese borrowed from the Indo-European peoples to their west and northwest, though, of course, it absorbed Chinese influences - such as traces of matriarchy - at an early date. Unlike Confucius, Lao Tse, traditional founder of Taoism, is a shadowy figure. In the portraits, Lao Tse does appear to be rather heavily bearded for an ethnic Chinese.

In my class on the history of China at Miami University of Ohio, the professor, Dr. Ikle, asked the class what they thought of Taoism. I noted that it seemed to me to have affinities with Buddhism. Professor Ikle said that I was quite right about this.

I have heard it said that Buddhism is merely "Hinduism for export". As we have seen, this is quite false, that the differences between Hinduism and Buddhism are, in fact, very considerable. However, those who take the opposite tack, saying that Buddhism is somehow "non-Indian" or "non-Aryan" are also badly mistaken; Buddhism is indeed in its origins an Indian religion. Buddha was a high-caste Hindu, steeped in Vedic lore, including the Upanishads, the basis of Vedanta. Buddha read, and likely wrote Sanskrit, and his everyday spoken language was Pali,

a *prakrit* or vernacular language derived from Sanskrit. In other words, all the languages which Buddha knew and used were Indo-European, and his formation was Hindu or Brahmanic. Also, Buddha called his teachings "the Aryan truths", usually translated as "the noble truths", or at times, "the noble Aryan truths". In

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other words, Buddhism, despite its considerable points of difference with Hinduism, Brahmanism or Vedanta, is, when all is said and done, very much an Indian and an Aryan or Indo-European religion.

Since Buddhism eventually became extinct in India, the land of its birth - unless one wishes to consider Sri Lanka or Ceylon as part of India - and also extinct in Afghanistan, eastern Iran and central Asia, it has become identified with non-Indo-European speaking areas such as Tibet, China, Southeast Asia, Korea and Japan. I have even known people who believe that Buddha was Chinese. The above, however, does not alter the fact that in its origins Buddhism is an Indian religion. To reiterate, Buddha was a high-caste Hindu well versed in Vedic lore, and all the languages he spoke and used were Indo-European. Though some have been translated to Tibetan, Chinese or other languages, Buddhist scriptures are written in either Pali or Buddhist-Sanskrit, both Indo-European languages.

It was the strong affinities between Buddhism and Taoism which enabled Buddhism to make great headway in China, and, though somewhat indirectly in Vietnam (the rest of Southeast Asia received Buddhism directly from India), Korea and Japan. In other words, in

China Taoism paved the way for Buddhism.

Besides the strong affinities between Taoism and Buddhism, there is yet another proof of the Indo-European origins of Taoism: the famous *yang-yin* symbol. Now, the *yang-yin* symbol is quite common in abstract, non-figurative Celtic and Iranian art. Said

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symbol passed to both Romanesque and Gothic art. In Persia, the *yang-yin* symbol survives, and is visible in the Persian painting of the Safavi period, particularly in the treatment of the clouds. Any religious symbolism which the *yang-yin* motif may have had for these Indo-European peoples was forgotten at an early date, its use becoming purely decorative.

Once again, the Sinophiles will insist that the *yang-yin* symbol originated in China and migrated to the West. However, in this case, said explanation, if you will pardon the expression, simply will not wash.

Abstract or non-figurative decorative art is quite common in China; however, there is a radical difference between Chinese abstract decorative art and that of the above-mentioned Indo-European peoples.

Chinese abstract decorative art is invariably "static", giving no impression of dynamism or movement. On the other hand, the abstract decorative motifs used in Celtic and Iranian abstract decorative arts are very often dynamic, giving an impression of movement or motion. Examples of the above are the "trisquele", the "turning wheel", and, yes, the *yang-yin* motif. Significantly, in China the *yang-yin* motif is used only as a religious symbol, not

as a motif in abstract decorative arts. Had the *yang-yin* symbol been conceived by the Chinese, it would no doubt be a circle with a straight line drawn through the center.

So, take together, the proofs are rather solid; Taoism was not originally a Chinese religion, but, along with its *yang-yin*

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symbol, was borrowed from certain Indo-European peoples, though it early acquired certain Chinese characteristics, but never completely abandoning its non-Chinese, Indo-European roots.

There is a parallel with Buddhism here. Though Buddhism is most certainly of non-Chinese origin, in China it eventually acquired certain Chinese characteristics, though without ever completely losing or abandoning its Indian roots and origins.

The influences of Buddhism on early Christianity, though fascinating, are, in fact, somewhat superficial, as we have noted in another place. Said influences include the halo, aura or nimbus as a symbol and an artistic motif. They also include the legend of St. Josaphat, which legend is a paraphrase of the *Buddhacarita*, an early biography of Buddha, while the name "Josaphat" is ultimately derived from the term *Bodhisattva*, as we have also noted in another place. Concerning possible Buddhist influence on Christian monasticism, which is the topic of a lively polemic, we shall say little, except to note that it seems to me that both those who *a priori* reject the idea of any Buddhist influence whatever on Christian monasticism are mistaken, as are those who claim that Christian monasticism is nothing but a "photocopy" of Buddhist monasticism. The truth is no doubt somewhere between the

above-mentioned extremes, but I do not see any possibility of coming to any precise conclusion concerning the degree or extent of said Buddhist influence.

On the other hand, the influences of Vedanta on early Christianity are far more profound. The similarities between

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Hesychasm and *Japa Yoga* are far too close to dismiss. In my former newspaper column I once wrote a essay titled "Hesychasm: Christian Yoga". As we have noted elsewhere, much of the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius appear to a paraphrase of the Upanishads. Many people consider Patriarch Severus of Antioch (465-538 AD), of whom we spoke in Chapter 4, to be the author of the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius, though perhaps with the aid of or influenced by the Syrian mystic Stephen bar Sadaili. This is very interesting, because, as we noted in Chapter 4, Patriarch Severus was also the composer of the eight modes used in Catholic and Eastern Orthodox liturgical chant. Now, as we also noted in Chapter 4, each and every one of the eight liturgical modes composed by Patriarch Severus has an exact equivalent in the ancient Hindu music of north India. Since the number of heptatonic or seven-tone modes which are theoretically possible is vast, the fact that all eight of said liturgical modes have exact equivalents in ancient Hindu music most certainly cannot be dismissed as a "mere coincidence"; as a general rule, it may be stated that the credibility of "mere coincidences" is in inverse proportion to their number.

In any case, the authors of the Upanishads, the *Rishis*, also known as the "Aryan Sages" and the "Forest Saints", were the

inventors of apophatic theology, called *via negativa* in Latin, which is so necessary to avoid both gross anthropomorphism and certain types of idolatry, as we have noted in another place.

Rather than being in conflict, apophatic theology or *via*

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negativa on the one hand and kataphatic theology, known in Latin as *via affirmativa* or *via positiva* on the other, are in fact interdependent. Without apophatic theology or *via negativa*, kataphatic theology or *via affirmativa* or *via positiva* risks falling into gross anthropomorphism and idolatry. Conversely, without kataphatic theology or *via affirmativa* or *via positiva*, apophatic theology or *via negativa* risks falling into nihilism. Thus, in Vedanta and also in traditional Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christianity as well as traditional Islam, both Sunni and Shi'a, the relation between apophatic theology or *via negativa* on the one hand and kataphatic theology or *via affirmativa* or *via positiva* on the other is very similar to the relation between *yang* and *yin* in Taoism: rather than being in conflict, they are, essentially, in accord.

Buddha claimed to follow the "middle Way"; now, especially in Theravada Buddhism, it seems to me that something is wrong. In Theravada Buddhism especially, but also in some schools of Mahayana Buddhism as well, there is no balance, no "Middle Way" between Apophatic theology or *via negativa* on the one hand and kataphatic theology, *via affirmativa* or *via positiva* on the other; rather, as Ms. King notes, Theravada Buddhism in particular takes apophatic theology, *via negativa*, to the extreme, in other words,

it risks falling into nihilism. This does not seem to me to be the "Middle Way", but rather an apophatic theology or *via negativa* carried to such an extreme as to be a quasi-nihilism.

In Chapter 7 of the present book we speak at length of

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Hesychasm and its close resemblance to the *zikr* of the Sufis and to certain practices of Hindu Yoga; in my newspaper column I once wrote an article whose title in English would be: 'Hesychasm, Christian Yoga'. Hindu Yoga is far older than Christian Hesychasm, which, in its turn is somewhat older than the *zikr* of the Sufis.

I do not wish to enter into the polemic concerning possible Buddhist influence on the formation of Christian monasticism.

At this point it would seem advisable to give a definition of the term *Rishi*, most often used in the plural. The definitions most commonly used, i.e., 'Seers', 'Aryan Sages' and 'Forest Saints' (see the Celtic or Gaulish **druwids**, i.e., "wise men of the woods" or **Druids**) are accurate as far as they go, but are not really adequate. As we shall see, the *Rishi-s* were the authors of the *Veda-s*, and also of the *Upanishad-s*, since the *Upanishad-s* are considered to be a part of the *Veda-s*; hence the term *Vedanta*, roughly 'The Philosophy of the *Veda-s*'. Certainly the *Rishis* must be counted among the greatest philosophers who ever lived. I recall a mystical poem which contained the words: 'what the *Rishis* saw'. Below is a definition of the word *Rishi*:

'RISHI: (masculine gender). Commentary on *Unadi Sutra*, IV, 19; *rishati jnanena samsara-param*; perhaps from obsolete root *rish* for *drish*, 'to see'? (cf. *rishi-krit*); a singer of sacred hymns, an inspired poet or sage, any person who alone or with others invokes the deities in rhythmical speech or song of a sacred

character (e.g., the ancient hymn-singers *Kuru, Atri, Rebha, Agastya, Kushika, Vasishtha, Vy-aiva*), *Rig veda, Atharva Veda*; the *Rishis* were regarded by later generations as patriarchal sages or saints, occupying the same position in Indian history as the heroes and patriarchs of other countries, and constitute a peculiar class of beings in the early mythical system (3552)

as distinct from gods, men, *Ashuras* (demons), etc.; they are the inspired personages to whom these (*Vedic*) hymns were revealed, and such an expression as 'the *Rishi* says' is equivalent to 'so it stands in the sacred text'; seven ***Rishi-s***, *Sapta rishaya*, or *saptarishayah*, are often mentioned in the *Brahmanas* and later works as representatives of the character and spirit of the pre-historic or mythical period. ... A saint or sanctified sage in general, an ascetic, anchorite (this is a later sense); sometimes three orders of these are enumerated, i.e., *Devanshis, Brahmarshis, and Rajarshis*; sometimes seven, four others being added, i.e., *Maharshis, Paramarshis, Srutarshis* and *Kandarshis*; the seventh of the eight degrees of Brahmins; a hymn or Mantra composed by a *Rishi*; the *Veda-s*. See Old Gaelic or Old Irish *arsan*, which means 'a sage, a man old in wisdom'; and also Old Gaelic or Old Irish *arrach*, which means 'old, ancient, aged'. ... (357)

Obviously the word *Rishi* is '**a many splendored thing**', which resists a brief definition, and any attempt to give it one is bound to be misleading and to cause distortions and misunderstandings.

Also in Chapter 7 we speak at length of '*apophatic theology*' - that necessary antidote to that anthropomorphism, which in extreme cases leads to an idea of God as 'an old man with a long white beard, sitting in a throne on a cloud' - and, on a higher level, to the conceit that God can be encompassed or defined by limited, conditioned human modes of thought. Though the word is Greek, apophatic theology first appears in the *Upanishad-s*, 'what the *Rishis* saw', in the Sanskrit expression '*neti, neti*', 'not this, not this'. The identity of the early (5th century) Syrian

Christian mystic known as 'Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite', or, more simply, the 'Pseudo-Dionysius' is unknown, as the prefix 'pseudo' indicates; one cannot identify someone by saying who he

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is not. Some say that the Pseudo-Dionysius is the Syrian mystic Stephen bar Sadaili, about whom little is known, but who wrote in Syriac rather than Greek, while others identify the Pseudo-Dionysius with that polyfacetic genius Severus, the Monophysite Patriarch of Antioch (465-538 AD).

Whoever the Pseudo-Dionysius really was, there is no doubt that he was the first known champion of apophatic theology in the history of Christianity. It should be noted that large parts of The Divine Names and The Mystical Theology by the Pseudo-Dionysius appear to be a close paraphrase of parts of the *Upanishad-s*, as anyone may prove to his own satisfaction, since both the *Upanishads* and the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius are readily available in various editions and translations.

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad we read:

'It (the Absolute: *Brahman*) is neither big nor small, neither long nor short, neither hot nor cold, neither bright nor dark, neither air nor space. It is without attachment, without taste, smell or touch, without eyes. Ears, tongue, mouth, breath or mind, without movement, without limitation, without inside or outside. It consumes nothing, and nothing consumes it.' (358)

The above is a classic example of the apophatic theology of the *Upanishads*: 'not this, not that', in Sanskrit '*neti, neti*'.

In the Taittiriya Upanishad we read:

'That from which all words turn back and thought can never reach ...'. (359)

Such are the words of the *Rishis*, the 'Seers', the 'Aryan Sages' or the 'Forest saints' of ancient India.

During my years at the University of Miami of Ohio, I took a

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course titled 'Seminar on Religion'. The subject of my presentation or term paper was *Shankara*, the leading exponent of the *Advaita Vedanta* school of Hindu philosophy. The recently deceased Stanley Lusby was my professor for this course. He said that he noted what he called an 'existential response to Shankara' on my part. Note that *Advaita* literally means 'Not Two' in Sanskrit. Thus, Shankara improves on Plotinus, who spoke of the Absolute as 'The One'; 'one' is a numeric category, and the Absolute is beyond all numeric categories, as the *Rishis*, the 'Seers', the 'Aryan Sages' or 'Forest Saints' who wrote or composed (the *Upanishads*, like the rest of the *Vedas*, were no doubt passed down orally for a long period before being written down) the *Upanishads* well knew.

Notes Reza Shah-Kazemi when speaking of Shankara:

'The first question that needs to be asked is whether the transcendent Absolute (*Brahman*) is in any way conceivable, in such a manner that one can speak of the 'concept' thereof. If, as is maintained by Shankara, the Absolute: *Brahman*) is 'That from which words turn back and thought can never reach' (a quote from the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, as we have seen above), that which ignorance (*avidya*) alone would attempt to define, then what function is served by the variety of names by which the Absolute is referred, i.e., *Brahman*, *Atman*, *Om*, *Turiya*?

Certainly, Shankara asserts that from the viewpoint of ignorance (*avidya*), the Absolute is inexplicable - *anirukta*. [*Shankara on the Absolute*, A.J. Alston, translator, London, 1987, Volume I, p. 177]. The attribution of 'name and form' (*nama-rupa*) to the Absolute (*Brahman*) is, likewise, the result of ignorance (*avidya*). Name and form, like the erroneous conception

of a snake in place of a rope, are destroyed when knowledge dawns, 'hence the Absolute cannot be designated by any name, nor can it assume any form'. [Alston, op. cit., p. 87].

Intrinsic knowledge of the Absolute can be
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acquired, but solely from the *paramarthika* perspective, (because) from the viewpoint of the relative, or the *vyavaharnika* perspective, the Absolute (*Brahman*) can only be viewed under the conditions of name and form (*nama rupa*). This distinction between the *paramarthika* and the *vyavaharnika* perspectives is of the utmost importance, not just in respect of doctrinal formulations, but, as will be seen throughout this chapter, in respect of central ontological aspects of spiritual realization.' (360)

Note that Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite lived long after the time of the *Rishis*, the 'Seers', the "Aryan Sages" or "Forest saints", but long before the time of Shankara. In other words, the Pseudo-Dionysius may have been influenced by the *Upanishads*, but could not possibly have been influenced by Shankara. Likewise, Shankara lived before the time of St. Gregory Palamas.

In the 15th century, Tandavaraya Swami was author of a brief treatise on Advaita Vedanta titled *Cream of Liberation*. In said work, Tandavaraya Swami gives a poetic definition or summary of the teachings of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, and of Apophatic Theology (Latin: *Via Negativa*), in general, whether Hindu, Christian or Islamic:

"Master:

"As *Brahman* (the Absolute, God Transcendant, or, in other words, the Transcendence of God) is neither an object of the senses nor an object of inference (*anumdna*), and as there is no second to It, It (*Brahman*) is beyond direct perception (*pratyaksha*), inference (*anumdna*) or analogy (*upamdna*). Also know that being free from attributes (*guna-s*), It cannot be expressed in words.

A girl says, "not he, not he" of all the others, and remains shy and silent when her lover is pointed

out. In the same way, the Veda-s (of which the *Upanishad-s* are a part), clearly deny what is not
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Brahman, as "not this, not this" (*neti, neti*), and indicate *Brahman* by silence." (361)

It should be noted that, despite its emphasis on what in Greek is called *Apophatic Theology* and in Latin *Via Negativa*, Advaita Vedanta never loses sight of *Atman*, God Immanent or the Immanence of God, and thus never risks falling into Manichaeism or something closely akin to it, not to mention nihilism or atheism. It is strange that those who most emphasize that God is unconditioned, by their denial of His Immanence put the most severe conditions on Him. It must be emphasized that, like Advaita Vedanta, Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Orthodox Islam, whether Sunni or Shi'a, emphasize that God is both transcendent and immanent, though some crypto-Manichaean sects deny His Immanence.

As we have noted in other parts of this book, what is called *apophatic theology* in Greek and *via negativa* in Latin is that very necessary corrective to prevent gross anthropomorphism, such as is true of those who imagine God as an old man with a long white beard sitting in a throne on a cloud. Apophatic theology first appears in Hinduism, in the *Upanishads* the teachings of the *Rishis*, the "Aryan Sages" or "forest Saints", and later in Advaita Vedanta, notably in the works of Shankara, who frequently cites the *Upanishads*. Apophatic theology or the *via negativa* appears very early in the Christian Tradition, in the works of Dionysius the Pseudoareopagite or the Pseudo-Dionysius and the works of St. Gregory of Nyssa, and much later in the works of St.

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Gregory Palamas. Imam Reza, the 8th Shi'a Imam, lived after the time of the *Rishis* , the Pseudo-Dionysius and St. Gregory of Nyssa, but well before the time of Shankara and St. Gregory Palamas. It is of utmost importance to keep this in mind.

Mount Tabor is a mountain in Galilee about five and one half miles south-southeast of Nazareth. Since 150 AD if not before, Mount Tabor has been identified as the Mountain of the Transfiguration, a key event in the life of Jesus Christ. Here is what the Gospels (*Injil*) have to say concerning the Trnsfiguration:

St. Matthew, XVII:1-8:

And after six days Jesus took Peter, James and John his brother and brought them up into a high mountain apart.

And Jesus was transfigured before them; and his face shone as the sun, and his clothing was white as the light.

And, behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with Jesus.

Then answer Peter, and said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if you wish, let us make here three tabernacles; one for you, and one for Moses and one for Elias.

While Peter yet spoke, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice (came) out of the cloud, which said, 'This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear you him.

And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were afraid.

And Jesus came and thouched them, and said: 'Arise and be not afraid.'

St. Mark, IX:2-7:

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter, and James, and John, and led them up into a high mountain by themselves: and he was transfigured before them

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And his clothing became shining, exceeding the whiteness of snow, so that no fuller on earth could make them so white.

And there appeared to them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

And Peter answered and said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for you, one for Moses and one for Elias.'

For he did not know what to say, for they were very afraid.

And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying: 'This is my Beloved Son: hear him.'

St. Luke, IX:28-36:

And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, Jesus took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

And as he prayed, the manner of his countenance was altered, and his clothing was white and glistening.

And, behold, there talked with Jesus two men, who were Moses and Elias.

Who appeared in glory, and spoke of his death which would take place in Jerusalem.

But Peter and they who were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they awoke, they saw Jesus' glory, and the two men that stood with him.

And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here: let us make three tabernacles; one for you. And one for Moses, and one for Elias': not knowing what he said.

While he spoke thus, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they were afraid as they entered into the cloud.

And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying: 'This is my beloved Son, hear him.'

And when the voice had ceased, Jesus was seen to be alone. And they kept it to themselves, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

The above Gospel verses are an excellent introduction to what follows.

Says Vladimir Lossky concerning the teachings of St. Gregory

Palamas:

"The light which the apostles saw on Mount Tabor was not a created, meteorological phenomenon, as Barlamm said, a light inferior by nature to human thought. It was the light belonging by nature to God: eternal, infinite, uncircumscribed in time and space, existing outside created being. It appeared in the theophanies of the Old Testament (*Torah*) as the glory of God, terrifying and unbearable for human creatures since before Christ it was external to men. This is why Paul, when he was still an outward man, alien to the faith in Christ, was blinded on the road to Damascus by the apparition of light. On the contrary Mary Magdalene was able to see the light of the Resurrection which filled the tomb and made everything in it visible, even though the "visible light" had not yet shown forth on the earth. At the time of the Incarnation the divine light was as it were concentrated in the God-Man, in whom divinity dwelt bodily according to the word of St. Paul. It was this light of the divinity, the glory belonging to Christ by virtue of His divine nature, which the apostles were able to contemplate at the moment of the Transfiguration. The God-Man underwent no change whatsoever on Mount Tabor, but for the apostles this was a departure out of time and space, a glimpse of the eternal realities. "The light of the Transfiguration of the Lord", says St. Gregory Palamas, "has no beginning and no end; it remained uncircumscribed (in time and space) and imperceptible to the senses, although it was contemplated ... but the disciples of the Lord passed here from the flesh into the spirit by a transmutation of their senses."

Once again we find ourselves in a contradiction concerning the nature of the vision: on the one hand the divine light is imperceptible to the senses, on the other hand it is contemplated by the eyes of the body. St. Gregory Palamas indignantly rejects attempts to interpret his doctrine of vision in a material way: "The divine light is not material", he says, "there was nothing perceptible about the light which illuminated the apostles on Mount Tabor." But on the other hand it would be absurd to assert that only intellectual gnosis merits the name of light, by way of metaphor. This light is neither material nor spiritual, but divine, uncreated.

In the *Hagioritic Tome*, an apology for the Hesychasts written under the direction of St. Gregory Palamas, we find a very clear distinction between

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sensible light, intelligible light, and the divine light

which surpasses the other two, both of which belong to the realm of created being. "The light of the intelligence", says the *Tomos*, "is different from that which is perceived by the senses. In fact perceptible light reveals to us objects which are subject to the senses, while intellectual light serves to manifest the truth that lies in thought. Therefore sight and intelligence do not perceive one and the same light, but it is fitting that each of the faculties should act according to its nature and within its limits. However, when those who are worthy receive grace and spiritual and supernatural power, they perceive by the senses as well as by the intellect that which is above all intellect ... how? That is known only by God and those who have had the experience of his grace. ...

... "He who participates in divine energy," St. Gregory Palamas again says, "becomes in some way light in himself; he is united to the light and with the light he beholds with all his faculties all that remains hidden to those who do not have this grace; thus he surpasses not only the corporeal senses but also all that can be known (by the intellect) ... for the pure in heart see God ... who as light dwells in them and reveals himself to those who love him, to his well-beloved." This same uncreated light communicates itself therefore to the whole man, making him live in communion with the Holy Trinity. It is this communion with God, in which the righteous will be finally transfigured by light and will themselves become as resplendent as the sun, which constitutes the beatitude of the age to come - the deified state of creatures, where God will be all in all, not by His essence, but by His energy, i.e., by grace or uncreated light, "the ineffable splendor of the one nature in three hypostases." (362)

Vladimir Lossky continues:

"The divine nature", says St. Gregory Palamas, "must be called at the same time incommunicable and, in a sense, communicable; we attain participation in the nature of God and yet he remains totally inaccessible. We must affirm both things at once and must preserve the antinomy as the criterion of piety." St. Gregory Palamas resolves this antinomy, without suppressing it, by preserving the deep-rooted mystery which dwells intact within the ineffable distinction between the essence (*ousia*) and its natural energies. "Illumination or divine and deifying grace", he writes, "is not the essence but the energy of God," "a power and universal (3561)

operation of the Trinity." Thus "while saying that the divine nature is communicable not in itself but in its

energies, we remain within the limits of piety." This distinction between essence and energies does not introduce any sort of division within the divine being. There would be a division if action was opposed to feeling, if energy pre-supposed a possibility (*to paschein*) in God; but God acts without suffering in relation to His action. Essence and energies are not, for St. Gregory Palamas, two parts of God, as some modern critics still imagine, but two different modes of the existence of God, within His nature and outside His nature; the same God remains totally inaccessible in His essence - and communicates himself totally by grace. As with the dogma of the Trinity, this dogma of divine energies in no way detracts from the simplicity of God, as long as simplicity does not become a philosophical notion which claims to determine the indeterminable. "It is right for all theology which wishes to respect piety to affirm sometimes one and sometimes the other, when both affirmations are true," says St. Gregory Palamas, "Thus Sabellius, incapable of affirming that God is one and not one, because he saw only the unity of the substance, lost the notion of the Trinity of persons." It is the same with the simplicity of God's nature and the distinction between *ousia* and energies. "God is not only in three hypostases, but he is also the All-powerful One (*Pantodunamos*) (Council of 1351). . . .

. . . St. Gregory Palamas' opponents are defending a philosophical notion of the divine simplicity when they affirm the perfect identity of the essence and the energy of God. When they speak of operations and energies as distinct from the essence, they are thinking of created effects of the divine essence. Their notion of God - as simple essence - admits nothing but an essential existence for divinity. What is not the essence itself does not belong to the divine being, is not God. Therefore the energies must be either identified with the essence or separated from it completely as actions which are external to it, i.e., as created effects having the essence as their cause. A rationalistic doctrine of causality is introduced into the doctrine of grace. For the opponents of St. Gregory Palamas there was the divine essence, and its created effects, but there was no longer any room for divine operations or energies. Replying to his critics, St. Gregory Palamas confronted them with the following dilemma: either they must admit the distinction between essence and operation, but then their philosophical notion of simplicity would oblige them to reject the

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existence of the glory of God, grace and the light of the Transfiguration among creatures; or else they must categorically deny this distinction, which would oblige

them to identify that which cannot be known with what can be known, the incommunicable with the communicable, essence and grace. In both cases the deification of created being and therefore also all actual communion with God would be impossible." (363)

Says John Meyendorff:

"To see God,, we must acquire 'a divine eye' and let God see himself in us. St. Gregory Palamas once more quotes St. Maximus: "The soul becomes God by sharing in the divine grace, after it has itself halted all activity of the spirit and of the senses, as well as all the natural *energies* of the body, for the body becomes divine at the same time. ... Then God alone appears in the soul and in the body ...'; and he comments, 'God is invisible to creatures, but is not invisible to himself', and it is he 'who will see not only through the soul which is in us, but also through our body.' Speaking of the supernatural faculty to see God granted to us by the presence of the Holy Spirit in us, St. Gregory Palamas continues: 'As this faculty has no other means of acting, having quitted all other beings, it becomes itself nothing but light, and grows like that which it sees; it unites with it without mixture, being light. If it looks at itself, it sees the light; if it looks at the object of its vision, that again is light, and if it looks at the means it employs in seeing, that too is light; it is there that there is union; all that is one, so that he who sees can distinguish neither the means, nor the end, nor the essence, but is only conscious of being light, and of seeing a light distinct from any created thing.' The Saints are thus 'transformed by the power of the Spirit; they receive a power which they did not possess before; they become Spirit and see in Spirit. Here one clearly sees that the Biblical idea that the new birth of baptism gives man power 'to be Spirit' (John III:6) fits in perfectly with the 'luminous vision', which also comes in the Bible, though more commonly used in the mystical vocabulary of the Neo-Platonic tradition. For St. Gregory Palamas, both terminologies refer to a single and unique quality, that of the divine-human union made accessible in Christ. To describe the state of deified man, he, following St. Maximus, refers to the mystical experience of the Apostle Paul (2nd Corinthians XII:2ff.): 'The great Paul', he writes, after this extraordinary ecstasy, declares that he did
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not know what it was. Surely he saw himself. How? ... By the spirit that accomplished the ecstasy. But what was he himself ...? He was certainly that to which he was united, that through which he knew himself, and that

through which he had left all things. ... So Paul was Light and Spirit.' Nonetheless this vision and this deification is never a way of 'possessing' God, of containing Him, and submitting Him to the laws of creatures: while manifesting himself, he yet dwells in mystery. After speaking of the vision of Moses, St. Gregory Palamas asks: 'Can one then no longer say that the divine is in mystery? Why not? He does not come forth from mystery, but communicates it to others, concealing them beneath the divine shade' 'This', he writes elsewhere, 'is the most divine and extraordinary fact; the Saints, possessing understanding of God, possess it in an incomprehensible way.'

It is the supernatural character of deifying grace that St. Gregory Palamas wishes to stress; it is the divine way itself, infinite and uncreated, which appears to us, and *really becomes ours*. This divine mystery into which God allows us to penetrate, this union which He makes accessible to us, is the Mystery of the Church, the Body of Christ. There is no other way of 'knowing God in God' but to be grafted by the new birth of baptism on to the Body of the Incarnate Word. The Saints are those 'who are born of God by the Word (*Logos*) through grace in the (*Holy*) Spirit who keep the likeness to God, their Father.' They are in truth 'God', '**since in all birth that which is begotten is identical with the begetter; that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit**' (John III:6). (364)

We return to Vladimir Lossky:

'The Bible is full of expressions relating to light, to the divine illumination, to God who is called Light.

In the mystical theology of the Eastern Church, these expressions are not used as metaphors or as figures of speech, but as expressions for a real aspect of the Godhead. If God is called Light, it is because He cannot remain foreign to our experience. *Gnosis*, the highest stage of awareness of the divine, is an experience of uncreated light, the experience itself being light: 'in Thy light, we shall see light'. It is both that which one perceives, and that by which one perceives in mystical experience. For St. Symeon the New Theologian, the experience of light, which is conscious spiritual life, or *gnosis*, reveals the

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presence of grace which a person has acquired. 'We do not speak of things of which we are ignorant,' he says, 'but we bear witness to that which we know. For the light already shines in the darkness, in the night and in the day, in our hearts and minds. This light without

change, without decline and never extinguished enlightens us; it speaks, it acts, it lives and gives life, it transforms into light those whom it illumines. God is Light, and those who receive Him, receive Him as Light. For the light of His Glory goes before His Face, and it is impossible that He should appear otherwise than as light. Those who have not seen this light, have not seen God: for God is Light. Those who have not received this light, have not yet received grace, for in receiving grace, one receives the divine light, and God Himself. ... Those who have not yet received, who have not yet participated in this light, find themselves always under the yoke of the law, in the region of shadows and fantasies; they are still the children of the bondwoman. Kings or patriarchs, bishops or priests, princes or servants, seculars or monks, all are equally in the shadows and walk in darkness, unless they are willing to repent as they ought to do. For repentance is the gate which leads them from the realm of darkness into that of light. Those therefore who are not yet in the light, have not truly crossed the threshold of repentance. ... The servants of in hate the light, fearing that it will reveal their hidden works.' Whereas the life of sin is sometimes willfully unconscious (we shut our eyes in order not to see God), the life of grace is an increasing progress in knowledge, a growing experience of the divine light.

According to St. Macarius of Egypt, the fire of grace kindled in the hearts of Christians by the Holy Spirit makes them shine like tapers before the Son of God. Sometimes this divine fire bestowed in proportion to the response of human will, burns brightly and with an increasing light; sometimes it decreases and shine no more. In a heart troubled by passions. 'The immaterial and divine fire enlightens and tests souls. This fire descended on the apostles in the form of fiery tongues; this fire shone upon St. Paul, it spoke to him, it enlightened his mind, and at the same time it blinded his eyes, for flesh cannot bear the brightness of this light. This fire Moses saw in the burning bush; this fire in the form of a chariot caught up Elijah from the earth. ... Angels and spirits in the service of God participate in the brightness of this fire. ... This fire expels demons and destroys sin. It is the power of the resurrection, the reality of eternal life, the enlightenment of holy souls, the

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strengthening of the rational powers.' These are the divine energies, the 'rays of divinity' of which Dionysius the Areopagite speaks: the creative powers which penetrate throughout the universe, and make themselves known, not through any created being, as the unapproachable light wherein the Holy Trinity dwells.

The energies, bestowed upon Christians by the Holy Spirit, no longer appear as exterior causes, but as grace, an interior light, which transforms nature in deifying it. 'God is called Light', says St. Gregory Palamas, 'not with reference to His essence, but to His energy.' In so far as God reveals Himself, communicates Himself and is able to be known, He is Light. It is not only by analogy with physical light the God is called Light. The divine light is not an allegorical or abstract thing; it is given in mystical experience. 'This experience of the divine is given to each according to his capacity, and can be greater or less according to the worthiness of him who experiences it.' Perfect vision of the deity, perceptible in its uncreated light, is 'the mystery of the eighth day'; it belongs to the age to come. But those who are worthy attain to the vision of 'the Kingdom of God come with power' even in this life, a vision such as the three apostles saw on Mount Tabor.

The theological controversies about the nature of the Light of the Transfiguration of Christ - controversies which, about the middle of the 14th century, divided the upholders of the doctrinal traditions of the Eastern Church from certain rationalizing theologians, related basically to a religious problem of the first importance. It concerned the reality of mystical experience, the possibility of conscious communion with God, and the nature of grace - whether it is created or uncreated. The questions of man's ultimate destiny, his beatitude and deification, were at stake. It was a conflict between mystical theology and a religious philosophy, or, rather, a theology of concepts which refused to admit what seemed to it to be an absurdity, foolishness. The God of revelation and of religious experience was confronted with the God of the philosophers, on the battlefield of mysticism, and, once again, the foolishness of God put to nought the wisdom of men. Finding themselves obliged to define their position, to formulate concepts of realities utterly transcending philosophical speculation, the philosophers had finally to give a judgement which in its turn appeared 'foolishness' to Eastern tradition: they asserted the created nature of deifying grace. We shall not discuss again the question of the distinction between the essence and the

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energies of God. At the end of our study we must think of another aspect of the divine energies: that of the uncreated light in which God reveals and communicates Himself to those who enter into union with Him.

This light or effulgence can be defined as the visible quality of the divinity, of the energies or grace in which God makes Himself known. It is not a

reality of the intellectual order, as the illumination of the intellect, taken in its allegorical and abstract sense, sometimes is. Nor is it a reality of the sensible order. This light is a light which fills at the same time both sense and intellect. It is immaterial and is not apprehended by the senses; that is why St. Symeon the New Theologian while affirming its visibility yet calls it 'invisible fire'. But neither is it an intellectual light. The *Hagior Tome* (an apologia edited by the monks of Mount Athos during the theological disputes about the Light of the Transfiguration), distinguishes between light apprehended by the senses, the light of the intellect, and the uncreated light which transcends both. 'The light of the intellect is different from that which is perceived by the senses, while intellectual light makes clear the truth in our thinking. Thus, the sight of the eye and the sight of the mind do not perceive one and the same light, but it is the property of each of these faculties to act according to its own nature and limitations. Since, however, those who are worthy of it receive spiritual and supernatural grace and strength, they perceive, both by the senses and by the intellect, that which is altogether above both sense and intellect ... but this light is known only to God and to those who have had experience of His grace.'

Most of the (Church) fathers who speak of the Transfiguration witness to the divine and uncreated nature of the light which appeared to the apostles. St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Maximus, St. Andrew of Crete, St. John Damascene, St. Symeon the New Theologian, Euthymius Zigabenus, all speak of it in this way, and it would be perverse in the extreme to interpret all the passages in question as mere figures of speech. St. Gregory Palamas develops this teaching in relation to the question of mystical experience. The light seen by the apostles on Mount Tabor is proper to God by His Nature: eternal, infinite, existing outside space and time, it appeared in the theophanies of the Old Testament as the Glory of God - a terrifying and unbearable apparition to created beings, because foreign and external to human nature as it was before Christ and outside the Church. That is why - according to St. Symeon the New Theologian - Paul

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on the road to Damascus, not yet having faith in Christ, was blinded and struck down by the apparition of the divine light. Ste. Mary Magdalene, on the other hand, according to St. Gregory Palamas, was able to see the light of the resurrection, which filled the tomb and rendered visible everything that she found there despite the darkness of the night: 'physical day' having not yet illuminated the earth, it was this light that

enabled her to see the angels and to talk with them. At the moment of the incarnation, the divine light was concentrated, so to speak, in Christ, the God-man, 'in whom dwells the whole fullness of the Godhead bodily'. That is to say that the humanity of Christ was deified by hypostatic union with the divine nature; that Christ during His earthly life always shed forth the divine light - which, however, remained invisible to most men. The transfiguration was not a phenomenon circumscribed in time and space; Christ underwent no change at that moment, even in His human nature, but a change occurred in the awareness of the apostles, who for a time received the power to see their Master as He was, resplendent in the eternal light of His Godhead. The apostles were taken out of history and given a glimpse of eternal realities. St. Gregory Palamas says, in his homily on the Transfiguration: 'The light of our Lord's Transfiguration had neither beginning nor end; it remained unbounded in time and space and imperceptible to the sense, although seen by bodily eyes. ... but by a change in their senses the Lord's disciples passed from the flesh to the Spirit.'

To see the divine light with bodily sight, as the disciples saw it on Mount Tabor, we must participate in and be transformed by it, according to our capacity. Mystical experience implies this change in our nature, its transformation by grace. St. Gregory Palamas says explicitly: 'He who participates in the divine energy, himself becomes, to some extent, light; he is united to the light, and by that light he sees in full awareness all that remains hidden to those who have not this grace; thus, he transcends not only the bodily senses, but also all that can be known by the intellect ... for the pure heart see God ... whom being Light, dwells in them and reveals Himself to those who love Him, to His Beloved.'

The body should not be an obstacle in mystical experience. The Manichaean contempt for our bodily nature is alien to Orthodox asceticism. **[though not, of course, to Calvinist or Puritan asceticism, which, as we have said in other places, is thoroughly Manichaean or Cathar, which leads to black witchcraft, to devil**

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worship, and to atheism] Says St. Gregory Palamas: 'We do not apply the word *man* to body and soul separately, but to both together, for the whole man was created in the image of God.' The body must be spiritualized and become (in the words of St. Paul) 'a spiritual body'. Our ultimate destiny is not merely an intellectual contemplation of God; if it were, the resurrection of the dead would be unnecessary. The blessed will see God face to face, in the fullness of

their created being. That is why the *Hagiographic Tome* already grants certain 'spiritual dispositions' to our purified bodily nature here below: 'If the body is to partake with the souls in the ineffable benefits of the worlds to come, it is certain that it must participate in them, as far as is possible, now. ... For the body also has an experience of divine things, when the passionate forces of the soul are - not put to death, but transformed and sanctified.' (365)

At the beginning of the 19th century, the starets St. Seraphim of Sarov said:

"in the course of a conversation which took place in a clearing in the forest, one winter evening, a disciple of St. Seraphim the author of the passage quoted, said to his master:

'All the same, I don't understand how one can be certain of being in the Spirit of God. How should I be able to recognize for certain this manifestation in myself?'

'I've already told you,' said Father Seraphim, 'that it's very simple. I've talked at length about the state of those who are in the Spirit of God; I've also explained to you how we can recognize this presence in ourselves. ... What more is necessary, my friend?'

'I must understand better everything that you have said to me.'

'My friend, we are both at this moment in the Spirit of God. ... Why won't you look at me?'

'I can't look at you, Father' - I replied - 'your eyes shine like lightning; your face has become more dazzling than the sun, and it hurts my eyes to look at you.'

'Don't be afraid,' said he, 'at this very moment you've become as bright as I have. You are also at present in the fullness of the Spirit of God; otherwise, you wouldn't be able to see me as you do see me.'

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And leaning towards me, he whispered in my ear, 'Thank the Lord God for His infinite goodness towards us. As you've noticed, I haven't even made the sign of the cross; it was quite enough that I had prayed to God in my thoughts, in my heart, saying within myself: 'Lord make him worthy to see clearly with his bodily eyes, the descent of your Spirit, with which you favor your servants, when you condescend to appear to them in the wonderful radiance of your glory.' And, as you see my friend, the Lord at once granted this prayer of the humble Seraphim. ... How thankful we ought to be to God

for this unspeakable gift which He has granted to us both. Even the fathers of the Desert did not always have such manifestations of His goodness. The grace of God - like a mother full of loving kindness towards her children - has deigned to comfort your afflicted heart, at the intercession of the Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoraditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*, i.e., the *Virgin Mary*) herself. ... Why, then, my friend, do you not look me straight in the face? Look freely and without fear; the Lord is with us.'

'Encouraged by these words, I looked and was seized by holy fear. Imagine in the middle of the sun, dazzling in the brilliance of its noontide rays, the face of the man who is speaking to you. You can see the movements of his lips, the changing expression of his eyes, you can hear his voice, you can feel his hands holding you by the shoulders, but you can see neither his hands nor his body = nothing except the blaze of light which shines around, lighting up with its brilliance the snow-covered meadow, and the snowflakes which continue to fall unceasingly.

'What do you feel?' asked Father Seraphim.

'An immeasurable well being,' I replied.

'But what sort of well-being? What exactly?'

'I feel', I replied, 'such calm, such peace in my soul, that I can find no words to express it.'

'My friend, it is the peace our Lord spoke of when he said to his disciples: 'My peace I give unto you,' the peace which the world cannot give; 'the peace which passes all understanding.' What else do you feel?'

'Infinite joy in my heart.'

Father Seraphim continued: 'When the Spirit of God descends on a man, and envelops Him in the fullness of His presence, the soul overflows with unspeakable joy, for the Holy Spirit fills everything He touches with joy. ... If the first-fruits of future joy have already filled your soul with sweetness, with such happiness, what shall we say of the joy in the Kingdom of Heaven, which awaits all those who weep here on earth. You

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also, my friend, have wept during your earthly life, but see the joy which our Lord sends to console you here below. For the present we must work, and make continual efforts to gain more and more strength to attain 'the perfect measure of the stature of Christ. ... ' But then this transitory and partial joy which we now feel will be revealed in all its fullness, overwhelming our being with ineffable delights which no one will be able to take from us.'" (366)

Below is something so complex, so convoluted that one

hardly knows where to begin. It has to do with the fact that the word **deification** is used above, which word will likely cause a great deal of serious misunderstanding. As used above, the the use of the word **deification** is a convention caused by the difficulties in translating from the Byzantine Greek to any other language, including English, French, Russian, Ukrainian, Church Slavonic, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian or Rumanian. If one reads the above carefully, one will not be misled by the conventional use of the word **deification** and will see that the understanding of the mystical union of St. Gregory Palamas is that of Sufism and Christian mysticism. Note that it is **NOT** St. Gregory Palamas who uses the word **deification**, but rather his translators who face an almost impossible task.

In his introduction to mysticism, Aldous Huxley refers to the understanding of the mystical union in Sufism and Christian mysticism as **theistic** and the understanding of the mystical union in Hindu mysticism as **pantheistic**. Now, Aldous Huxley was a man of considerable literary talent, and was well-read; however, his philosophical and theological acumen often left much to be desired. The truth is that, as Hindus never tire of pointing out,

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Hinduism is **NOT** pantheist, because no religion is, because the words **pantheist** and **pantheism** are arrant nonsense. Sigmund Freud was a prurient-minded crypto-pornographer, and a militant atheist; his philosophical, theological and metaphysical acumen was nil. However, Freud's commentary on pantheism is difficult to improve upon. Freud said:

"In regards to pantheism, I have nothing against it, except that it says nothing."

In other words, the words **pantheism** and **pantheist** are nonsensical. Unfortunately Aldous Huxley's book The Perennial Philosophy, with its definition of Hinduism and its understanding of the mystical union as **pantheist** and has misled a great number of people. Aldous Huxley was right in defining the understanding of the mystical union in Sufism and Christian mysticism as **theistic**. However, for reasons given above, Huxley's definition of the Hindu understanding of the mystical union as **pantheist** is a gross error. Human language has its limitations; how to define the Hindu understanding of the mystical union in words I honestly do not know; however, to define it as **pantheistic** is wrong.

The understanding of the mystical union of Sufism and Christian mysticism has been very well expressed by al-Ghazzali; we expounded it at some length in Chapter 7, and I do not wish to repeat it here. Aldous Huxley was right in saying that the Hindu understanding of the mystical union is not the same as that of Sufism and Christian mysticism, though he erred in defining said Hindu understanding as **pantheist**. Of course, some will say that

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the differences between the Hindu understanding of the mystical union on the one hand and that of Sufism and Christian mysticism on the other are merely matters of interpretation, of "limited human understanding seeing things differently": I do not wish to comment on this; there are some things which only God knows.

As someone once noted:

"Hindu metaphysics are so sophisticated that they

make one dizzy."

One can only fervently agree with the above statement.

At this time I cannot resist quoting from the Hindu poet and thinker Swami Ramdas:

Spirit is still, but it sings sweetly
And universes are born.
They live in the infinite ocean of the Spirit
Like ice floating on water.

Are the above words of Swami Ramdas pantheistic? Manifestly, the answer is **NO**. Some Hindu schools may be theist in a sense very close to that of Christianity and Islam, but **NOT ONE** school of Hinduism is pantheist.

As we said above, to define the Hindu understanding of the mystical union in so many words is not possible, because, except perhaps in Sanskrit, said words do not exist. Once again, one is forced to resort to the words of my former professor of creative writing and good personal friend the late and much mourned and lamented Walter Havighurst:

"Do not tell, show."

We begin with a commentary by Rene Guenon:

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"The *Brahma Sutras*, the text of which is extremely concise. Have given rise to numerous commentaries, the most important of which are those of Shankara and Ramanuja; they are, both of them, strictly orthodox, so that we must not exaggerate the importance of their apparent divergences, which are in reality more in the nature of differences of adaptation. It is true that each school is naturally enough inclined to think and to maintain that its own point of view is the most worthy of attention and ought, while not excluding other views, nevertheless to take precedence over them. But in order to settle the question in all impartiality one has to examine these points of view in themselves and to ascertain how far the horizon extends which they

respectively embrace; it is, moreover, self-evident that no school can claim to represent the doctrine in a total and exclusive manner. It is nevertheless quite certain that Shankara's point of view goes deeper and further than that of Ramanuja; one can, moreover, infer this from the fact that the first (Shankara) is of Shaivite tendency while the second (Ramanuja) is clearly Vaishnavite. A curious argument has been raised by Thibaut, who translated the two commentaries into English: he suggests that that of Ramanuja is more faithful to the teaching of the *Brahma Sutras* but at the same time recognizes that that of Shankara is more in conformity with the spirit of the *Upanishads*. In order to be able to entertain such an opinion it is obviously necessary to maintain that there exist doctrinal differences between the *Upanishads* and the *Brahma Sutras*; but even were this actually the case, it is the authority of the *Upanishads* which must prevail, as we have explained above, and Shankara's superiority would thereby be established, although this was probably not the intention of Thibaut, for whom the question of the intrinsic truth of the ideas concerned hardly seems to arise. As a matter of fact, the *Brahma Sutras*, being based directly and exclusively on the *Upanishads*, can in no way be divergent from them; only their brevity, rendering them a trifle obscure when they are isolated from any commentary, might provide some excuse for those who maintain that they find in them something besides an authoritative and competent interpretation of the traditional doctrine. Thus the argument is really pointless, and all that we need retain is the observation that Shankara has deduced and developed more completely the essential contents of the *Upanishads*; his authority can only be questioned by those who are ignorant of the true spirit of the orthodox Hindu tradition (**such as those who refer to it as 'pantheist'**), and whose opinion is completely
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valueless." (367)

Note that above Rene Guenon affirms that the point of view of the Shaivite denomination of Hindusim goes 'deeper and further' than that of the Vaishnavite denomination. All followers of Advaita Vedanta are followers of the Shaivite denomination, whose motto in Sanskrit is **Om Namah Shivaya** (Hail the Name of Shiva). Therefore, with the exception of the *Rishis*, the authors of the *Upanishads*, who lived long before the expressions "Shaivite" and

"Vaishnavite" had been coined or could have had any meaning, and the possible exception of Ananda Coomaraswamy, all Hindu authorities cited in this book are of the Shaivite persuasion.

In the July/August/September 2011 issue of the very interesting quarterly *Hinduism Today* (Kapaa, Hawaii, U.S.A.) appeared something very interesting from our point of view.

For a long time the ancient texts known as *Shaiva Agamas* were virtually unavailable, being mostly in manuscript, inedited, in obscure libraries and written on perishable materials. Recently, some people decided to locate the manuscripts of the *Shaiva Agamas* and digitalize them so that they would not be lost, a huge job, as this involved over 11,000 manuscripts. Says the above-mentioned issue of *Hinduism Today* in an essay by Acharya Arumuganathaswami titled: 'Digitalization Saves Shaiva Agamas':

"Satguru Shivaya Subramuniaswami had a persistent interest in the *Shaiva Agamas*. The founder of Kauai's (Hawaii) Hindu Monastery, home of *Hinduism Today*, knew these ancient texts to be the key scriptures defining the Shaivite denomination of Hinduism. They are best known today as the source texts for temple construction and worship. But they contain much more, from cosmology
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and the intricacies of the guru-disciple relationship, to initiations and instructions for meditations on the nature of Lord Shiva."

Among the manuscripts discovered and digitalized is the profoundly mystical *Sarvajnanottara Agama*, of which verses 12 to 16 of chapter 2, "The Direct Blissful Experience of Absolute Oneness with Shiva", translated from the Sanskrit by Dr. S.P. Sabharathnam of Chennai are given below. I have never seen a text which expresses in a manner at once so poetic and lucid the Hindu understanding of the mystical union:

"I am the individual self. Shiva who is considered to be the Supreme Self is different from me." He who contemplates in this way being under the spell of ignorance and infatuation will never attain the exalted qualities of Lord Shiva characterized by the power of all knowing and that of all doing. (12)

"Shiva is different from me. Actually, I am different from Shiva." The highly refined seeker should avoid such vicious notions of difference. "He who is Shiva is indeed Myself." Let him always contemplate this non-dual union between Shiva and himself. (13)

With one-pointed meditation of such non-dual unity one gets himself established within his own Self, always and everywhere. Being established within himself, he directly sees the Lord, who is within every soul and within every object and who presents Himself in all the manifested bodies. There is no doubt about the occurrence of such experience. (14)

Within such a yogi who establishes himself in absolute non-dual union with Lord Shiva and who keeps himself free from all sorts of differentiating notions, the exalted power of All-knowing gets unfolded in all its fullness. (15)

He who is declared in all authentic Scriptures as unborn, the creator and controller of the universe, the One who is not associated
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With a body evolved from maya and who is the Self of all, is indeed Myself. There is no doubt about this non-dual union. (16)

Those who reduce all Hinduism to a crude paganism or polytheism are like those who reduce all Christianity to the English and New England Puritans, or reduce Islam to Wahhabism and Taliban; it reflects a gross ignorance, and, at times at least, and anti-Aryan or anti-Indo-European bias. To pontificate about that which one knows nothing is the hallmark of a fool. Backbiting, slander and bearing false witness are grave sins, as is collaborating with the divide-and-conquer strategy of the

militant secularists.

Only fools and ignorant louts allow themselves to be blinded or deceived by names or labels. Anyone who reads this book will note that I do not care a cumin seed for names or labels, but only for content, meaning and substance.

Some brief observations are called for.

As we noted in other parts of this book, what is called *apophatic theology* in Greek and *via negativa* in Latin is that very necessary corrective to prevent gross anthropomorphism, such as is true of those who imagine God as an old man with a long white beard sitting on a throne on a cloud. Apophatic theology first appears in Hinduism, in the *Upanishads*, the teachings of the *Rishis*, the 'Aryan Sages' or 'Forest Saints', and later in Advaita Vedanta, notably in the works of Shankara, who frequently cites the *Upanishads*. Apophatic theology or the Via Negative appears

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early in the Christian Tradition, in the works of Dionysius the Pseudoareopagite or the Pseudo-Dionysius and in the works of St. Gregory of Nyssa, and much later in the works of St. Gregory Palamas. The real identity of the Pseudo-Dionysius is unknown; some identify him with the 6th century Syrian mystic Stephen bar Sadaili, while others believe that he was really that polyfacetic genius, Severus, a 6th century Patriarch of Antioch, of whom we have already had occasion to speak. Imam Reza lived after time of the *Rishis*, the Pseudo-Dionysius and St. Gregory of Nyssa, but before the time of Shankara and St. Gregory Palamas.

We have already spoken of the Uncreated Light. This appears

quite early in the Christian Tradition, in the Nicene Creed to be exact [**Light of Light, True God of True God**], and later in the works of St. Symeon the New Theologian, and, most especially in the works of our old and very dear friend, St. Gregory Palamas. Finally, it appears in the teachings of the *startsi* St. Theophan the Recluse and St. Seraphim of Sarov. Imam Baqir, the 5th Imam, lived after the time of the Nicene Creed, but before the time of St. Symeon the New Theologian, St. Gregory Palamas, St. Theophan the Recluse and St. Seraphim of Sarov.

Ali Reza, the 8th Imam, in a hadith on which Qazi Sa'id Qummi (1629-1691) commented so admirably, expressed the principles of *tanzih*, called in Latin *Via Negativa*, in Greek "Apophatic Theology", i.e., "Negative Theology". The Imam began with *tawhid* or divine Oneness, the solitary transcendent Divinity, which consists in denying, or removing from God all

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qualifications, all attributes, or any qualification which might support anything like unto a creature, whether said qualification is considered as identical to the essence or subordinate to the essence. Its meaning includes the idea that anything similar to a creature cannot be either a qualification nor an attribute, nor a basis for a qualification. Consequently, one must not attribute to God any image known of the qualifications which man might confer upon Him. Throughout the length of his sermon, the Imam searches in all its hiding places for an "affirmative theology" (Greek: **Kataphatic Theology**; Latin: **Via Affirmativa** or **Via Positiva**) which demonstrates the premises and paradoxes of the apophatic

theology or via negative. Said Imam Ali Reza:

"The first divine service, proclaims the Imam, is the spiritual knowledge (*ma'rifat*) of God: the first adoration, the first worship is the knowledge, the wisdom. The fountainhead of the knowledge of God is the testimony of His Oneness (*tawhid*). The fundamental rule of this testimony of His Oneness is the exclusion of all qualifications. Because the intellect testifies that every qualification (*sifat*) and every object thus qualified (*mawsuf*) is a created object (*khaliq*). All created objects attest to a Creator, (*makhluq*) which is neither a qualification nor the subject of a qualification. All qualifications and all subjects of qualifications affirm a connection with the one thing and the other. Every connection attests to whatever thing produced it. Everything which has a beginning testifies that it cannot have existed in the pre-eternity. ..."

"...This is the great problem of Shi'ite theosophy: the link between the dark cloud of the divine unknowability broached by the dawn of the theophanies. For the cloud is dark, while the dawn is bright, and it is this which gives to the Imamology of Qazi Sa'd Qummi its unique tone or flavor. On the supreme horizon is manifested a Theophanic Figure (*mazhar*) which is, in turn, the basis of the Names and Attributes which may be assigned to the Divine Essence,

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Names and Attributes which manifest the Divine Operations (**a parallel here with the Divine Energies of St. Gregory Palamas, who lived later than the time of Imam Ali Reza**) without unmasking the mystery of the **Divine Essence**. To this image may be given various names, From the lexicon of Neoplatonism, this would be the Intelligence (*Nous*, 'Aqil). From the lexicon of the prophetic Muhammedan theosophy, this would be the Eternal Muhammadan Reality, which in its turn receives various symbolic names: Initial Determination, Universal Mercy, Muhammadan Light (**Recall the Uncreated Light of St. Gregory Palamas**), Logos or Word (*kalima*) before the Great Abyss, Reality of Realities, Pre-Eternal Matter, Absolute *Walayat*, Essential Love, etc.

What is this name, the theosophic lien between the apparent form (*mazhar*) and the hidden reality which is manifest in the esoteric (*batin*) and exoteric (*zahir*), which is not a subject for dialectical discussion. Qazi Sa'id Qummi advises us that this requires an organ of perception other than the dialectical intellect ('*aql fikri*), and presupposes an appeal to the knowledge of the heart, *marifat qalbiya*, of the Imams. This is the interconnection between apophatic theology and knowledge

of the heart, interior vision between *tanzih* and *marifat qalbiya*), in the same measure in which the other theology, i.e., affirmative theology (Greek: *kataphatic*; Latin: *Via Positiva*) is made possible to those who perceive the *Haqiqat Muhammadiya*, and is divulged by the interior vision, with the heart as organ of theosophic knowing. Note that for Qazi Sa'id Qummi, as in agreement with the teachings of the Imams and with the neoplatonic Tradition, the Principal remains super-substantial, above being, and is not the Principal to which may be given the qualifications of "first Being", "Light of Lights", etc., but it is precisely the *Haqiqat Muhammadiya*, which the Existent from Being, the One who is Being. ... (368)

Henry Corbin continues:

"It is inseparable within itself, not only because the *walayat* presupposes the charisma of prophethood, each *nabi* being also a *wali*, but also because, by reason of the fundamental rule pertaining to the two of them, prophethood and *walayat* are one unique Light, which encompasses the exoteric as well as the esoteric, and thus applies to the spiritual universe and to that universe made manifest to the senses. Thus it is said of the Prophet, repeated in various contexts: "I and Ali we are one and the same Light.", a Light manifested in two persons: that of the Prophet and that of the
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Imam. And let it be noted that the word "*Imam*" refers to all Twelve, since each Imam as well as the Twelve in union manifest the Imamate united and unique in its essence. ...

... According to a hadith of Muhammad al-Baqir, the 5th Imam: "The Messenger of God said: The first thing which God created was the unique Light. In origin it is its own proper Light, and derives from the majesty of His Sublimity. From it was detached (literally "unstitched", *fataqa*) the Light of Imam Ali." The above hadith makes allusion to the mysteries of pre-existence, to a mysterious procession around the Throne, to achieve at last an echo of the most celebrated of the Imams, that of the 5th Imam, when, speaking in the name of the Twelve, he declares: "We are all the First and we are the Last (**remember "The Alpha and the Omega"**). We are the *Logos* (Word) of God. We are the good friends of God. We are the Face of God. We are the guardians of the Divine Revelation. We are the Knights Templars of the Divine Mysteries. We are the exterior expression of Revelation. In us is the meaning of *Tawil*."

Thus is expressed the connection between Prophethood and Imamate on which Qazi Sa'id Qummi meditates and which he deepens throughout the length of

his great commentary on the Tawhid of Ibn Babuyeh. And this meditation orients his research towards its characteristic sense: the properties attached to the number twelve, which is to say the *dodecade* (*do-decade* = ten + two) or of the twelve divisions of the structure of the Imamate, which tends to make apparent a concrete spiritual image, which gives birth to one of the *imagines agentes*, the active images, the metaphysical presuppositions and the *noetic* function, which verifies knowledge, thanks to the reality of the points of reference provided by the topography of the *imaginal* space, in the order of which the spiritual entities appear and are placed in the order of their representation. It may be assumed that the *imaginal* forms of the *dodecadic* structure are provided to Qazi Sa'id Qummi by the content of said hadith. This is true in the case of the mysterious hadith "The Twelve Veils of Light". ...

... the hadith of "The Twelve veils of Light" associates the Imamology with the cosmogogy, as well as with the theosophy of history and metahistory, by symbolically describing the pilgrimage of the Muhammadan Light within the *Pleroma*, with its "descents" (*tanazzolat*) from world to world, through the sventy thousand veils until this world is reached. ...

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... In an essay based on a translation: "God created the Muhammadan Light (*Nur Muhammadi*) before He created the heavens and the earth, the Throne (*'arsh*) and the Firmamnt (*Korsi*), the Table (*Lawh*) and the Pen, and before the creation of the twenty-four thousand prophets. And together with that Light (or according to another variant: "of the same Light) He created twelve veils (*hijab*): the veil of Strength, the veil of Sublimity, the veil of Grace, the veil of Mercy, the veil of Happiness, The veil of Generosity, the veil of Permanence, the veil of Guidance, the veil of Prophecy, the veil of Exaltation, the veil of Reverence, the veil of Intercession,. He makes to sojourn in in the Muhammadan Light twelve thousand within the veil of strength; eleven thousand within the veil of Sublimity; ten thousand within the veil of Grace; nine thousand within the veil of Mercy; eight thousand within the veil of Happiness; seven thousand within the veil of Generosity; six thousand within the veil of Permanence; five thousand within the veil of guidance; four thusand within the veil of Prophecy; three thousand within the veil of Exaltation; two thousand within the veil of Reverence; and one thousand within the veil of intercession.

We do the same, explains our philosopher, when we speak of the progression of the Muhammadan Light in its manifestations on earth in the cycle of Prophecy, from

Adam to the Seal of the Prophets (Muhammad). The twelve Veils of Light are the twelve Imams and the twelve spiritual universes are respective to each and every one of the twelve Imams. They are **cyphers** as are the twelve millennia. The word **millennium** here does not denote a chronometric measure; it is the equivalent of the gnostic term *Aion* (Eon) *saeculum*. The twelve universes are the **cypher** of the metahistory of the cycle (within the *temps sutil*) which is the archetype of the cycle which appears on earth in the cycle of the *walayāt*, which in the inverse image, i.e., to know the image, in the sense of return to or come back to it, which the present hadith describes in terms of descent. The Muhammadan Light progresses from Imam to Imam without ever abandoning the veil of the preceding Light, integrating into itself the esoterism which typifies said veil; this is because in it remain twelve millennia (the totality of the cycle) within the first veil, eleven millennia in the second, ten millennia in the third, etc., progressing thus till it reaches the *Qa'im*, the twelfth and final Imam. It is impossible to grasp the depth of Shi'ite thought in regards to Imamology, if one does not comprehend said hadith; the perceptor is metaphysical, transcendental, it precedes
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and conditions all empyrean perception, every configuration given to history." (369)

Said Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i:

"Another episode is related by the late Aqa Sayyid Ahmad Karbala'i, may God be pleased with him. He was one of the most prominent and well-known pupils of the late Akhund Husayn Quli Hamadani. He said: 'One day I was resting in a certain place when somebody woke me up and asked me if I would like to see the Divine Light (*Nur-i-Isfahbudiyah*). When I opened my eyes, I saw an endless light that covered the East and the West of the universe.' May God nurture our souls by this light. This phrase is the same stage as the self-disclosure of the soul (*tajalli-yi-nafs*), which is seen in this form and in the quality of endless Light." (370)

Allamah Tabataba'i continues:

"*Nur-i-Isfahbudiyah*: The Light of Lights that is present in the center of man's being. Suhrawardi identifies it with the Muhammadan Spirit (*ruh-i-Muhammadi*) or the Holy Spirit (*ruh al-Qudus*). *Nur-i-Isfahbudiyah* illuminates everything and makes visions possible. Everything that exists in the corporeal existence of the human being is a shadow from that which exists in the *Nur-i-Isfahbudiyah*." (371)

Below Henry Corbin deals with Chapter 1 of Haidar Amoli's great work Jami a'Asrar wa Manba' al-Anwar (Sum of Esoteric Doctrines and the Source of Light):

"Book 1 reveals the essence of the truth of *Tawhid*, the basis of differentiation between theological *Tawhid* (*Oluhi*, exoteric monotheism) and ontological or esoteric *Tawhid* (*Tawhid Wojudi*), which is the affirmation of the Transcendant Unity of Being (*wahdat al-wojud*, not far from 'existential monism'). The author (Haidar Amoli) proposes that the theological *Tawhid* conceals a hidden *shirk* or dualism, an unconscious idolatry. Ontological *Tawhid* is shown to be in agreement with the metaphysics of Ibn Arabi al-Mursi. Finally he returns to the hermeneutic of (Qur'anic) verse XXXIII:72, where it is reaffirmed that the burden assumed by man, in an act of sublime folly, is the veritable secret of the Imams. We reiterate: man's burden is so difficult and heavy that it may be borne only with the aid of an angel, a prophet or a

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believer of steadfast heart. This is the context of that affirmation which the Sufis, to the degree in which they they reclaim the esoteric knowledge transmitted by the Imams, are 'Shi'as in the true sense'; therefore, it is those Shi'as who accept the totality of the teachings of the Holy Imams, who are 'believers of steadfast heart' and are therefore Sufis in the true sense. ...

... Book 3 is of a perfect symmetry. Each of the four chapters deals with three fundamental notions of the Shi'a theosophy or esoterism, in an order which comments on the terms which compose each triad and their connections with the others: 1.) Literal, exoteric religion (*Shariat*), the mystic way (*Tariqat*), the truth of esoteric knowledge and spiritual knowledge (*hariqat*). 2.) The prophetic message (*risalat*), the prophetic vocation (*nobowwat*), the *walayato*f the Imams (defined as *Wali Allah*, Friend of God and guide to spiritual initiation). 3.) The revelation or divine communication by an angel (*wahy*), inspiration (*ilham*), interior revelation (*kashf*, mystic intuition, superior knowledge). 4.) *Islam* (the act of submission to God); *Iman*, i.e., true faith according to the Shi'a definition, which implies the adhesion of the heart to the triple witness of Divine Unity, of the prophetic mission and of the *walayato* of the Imams); *iqan* (the certainty that this is the true and genuine faith)." (372)

Said Haidar Amoli:

"At the end of this book I will repeat that which I said in the beginning, because at the end we return to the origins. To close this book we return to the famous poem by Ibn Arabi al-Mursi:

The religion which my heart professes is not the same as yours
My heart has become capable of all forms
It is a meadow for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks
A temple for idols and the Ka'aba of the pilgrims
(*hajjis*)
For the tables of the Torah and the book of the Qur'an
I profess the religion of love, and wherever it leads
there I will go. Love is my religion and my faith.

Everything indicates that for our Sayyid (Haidar Amoli), the celebrated poem of Ibn Arabi al-Mursi was the symbol of the secret faith of the 'steadfast believer', of the 'complete, total Shi'a', thus the
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symbol of the integration of Ibn Arabi al-Mursi into the esoteric teachings of Shi'ism." (373)

Shi'as also have a particular reverence for St. John the Baptist. Many Shi'a traditions speak of St. John the Baptist. here are a few examples.

"When asked about the inner meaning of the alphabets used, it was said that God willed Gabriel to make Zachariah (father of St. John the Baptist) know the sacred names of the Holy Prophet (Muhammad) with those of the Ahl al-Bait ("People of the House", i.e., of the House and Lineage of Muhammad, in other words, Fatima and the Twelve Holy Imams). When Gabriel mentioned the names, Muhammad, ali, Fatima and Hussein, Zachariah felt a great joy and consolation, but with the mention of the name Hussein, he was filled with grief and sorrow. When he asked the angels about the uncontrollable sorrow he felt, Gabriel informed him of the heart-rending tragedy of Karbala, for the experiences of Hussein are quite similar to what Yahya (St. John the Baptist) faced. Zachariah was informed of the story of the untold miseries and tortures which Hussein would suffer and the brutal massacre he would meet. It is said that in conveying the tidings about the tragedy of Karbala, the letter symbols used in the start of this chapter were:

- ❖ 1.) "Kaf" for *Karbala* - Where Hussein was martyred along with the band of his faithful devotees.
- ❖ 2.) "Ha", for "*Halakat*" - Annihilation of the Holy Family (Ahl al- Bait).
- ❖ 3.) "Ya" for "*Yazid*" - Yazid the son of Muawiya, who caused the heartless massacre.
- ❖ 4.) "'`Ain'" for Atash or the killing thirst (along with hunger) which Hussein and his devotees suffered before they were butchered.
- ❖ 5.) "*Saad*" for *Sabr* (or patience) the marvelous patience with which Hussein and his comrades suffered the tortures before they drank the cup of martyrdom.

The events connected with the life of the Third Holy Imam Hussein, the second son of Ali and Fatima, (3586)

the second grandson of the Holy prophet, are identical with those of the apostle Yahya (St. John the Baptist).

Hussein during his journey to Karbala frequently remembered the apostle Yahya.

Like Yahya, Hussein was also born in six months. Hussein's name was also peculiar to him as was the name of Yahya (i.e., refers to first use of said names).

Hussein was also martyred for opposing the brute Yazid's devilish life as was Yahya for declaring that what the king did was wrong.

With the glad tidings of getting a son, Zachariah was informed of what the name of the son was to be. None else had ever been before with the name Yahya (John) - derived from *Hayat*, i.e., life. It is said that the name Yahya was given to him for he was born of a barren woman who for never being productive and also for her having crossed the age of production of an issue, was virtually dead to womanhood. The issue or the son promised was Yahya (St. John the Baptist), the forerunner of Jesus. The word Yahya in Hebrew is *Johanán*, meaning "Yahveh (god) has been gracious". The word "*Hanaan*", meaning kindness or tenderness, is used in the Holy Qur'an (XIX:13).

By the statement "We did not make anyone like him", i.e., Yahya, was made as such that he neither sinned nor had he any inclination towards any sin. He was not even inclined to marry any woman and he did not also marry. Secondly, none else was born of a barren

woman and even that in the advanced age of about eighty years. God's Almighty will manifested once in bringing forth a child (Jesus) from a virgin (Mary) and once in bringing forth a child (Yahya, St. John the Baptist) from a barren woman in the advanced age of eighty. And never did the heavens mourn for anyone else save for Yahya and the Third Holy Imam Hussein ibn Ali, the King of Martyrs.

According to the Ahl al-Bait, the names Muhammad, Ali, Hasan and Hussein were adopted by the Divine suggestion. Prior to these, none else had these names, but particularly in the case of Hussein. The Sixth Holy Imam, Jaafar ibn Muhammad As-Sadiq, says that similar is the case of Yahya with Hussein in:-

❖ 1.) None had his name before, save Yahya and Hussein.

❖ 2.) For none else did the heavens weep for forty days save Yahya and Hussein, and
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when asked how the heavens wept for forty days he said that the Sun would rise, and set extraordinarily red.

❖ 3.) The murderers of both Yahya and Hussein were of illegitimate birth.

❖ 4.) Sufyan ibn A'seneh narrates from Ali ibn Zaid, who from his father Ali ibn al-Hussein - that he said - "We set out with Hussein for Kufa. We did not halt in any station nor moved from the path, but Hussein mentioned Yahya ibn Zachariah and one day he said that "As the proof of the worthlessness of this world in the view of God it is that the head of Yahya ibn Zachariah was presented to one of the prostitutes of the Israelites."

Similarly, Hussein's head was also presented to the sons of the prostitutes for which he set out from Medina, knowing well the fate that awaited him and his Ahl al-Bait. His effort was that his sacrifice should not take place unnoticed and go to waste ineffective and he succeeded in his divinely planned mission in laying his all for the sake of truth in such a way that it shook the very throne of the Tyrant and the heart of every Muslim in particular and humanity in general.

Even from a very young age, Yahya clad himself with the simplest covering made of jute and fed himself with

the simplest food of mere dried leaves. "Hukm" - meaning the strength or the power of correct judgement, i.e., "Hikmat", meaning Wisdom, which also means apostleship. This gift of God was, when he was yet very young. Yahya from the earliest age used to be with the priests and scholars of the religion, firmly established in faith.

It is a fact that Jesus spoke from the cradle, claiming Himself to be the servant and Apostle of the Lord, and while He was yet a baby lying in the cradle claimed to have received from God the Holy Book Injil (Evangel, Gospel), and Yahya, while yet a young boy, was endowed with Wisdom, i.e. apostleship.

It is said that when Yahya was yet a young boy, when the other boys called him to play with them, he used to tell them that "Men are not born to play away their lives."

Ayashi reports of Ali ibn Isbath who said that "When I visited medina en route to Egypt and presented myself to the Eighth Holy Imam Ali ibn Musa Ar-Reza, who was yet of only five years of (3588)

age, I was struck with wonder at the highest amount of wisdom and the divine insight the young Imam was endowed with. I decided in my heart to speak of this wonderful gift I found in him, when I reached Egypt. As this thought was still in my heart the Holy Child of five years looked at me and recited the verses which speak Of Yahya being gifted with wisdom while yet a young boy.

Yahya was so tender-hearted and Godfearing that he could not bear even the mention of the various kinds of the chastisements of Hell. Whenever he heard anyone mentioning the torments of Hell-fire, he used to weep and even get out of control in His dreading the wrath of God that he used to run away weeping into the wilderness, out of the habitation, and Zachariah his father and his mother used to wander for days together in the wilderness, searching for him. The cause of Yahya's assassination was that the wife of the king (Herod Antipas) of the place (Galilee) had a beautiful daughter by her previous husband. As she became old and had lost the attraction of womanhood for the king, she intended her young and beautiful daughter to engage the attention of the king. The king consulted Yahya about taking his step-daughter as his wife. Yahya said that it was forbidden, and the king gave up the idea of taking the girl into any matrimonial connection.

But this displeased the king's wife, i.e., the mother of the girl. When once the king was fully drunk, his wife sent her daughter, fully adorned with an extraordinary attraction. The king in his violent passion in the drunken state went to take hold of

the girl, but the mother said that it could be possible if the king presents Yahya's head to her as her dowry, and the king immediately ordered to bring Yahya's head before him. When the scholars of the faith learnt about the king's order, they rushed to the king and said that if even a drop of Yahya's blood was shed on earth, not even grass would grow on it. However, the king ordered Yahya to be slain and his blood to be thrown into a well and his head brought before him on a tray. Someone suggested to the king through his closest officials that since Yahya's father Zachariah was the one whose prayer was always readily heard by God, Zachariah be killed first so that he might not curse the king for Yahya's assassination. The king ordered his men to act accordingly. When Zachariah and Yahya were engaged in prayer in their house, the king's men came and took hold of Yahya, and Zachariah escaped and ran for his life, and while he was being chased by the king's men, Zachariah in his helplessness ordered a tree in front of him to split, and he entered into it,
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and the tree once again resumed its original form with Zachariah accommodated in it. But Satan, the avowed enemy of man, who had no hold upon God's selected ones like Zachariah, to beguile them, caused a corner of Zachariah's cloth to protrude out of the tree. When the king's men were in search of Zachariah, Satan in the form of a man led them to the tree, and pointing out the bit of Zachariah's cloth peeping out of the tree, suggested to them to kill Zachariah, cutting the tree into two parts with a saw which he (Satan) himself devised for them. When Zachariah felt himself getting cut along with the trunk of the tree, a voice came saying: "Beware, oh Zachariah if thou raised any noise or complaint, thy name will be removed from the list of the patient ones." Zachariah got himself quietly cut without raising the least noise of grief or pain. Yahya was slain, his blood was thrown into a well, and his head presented to the king. The well began to flow out blood so profusely that however much the people filled it with earth, the gush of the blood from the well did not cease, and the earth thrown into the well rose up into a mound covering the mouth of the well." (374)

In Al-Mizan, his monumental commentary on the Qur'an,

Allamah Tabataba'i says:

"... Allah gave him (Zakariyya, Zechariah) a son, Yahya - the prophet most similar to Isa (Jesus) (peace be on both); he was given all the qualities of perfection and excellence which Isa and his Truthful mother, Maryam (the Virgin Mary) were granted. It was

for this reason that Allah named him Yahya and sent him to verify a word from Allah, and made him honourable and chaste as well as a prophet, from among the good ones. As will be explained later, it was the nearest that any man could resemble Maryam and her son Isa, peace be on them all."

"... Allah therefore gave Yahya, to the utmost possible extent, all the qualities and attributes given to Maryam and Isa. The attributes of Maryam had fully

blossomed in Isa; and Yahya was made to resemble Isa

As completely and perfectly as was possible. Yet Isa had precedence of Yahya, because his creation and birth was firmly decreed long before the prayer of Zakariyya for Yahya was accepted. That is why Isa was given superiority over Yahya, and made an ulu l-azam apostle, bringing a new shariah (law) and a new book (the

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Gospel, called "Injil" in Arabic, from the Greek

"*Euangelion*", which is also the origin of the Medieval Latin "*Evangelium*"). Apart from such necessary dissimilarities, Yahya and Isa resembled each other to the maximum extent possible." (375)

The parallels between Iranian Shi'ism on the one hand and Spanish Catholicism and Russian Orthodoxy on the other is a topic far too vast to fully treat here. The resemblance between them is indeed uncanny.

In 1980 on a store front on the Calle Real, main shopping street in the city of La Corunya in Galicia in Northwestern Spain I saw the following *graffito* (singular of "*graffiti*") in rather ungrammatical Gallego-Portuguese:

Chiita na escola.

The above *graffito* literally means "Shi'ite in the school". Since this does not make much sense, one may assume that the author was someone from La Coruna whose everyday language is Castilian

("Spanish"), but as a good Gallego (native of Galicia) believes that he should write and express himself in Gallego-Portuguese, the regional language, though his Gallego-Portuguese be deficient in spelling and grammar. Firstly, *Chiita* is the Castilian Spanish way of saying "Shi'ite", as the "SH" sound does not exist in modern Castilian Spanish. Said sound **DOES** exist in Gallego-Portuguese, and is written: "X". Therefore, "Shi'ite" in Gallego-Portuguese would be written: *Xiita* or *Xi'ita*. Also, *Chiita na escola* or *Xiita na escola* literally means: "Shi'ite in the school", which does not make much sense. No doubt the unknown

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author of said graffito meant to say: *Xiismo na escola* or *Xi'ismo na escola*, which means: "Shi'ism in the school". This expression in Castilian would be: *Chiismo en las escuelas* or *Chi'ismo en las escuelas*.

What did the author of the above-mentioned graffito have in mind? Why did he want Shi'ism taught in the schools? Almost certainly he was a devout, traditional Spanish Catholic very dismayed by the changes in the Catholic Church since Council Vatican II, and with the moral degeneracy he saw around him, believed that it was "time to stop the rot", and that Shi'ism was less infected by Modernity than is Catholicism. To put it another way, the author of the graffito was a traditional Catholic Spaniard who, for reasons he could probably not articulate, felt an instinctive affinity with Iranian Shi'ism. The same was no doubt true of a great many Hispano-Muslims, who as Spaniards of

Iberian, Celtic and Visigothic blood, felt an instinctive affinity with Iranian Shi'ism.

A Jesuit once told me:

"Catholicism is one, but Catholicity is extremely varied".

In other words, any great religion which comes to include people of a variety of cultures and ethnic groups is bound to acquire distinct particular characteristics in different times and places.

In the Eastern Orthodox Church the above is candidly recognized: hence we have Greek Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox,

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Bulgarian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Rumanian Orthodox, Georgian Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, et cetera.

As we have seen, at least since the 12th century, and no doubt earlier, it has been noted repeatedly that Shi'a islam has many special affinities with traditional Catholicism and Eastern Orthodox (particularly Russian Orthodox) Christianity.

Spanish Catholicism has particular characteristics which give it a special rapport with Shi'ism above and beyond the general Shi'a-Catholic affinities. This is easily explained historically, as we have said throughout this chapter.

The reader may well ask why in this chapter especially I devote so much space to Russia and Ukraine and to the Russian Orthodox Church, which first glance might seem to have little relation to our main topic. Below is the answer:

The Russian Orthodox Church also has particular characteristics which give it a special rapport with Shi'ism above

and beyond the general Shi'a Eastern Orthodox affinities. It is for this reason that in this book I have devoted so much space to Russia and Ukraine and to the Russian Orthodox Church.

Certainly the story of Sts. Boris and Gleb, the martyrs of Kievan Russia, and the story of the Tsarevich Dmitri, on which we dwelt at length earlier in this chapter, would touch the hearts of both a devout Shi'a Muslim and a devout Spanish Catholic. The Russian Orthodox and Spanish Catholic Easter certainly evoke Ashura. Following the advice of my professor of creative writing at the University of Miami of Ohio and good personal friend the

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late Walter Havighurst, on this point I have tried to follow his favorite precept: **Do not tell, show.**

It is also evident that, when speaking of Muslim-Christian dialogue, the ideal spokesman from the Christian side would be either a mystically-oriented Spanish Catholic or a mystically oriented Russian Orthodox believer, while from the Muslim side the ideal spokesman would be a Sufi-oriented Shi'a.

In a personal communication, my good friend Seyyed Hossein Nasr told me:

'You are completely right in emphasizing the unique rapport between Shi'ism and Sufism on the one hand and certain elements of Spanish Catholicism and Russian Orthodoxy on the other.'

Nina Podmoshenskaya was the mother of Gleb Podmoshensky, today the beloved Fr. Herman, who, sadly, died recently. He never failed to send me a greeting at Christmas and Easter. Rest in peace with God, Fr. Herman! Monk Dasmacene Christenson speaks of

Nina Podmoshenskaya:

"Having lived on Russia both before and after the Revolution, she (Nina Podmoshenskaya) provided a firsthand description of how a nihilistic society manifests itself, producing subhumanity. Eugene (Eugene Rose, later Fr. Seraphim) asked her detailed questions about the Soviet judicial and prison systems. Not only had her husband been imprisoned, but her father and her 20-year-old brother had as well. Her father had lost all his hair and her brother all his teeth within a week due to the terrible conditions of the Vologda prisons; and the ruthless Soviet agents - mere hooligans trained specifically in sadism - had even shot the family dog after they had come to take away her husband.

Nothing gave Nina greater pleasure than to pour out her rich life experience before such an avid listener as Eugene (Rose), speaking in her native

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tongue (Russian) with dramatic force garnered from her Fokine (Mikhail Fokine, great choreographer of pre-Soviet Russia) ancestry.

'He absorbs it like a sponge', she told (her son) Gleb, again likening Eugene to the fertile ground of the Gospel (*Injil*) parable. She did not limit her discourse to the horrors of Communism - which to her was nothing less than a Satanocracy - but spoke just as emphatically about the glories of pre-Revolutionary Russia. 'You wouldn't believe it, she would say. 'Everywhere there were churches, sometimes three on a block! Huge churches of all kinds, of bright colors. Rich benefactors would build one in memory of a loved one, or a community would build one in honor of some miracle. All over you would see shining cupolas. In the morning hundreds of bells would be ringing, calling people to prayer and making the whole atmosphere of the city light and joyful. And there were holy shrines all over, too, with *lampadas* (icon lamps) burning all day and night before holy icons. People would often stop in the middle of their daily tasks to venerate them and say a prayer.'

Being from a high-society, cultured family, Nina (Podmoshenskaya) had not appreciated these religious manifestations while in the old country; it was only after she had seen her son (Gleb) 'born again' as an Orthodox Christain that she had come to realize their value. Before, she had been taught to view Russian Orthodoxy as the mere 'religion of (house) maids and cooks'. Now she recalled how her family cook in Russia had, after putting food in the oven, gone to church every morning. When he returned to serve the meal, Nina said, he emanated a deep spiritual peace that had a calming effect on the entire household: 'It was like

being in the presence of a real saint. And he was just an ordinary layman; people like him were quite common. 'How great was Holy Russia.'" (376)

Let one thing be perfectly clear: though I utterly hate, loathe and detest the Soviet Regime, I have only great reverence for 'Holy Russia'; in other words, I hate Communism, but I love Holy Russia. Some people may find a paradox here, where in fact there is none. As Frere Michel de la Sainte Trinite said:

"One of the first important truths which must be established, under pain of dangerously deceiving ourselves concerning Russia and Communism is that the
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Bolshevik Revolution is not Russian, as (Alexandr) Solzhenitsyn has never tired of demonstrating to the West, which has voluntarily blinded itself on this point."

As the Abbe de Nantes, the spiritual father of Frere Michel de la Sainte Trinite noted in the May, 1976 issue of his newsletter "*La Contre-Reforme Catholique*":

"The Bolshevik phenomenon developed like a cancer on the body of 'Holy Russia'. It remains totally foreign to it. Neither the (Russian) Orthodox religion nor the Slavic tradition have the least affinity with its inhuman dialectic."

Karl Marx was a north German of a Jewish - in fact rabbinical - family that had converted to Protestantism, while Friederich Engels was also a north German but of a totally Protestant background. In other words, Communism is a north German, Jewish-German and Protestant German, ideology with nothing Russian nor Slavic nor Eastern Orthodox Christian about it. It would never, but never, have arisen in Russia. Also, there is obviously nothing Catholic about Communism. Hitler noted that the Catholic Church is not only un-German but anti-German (though not necessarily un-

Austrian nor anti-Austrian), contemptuously defining it as "Latin-Slav". So, Bolshevism or Communism was a Jewish-German and Protestant-German cancer which was implanted in the body of Holy Russia. There is no contradiction whatever in hating Bolshevism or Communism and at the same time loving Holy Russia, as Alexandr Solzhenitsyn never tired of pointing out. So, I hate Communism, but love Holy Russia.

One of the objectives of the Soviet Regime was to

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collectivize agriculture, to force all independent peasants and farmers onto huge collective farms where they became, in effect, slaves of the state. Of course, this was far from popular, particularly in the valley of the River Volga and in Ukraine.

Says Timothy Snyder:

"The rural societies of Soviet Ukraine were still, for the most part, religious societies. Many of the young and ambitious, those swayed by official communist atheism, had left for the big Ukrainian cities or for Moscow or Leningrad. Though their Orthodox Church had been suppressed by the atheist communist regime, the peasants were still Christian believers, and many understood the contrast with the collective farm as a pact with the devil. Some believed that Satan had come to earth in human form as a (communist) party activist, his collective farm register a book of Hell, promising torment and damnation. The new Machine Tractor Stations looked like the outposts of Gehenna (Hell). Some Polish peasants in Ukraine, Roman Catholics, also saw collectivization in apocalyptic terms. One Pole explained to his son why they would not join the collective farm: "I do not want to sell my soul to the devil." Understanding this religiosity, party activists propagated what they called Stalin's First Commandment: the collective farm supplies first the state, and only then the people. As the peasants would have known, the First Commandment in its biblical form reads: "Thou shalt have no other god before me." (377)

The Soviet Union was indeed a Satanocracy, one of the

multitude of proofs of the absolute truth of the Spanish proverb:

"He who does not accept God as his Lord will have Satan as his tyrant."

People who know me well say that I have a mentality which is medieval and not modern, rural and not urban, that I am at base still a peasant, that I still have a peasant mindset. To this I answer, as we say in Spanish, "*Y a mucha honra*", i.e., And very proud of it." I completely understand the mindset of the

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Ukrainian peasants of whom Timothy Snyder speaks in his book Bloodlands.

Monk Damascene continues:

"As a Russian, Fr. Herman (born Gleb Podmoshensky) felt reverence, awe and some inferiority before the refined Byzantine-Greek culture which had given Russia its Orthodoxy. Not so with Fr. Seraphim (born Eugene Rose): he much preferred Russian culture. One can find two reasons for this. In the first place, Russia had been the last great protector of the Orthodox world view, the continuation of the Byzantine model of Christian society; it had been the seat of the "Third Rome" which had restrained the power of the Antichrist (*Dajjal* in Islamic terms) until the martyrdom of the last Tsar; and, through such thinkers as Dostoyevsky and Kireyevsky, it had nurtured a profound Orthodox philosophy of life and history in the face of worldwide apostasy. Secondly, Fr. Seraphim loved Russia for the profound suffering that its people had endured in his own times, lighting sparks of humble martyrdom and persevering confession from the Arctic Circle to the scorching desert. There were times when Fr. Seraphim would weep on beholding old Russian women kneeling and praying fervently in church. In these old *babushka-s* (grandmothers) he saw vestiges of a glorious past: the dying breed of Russian exiles who remembered Russia as once she had been, genuinely suffering together with those in their faraway homeland.

Fr. Seraphim believed that, by learning how their co-believers in Communist countries struggled against the open enemies of their Faith, Orthodox Christians in the free world could gain courage to fight their own battles against worldliness, and also to endure when

more violent persecutions come to the West as well (and they will if the Liberals have their way; this has already happened in Spain and Mexico). He was convinced that the New Russian Martyrs, whose numbers far exceeded those of the early Christian martyrs, comprised the most important phenomenon of the 20th century; and he felt their story had to be told. 'As I see it', he wrote in a letter of 1970, 'there are two great gifts that God has given people today: in the Soviet World, the difficult gift of suffering, which by God's grace will probably be the salvation of Russia; and in the free world, the gift of freedom - to speak and witness the truth and tell what is going on. How poorly this (last) gift is being used among us - and how soon, perhaps, it will be taken from us (as it will

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if the Liberals have their way). While there is daylight, we must speak out.'" (378)

A poem written by Fyodor Tyutchev (died 1864):

These poor villages which stand
Amidst a nature sparse, austere-
O beloved Russian land,
Long to pine and persevere!

The foreigner's disdainful gaze
Will never understand nor see
The light that shines in secret rays
Upon your bare humility.

Dear native land! While carrying
The Cross and struggling to pass through,
In slavish image Heaven's King
Has walked across you, blessing you.

The Soviet Regime was a Liberal's dream. Lenin passed the mother of all "hate crime laws"; he made anti-Semitism a crime deserving the death penalty (this law was, of course, immediately rescinded by Stalin when he took power). Also, the Soviet Regime persecuted all religions equally, or very nearly so, it did not discriminate. Of course, in absolute numbers it was the Eastern Orthodox believers who produced the largest harvest of martyrs, as they were the large majority in the old Russian Empire. However, in proportion to their numbers in the Soviet Union, Catholics

(both Latin Rite and Eastern Rite) and Muslims produced even more martyrs than did the Orthodox. Very few Protestants were martyred by the Soviet Regime; the communists were aware that they were collaborators and kindred spirits, fellow travelers on the road to atheism. However, let us be honest. Catholics and Muslims had the support of many millions of fellow believers outside the Communist world, while the Russian (and Georgian) Orthodox Church suffered

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alone, having only relatively few exiles and émigrés scattered over the world to weep for it. Only the Russian (and Georgian) Orthodox Church faced literal extinction at the hands of the Soviet Regime. In proportion to its total numbers worldwide, it was the Russian Orthodox Church which suffered most at the hands of the Soviet regime, and by a large margin. As Solzhenitsyn put it, the Russian Land spent seventy years on the Cross. In the 20th century the Russian Orthodox Church was indeed the Church of Martyrs.

There is something very Russian in all this. Recall the scene from the novel The Brothers Karamazov by Fyodor Dostoyevsky in which Fr. Zossima falls down before Dmitri Karamazov and embraces his ankles. Dmitri was taken aback, because, though a believer, he had never thought of himself as any sort of saint. Seeing Dmitri's puzzlement, Fr. Zossima says: "Because you have suffered much." We have dealt with this aspect of Russian Orthodoxy, i.e., the prominence given to redemptive suffering; recall the term *strastoterptsy*, meaning "passion bearers".

For obvious reasons the majority of those martyred by the

Soviet Regime were Orthodox Christians, but a great many Catholics and a huge number of Muslims were also martyred by the godless murderers of the Soviet Regime.

Many grossly ignorant and stupid Protestants believe that the Era of Persecutions ended in the 4th century AD with the ascension of Constantine the great to the office of Emperor, a gross error of which even the most unlettered Catholic or Eastern

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Orthodox Christian would never be guilty.

The above blythely ignores the savage antireligious persecutions of the French Revolution; even worse, it ignores the antireligious persecutions of the Soviet Regime, which dwarfed the butcher's bill of the anti-Christian persecutions of the Pagan Roman Emperors. The 20th century has produced vastly more martyrs than were victims during the 1st - 4th centuries AD.

Recently there appeared a book which was immediately a runaway best seller in Russia. Said book is Faith & Humor by Maya Kucherskaya. Ms. Kucherskaya's book loosely follows the ancient Russian tradition of the *paterik*, of which we have given some examples. Says Sergey Chuprynin in his foreword to Ms. Kucherskaya's book:

"I'm convinced that this idea could not have emerged fifteen or twenty years ago, at a time when even the Bible couldn't be found easily here, when the few existing monks and only slightly more numerous priests seemed if not dissidents or great heroes, then at least deserters from the battlefield of socialist construction. It wasn't the government alone that held this view, and as a result an impenetrable wall separated the Church from society and private life.

That time is now past. It may be too early to speak of a revival of the Orthodox spirit in the nation, but there are numerous signs in daily life attesting to the

fact that the Church is becoming for many a source of inspiration. The number of churches, religious shops, Orthodox publishers, candle factories and Sunay Schools is multiplying. Young and old Russians (and Ukrainians) bake Easter cakes, color eggs (especially in Ukraine), and come to church to get apples blessed for Easter. Beggars in underground passages in the city have shed their camouflage fatigues, donning cassocks in order to receive more alms. Priests now bless offices, dachas, cars and even, one hears, personal computers.

In a single decade, serving the Lord has ceased being something totally exotic and has become, so to

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speak, an ordinary profession. If we count not only monks and priests, but sextons, sacristans, church wardens and many others who come together for meals around the refectory table, and add to this number the members of their households, it will turn out that tens of thousands, and perhaps hundreds of thousands actively participate in the life of the Church." (379)

Says Maya Kucherskaya in the preface to her book:

"This book was written over a period of many years. The early stories date from around 1990, while the most recent ones were finished 15 years later.

The book is also a product of a new era in Russian life, that period during which it was written was also an era marked by the rebirth of the Church.

The Russian Orthodox faith is a distinct branch of Christianity (or, perhaps more precisely, Christendom). Formed originally under the influence of Byzantium, the Russian Church gradually evolved into a separate, original, immense and complex world. It comprised holy men of the sort described by Fyodor Dostoyevsky in The Brothers Karamazov, hundreds of monasteries and convents, churches, Processions of the Cross and intercessionary public prayers for rain or a bountiful harvest. For most Russians for most of the nation's history, life was hard and poor, and the Church offered a crucial respite: attending services showed people a different sort of life, bright and beautiful and bearing little resemblance to their everyday routine. The light of the candles was a sharp contrast to the gloom of the *izba*.

It was a colorful, festive world formed over many centuries. And it was almost completely destroyed by the communists. Thousands of priests and monks were executed, died in camps or were sent into exile. Hundreds of churches (and mosques) were dynamited and atheism became the official state creed. Growing up, we were constantly told that there was no God and there could be none. Only a handful of churches remained open

and even they functioned only under close KGB supervision. To be an openly worshipping believer became all but impossible. Still, a genuine life in the spirit endured in some places: holy men lived in remote towns, usually after serving long terms in labor camps. People would come to see them and to ask their advice. But it was a secret, semi-clandestine life.

Then came *perestroika*. After 70 years of oppression, everything changed once more.

Churches and monasteries were reopened and priests suddenly began to appear on television and even in

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university lecture halls. The Bible was sold openly. In the early 1990s, people literally flooded the churches, getting baptized one after another and seeking a new life. It was a special, romantic era, a time of hope and revival in the Church. The tree of Christianity sprang a new, fresh, living branch.

Nevertheless, those who joined the Church at that time were neophytes, yesterday's atheists with no experience of religious life, no examples to follow. Some were overly enthusiastic and made plenty of mistakes; the revived Russian Orthodox Church surely had its share of boorishness, hypocrisy and misinterpretation of the Christian commandments.

I too joined the Church at that time, along with many of my friends. I went on pilgrimages to newly reopened monasteries and to visit monks and priests. Soon, there were so many emotions engendered by what I had seen, heard and felt, that I was literally drowning in them. I felt the need to pour them out, to express them and thus to try to make sense of them.

One of the consequences of the 70-year break in our traditions was that we had lost our language for discussing Church matters. There was no linguistic tradition that I could harness and which might carry me along, because modern Russian literature did not have a way of describing the life of the spirit, church services and the lives of monks and priests. Over the previous 70 years, there had been tons of novels, novellas and short stories about love, family, social classes and relations on the factory floor or at a research institute, but not a single work about the Church.

Nevertheless, I took the risk of putting pen to paper and writing my first short vignette: "They were all supping around the refectory table. Suddenly Father Theoprepus got down under the table..." Then I wrote another, and a third. Short vignettes began to spring from my pen as if of their own accord, their literary form resembling that of ancient *Paterika*. A *Paterikon* is a collection of moral tales about Christian fathers, an extremely old genre that had been popular in religious

circles since the Middle Ages. My stories combined a wide variety of impressions of the church and church life.

It should be said that this book contains stories about several real clerics, but for the most part it is a work of fiction. Nevertheless, everything in this Paterikon is a true reflection of something I have heard or observed. In short, this is literature supplemented with a few snapshots from real life.

Month by month and year by year my vignettes
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continued to multiply. Finally they added up to a complete volume. In the end, the book turned out to be an epic about Russian Orthodox believers. It is by turns multicolored, ironic, pious, enthusiastic, grim, sad and joyful. In other words, as diverse as the life of the Church or life in general.

When my Paterikon was published in Russia, it created something of a sensation. Many people felt terribly insulted. "A cannibal priest? An atheist priest? It's blasphemy, that's what it is," they said. At one convent, the book was burned at the stake. Meanwhile, at a seminary in another small town, my Paterikon was added to the curriculum that helps future priests understand problems within the Church. My greatest surprise, however, was that so many people outside the Orthodox Church read this book, and with great interest. They too laughed and cried. So far, the book has been through six printings in Russia.

My great hope is that English-speaking readers will see this book not merely as a window into the mysterious Russian soul or a collection of amusing anthropological facetiae about priests (even though it is, in part, both of these things) but as a story about people who ardently believe in something and who carry this belief out into the real world."(380)

Ms. Kucherskaya continues:

'The reverend father (Nicholas) often repeated, "He who does not recognize the Church as his Mother, does not have the Lord as his Father."(381)

"There was once a monk who suffered from depression. He fought against it in every way he could, but he couldn't beat it. Yet outwardly he seemed to be the happiest man alive. He told jokes and laughed all the time. Only in the final year of his life did he become sad and quiet. He no longer suffered from depression and didn't need to tell jokes. He grew weak and died. During his funeral service the church filled with a sweet odor, so that many thought that lilacs had suddenly begun to bloom. This was because Father Basil

had defeated the Devil." (382)

"When he was four years old, Father Paul was sent to the St. Athanasius of Mologa Convent, to his grandmother and his aunts, who lived there as nuns. He stayed with them so as not to burdeb his familt, which was poor. At first he did simple chores, collecting thick branches for firewood and looking after chickens, but eventually he started performing more difficult
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tasks.

One day Father Paul was carrying a barrel of honey from the convent's beehive. The nuns were not supposed to have any honey, but they were young and worked hard in the fields and in the garden, and they were always hungry. Still, the Mother Superior kept a strict watch over the honey and didn't allow the nuns to have any. But Father Paul, although he was still a very little boy, already felt compassion for everyone. When he returned to the convent, he found a rat in a rat trap. He took a clean rag, wiped it on the inner walls of the barrel and smeared the honey onto the rat.

Then he ran to the Mother Superior.

"Reverend Mother, I don't know what to do. Look, a rat drowned in the honey," he shouted. He held up the rat by its tail, letting a clear drop of honey fall from its muzzle.

The Mother Superior was mad:

"I don't want this ratty barrel of honey anywhere near my convent. Take it wherever you like, only as far away as possible."

The nuns were very grateful to the boy and kissed and hugged him.

But that was not the end of the story.

Little Paul was ashamed of himself for deceiving the Mother Superior. He went to confession and revealed to the priest his great secret about the honey and the rat.

The priest's brow darkened.

"Paul, your sin is very grave," he said. "But if you get me a small pot of honey, God will forgive you, because you have repented sincerely and because you're kind."

Paul brought a pot of honey to the priest and fel great joy in his heart. He felt as though a heavy burden had fallen from his shoulders. The Lord had forgiveb his sin." (383)

"Once, Father Paul had to spend time in the hospital. He had surgery and it had been unsuccessful. By the, Father Paul was nearly blind. He became despondent. He lay in his room, old, blind and depressed. It was the first time in his life that such a

thing had happened to him. He had been tortured and beaten and starved, but he had never despaired. But now he felt despair gnawing on his soul.

All of a sudden, the doors opened and several men came into his room. They wore mantles and black cassocks.

"Look who is here to visit you," said one of them.

Father Paul raised his head and recognized all the
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monks he had met in jail and in the labor camp, who had been tortured to death or killed and who had been dead for many years. Such were the visitors who came to see him at the local hospital. Father Paul could see them clearly, their faces and every fold of their cassocks.

"Father Paul", one of them said, "It is not fit for a monk to fall into despair."

Then they filed out quietly. As to Father Paul, he immediately regained his spirit and never again despaired." (384)

"Father Artemius graduated with a degree in philology from Moscow State University, which is named after the great Russian scholar and educator Mikhail Vasilievich Lomonosov. Whenever the priest opens his mouth, silky soft grasses spread upon the ground, sweet-smelling flowers bow their heads, young leaves dripping with sap cling to their branches in silent admiration, birds in heaven fold their wings and fall silent, daring not to go on with their wonderfully sweet songs, wild beasts, thick of fur and long of tail, freeze mid-stride and sniff the air, pricking their ears in awestruck surprise, and creatures of the sea lay motionless, moving their tails ever so slightly as they emit tiny air bubbles. Humans record the priest's sermons on tape and video cassette recorders and print his books in the thousands. But some were bewildered and rubbed their temples. Trying to grasp his meaning.

"It's very simple," an admiring member of his congregation said. "Our reverend father is under a lot of pressure and he is very busy. He has forgotten plain Russian words and is using only Old Russian ones, because at the university he used to get straight As, both in Old Russian and Church Slavonic. It would be better if we had a translator for him. For instance, when our reverend father says: 'Be it known to Thee that Thou hast to shake from the soles of Thine shoes the dust of atheism even as Thou sheddest pride and dangerous self-regard,' he simply means that we must give up our sinful ways. See how simple it is? Nothing to puzzle over." (385)

"One pregnant woman often fell ill. She got one disease, then another and then a third. She suffered terribly. The doctors said to her: "You must have an

abortion immediately, or else you will give birth to an idiot."

Her family was also distressed and they said, "think of it. You will have a retarded child. Where will it live? We have no room for it."

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Indeed. They were a large family sharing a two-room apartment.

But the woman was stubborn. Her clever relatives encouraged her to talk to Father Alexander, because they knew him to be an open-minded and modern priest, not your typical obscurantist cleric. He spoke foreign languages and read books. He held scientific notions in high regard - so they hoped he would encourage her to have an abortion.

The woman came to see Father Alexander and explained to him her problem. Father Alexander said: "If you give birth to an idiot, it will be an idiot that you'll love."

She had a son and he was not an idiot at all. In fact, he is grown now and attends university." (386)

"Once upon a time there were two novices, Ira and Lena. They were best friends, and had been since sixth grade. Together they started attending the Petrochemical Institute, together they became disillusioned with it all, and together they took the veil. They were placed in different cells, but they remained friends, even though a little less than before. They no longer had much time on their hands and, besides, friendships at the convent were not encouraged.

One day Ira grew sad. And so did Lena. They slipped away to a grocery store located not far from their convent and bought two bottles of vodka. They put one aside for later use and decided to drink the second one right away. They met after vespers in the showers, having told their sisters that they wanted to wash. They spread a newspaper on a bench, got out bread, a can of salmon which they also purchased at the store, and two plastic cups. They untapped the bottle, poured the first glass and drank. But the vodka had a strange taste, Ira thought. And so did Lena. They poured another glass but something definitely was wrong. Ira was the first to see what the problem was. Despite the label and the golden cup, the bottle was filled with ordinary water. They had purchased fake, counterfeit vodka.

But the Devil, the father of perdition, wasn't napping. He had laid his trap cleverly and with skill. The two novices promptly went to fetch the second bottle, which was very easy to do, since their hiding place was also near the showers. But the second bottle also contained nothing but water, which tasted a bit like "holy Springs" brand water. There was nothing else

to drink.

Only then did the scales fall from their eyes and
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the young women began to shed the bitter tears of remorse, soon to be followed by the joyful tears of gratitude to the All-Merciful Lord, who had saved them from committing a sacrilege and a sin. After that, they never let a drop of alcohol pass their lips." (387)

"Novice Nastia Arbatova started to gain weight. Five months later the truth came out. It was too late for remorse. Nor was abortion an option. Nastia stopped going out and pretended to be ill. She was afraid to go to the Abbess because their Abbess was extremely strict. But such things could not stay hidden for long in a convent. No doubt someone had already informed the Abbess, but for some reason the Abbess had not yet summoned Nastia; she agonized while her girth continued to expand.

Finally, the young woman could bear it no longer and went to the Mother Superior's office. The Hegumenia barely glanced at her and asked, "What are you planning to do?"

Nastia sobbed and wiped her tears with her fist.

"Did you find a midwife yet? How are you going to raise the child?"

Nastia said nothing.

The Hegumenia imposed a penance on her.

"You will have to leave the convent. When you have the baby, I want you to raise it as a Christian. We will help you with money."

Nastia shook her head but the Mother Superior went on, "Do not refuse. It is my fault, too. I failed in my duty to protect you and it is my foremost debt to the Lord. We will have to support you both. When your child comes of age, he or she will have to take vows in your place. This is my penance on you. Do you understand?"

Nastia understood, thanked the Hegumenia and promised to do as she had been told.

She had nowhere to go, for she was an orphan from a family of refugees. She settled in a small town not far from the convent.

Soon she gave birth to a boy, and an amazing boy he was. From a very early age his favorite game was to play church. He pretended to be a deacon. His second passion was for books. He loved reading about history and biology. On the Abbess' orders, the convent supported Nastia financially, so that mother and son did not want. There was peace in their small household and every Sunday they attended services at their local church. Nastia adored her Alyosha. The older he got, the more deeply she loved him. She feared that her son would one day find out about her promise to make him a monk. She

had no wish to send him away to a monastery.
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She wanted to be a grandmother and to play with her grandchildren. She wanted to have a normal life.

Time went on. The boy was about to graduate from high school and he was attending a tutorial college in Vladimir, where he commuted twice a week from the town. Soon Nastia found out that the Hegumenia who had imposed the penance on her had died. She felt as though a heavy stone had fallen from her chest.

But when Alyosha turned seventeen, one day after graduation, he rose from the dinner table, bowed to his mother and asked her for her blessing to become a novice at a monastery.

Nastia went cold with horror. How had he found out about her penance? Had somebody been talking?

"Who told you about it?"

"Nobody told me anything," replied Alyosha. "I want to be a monk."

Then Nastia revealed to him her terrible secret and her penance. Which she had kept secret from him for so many years. Alyosha smiled gently at her.

"It is the Hegumenia's blessing," he said.

A week later he left for a remote monastery, which had recently been reconsecrated. Nastia, still a relatively young woman, never returned to the convent. It was not to be her path in life, after all. She moved to a village not far from Alyosha's monastery, where she lived long enough to see him wear an Archbishop's mantle and she passed away quietly, at peace with herself and the Lord." (388)

"you see, Reverend Father,, a novice once said to the confessor at a convent. "I'm bored at the convent. I started to dance at the age of four and I almost became a ballerina. When I took the veil, I threw away my ballet slippers and my tutu, as well as all the photographs which showed me dancing. Yet now I have such a strong desire to dance."

The priest said nothing to the novice, but a month later, on her name day (her patron saint's day), he gave her a gift of pink satin slippers and a real tutu.

The novice was overjoyed. She tried on her new slippers and they fit her perfectly.

"When you think of your past," said the priest, "and you get the desire to stand in third position or sixth position, I give you my blessing to put on your slippers and your tutu and to dance as much as you wish. You can use the conference hall. Get the key from Mother Eustaphia."

After that, the novice lost all desire to dance. She never asked for the key to the conference hall. She put her slippers and the tutu away in the corner of her

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trunk and didn't think of them for months on end. But every year, on the evening of her old name day (she had by then become a nun and had taken a different name), she would open the lid, look at the priest's gifts and remember his warmth and infinite love, and she would pray for the soul of Hieromonk Adrianus, because the priest had long since passed away."

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"There once were two seminary students, Cyril and Vitya. They went to school together and together they hated the communists. They read underground *samizdat* kiterature and admired Father John of Kronstadt and prayed to the martyred Russian Emperor Nikolai II, in secret of course, keeping a strict fast on July 17, the anniversary of his execution. Everything was clear to them and their life was uncomplicated. Eventually, the boys got married, and each was best man at the other's wedding. Soon they were both ordained as priests. [Note: in the Eastern Orthodox Church, a married man may be ordained as a priest, but once ordained, if not already married, he is not allowed to marry. However, a bishop is not allowed to be married. This is the reason that most Eastern Orthodox bishops come from the monasteries, as monks are forbidden to marry.] Father Victor was sent to a parish near Moscow, while Father Cyril went to a remote place in the Moscow region, to a church that had been abandoned for a long time. Father Victor became the third priest at his parish, whereas Father Cyril became the parish priest.

Both were happy. Father Victor commuted to his church from Moscow by bus. He was easy-going and accessible and had a gift for speaking smoothly and clearly. He was compassionate and kind and soon earned the affection of his congregation. He was also on good terms with his superiors and, when the parish priest at his church died, it was natural enough that he would take his place. Moreover, he turned out to have a knack for building. He had an excellent house built for his deacons, where a charity meal was served every Sunday." (390)

Recently a most interesting book was published, I refer to Russian Orthodoxy Resurgent by John Garrard & Carol Garrard. Below is the prologue:

"On August 19, 1987, Pimen, the patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, and Demetrios I, the ecumenical

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patriarch of Constantinople, jointly celebrated the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Transfiguration at the Cathedral of the Dormition in the Trinity-St. Sergius Monastery which is located a few miles northeast of Moscow. It was the first visit of a patriarch of Constantinople to Russia in almost 400 years. In January 1589 Patriarch Jeremias II visited Moscow to elevate the status of the Moscow metropolitan to patriarch. No longer the daughter, the Church of Russia would be the sister to the Orthodox Church of Constantinople, which was obviously hoping for support from the rising power of Orthodox Russia. On the way back to his see, Jeremias II died. His death symbolized Constantinople's declining influence, which had been shrinking since 1453 when the Ottoman Turks captured the city and renamed it Istanbul. The Orthodox congregation of the premier patriarch dwindled further over the ensuing centuries. By 1987 the patriarch of Constantinople, a courtesy title permitted by the Turks, was shepherd to only about two thousand souls. Meanwhile, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), which Jeremias had officially raised to patriarchal status, continued to grow in power and prestige until it suffered its own hostile takeover by militantly atheist Bolsheviks after the October Revolution of 1917.

The 1987 co-celebration, in ways unanticipated by anyone, including the celebrants themselves, also heralded fundamental change for the Church. It signaled a *perestroika* in faith a full four years before the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union on December 25, 1991.

Although the invitation had been issued in the name of Patriarch Pimen, everyone knew that Mikhail Gorbachev, president of the Soviet Union and general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) since March 1985, made the decision. Gorbachev thought the Church might become an ally in his campaign to modernize the country, to make it work more efficiently, and to raise the moral tone, thus bringing about a decline in the widespread corruption that characterized Soviet society. According to the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, the ROC hoped that Demetrius's visit would promote "inter-Christian dialogues, participation in the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical movement as a whole," and "closer cooperation" between the two churches in "their efforts to establish on Earth a just and lasting peace." Neither Gorbachev nor the ROC achieved hoped-for objectives. In fact, even after accepting the invitation, Demetrius I failed to attend the 1988 celebration to mark the thousand-year anniversary of

the Christianization of the Eastern Slavs, or, as the Russians (and Ukrainians) call it, "the Baptism of Rus" (Church Slavonic: *Kreshchenie Rusi*).

The 1987 service conducted jointly by the two patriarchs took place in what is known as *Sergiev Posad*, literally "Sergei's Abode". During Soviet times, the monastery complex disappeared from the map; it was simply renamed "Zagorsk". Sergei of Radonezh (1314-1392), the future St. Sergei (canonized 1422) founded it in 1337 while still a young man. In a great explosion of monastic expansion in the 14th and 15th centuries, it hived off other communities organized according to his standards and rules. The mother house itself became the seat of icon painting and the spiritual heart of Russia.

In 1380 Sergiev Posad witnessed one of the great turning points of Russian history. The account written by monks in the medieval Chronicles retains its emotional impact to this day:

'A rumor spread that Khan Mamay was raising a large army as a punishment for our sins and that with all his heathen Tatar hordes he would invade Russian soil. The puissant and reigning prince, who held the scepter of all Russia, great Dmitri [Prince Dmitri Ivanovich Donskoy, 1350-1389], having a great faith in the saint [Sergei], came to ask him if he counseled him to go against the heathen. The saint, bestowing on him his blessing, and strengthened by prayer, said to him:

'It behooves you, lord, to have a care for the lives of the flock committed to you by God. Go forth against the heathen; and upheld by the strong arm of God, conquer; and return to your country sound in health, and glorify God with loud praise.'

Dmitri and all his armies were filled with a spirit of temerity and went into battle against the pagans. They fought; many fell; but God was with them, and helped the great and invincible Dmitri, who vanquished the ungodly Tatars. The Grand Duke Dmitri returned to his country with great joy in his heart, and hastened to visit holy, venerable Sergei. Rendering thanks for the prayers of the saint and of the brotherhood, he gave a rich offering to the monastery.'

Russians credit Donskoy's 1380 victory at Kulikovo over Khan Mamay as a watershed in Russian history marking the beginning of their release from the long years of

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the "Tatar yoke" (*Tatarskoe igo*). The victory gave rise to the proverbial saying that separate forces from

principalities northeast of Rus (the ancient name for Russia) came to the battlefield of Kulikovo, but they left a united Russian people (*yediny russky narod*).

Grand Prince Dmitri's victory of Kulikovo also marks the beginning of the rise of the dominance of Muscovy. For his crucial role in encouraging the grand prince (he even sent two monks into the battle), Sergei would become known as the "godfather of Muscovy". So deeply embedded was this story in Russian memory that Stalin resurrected it during the darkest days of World War II. With the (German) Wehrmacht literally at the gates of Moscow, he allowed the metropolitan of Leningrad (St. Petersburg) to stir the deep patriotism of his audience by retelling the tale. Once the Germans were defeated, however, the Soviet authorities once again erased Orthodoxy from Russia's history. Donskoy's triumph over Mamay remained part of the state curriculum but was taught without its religious frame of reference. By 1987 the churches within the monastery gates were occupied by the Theological Academy of Orthodoxy, and the Cathedral of the Dormition had not seen the liturgy performed for decades. (This is yet another example of the infinite perfidy and cynicism of communists and leftists in general, including liberals.)

As the "cultural lecturers" for the 1987 University of Arizona (USA) Alumni tour, we expected to shepherd our charges around virtually empty grounds of Sergiev Posad, dotted by the occasional elderly *babushka* communing alone. Instead, the buses parked not far from a row of black *Chaika* ("Seagull") limousines. This meant that the occupant was very important indeed. A huge crowd of Russians streamed toward the entrance to the Cathedral of the Dormition. A continuous torrent of people - old, young, middle-aged - swept toward the double doors. Inside, the cathedral was packed to the rafters. The cathedral itself glowed. Orthodoxy's message is that it is the "light of the world," and light was the immaterial substance disposed through the sanctuary. To squeeze into the space was effectively to walk into and through light refracting all around. The effect was both immediate and physiological. As the eye adjusted, it began to play tricks. The walls of the cathedral gleamed a warm gold as the light reflected off the painted frescoes. The gold began to take on a rosy tint, as if it had been overlaid with a luminous pink. And the sky, which could just be glimpsed through the tiny windows, became suffused with a purplish glow. The windows had not been treated; it was the phenomenon

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of complementary retinal adjustment, for the sky was still blue. These optical effects were evanescent, mutable, though the eye needed time to adjust in order to see clearly. To be forced in this way to confront

one's physicality and by extension, one's mortality, heightened the sense of being in an otherworldly space.

The iconostasis (the screen inset with icons that separates the altar from the nave and blocks the congregation's view of the altar) shone in the flickering tapers held by the audience, and a gold, red, and blue rainbow refracted throughout the sanctuary. The original builders of the cathedral had carefully placed the slit windows for maximum light, and sickles (poor choice of words) of brightness curved through the air illuminating individual icons. The Slavic school of icon painting had perfected the technique of applying layers of translucent washes, one on top of the other, each composed of a mixture of egg yolk (error: **not** egg yolk but egg white) and water or vinegar, which served as the medium to bind the pigments. Light passing through these glazes would reflect from the background gesso. The iconostasis must have recently been restored; the once murky panels of brown figures on dark backgrounds shone in their original subtle, luminous colors, and the brush strokes of pure white flashed out.

To the believer, icons (from the Greek, "icons") are more than art; they are portals into the spiritual world. The Orthodox hold that as they look at the icon, the icon gazes back. Believers talk to them, and the icons answer. Indeed, Orthodox believers pray with their eyes open, and they need an icon to focus their gaze as they do so. They are not praying "to" the icon, but "through" it to the divine world it depicts in gesso and tempura (paint which uses egg white as the binding material). Such communication is both intimate and interactive. The cleft between the celestial and terrestrial dissolves, and the believer participates in an image of Heaven itself. With the atmosphere inside the Cathedral of the Dormition altered to pink, satiny indigo, and warm gold, the air itself seemed charged. All around were standing Russians (there are no pews), moving in regular rapid rhythm, bowing and crossing themselves with an expression on their faces difficult to describe. Russians cross themselves using two fingers and a thumb pressed against the third and fourth finger, not just two fingers, and from right to left, not left to right, as do Catholics. Some people were on their knees, bowing and kissing the floor, alternating between adoration and penitence.

For seventy years the official ideology of the
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USSR was "scientific atheism", carefully termed "Marxism-Leninism" for Western consumption. Lenin and Stalin (true liberals, of whom the American Civil Liberties Union and People for the American Way would be proud) were equal opportunity haters of all religions,

but Russian Orthodoxy, state faith of the Tsarist Empire, was their special target. Khrushchev, who passed as a reformer in the West, confidently predicted that "the last remaining priest would be exhibited at a museum twenty-years hence." He did not specify if this cleric would be stuffed or live, but his point was clear. Though Khrushchev fell from power October, 1964, the anti-Orthodox campaign did not let up. And yetm on this August afternoon in 1987 it looked as if the sun shone over a service that had been running continually since 1917. The packed cathedral, the icons, the ecstatic believers, the beautiful liturgy, and the exquisite robes of the two patriarchs seemed as if nothing had changed. Only the bright lights of the Soviet television crew and its huge black boom and cameras betrayed the date.

Even for those who were not Orthodox, the sheer beauty of the experience was overwhelming. The sound of the melodious voices singing with no musical instrument as accompaniment, the gaze of the icons, the crackle of the tapers, the continual bowing and crossing which energizes the breathing all of these elements synthesized into a total mind-body experience powerfully communicating an ineffable sense of the divine. When both patriarchs censed the congregation (from a theological point of viewm they were recognizing thd divine spark in every human), an indescribable fragrance wafted through the air. Non-Orthodox (and those Orthodox) who had not fasted could not partake of the consecrated bread and wine, but all were invited to come forward for a piece of the *fosfora*, the leavened bread blessed but not consecrated by the priest.

Men shape buildings as the embodiment of their spiritual vision, Russian Orthodox Church interiors synthesize this truth, for they are coded as visible "texts" of the liturgy as Archpriest Lev Lebedev explained early in the run up to the millennial celebration of the Baptism of Rus: "A Russian Orthodox Church is not merely a place for prayer, it above all is the image of the Kingdom of Heaven in everything from the symbols of the architectural forms and its inner tripartite division, to the decoration of the icons, especially the iconostasis." Here Lebedev puts his finger on a crucial feature of the faith: "In Russian Orthodoxy the personal spiritual life of the

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faithful, domestic life, family relations, economic and all other activity consciously aspire to the 'embodiment', the relction of the Heavenly in the earthly, which is the chief means of transforming the earthly, of spiritualizing and bringing it closer to the Heavenly." Thus Russian Orthodox architecture proclaims that the image of paradise is visible in the sanctuary's

structure. Orthodoxy does not pretend that the believer has been magically transported into the empyrean. Rather, the liturgy as text and the coded space of the sanctuary as context together give a mystical foretaste of the eternal heaven. Each part of the church is a form of worship itself, synchronous with specific elements of the liturgy.

Soviet officials commonly referred to churches (and mosques) as "prayer buildings". Indeed, Soviet law, based on Lenin's decree of January 20, 1918, titled "On the Separation of Church and State" (that phrase so dear to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and People for the American Way (PAW) [whose name should be "People for the Soviet Way"] should, made performing church rites the sole function permitted for the Russian Orthodox Church. Furthermore, it was a crime to perform the liturgy outside a licensed "prayer building". (391)

To me the phrase "Separation of Church and State" (which is NOT found in the US Constitution, but was nothing more than a bit of political cant by Thomas Jefferson, who in practice, both as President and as Governor of Virginia, demonstrated that he did not believe in any such thing as a "Wall of Separation between Church and State", which he knew to be contradictory and practically impossible) always sounded schizophrenic. Lived experience and a study of world history since 1789 has demonstrated to me that, in reality, "separation of church and state" is a codeword and a pretext for imposed atheism, as Lenin knew and as the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union, though its real name should be: "Atheist Communist Liars' Union") and PAW (People for the American Way, whose real name should be "People

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for the Soviet Way") know very well. Historical experience has shown that "separation of church and state", far from guaranteeing religious tolerance, leads to the most savage anti-religious persecution. Robespierre, Lenin, Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot and

Slobodan Milosevic were all fanatical partisans of separation of church and state. Slobodan Milosevic was a communist, an atheist, and a bitter enemy of Patriarch Paul of the Serbian Orthodox Church. It has been noted that Milosevic "reinvented National Socialism (Nazi'ism). In act, Milosevic was another proof of how fine is the line between Communism and Hitler's National Socialism, a line which often vanishes completely, as in the case Milosevic and of the "National Bolsheviks" of Hitler's Germany, who saw no contradiction whatever in being a Communist and a National Socialist or Nazi at one and the same time. Separation of church and state leads to Auschwitz and the Gulag. Unfortunately, in USA at least, the strict separationists have a virtual monopoly in both the mass media and public education, so only one side of this question is ever heard by most people, who are totally "brainwashed" in this respect.

John Garrard & Carol Garrard continue:

"(Russian Orthodox) Theologians defined the Russian Orthodox Church as more than a building and a service; rather, it was the people of God who make up the Body of Christ active in the world today. Lenin had forestalled that; his decree of 1918 stated that religious congregations (Church Slavonic: *obshchiny*) did not enjoy the rights of a legal entity. According to the Soviet legal code, outside the performance of the liturgy the church did not legally exist. Seizing
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churches would prevent the liturgy from being performed. No liturgy - ergo, no faith.

But, however small the number of churches, however dilapidated and desecrated their interior, the liturgy itself survived. The Soviet authorities never insisted that it be changed. The Liturgy was performed in OCS - Old Church Slavonic, the liturgical language invented by (Sts.) Cyril and Methodius, two monks sent

in the ninth century from Constantinople to Moravia (today part of the Czech Republic) to Christianize the Slavs (as we noted earlier, Old Church Slavonic is closer to Old Bulgarian than to any other known language; Sts. Cyril and Methodius were from Salonika (*Thessaloniki* in Greek), so the first Slavic language they learned was Old Macedonian, a slight variant of Old Bulgarian) (See footnote No. 6 below):

[(Sts). Cyril and Methodius are termed the “apostles to the Slavs”;

they created an alphabet, the *glagolitic*, which was subsequently modified by the Bulgarians, who added more Greek and Latin letters. This became the *Cyrillic* alphabet, the basis for the creation in the eighteenth century of the Russian literary language. Thus Russians were able to understand a great deal of the liturgy, much more so than Western Christians listening to Latin.] [Footnote No. 6, John Garrard & Carol Garrard, op. cit., p. 263.]

Perhaps the party, thoroughly secularized in its worldview, thought the archaic nature of the language would drain the liturgy of its power. Unwittingly, they allowed the ROC to continue the most compelling element of its confession. For however antiquated the words, no other liturgy in all Christianity is more elaborate or more awe-inspiring (or more aesthetically beautiful from a musical point of view). St. Nicholas Cabasilas, a fourteenth-century theologian, in The Life of Christ called the liturgy of the Orthodox Church the final and greatest of the mysteries since it is not possible to go beyond it or add anything to it. After the liturgy there is nowhere to go. There all must stand, and try to examine the means by which we may preserve the treasure to the end. For in it we obtain God Himself, and God is united with us in the most perfect union. Judaism can be carried in the arms of a single man: the Torah scrolls transported the faith during the two thousand years of the Diaspora to every continent. Similarly, Protestantism is Bible-based(???) ; a Bible in the vernacular can function as a miniature church, enabling a missionary to take the Gospel (*Injil*) anywhere, or a believer to stay connected to his faith. But to a great extent, Russian Orthodoxy exists for its

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believers in its liturgy, the power of whose beauty (the torpid leadership of) the party underestimated.

The centrality of the Orthodox liturgy for the Russians was attested to from the moment of their conversion. When in the tenth century, the envoys of Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev arrived in Constantinople to inquire about the Christian faith, they were not offered a verbal explanation. Rather, they were taken to the Church of the Holy Wisdom (Ste. Sophia; *Hagia*

Sophia in Greek) to witness the celebration of the liturgy. So dazzling was this experience that it converted them, though they could not understand the words, which were being sung in Greek. Soon translated into Old Church Slavonic (understood by Russians more easily than Latin in the West), this liturgy became the centerpiece of their faith for almost a thousand years. The experience was so profound that they were convinced that here they could meet God. In retrospect, Communist planners would have been better advised to allow the Orthodox to do charity; teach the catechism, print Bibles, and open seminaries, anything but perform their liturgy.

On August 19, 1987, for the first time in almost seventy years, this vital liturgy was being performed in the Cathedral of the Dormition, restored to a semblance of its former stunning beauty and opulence. Even from far in the back, the "royal doors", which stand in the center of the iconostasis and open into the sanctuary, glowed with renewed luminescence. Representing the doors to paradise, their shape (the two upper panels rounded at the top) and their message had been codified centuries ago. The original doors were modeled on the pair in the monastery's Trinity Cathedral. Those had been seized by the Soviet state and placed in the Sergiev Posad Museum. They were painted by an artist from the circle of the greatest icon painter of them all, Andrei Rublev. On those doors the Annunciation was painted in the upper panels, and the Four Evangelists writing their Gospels (*Injil-s*) appeared below. These images had once interrelated with the frescoes in the eastern part of the church, where the Annunciation had appeared on the altar columns, officiating bishops on the walls of the apse, and the (four) Evangelists on the pendentives of the domes. The whitewash that had once covered these frescoes was gone. Painted in 1684 under the guidance of the Yaroslavl master Dmitri Grigoriev in the amazing space of three months, they had not been seen for almost seventy years. Now they sparkled with their original brilliance. Once again the whole Eucharistic rite as a reenactment of the life of (Jesus) Christ from his
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incarnation to his ascension into heaven and the promise of his coming again could be seen interacting with the fabric of the building.

Time itself could be traced on the iconostasis; it showed figures known to history, such as St. Sergei, as well as people known only through the Bible, such as Elijah and Ezekiel. The timeline could be followed up to the very last moment of the future, when linear time itself will dissolve, at the Second Coming, the *Parousia*, predicted by (Jesus) Christ in Matthew XXV:31-

33:

When the Son of Man comes in His glory and all his angels with Him, then He will sit on the Throne of His Glory.

And all the nations will gather around Him. And He will divide one from the other, just as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ...

To the saved He will invite, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew XXV:34)

Inside the Cathedral of the Dormition, eyes traveled up to the ceiling. Overhead was a blue dome: the visual equivalent of the vault of heaven. There in a crescendo of visual glory sa (Jesus) Chris, looking directly at the viewer. But this was not Christ on the cross. The throne he sat on was magnificent, and the angels swarming around him hovered and jostled, wing to wing. The entire fabric of the dome seemed to vibrate; the gaze of the Savior did not appear to come from a great

height, but trembled as a face-to-face encounter. This was the gaze of *Christ Pantocrator* (Church Slavonic: *Vsederzhitel*, that is, "All Powerful" or "Almighty"), judge of all nations at the end of time itself. This was not the ebb and flow of human history but God's plan. The message was palpable: each individual was going to have eternal life, whether one wished for it or not. These theological principles were no longer abstract but vividly, physically present that day.

Reinforcing the imagery of the Last Days was the occasion itself. The two patriarchs were celebrating one of the twelve great "feasts" of the Orthodox calendar, the Transfiguration. On that day, according to the New Testament (*Injil*), Jesus took three of his disciples up to Mount Tabor. There he rose into the air, between Moses and Elijah, and he was **"transfigured before hem: and his face did shine as the sun and his raiment was white as the light"**

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(Matthew XVII:2; see also Mark IX:2-8 and Luke (IX:28-36). Orthodox believers hold that through prayer and meditation they too can see the celestial (Uncreated) light that shone around Christ on the mountain. They petition in the feast's hymn stanza (Greek: *troparion*; Church Slavonic: *Tropari*):

Thou [were] transfigured on the
Mountain O Christ God, showing to Your Disciples
Your glory as each one could endure. May Your
Eternal (Uncreated) light shine forth upon us sinners, through

the prayers of the Mother of God [Greek: *Theotokos*], [Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*] (The Virgin Mary)

Light Bestower, Glory to You.

The Transfiguration prefigures the glorified body that Christ will assume after the Resurrection, and by extension reveals the wondrous body that the faithful will put on at the Day of Judgement. Thus, its importance extends beyond its pairing with Christ's Ascension on the Mount of Olives, The Eucharist, the heart of the Orthodox liturgy, links the Transfiguration as described in the Gospels and the calling of the blessed at the end of time: "come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom." For the believer, this is not a spectacle but a reality mystically "made present again". While the communion rite reenacts the life of Christ from the Incarnation through the Ascension, simultaneously the believer is carried from sin to salvation. Through partaking of the "Holy Gifts", he or she enters liturgical time, all of whose cycles are depicted in a consecrated Orthodox sanctuary.

As non-Orthodox, our experience of this liturgy was not that of the believers who surrounded us. We (in true banal, mundane Protestant fashion) looked for down-to-earth explanations as to why this service was being allowed now, at this moment in time. Around us were people who were not analyzing at all: they were praying and petitioning the saints and the *Theotokos* (Church Slavonic: *Bogoraditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) for help in the quest to save their souls. St. Nicholas Cabasilas quoted earlier also states a core principle of Orthodoxy: rationality alone cannot capture the mystery of the divine. Specific portions of the liturgy depict two events that are beyond human comprehension, Christ's incarnation and sacrifice, with the aim:

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That we might not reason with the mind alone, but indeed should see in some fashion with our eyes the great poverty of the one who is rich, the dwelling within us of him who inhabits every place, the reproaches suffered by the blessed one, the sufferings of the impassible one; how much he was hated, how much he loved; being so great, how much he abased himself; and what he suffered and what he accomplished to spread the table (i.e., the Eucharist) before us.

The wonder stamped on the Russians' faces demonstrated

the human longing to sense and touch mystery. The power of this appeal was especially forceful given the drab background of grungy and soulless Soviet life outside the cathedral.

The fervor of the crowd was reminiscent of the Muslim Shia's yearly reenactment of the grief of the original followers of Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, at the murder of his (Ali's) son Hussein and seventy-two of his followers. They were massacred at Karbala, in the desert of southern Iraq, after challenging the authority of Islam's Sunni caliph, Yezid. The (Russian) Orthodox were not ritually flagellating themselves with chains, but the same sense was palpable that an event that took place long ago (Hussein's martyrdom occurred in 680 AD) was being experienced in the present. The individual is not hallucinating but experiencing an epiphany: the collapse of the past, the present, and the future into a single moment, what T.S. Eliot called the "still point of the turning whorls." In Western Christianity, the parallel impact would be the medieval passion play. (See Chapter 9) Those actors who represented Roman soldiers were advised to nail Jesus to the cross immediately lest the audience tried to attack them physically. The boundary between the mythic time of the event and the present moment of its staging was erased. The audience no longer watched the past; it participated in events occurring in a mystical, eternal present.

Every element of this celebration of the Feast of the Transfiguration reinforced the message that Christ's Passion was being made present again. Both patriarchs were wearing a robe we had never seen before outside of a museum case: the *sakkos*, an Episcopal garment whose shape derived from the costume worn by Byzantine emperors. Each *sakkos* was densely embroidered with images drawn from the life of Christ. Was Patriarch Pimen's *sakkos* a new replica of the famous one made in Constantinople and sent to Moscow as a gift to commemorate the 1339 canonization of Metropolitan

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Peter, who made the momentous decision to move the Orthodox see of the Rus' from Kiev? The back of that garment pairs the Transfiguration and Ascension, each embroidered in gold and silver thread so dense the cloth resembles a huge cloisonné enamel. The original had been seized by the Soviet state and transferred to the Kremlin Armory in 1920. Its pearls were cut off. But Pimen looked to be wearing something equally gorgeous.

Once outside in the blinding light of the

monastery grounds, we rejoined the Soviet world. The militantly Communist guides supplied by Intourist had not entered the cathedral, but smoked in the buses, as if crossing the threshold might infect them with some contagious disease. Yet even though the service had ended, more Russians were still crowding inside. One of

the University of Arizona's elderly alumnae got caught in the doorway with people on one side pushing in, and people on the other coming out. The horizontal crosscurrents pinioned her and she bobbed, an unwilling cork, for several minutes. Had she gone down, she could easily have been trampled, a victim of the power of a crowd to act as an undertow.

But to adduce to this experience a cosmic significance seemed self-indulgent. In spite of the elaborate service, it was (seemed) unlikely anything would fundamentally change inside the Soviet Union. Though Gorbachev had become the CPSU's general secretary in March 1985, in September *Pravda* stated that the forthcoming millennial anniversary of the Baptism of Rus' meant that atheistic propaganda should show "particular vigilance". The new party program adopted in 1986 included a paragraph on the necessity for "atheistic education" (how the ACLU and PAW would love that!). On November 24, 1986, Gorbachev made a speech in Tashkent, capital of the Uzbek Republic, calling for "an uncompromising struggle against religious manifestations."

Yet in retrospect, the celebration of the Feast of the Transfiguration at Zagorsk (soon to be once again Sergiev Posad) on August 19, 1987, played its part in history. Four years to the day after Pimen and Demetrios were inside its Cathedral of the Dormition another Feast of the Transfiguration would be celebrated by a new patriarch, Alexei II, in the Cathedral of the Assumption inside the *Kremlin* walls in Moscow. This too would be a "first" in Soviet times. At that moment, KGB and party hard-liners attempted a coup in Moscow. It failed by the morning of August 21, 1991. When the tanks encircling the Russian Parliament Building, called the "White House", turned around,

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Soviet power itself evaporated. The country began a transformation that continues to this day.

Orthodox believers, who assert we live in liturgical time, interpret the 1987 Feast of the Transfiguration as the hand of God active in their affairs. Less divinely, it can be seen as proof of the law of unintended consequences. Gorbachev made the startling admission to a journalist in Paris that his

mother had been a believer and he had been baptized. But he did not attend the co-celebration at Sergiev Posad. Had he done so, he might have realized that, like the Sorcerer's Apprentice, he was unleashing forces he would not be able to control.

To understand the energies reshaping life in the Russian Federation, we in the West must make a journey of the imagination across centuries and into an alien landscape. The roots of Russian religious tradition lie

in a past with which most westerners are unfamiliar. In

1054, when Christainity split into Eastern and Western halves and rival prelates anathematized each other, Orthodoxy ceased evolving theologically **[NOT TRUE: this statement once again reveals a Protestant prejudice or**

misconception; only a Protestant or an atheist (not much difference between the two) would make such an idiotic statement or such a bald-faced lie]. The fact that the East did not pass through a Reformation (or, rather, a **"Deformation"**) means that (Protestant or atheist) Western scholars of religion frequently bypass the Byzantine tradition altogether. In his important 2003 book The Reformation Diarmaid MacCullough declares that he will not deal with the Orthodox story, except where it is intertwined with that of the Latin West. There is a simple reason for this: so far the Orthodox Churches have not experienced a Reformation (I am ashamed and embarrassed that someone with so Celtic a name as Diarmaid MacCullough could show himself to be such a blind idiot and to make such a totally moronic statement). It is vital to understand that the Orthodox

(quite rightly) regard this as a virtue, because they believe that the three forces that remade Western Europe: the (so-called) Renaissance, the Reformation (rather the **"Deformation"**) and the Counter-Reformation (the [so-called] Enlightenment" should certainly be added to this list) - represent a falling away from the true faith, the Church of Christ and the Apostles. Believers in (Russian) Orthodoxy are called *pravoslavnye*, that is, "true believers". The word itself constitutes a value judgement: any non-Orthodox faith, such as Catholicism and its spin-off (or rather "perversion"), Protestantism, must to some degree be false. Thus, as Russia tries to move forward to a

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prosperous and stable future, it must look back upon a thousand-year past that has never been free of religious tension with the West.

We in the West should not underestimate the

significance of the resurgence of a faith unchanged in a thousand years liturgically and theologically, over a landmass extending almost one-sixth of the planet's surface, in a country that controls vast reservoirs of oil and mineral resources. The fall of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union shifted history's tectonic plates. We must give up the thinking and lexicon of the Cold War (as I, once very much a militant "Cold Warrior", have manfully striven to do; I hated the Soviet Union, because I hate Communism, but always had much respect for what Nina Podmoshenskaya called "Holy Russia"). Once we knew the Soviet Union. Now we face the Russian Federation, a country that is neither Cold War adversary nor World War II ally. The vocabulary, heroes, villains and myths of their mind's eye are linked to medieval history. This may seem disconcerting, given that Russia is a heavily industrialized state, which sent the first man into space and whose military arsenal includes some of the most advanced weapons in the world. But an attempt must be made to understand the memory of Russia's thousand years of Orthodoxy, for it is the hidden mainstream coloring Russian domestic behavior and shaping Russian policies abroad." (392)

Some comments are in order. I agree that the (so-called) "Renaissance", the Reformation (more correctly, the **Deformation**), the Counter-Reformation and the (so-called) "Enlightenment" (which should be called the "**Darkening**") represent a falling away from the true Christian Tradition, and also from the whole "Tradition with a capital T" as Rene Guenon and Frithjof Schuon would have put it. Protestantism, by definition a product of the "Reformation" or "Deformation", is therefore an utterly false religion, a stooge, fellow-traveler, useful idiot and lackey of secularism and atheism. This would also apply to "progressive", "modernist", "Post-Council

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Vatican II" Catholicism, or, as Frithjof Schuon put it, "that part of the Church which wishes to modernize itself". However,

Traditional Catholicism still retains a core that is untouched by the (so-called) "Renaissance", the "Reformation" (which should

be called the "Deformation", the Counter-Reformation and the (so-called) "Enlightenment" (which should be called the **"Darkening")**.

Before proceeding further, I wish to make some observations.

The works of William of Tyre, Ibn Rabi al-Mursi, Jalal al-Din Rumi, Suhrawardi, the poet Kabir, Dara Shikoh, son of the Mughal *Padishah* (Emperor) Shah Jahan, St. John of the Cross, the great Shi'a Muslim thinkers of the Safavi Period in Persia, Mircea Eliade, Rene Guenon, Titus Burckhardt, Frithjof Schuon, Swami Ramdas, Vladimir Lossky, Leonid Ouspensky, Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov), the Staretz Silouan, my good personal friend

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Pope John Paul II and Reza Shah-Kazemi deserve to be far more widely known and studied. Were this to occur, Unitarianism and Protestantism would disappear, along with "Modernist". "Progressive" or "Post-Council Vatican II" Catholicism, Wahhabism, Salafism, Taliban, ISIL or ISIS, and Deobandism. Other religions would be greatly strengthened and made more firm and solid, including traditional Islam, both Shi'a and Sunni, Traditional Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. These last two would then see their real differences in their true perspective, and not allow these differences to blind them (or nearly blind them) to their essential unity and

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see at least some of said differences as complementary rather than motives for antagonism. In chapters seven, eight, & nine of this book we have noted and demonstrated ("Do not tell, show" in the words of walter Havighurst) that Spanish Catholicism and Russian Orthodoxy have a great many particular characteristics in common, and that both uniquely share a great many particular characteristics with Sufism and Shi'a Islam; as was note earlier, Seyyed Hossein Nasr says that I am completely right in this. Were the works of those people mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph to be widely known and studied, Spanish Catholicism, Russian Orthodoxy and Shi'a Islam would recognize and celebrate the particular characteristics which they uniquely hold in common. Atheists and secularists could no longer play "divide and conquer".

Some people who know me very well have noted that I have a mentality which is medieval and not modern, rural and not urban, and that I am an "incurable romantic and idealist", to which I reply:

"Yes, and I am very proud of it."

John & Carol Garrard continue:

"The dispute over the Apostolic Succession in Christianity can no more be resolved than can the conflict in Islam between the Shi'ites and the Sunnis,, who disagree as to the successor to Muhammad. Muhammad died leaving a daughter (Fatima) but not a son. The Shi'a ("followers of Ali") believe his blood relative Ali ibn Abi Talib, a cousin and his son-in-law, should have been chosen (were this the only point at issue, I do not see how anyone could deny that the Shi'as are

right and always were). The Sunnis ("followers of the prophet's customs") [more accurately, "followers of (3627)

(the prophet's) tradition", but those of a Protestant and/or secularist background seem to be allergic to the word "Tradition") believe that his father-in-law, Abu Bakr, was the correct heir to the Prophet's authority and that the leader of Islam should be named on merit and the consensus of the community. Though both profess "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet" [Actually, this should be translated "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger". In the original Arabic, the above says "Muhammad rasul Allah".

Now, the Arabic word for "prophet" is "nabi", while "rasul" literally means "messenger"], recite from the same Qur'an, and follow the same "five pillars of Islam", they have never been able to agree on the succession (and other things, but this is not the place to expound on this).

Just so, Catholicism and Orthodoxy acknowledge one God, agree that Jesus of Nazareth is the "anointed one" ("Christ" in Greek, "Messiah" in Hebrew [and Aramaic]), and acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. But each claims that its church is the (One) true descendant ("successor" would be a more appropriate word) of Christ and the Apostles. The merits of the case do not relate to the inheritance by blood (as in Islam), but which disciple was the first to be called by Jesus and which disciple was the first to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. The Orthodox - from medieval Constantinople to contemporary Moscow - marshal evidence from the New Testament (*Injil*) demonstrating that the Roman (though many Catholics - especially in Spain and Ireland - do not much like the name "Roman") Catholic Church makes false allegations of superiority. The Catholic Church points to equally persuasive scriptural substantiation that the Orthodox challenge to its authority contravenes the word of Jesus Christ himself. On these two questions, the Gospels simply differ. The synoptic Gospels (the "one-eye" of Matthew, Mark and Luke) say that Peter was the first disciple to be called by Jesus and the first to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. But the fourth Gospel, (that according to) John says the same of Andrew, Peter's older brother. Catholicism claims descent from Peter, the first pope. Russian Orthodoxy claims descent from Andrew, one of its two patron saints. This is a divorce based on irreconcilable differences.

Because the split in the Gospels is the crux of the matter, it is worth reviewing in some detail.

Jesus' calling of the disciples is related roughly the in Matthew, Mark and Luke. (See Luke 5:3-10 and Mark 1:16-18 for slight variations of the "fishers of men" (3628)

story, with Luke's involving only Peter.) Matthew 4:18-19 is the most succinct: "And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter (Latin: "Petrus"; Aramaic: "Kleophas", both meaning "Rock" or "Stone"). Since Jesus was speaking in Aramaic, St. Peter was almost certainly first called "Kleophas", this, apparently, being his "nickname", as his given name was "Simon".) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea for they were fishermen. And he said to them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." While the two brothers act simultaneously, the order in which they are named, "Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother" is regarded as significant.

But far more important is who first acknowledges Jesus as the Christ. Matthew, Mark, and Luke again answer "Peter". Popes particularly cherish Matthew's account. (See Mark 8:27-29 and Luke 9:18-20 for a briefer version of Christ asking the disciples "Who do you say that I am?" and Peter answering "The Christ".) In Matthew 16:13-19 Jesus asks: "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" The disciples first weasel out by responding with hearsay: "Some say you are John the Baptist; some Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Jesus probes further: "But whom do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answers with the dramatic assertion: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Instead of charging the disciples to say nothing of this revelation as he does in Mark and Luke, here Jesus blesses Peter (or "Kleophas") and declares: "You are Peter and upon this rock (Latin: "petrus"; Aramaic: "kleophas") I will build my church. And I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19). This verse is simultaneously the "rock" upon which Catholic popes have built their claim to primacy in Christendom. (Somewhere Henri Daniel-Rops noted that there must be something significant in the fact that Jesus chose neither the brilliant Paul nor the mystic John, but the simple fisherman whose "nickname" indicated a stalwart character.) The centrality accorded this passage by Catholic doctrine cannot be overstated. Because Peter was the first pope, ergo his successors still hold the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Until time itself dissolves, the (Roman) pontiff holds sway over the whole world for as he binds and looses here on earth, so it is done in heaven. Only the Second

Coming can displace the pope as the "vicar of Christ".
The corollaries to this premise are immense.
Rome,
the site of Peter's martyrdom, is a holy city, a
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destination for pilgrimage, because it is claimed that St. Peter's Cathedral (more correctly, "St. Peter's Basilica") was built over the very bones of the Chief Apostle (more commonly, "Prince of the Apostles"). "Peter's Pence", an annual tax - formerly a penny - could be legitimately assessed on Christians everywhere for the maintenance of the papal see. The Vatican still uses the phrase today to indicate voluntary donations in its annual financial reports. Papal supremacy, according to the Gospel of Matthew, comes from Jesus Christ himself. The Renaissance opes so loved this verse that Pietro Perugino was hired to paint in 1485-86 on an immense canvas, measuring eleven by eighteen feet, "Christ handing the Keys of the Kingdom to Peter" inside the Sistine Chapel.

However, the Gospel of John (**NOT** to be confused with St. John the Baptist, who was martyred long before the events related here) tells a different story. The calling does not happen on the shores of the Sea of Galilee while Andrew and Peter are fishing. No, Andrew, already a disciple of John the Baptist (I:36), is "in Bethabara [Bethany] beyond Jordan (therefore **NOT** the Bethany near Jerusalem, home of St. Lazarus and his sisters St. Mary of Bethany and St. Martha) where John (the Baptist) was baptizing." The "whom do men say I am?" question and answer dialogue is transferred to the Pharisees and (St. John) the Baptist (John 1:19-24). To their repeated queries John (the Baptist) answers: "I am not the Christ." The next day John (the Baptist) sees Jesus walk by and declares, "Behold the Lamb of God." After hearing (St. John) the Baptist say this, the text reports that two disciples (i.e., of John [the Baptist]) "followed Jesus".

Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and said to them, What do you seek? They said to him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where do you dwell?

He said to them, Come and see [*poidite I uvidite*, in the modern Russian translation of the Bible]. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

One of the two, which heard John (the Baptist) speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

He (Andrew) first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, We have found the Messiah (Greek and

Latin version of the Hebrew and Aramaic "Messiah") which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him [Peter or Kleophas] to Jesus. (John I:38-41)

The Gospel of John, in just three verses,
(3630)

dissolves the rock-solid claim of the pope that he is the successor to the first disciple to be called by Jesus; instead Peter is "brought" by Andrew to Him. And Peter is not even the first to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, but has to cede this honor to his brother as well, for Andrew says, "We have found the Messiah the Christ". In (the Gospel of) John, even Jesus' thrilling statement found in Matthew 'You are Peter

and upon this rock I will build my church, dwindles into a rather mundane renaming procedure: "You are Simon the son of Jonah: you shall be called Cephas (Latinized and/or Hellenized version of the Aramaic Kleophas), which is by interpretation, a stone (John I:42). There is nothing about Peter being the "rock" upon which the church will be built, and nothing about Peter binding and loosing here on earth as it shall be done in heaven. Popes had based their claim to absolute authority in the secular and political sphere precisely on Matthew XVI:19. They asserted a right to make and depose emperors based upon it. However, if the Gospel account in John is followed, papal claims to keys and kingdoms disappear. The ROC regards the Gospel of John as the work of the Apostle John (Whom Henri Daniel-Rops very accurately refers to as "the mystic John"), eyewitness and participant in the events described. They believe him to be the unnamed disciple of John the Baptist who along with Andrew "follows" Jesus and whom Jesus invites to "Come and see."

To emphasize the momentous importance of these verses, Orthodoxy titles Andrew "The First Called (Pervozvanny). Even the cross that is used by the ROC refers to Andrew. The upper bar represents the inscription over Jesus' head, "The King of the Jews". The slanted bar at the bottom recalls the X-shaped cross upon which the saint (Andrew) was crucified. He had asked that his cross be made differently than Jesus', for he was unworthy to die as had the Messiah. The Order of St. Andrew Pervozvanny, established by Peter the Great in 1699, was the first and highest award of the state. The tsars went on eventually to create twenty-two awards; the church had no ecclesiastical awards itself. Empress Catherine the Great ordered from the Lomonosov Factory and enormous set of china for the order's annual dinner. Each dinner plate replicates the gorgeous ribbon from which hung the deep red enamel medallion of the Cross of St.

Andrew. Thus, however "Western" the tsar, the memory of Russian Orthodoxy was anchored in an event that happened circa AD 30. The cross is the universal symbol of Christianity; Catholics and the Orthodox do not agree upon how to depict it.

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The Order of St. Andrew Pervozvanny became extinct when Tsarism died. In the Soviet period, paradoxically, the state permitted the church to create its own orders; they were considered politically innocuous. Until 1988 the highest church award was the order of St. Sergei of Radonezh. ([Patriarch] Pimen conferred it upon the Patriarch of Constantinople in August 1987 after their co-celebration of the Feast of the Transfiguration.) Then, in the millennial year of 1988, the church received permission to create three new orders. The highest award of the church now became the Order of St. Andrew Pervozvanny. Neither the cross nor the ribbon itself changed, only the uniform of the man hanging it around the recipient's neck.

The final link in the chain by which the Russian Orthodox claim to be the Church of the Apostolic Succession is found in its medieval Chronicles. Seen as written by divinely inspired monks, here the Savior's plan for Rus' (the proto-Eastern Slavic state) is brought into being, as foretold in the Gospels. Orthodoxy accords sacred weight to its Chronicles, just as Catholicism accords sacred weight - equal to that of Scripture - to its traditions. (The Tradition of the ROC includes much more than said Chronicles.) Russians believe the medieval Chronicle of St. Nestor picks up their story where the Gospel of John left off; it tells that Andrew Pervozvanny traveled up the Dnieper to the site of the future city of Kiev. There he erected a cross and prophesied to the assembled people, "Do you see these hills? On these hills divine grace will shine, there will be a great city, and God will erect many churches. ..."

At first glance all this may seem like the absurd claims that St. Paul, St. Joseph of Arimathaea, - or, yet more absurd - Jesus Christ visited Great Britain. The above are all desperate and mendacious attempts to claim Apostolic Foundation for the Church of England or the Anglican Church: I have news for the

Anglicans; Henry VIII, the real founder of the Church of England or the Anglican Church, was anything but an Apostle. Or, the, if anything, the even more absurd claims by members of the Baptist Church to claim St. John the Baptist as its founder; this

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laughable claim demonstrates both crass ignorance and plain mendacity and dishonesty; apparently some Baptists are unaware that bearing false witness is a sin. The truth is that the Baptist Church dates only from the 17th century, so it is even younger than the Church of England or the Anglican Church, and cannot even claim Henry VIII, much less St. John the Baptist, as its founder.

However, the claim of the Russian Orthodox Church to Apostolic Foundation has a firm base, which cannot be dismissed as pure invention. As Francis Dvornik notes:

"The Slavic tribes, which were to become the nucleus from which the immense political unit known as modern Russia was formed (i.e., the East Slavs, ancestors of Russians and Ukrainians), were among the last of the Slavic family to be introduced into the orbit of Christian influence. This seems rather strange when we taken into consideration the fact that the southern lands which are now part of the modern Russian state were the nearest to the most important Christian center in the East, Constantinople, which had Christian outposts, not only in the Crimea, but also in the Caucasus. The Transcaucasian lands of Georgia and Armenia were the intermediaries between Asia Minor, where Christianity predominated in its early history, and the cradle of Christianity in Palestine. Both lands claimed that Christianity had been implanted in the midst of their populations in the time of the Apostles. The Armenians appropriated the Apostles Bartholomew, Judas Thaddeus, and Simon as their first teachers

and patrons, but they had competitors in Edessa, Syria, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, and Persia who made the same claims. It is, however, possible that Christianity had already penetrated into Armenia during the first century A.D. traces of Christianity are reported in the seventh century AD, and the Christianization was
(3634)

brought to an end by Gregory the Illuminator (240-320 AD), who had also won over King Tiridat I to the new faith. Armenia was also the first land which declared Christianity to be the official religion of the state (about 280 AD). Gregory also became the head of the Armenian Church, as *Katholikos* with twelve suffragan bishops. The *Katholikos* Sahak, with the help of Mezrob, invented, in about the year 396 AD, a special alphabet (which some believe to be derived from the Avestan alphabet) for their language, a deed which became the source of a flourishing Armenian literature.

Georgia possessed a numerous Jewish diaspora which seems to have been strengthened by refugees from the destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD). Lively contacts with Palestine and Syria opened the land for Christian missionaries as early as the first century AD. During the reign of (the Roman Emperor) Constantine the Great the country was Christian, and the Christian religion was declared the official religion of the state between 297 AD and 356 AD. Its religious center in Mzchet was in touch with all the important eastern Christian centers, and Georgian monarchism developed lively missionary activities.

(The Byzantine Emperor) Justinian the Great supported Christian missionaries in the Caucasian region, especially among Ossetes, Alans, and Abasques, and even the Huns are said to have been touched by Christian propaganda.

* * *

The claims of the Armenians to the apostolic origins of their conversion are doubtful, as is well known. However, the claim of the Russians that their land had been at least touched upon by an apostle before the Slavs came there may have a more

solid basis. There is a tradition codified by the first Church historian, St. Eusebius of Caesarea, and based on the report given by Origen (died 252) that the Apostle Andrew had preached the new faith in Scythia. There were then two Scythias, one between Thrace and the Danube which had become a Roman province (modern Dobrudja), and another Scythia,

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called "cold", which lies between the rivers Danube and Don in modern southern Russia and Ukraine. We are entitled to suppose that Origen had in mind the "cold Scythia", and this seems to be suggested also by the apochryphal Acts of Andrew. According to them (the Acts of Andrew), Andrew preached first in Asia Minor with his brother (Simon) Peter. This could be so because the cities of Asia Minor possessed strong Jewish colonies. Jewish propaganda was successful even among the pagans. The synagogues were the first places from which the Apostles began to preach about Christ. These cities, and their Jewish Diaspora, were in lively contact with the Greek cities and Jewish Diasporas in the Crimea and in the ancient Greek colonies around the Sea of Azov. The legendary Acts of Andrew allow him to come as far as Sinope, the important port of Asia Minor whence it was easy to reach the Crimea and its main port, Cherson. Andrew may have used this maritime commercial way to reach the Crimea; it is quite possible that he also touched upon the land of the Scythians, and it seems that he may even have died somewhere in these parts. There is a tradition that he returned from Cherson to Asia Minor, passed through Byzantium and travelled on to Greece, where he died as a martyr at Patras. But this should be considered as legendary. The only reliable information we have concerning Andrew's travels is that transmitted to us from Origen by the first Church historian, St. Eusebius, who tells us that Andrew preached the new faith in Scythia.

This tradition appears to be much more trustworthy than that of the Armenians concerning St. Bartholomew, Judas Thaddaeus, and Simon. Therefore, the claim made by the Russians and Ukrainians that Andrew did visit the lands which were to become Slavic

has some solid basis. The author of the Russian Primary Chronicle tried to make the most of this tradition about the apostle (St. Andrew), which was increased by legend, for the glory of his nation which, when he wrote his Chronicle at the beginning of the eleventh century, was already Christian. There we read that "when Andrew was teaching
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in Sinope and came to Cherson, he observed that the mouth of the Dnieper was nearby. Conceiving a desire to go to Rome, he proceeded therefore to the mouth of the Dnieper and thence journeyed up the river and, by chance, he halted upon the shore beneath the hills. He prophesied to his disciples that on that spot a great city with many churches would arise. He blessed the spot, erecting there a cross, then continued his journey to Novgorod, and, after a stay with the Vikings, reached Rome. Leaving Rome, he returned to Sinope."

This last passage shows us that in the eleventh century the Russians (or, rather, East Slavs) were well acquainted with the legendary Acts of Andrew, which tell of his travels from Sinope to Thrace and Achaia, where he is said to have died. The chronicler had to allow Andrew to leave from Rome for Sinope in order to fit his account to that of the legendary Acts.

• * *

At the time the Apostle (St. Andrew) was supposed to have reached the Dnieper and travelled this river, the Slavs had not yet arrived. Some of their tribes had already left their original home between the Vistula, Oder, and Bug, and were expanding toward the territory of the Scythians, from whom they borrowed many pagan beliefs (as we have seen). The movement to the south was accelerated by the migration of the Germanic Goths. The first knowledge of Christianity reached the Ostrogoths after they penetrated the Crimea. From reports of prisoners taken by them in Trebizond (between 256 and 267). The Gothic Church in the Crimea maintained relations with Palestine and stayed independent of the Byzantine Church up to

451. The Visigoths had already sent a bishop to the First Oecumenical Council of Nicaea (325 AD), and Ulfila (*Ulfila* or *Wolfein*) (311-381 AD), translated the Gospels into Gothic. They adhered to the heretical doctrine of Arius (of Alexandria), but those Goths who remained in the Crimea professed the Orthodox (or Catholic) faith, although using Ulfila's translation. Thanks to St. (3637)

John Chrysostom (Patriarch of Constantinople, 398-404 AD), Byzantium, for the first time, was able to play a direct role in the conversion of the peoples in the Crimea and in the former Scythia. Georgian and Armenian monks brought the Christian faith to the peoples in the northern Caucasus; these missions were supported by the Emperor Justinian (527-565 AD), who, at the same time, defended the Crimea against the Huns.

It is doubtful if any of these attempts to Christianize the lands of modern southern Russia (and Ukraine) influenced the Slavic tribes which, in the seventh century, were already established on the middle Dnieper (Ukrainian: *Dniepro*). Perhaps after the Goths had become Christian and had extended their sway over them (and contributed some words to the Gothic language), certain Christian elements did penetrate. On the other hand, Byzantine cultural influences did reach those Slavic tribes living in the middle Dnieper in the seventh century. Archaeological finds made in this region present very important discoveries. Hidden treasures found in Martinovka, Sjenkov, Chacki, and especially in Malaja Pereschepina and in the cemetery of Pastyrskoje, included Byzantine silver ware, ornaments, and coins in large numbers. These finds show us that trade with Byzantium existed in the sixth and seventh centuries. Broken pieces of silver and semi-manufactured objects testify that some of these pieces must have been produced on the spot by foreign or native artisans, who also made a special kind of *fibulae* (brooches) characteristic of the Dnieper region. The imported objects could have reached the area from Byzantine possessions in the Crimea, or from cities on the Black Sea. It is of interest that some of the objects

produced in the Dnieper workshops were found in the Crimea where the Goths lived. This would seem to indicate that commerce between the Slavs on the Dnieper and the Goths of the Crimea must have existed.

None of the objects discovered bears a religious character, but it is quite possible that the Slavic tribes on the Dnieper had acquired a slight knowledge of Christianity from the Christian Goths in the Crimea and

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from the Byzantines living in Cherson. The finds reveal that the Slavic tribes of this region had reached a certain level of culture and had acquired a certain amount of wealth. These tribes were the predecessors of that Slavic group which was to build, on the middle Dnieper, that important Slavic settlement called Kiev (Ukrainian: *Ki'iv* or

Kee'eev).

It is to be noted that the coins found in that region are of the reign of (the Byzantine Emperor) Constans II (641-668 AD). The treasures I have described must have been buried during the second half of the seventh century, which indicates the threat of invasion, possibly from the Khazars."

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It is obvious that the claim of the author of the Russian Primary Chronicle that the Apostle St. Andrew visited Novgorod is a late invention; there is nothing in the accounts of Origen and St. Eusebius of Caesarea that could lead one to suppose that the Apostle got so far to the North. In any case, in the First Century AD, Novgorod had not yet been founded, and there were no Vikings in the area.

However, there is nothing strange nor absurd in the accounts given by Origen and St. Eusebius, who were men of the most unimpeachable and irreproachable honesty and sincerity, and, in truth, their accounts are perfectly plausible and

reasonable. So, it may be considered a fact that the Apostle St. Andrew visited the area around the Crimea and the Sea of Azov, including the site of the future city of Kiev.

The point of all this is the following: the Russian Orthodox Church has its own claim to Apostolic Foundation independent of that which it inherited from Byzantium.

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We now return to John Garrard and Carol Garrard:

"... The Chronicle of Nestor continues the story of Andrew Pervozvanny right into Russia's medieval history. It recounts that Andrew journeyed on from the hills of the future Kiev to the Slav settlements located on the spot where Novgorod, an early progenitor of the future state of Russia, would be built. There, near the village of Gruzino, he planted a cross. Every Russian child knows that it was the merchants of Novgorod who appealed to Prince Rurik (Old Norse: *Hroerekr*) in 862 to "come rule over us" because they quarreled among themselves. Grand Prince Vladimir originally came from Novgorod; he had been thrown out prior to becoming prince of Kiev. The Chronicle of Nestor is among the Russians' oldest documents. The contemporary ROC has skillfully updated its version of history.

Tsar Alexander II had done the same in the nineteenth century. In 1862 he commissioned the sculptor Mikhail Mikeshin to create a "Monument to the Millenium of Russia", erected in front of Ste. Sophia's Cathedral in Novgorod. It was cast in the shape of a giant bell. The iconography of bells, "singing icons", is part and parcel of Orthodoxy's mythos. In 1852 Archimandrite Leonid made this comparison:

"In Russia our motherland, the variety of our calls to church, at first with wooden, and then with cast iron beams and finally with the ringing of bells, has its own significance and deep meaning., even an acoustical one between our time and that more distant - the past and the future. The weak sounds of the wood and iron remind us of the prophets' vague, cryptic language, but the clamor and harmonious ringing of bells is a proclamation of the Gospel, its exultation to

the ends of the universe, and reminds us of the angel's trumpet on the final day."

In the Orthodox mind, the sound of the bells connects the believer to the time of the prophets and to the equally distant future, the Apocalypse, when linear time shall dissolve. Their peal "makes present" both the Old Testament (*Torah*) *shofar* and the trumpet that the angel will blow on the Last Day. The tocsin carries the believer through the Last days to bliss. It reassures the listener who he is, where he has come from, and where his pilgrimage here on earth is going. Mikeshin's giant bell reifies this collapse of time. At

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the top, the Archangel Michael embraces the cross Andrew planted while the saint kneels at his feet. In the middle register, oversized statues of individual tsars act out specific incidents of Russia's history. The bottom frieze runs the entire circumference of the bell and brings the story up to date: tsars are now depicted in breeches and waistcoats. In 1862, counting back a thousand years brought Mikeshin to a time when Novgorod was still officially pagan. Yet Orthodoxy was somehow mystically present. The message is that the Christianity Andrew Pervozvanny planted with his cross near Novgorod was the true Church of the Apostolic Succession, unchanged sacramentally, doctrinally or liturgically.

By tracing the Apostolic Succession from Christ to Andrew and then his journey to Kiev and the future Novgorod, the church sets forth a special connection between God and the destiny of the Russian *nation*. In 1049, just a generation after the death of Vladimir himself, Hilarion, Kiev's first metropolitan of Slavic as opposed to Byzantine Greek origin, wrote a prayer emphasizing the bond between the Savior and the Eastern Slavs:

"We are Your people and the sheep of Your flock. Our souls are in Your hands, and our breath is in Your will".

This was not a private meditation but became for centuries the national prayer of the church recited on the first day of the New Year. It brilliantly evoked the key verse in the prologue to the Gospel of John, which bonds the New testament to the Old (Testament): "In the beginning was the Word." This echoes Genesis 1:1-2, "In the beginning the spirit of God moved over the face of the waters." The Greek *logos* used for "Word" links a concept from the Old Testament, the idea of God's creative breath (*ruah*) from which

creation comes, to Jesus of Nazareth, who is Jesus the Incarnate Word of God. The Gospel of John states that Christ came into the world as a human being but is God Himself. The Logos worked alongside God in creation. (This last sentence is very clumsy, and reveals a severe lack of philosophical-theological-mystical acumen. In mystical terms, the Logos is God, who is beyond all spatio-temporal categories, manifesting Himself in the spatio-temporal world; **God does not have a "partner" called the Word (Greek: Logos; Church Slavonic: Slovo), the opening of the Gospel of John is NOT polytheistic. As God is also beyond numeric categories, there CANNOT be two Gods.**) Thus, from 1049 the prayer of the Slavs traced their spiritual journey (3641)

through John I:1-2 back to Creation itself.

A great deal of history and cartography has happened, however, since Grand Prince Vladimir (of Kiev) Christianized the Eastern Slavs in AD 988. From the ROC's perspective, Kievan Rus' is now quite inconveniently located in a different and sovereign country, Ukraine. [Note: in 988 there was no Russian language and no Ukrainian language, there was only East Slavic, which later divided into Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian, ergo, in 988 "Rus'" meant "East Slav", with no distinction between Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian). The church, however, "reads" the events of 988 the same way it interprets the events of the Old Testament: they prefigure the New. The classic case is the Orthodox interpretation of the episode in Genesis in which Abraham entertains three angels unaware. The famous "Holy Trinity" icon painted by Andrei Rublyov gives no hint that what comes out of Abraham's alfresco picnic is an Isaac who begat a Jacob who will be renamed Israel by an angel with whom he will wrestle. Rublyov's angels prefigure the triune God - The Father, Son and Holy Spirit of the New Testament. Indeed, the Rublyov icon eliminates Sarah altogether and shows Abraham's dwelling place at Mamre very much in the background.

The same principle operates here: Grand Prince Vladimir was the mystical progenitor of Holy Rus'. Makary Bulgakov, the metropolitan of Moscow and a widely respected church historian, gives the official church view in 1994: the Baptism of Rus'

"is without a doubt, the most important event in the history of all Russian lands. In several ways, it decided the eternal fate of all future generations of Russia and began a new period of our existence in every

respect: our enlightenment, customs, judiciary, and building of our nation, our religious faith, and our morality."

Notably there is no mention of "Ukraine" (after all, in 988, the year of the Baptism of Rus', is would be an anachronism to speak of "Ukraine" or of a "Russia" separate from "Rus'" or "lands of the East Slavs", which included present day European Russia, Ukraine and Belarus). That Kiev became capital of an independent and sovereign country begotten in 1991 is ignored (and, for reasons I have given above, irrelevant). The redoubtable Elizabeth Koutaissoff, a descendant of the same Marshal Kutuzov who defeated Napoleon, remarked that in her opinion the Ukrainians were really borderline Russians, because, after all,
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"Ukraina" itself meant "borderland". She spoke for many nationalists. While it is true that ethnically Ukrainians are Eastern Slavs like the Russians, their contemporary self-image is most certainly not that they are "borderline Russians". Since in 988 there were no Russians nor Ukrainians nor Belorussians, but only East Slavs, most of this polemic is both irrelevant and anachronistic. The circumstances which caused the East Slavs to divide into three somewhat distinct ethnias are far too complex to deal with here.

The ROC simply eliminates details like borders between Russia and Ukraine. It begins teaching this version of history to Russian children before they can read and write. The class for five- and six-year-olds at St. Vladimir's Russian Orthodox Church elementary school in Moscow in March, 1992 absorbed the essence of the story from lesson plans taken from pages of a coloring book entitled Kreshchenie Rusi, that is, *The Baptism of Rus'*. Its twenty-five pages, each page with one or two sentences of text, traces the church's view of Vladimir and his role in the history of the Eastern Slavs. The coloring book was printed March 1, 1992 - that is, not long after the December 25, 1991, disbanding of the USSR. The Soviet Union had strictly forbidden any religious publications directed at children. Yet no sooner had the country dissolved than the machinery of the ROC was able to churn out a print run of 300,000 copies of this booklet. It failed to seek permission from the original publisher, however. This copy of Kreshchenie Rusi came from a "rogue" reprint, one of several that came out in Russia in the early 1990s in many thousands of copies. The provenance of Kreshchenie Rusi itself is a window not only into the complete collapse of Soviet control but also into the ROC's cavalier attitude toward

international copyright law. Its publication passed totally unnoticed in the West. Within Moscow itself, every copy was snapped up immediately.

Already the energetic Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) of St. Vladimir's had opened a primary school, and Moscow parents - some of them believers and some of them not - were vying to get their children into its sparkling clean rooms and peaceful and happy atmosphere. For Orthodox families, the school was a "miracle":

Now our children can study God's word, and they can pray together, both before and after meals, before their classes, and can sing hymns. Two years ago (1990) when we prayed together, or sang hymns, or studied the Bible, it was all done in

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secret. Even just two years ago, our children had to be careful about wearing a cross around their neck. They were studying in Soviet schools and were subject to attacks by aggressively atheist students, and worst of all, teachers.

But nonreligious parents were eager to enroll their children too. (The same phenomenon obtains in cities in the United States and Great Britain [and also in France and Spain].) St. Vladimir's serves as a support system for families, some single parent, many of whom are under stress. It manages both an after-school and preschool program for children whose parents have to work and commute long hours. When a child needs to stay overnight, there are thirty small, immaculate beds in a large, light-filled dormitory. This tender and gently twenty-four-hour care induces a harried working mother and father to send their child to St.

Vladimir's. Some of the parents confided that before the opening of this school, they had to board their children from Monday to Friday at state-run crèches just so they could work. In Russia, enrolling a child in an Orthodox school embeds the entire family in its ethos. Many of the "volunteers" helping with the church restoration were motivated by the desire to get their child accepted at its school.

What made *Kreshchenie Rusi's* story so dangerous to the Soviet Union that it could not be printed in a format for small children as long as the country itself existed? The cover shows Grand Prince Vladimir and a beautiful lady overlooking the Dnieper while priests

carrying icons lead masses of huddled Slavs down to the river. Page one plunges into the pagan world of Kievan Rus' showing an exciting drinking party. But prince Vladimir quickly sends out embassies to find out about

other faiths, and lo, as the caption says underneath a drawing of a wedding, "Prince Vladimir accepted baptism and married the Byzantine Princess Anna". This became the jumping off point for the teacher to teach that bit of history from the church perspective. As part of each lesson, the children were given crayons and pencils and told they could illustrate the page in their own way because the book itself was too precious for an individual child to be allowed to color. Several quite lovely drawings resulted. A little girl rendered the "wedding page" of Vladimir (the Russian Viking) and Princess Anna by concentrating on what was important to her: the bride. The Byzantine Princess Anna is transformed into a "Russian beauty" (in typically Russian rather than Byzantine wedding garb) sans either groom, guests, or church.

The charm and naivete of these drawings should not

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blind us to the importance of what is going on here. Children are learning to view history with Orthodox eyes. The church regards the history of the faith and its flock as both *sui generis* and miraculous. Its version alone furnishes the key to both the past and the future. Events partake of human endeavor, but the secular does not furnish the plot. This is history discontinuous with the rational, which indeed suspect (as Blaise Pascal said, "There is nothing more reasonable than a certain disdain of reason", something later expressed in far stronger terms by Martin Heidegger: "Our thought cannot truly begin until we recognize that reason, for so many centuries hailed as its most useful tool, is, in reality, its deadliest enemy."), because analysis can never comprehend the divine (Pascal, Heidegger and the mystics of all religions would agree). Its timeline is also discontinuous, because those period when God is not active in man's affairs - such as the space between the Old and New Testaments - is not significant. (In the West we know this period as overlapping classical Greek antiquity.) The Soviet coloring book about Lenin and the benign Communist Party that once swamped children have been pulped.

But what is being absorbed here is the myth, the pseudohistory (though the "Baptism of Rus'" most certainly happened), and drop by drop, a page a day, it is sinking in. The cover had depicted the mass baptism; the same illustration is repeated on page 20.

The caption reads "The inhabitants of Kievan Rus' were baptized in the Dnieper River in 988 and then the whole of Kievan Rus' was baptized, followed by other Slavic tribes". This phrase neatly erases any actual borders (which did not exist nor were even dreamed of in 988) on current maps. Ukraine and Russia are simply blended together under an umbrella phrase (which in 988 would have been perfectly accurate). In another illustration, weeping Slavs kneel by the river as the waterlogged totems of their pagan (Slavic and Iranian) gods float away - a man on horseback whips the pleading crowd back from trying to wade in and "save" them. This actually occurred at Novgorod where the populace rioted at seeing their idols toppled into the water. The caption explains that the people had to be taught the truth by their "Good and Just prince [who] defended the weak, helped the poor, and built many churches." (By referring to all this as "myth" and "pseudohistory", John Garrard & Carol Garrard once again reveal their Protestant and secularist bias. In fact, the version of the history of Kievan Rus' taught in the Kreshchenie Rusi is far closer to real history, contains far more

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truth and far less "myth" and "pseudohistory" than do the versions of American History taught in public schools in USA.)

The last page has an elaborate border by the celebrated artist Bilibin framing a huge bell ringing over a stylized landscape of "Rus'". The caption declares, "They [the people] loved their prince, and nicknamed him 'Beautiful Sun' [*Krasnoe Solnyshko*]. Our holy church canonized Prince Vladimir as a Saint, and called him 'Equal to the Apostles' [*Ravnoapostolny*"]". The children of the preschool were now told that they would be taking a "field trip" over to the church next door. And there on its iconostasis they would see a beautiful icon of the same Grand Prince Vladimir (the Russian Viking) that they would be allowed to copy and color. To say the five- and six-year-olds were excited is an understatement. Western parents (and uncles)-veterans of being conscripted to chaperone school field trips - will know the denouement. The class would need several stalwarts to come along and help. Thus the way is paved for a modern version of the Gospel's promise that "a little child shall lead them". A children's coloring book segues into a salutary lesson in child evangelism.

The caption of the last page slipped in a word that had not been heard in a Soviet school: *Ravnoapostolny*. Russian children will now learn how to

pronounce, define, and spell a word that signifies one of the irreconcilable differences with the West. *Ravnoapostolny* is a status unique to the lexicon of Orthodoxy. It is given to people regarded as "Apostles to the Slavs" (*vide* St. Paul's status as "Apostle to the Gentiles"). See footnote 17, p. 287, given below:

"The pantheon of *Ravnoapostolnye* begins with Constantine, the Roman general and emperor. Then come [Sts.] Cyril and Methodius, two ninth-century monks who created the special alphabet that allowed the translation of the Gospels into a language for the Eastern Slavs [though, since Sts. Cyril and Methodius were from Salonika (*Thessaloniki* in Greek), the Slavic language that they knew was Old Macedonian, ergo, Old Church Slavonic is a South Slavic language, closer to Old Bulgarian than to any other known language, rather than an East Slavic language.] This eventually became Old Church Slavonic and was accorded the status of a "sacred language" by the church prior to the 1054 split. Grand Princess Olga (Old Norse: *Haelga*) of Novgorod converted to Christianity in 954 but failed to
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persuade her son to follow suit. St. Vladimir, her grandson, "Equal to the Apostles," brought Christianity to the Eastern Slavs [the Western Slavs and Southern Slavs had previously been converted to Christianity]." John Garrard & Carol Garrard, *op. cit.*, footnote 17, p. 287.

John Garrard & Carol Garrard continue:

By canonizing Vladimir (the Russian Viking) as "equal to the apostles" in the thirteenth century, the church linked the Gospel of John and the Chronicle of Nestor. Thus, much as Acts is seen as the continuation of the Gospel of Luke, the Chronicle of Nestor functions as an

"Acts of the *Ravnoapostolnye*."

The first of the *Ravnoapostolnye* pantheon is Constantine, the Roman general whose vision of a cross in the heavens before the critical Battle of the Milvian Bridge in AD 312 paved the way for him to become sole Roman Emperor and to make Christianity the religion of the Empire. This turning point in history has always been part of the deep memory of Orthodoxy, as

attested by the actions of the Moscow crowd on August 21, 1991, who replaced the forbidding bronze statue of

Feliks Dzerzhinsky with an Orthodox cross and "By this sign conquer painted on the black granite. While Western Christianity sainted Constantine, he is not titled "Equal to the Apostles". In fact, because he moved the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to his new city of Constantinople [formerly a small town known in Greek as *Byzantion* and in Latin as *Byzantium*; hence the expression "Byzantine Empire"], Catholicism prefers to play down his role.

Not so the Russian Orthodox. From the outset, his conversion has been deliberately paralleled with that of Grand Prince Vladimir (the Russian Viking). Metropolitan Hilarion of Kiev made the point in 1049, with Vladimir dead only since 1015 and his son Yaroslav the Wise (*Premudry*) on the throne: "He [Constantine] with his mother St. Helen brought the Cross of Jerusalem, glorified it widely and consolidated the belief (we have already spoken of Yaroslav the Wise in connection with the martyred princes Sts. Boris and Gleb). And you [the dead Grand Prince Vladimir] with your grandmother St. Olga (Old Norse: *Haelga*) brought the Cross from the new Jerusalem-Constantinople, installed it all over the country and consolidated the belief. In real life Vladimir was a ruthless and wily (though very amiable when circumstances permitted) Viking who had (before his baptism, let it be noted)

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blinded his brother (thus making him ineligible to rule), raped his brother's fiancée, Rogneda, and had to give up about 1,000 concubines (in his pagan days, Vladimir the Russian Viking was a polygamist on a grand scale, as we have said earlier; Yaroslav the Wise (*Premudry*) was a son of Rogneda, and therefore a pure Viking, Sts. Boris and Gleb were both sons of a Danubian Bulgarian woman, while the evil Sviatopolk was son of a Greek woman, though NOT the Princess Anna), according to a horrified monastery scribe [in order to] marry the Princess Anna, a lady so reluctant to accept the match that she initially declared that she would rather die (who can blame her?). [Let it be known that after his baptism, Vladimir did indeed "change his ways", and of his sons, at least Yaroslav the Wise and Sts. Boris and Gleb (and perhaps others] were devout Christians. If Vladimir did indeed sincerely repent of his pagan ways after his baptism, may God's mercy be on the repentant sinners, many and grievous though were his sins.] None of that will be mentioned in the classroom. Anyway, it all happened before he saw the (Christian) light. As St. Vladimir, he fulfills the divine prophecy of St. Andrew Pervozvanny and deserves to be named *Ravnoapostolny*.

What was taught in an Orthodox primary school

classroom in 1992, using a coloring book's pages for lesson plans, were the first gentle shoots of an entire rewriting of history that has been propagated ever since. The plot and characters of *Kreshchenie Rusi*, first portrayed by monks illuminating manuscripts in the eleventh century, is drawn a thousand years later by childish hands. The point is the same: God marked out the Russians (or, perhaps more accurately, the East Slavs) for a special destiny. Whether or not the story will be taught in state schools remains an issue; but because the ROC can now open its own schools, it already has a channel to inculcate its curriculum. In 2006 a high-budget, lavishly marketed animated film, *Prince Vladimir*, came out in Russian theatres. The story line weaves in and out of the pages of *Kreshchenie Rusi* and takes the plot further. After having Christianized the (East) Slavs, Vladimir fair Sun has to battle "against the enemies of the ancient land of the Eastern Slavs by uniting the nobles and the simple folk. Now one of the pagan idols burned at Novgorod uncannily resembles the Statue of Liberty. The leaders of the enemy tribes look like clones of Mikhail Khodorkovsky (controversial businessman, once one of Russia's richest men, accused of corruption). Here in glorious color is a world where the heroes and villains are black and white. *Prince Vladimir* was made with (3648)

backing from the Ministry of Culture who cited its "patriotic" as well as "historic" value. When it was released on the eve of the "Defenders of the Fatherland Day", (Patriach) Akeksy publicly blessed it. The Chronicle, the coloring book, and the cartoon propound a view first articulated by (Metropolitan) Hilarion in 1049: the Rus' are the Chosen People of the New Testament. In later grades the students will read the Chronicle of Nestor itself." (394)

John & Carol Garrard continue:

One of Orthodoxy's most powerful tenets: as Christ forgave us (cf. "Father, forgive them", uttered on the cross) [The full quotation is "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do", referring to the Roman soldiers; how this could apply to deliberate, knowing evildoing is another matter.], so we are called to forgive one another. The (Orthodox) faith places an extraordinary emphasis upon God's forgiveness and the necessity for human beings to imitate it.

Over and over in the liturgy is heard "*Gospodi, Gospodi, Gospodi pomiluy*" (in Church Slavonic this

would be "*Hospodi, Hospodi, Hospodi pomiluy*), meaning "Lord, have mercy [upon us]". (Thus *Hospodi pomiluy* is the Church Slavonic equivalent of the *Kyrie Eleison*, which in Greek means "Lord have mercy [upon us]" of both the Byzantine Rite and the various rites which use Latin as their liturgical language.) Before a Russian Orthodox (communicant) receives the "Holy Gifts" of the sacrament, he often turns to the person standing next to him and says "Forgive me." This is a crucial moment in the service. The Russian Orthodox liturgy does not "repeat" the death of Jesus on Golgotha. Theologically, the "Lamb of God" was sacrificed "once only, for all time." But the liturgy sacramentally "makes present again" that death. When Jesus was on the cross, the Good Thief said, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." These words are "happening" in the Great Entrance through the Royal Doors, when the priest carries the covered chalice and paten which contain the consecrated bread and wine out to the people, and prays, "Remember. O Lord each one of us when You come into Your kingdom." The Orthodox hold that after the consecration, performed at the altar behind the iconostasis, the covered chalice and paten contain the actual body and blood of Christ. This is a "real presence" which cannot be explained, as it is a mystery. But it can be felt and believed. efore the believer is sacramentally
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present at Golgotha when the thief appealed to Christ, who is also present in the here and now of liturgical time. The believer at this moment *is* the Good Thief who asks to be remembered. He or she is comforted by the same response from Jesus: "Today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). **Today** means this day, for the linear timeline collapses into the mystical moment (the "Eternal Now" of the mystics of all religions). "Today" also emphasizes that the sanctuary is a symbol of Paradise. Indeed, sometimes an icon of the Good Thief replaces an archangel on the south door of the iconostasis.

When Boris Yeltsin emerged victorious from the White House (the Russian Parliament Building), he went immediately to the parents of the three young men killed by the tanks and said, "Forgive me, your president, that I was unable to defend and save your sons." There followed a brief moment of peace and harmony during the victims' funeral procession, The strains of the Orthodox funeral hymn "Eternal memory" mingled with the sounds of the Kaddish, because (at least a bit ironically), one of the victims was Jewish. The three young men died on the Garden Ring Road that circles central Moscow. Flowers, icons, and

crosses soon covered the ground. The ancient peasant belief that the soul is sustained by bread and vodka as it leaves the body reappeared at these makeshift shrines as well: loaves and bottles nestled among the crosses. People spoke of the young men's resemblance to the first (East) Slavic saints (St. Wenceslaus of Bohemia was most certainly a Slav, but, being a Czech, a West Slav), the *Strastoterptsy* Boris and Gleb, who accepted death at the hands of their (half) brother Sviatopolk and thus prevented civil war over the succession." (395)

In Chapter Seven, that which deals with St. John of the Cross and Sufism, we quoted at length from the works of the great

Russian Orthodox theologian Vladimir Lossky. Below is an essay titled "Tradition and Traditions" by Vladimir Lossky which appears in the beautiful book The Meaning of Icons by Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky. When reading this essay, it is well to recall the words of Rene Guenon concerning Tradition

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which we have cited earlier in this chapter. In said essay, Vladimir Lossky presents the Orthodox view of Tradition, which, *grosso modo* is that of Traditional Catholicism and also of Traditional Islam, both Shi'a and Sunni. The very word "Sunni" is derived from *Sunnah*, which means "Tradition", while, as we have said earlier, the Shi'as have their own *Sunnah*, which is not identical to that of the Sunnis. Thus, to refer to "the Shi'a" as being opposed to "the *Sunnah*" is a gross error and demonstrates a misunderstanding as to the meaning of said words.

Intentionally or not, the essay given below is an attack on Protestantism, Wahhabism, Salafism, Taliban, Deobandism, and

"Modernist", "Progressive" or "Post Council Vatican II" Catholicism, what Frithjof Schuon called "The Church that tries to modernize itself", but a firm support for traditional Catholics, Shi'as and traditional - particularly sufi-oriented - Sunnis as well as Orthodox Christians.

"Tradition (Greek: *paradosis*, Latin: *tradition*, Church Slavonic: *traditsii*) is one of those terms which through being too rich in meanings, runs the risk of finally having none. This is not only due to a secularization, which has depreciated so many words of the theological vocabulary - "spirituality", "mystic" "communion" detaching them from their Christian (or simply religious) context in order to make of them the current coin of profane language. If the word "tradition" has suffered the same fate, this has happened all the more easily because even in the language of theology itself this term sometimes remains somewhat vague. In effect, if one tries to avoid mutilating the idea of tradition by eliminating some of the meanings which it can comprise, but attempts to keep them all, one

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finds oneself reduced to definitions which embrace too many things at a time and no longer seize what constitutes the real meaning of "tradition".

As soon as precision is desired the over-abundant content has to be broken up, and a group of narrow concepts created, the sum of which is far from expressing that living reality called the Tradition of the Church. A reading of the erudite work of Fr. A. Deneffe, Der Traditionsbegriff, raises the question of whether tradition is capable of being expressed in concepts, or indeed whether, as with all that is "life", it "overflows the intelligence" and would have to be described rather than defined. There are, in fact, in some theologians of the romantic epoch, such as Mohler in Germany or Khomiakov in Russia, beautiful pages of description, in which tradition appears as a catholic plenitude, and cannot be

distinguished from the unity, the catholicity (The "Sobornost" of Khomiakov), the apostolicity of the consciousness of the Church possessing the immediate certitude of revealed truth.

Faced with these descriptions, faithful in their general line to the image of the Tradition in the patristic writings of the first (Christian) centuries, one is anxious to recognize the character of "*pleroma*" belonging to the tradition of the Church, but cannot all the same renounce the necessity of drawing distinctions, which is imposed on all dogmatic theology. To distinguish does not always mean to separate, nor even to oppose. In opposing Tradition to Holy Scripture as two sources of Revelation, the polemicists of the Counter-Reformation put themselves from the start on the same ground as their Protestant adversaries, having tacitly recognized in Tradition a reality other than that of Scripture. Instead of being the *upotesis* itself of the sacred books, their fundamental coherence due to the living breath passing through them, transforming their letter into "a unique body of truth", Tradition would appear as something added, as an external principle in relation to Scripture. Henceforth, the patristic texts which attributed a character of *pleroma* to

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the Holy Scripture became incomprehensible, whilst the Protestant doctrine of the "sufficiency of Scripture" received a negative meaning, by the exclusion of all that is "Tradition". The defenders of Tradition saw themselves obliged to prove the necessity of union between two juxtaposed realities, each of which problems like that of the primacy of Scripture or of Tradition, of their respective authority, of the total or partial difference of their content. How is the necessity of knowing the Scripture in the Tradition to be proved, how is their unity which was ignored in separating them to be found again? If the two are "fullness", there could be no question of two *pleromas* opposed to one another, but of two modalities of one and the same fullness of the Revelation communicated to the Church.

A distinction which separates or divides is never perfect nor sufficiently radical: it does not allow one to discern, in its purity, the difference of the unknown term, which it opposes to another that is supposed to be known. Separation is at the same time more and less than a distinction: it juxtaposes two objects detached from one another, but in order to do this it must first of all lend to one the characteristics of the other. In seeking to juxtapose Scripture and Tradition as two independent sources of Revelation, Tradition is inevitably endowed with qualities which belong to Scripture: it will be the ensemble of "other writings" or of unwritten "other words", that is, all that the Church can add to the Scripture on the horizontal plane of her history. There will thus be on the one hand the Scripture of the Scriptural canon, and on the other hand the Tradition of the Church, which in its turn can be divided into several sources of Revelation of unequal value: acts of Oecumenical or local Councils, writings of the (Church) Fathers, canonical institutions, liturgy, iconography, devotional practices, etc. But then could this still be called the "Tradition" and would it not be more exact to say, with the theologians of the Council of Trent, "the traditions"? This plural well expresses what is meant when, having separated Scripture and Tradition instead of

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distinguishing them, the latter is projected on to the written or oral testimonies which are added to the Holy Scripture, accompanying or following it. Just as "time projected in space" presents an obstacle to the intuition of Bergsonian "duration", so too this projection of the qualitative notion of Tradition in the quantitative domain of the "traditions" disguises rather than reveals its real character, for Tradition is free of all determination, which in limiting situates it historically.

An advance will be made towards a purer notion of Tradition, if this term is reserved to designate solely the oral transmission of the truths of faith. The

separation between Tradition and Scripture will still subsist, but instead of isolating two sources of Revelation, one will oppose two modes of transmitting it: oral preaching and writing. It will then be necessary to put in one category the preaching of the Apostles and of their successors, as well as all preaching of the faith practiced by a living ministry; and in the other category, the Holy Scripture and all other written expressions of the revealed Truth (these latter differing in the degree of their authority recognized by the Church). This approach affirms the primacy of Tradition over Scripture, since the oral transmission of the Apostles' preaching preceded its written recording in the canon of the New Testament. It will even be said: the Church could dispense with the Scriptures, but she could not exist without the Tradition. This is just only up to a certain point: it is true that the Church always possesses the revealed Truth, which she makes manifest by preaching, and which could have equally well remained oral and passed from mouth to mouth, without ever having been put into writing. But however much the separability of Scripture and Tradition is affirmed, they have not yet been radically distinguished: one remains on the surface, opposing books written with ink to discourses uttered with the living voice. In both cases it is a question of the word that is preached: "the preaching of the faith" here serves as the common foundation, which qualifies the opposition. But is not that to
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attribute to Tradition something which still makes it akin to Scripture? Is it not possible to go further in search of the pure notion of Tradition?

Amongst the variety of meanings that can be noted in the Fathers (of the Church) of the first centuries, tradition sometimes receives that of a preaching kept secret, not divulged, lest mystery be profaned by the uninitiated. This is clearly expressed by St. Basil, in the distinction which he makes between *dogma* and *Cherygma*. "Dogma" here has a sense contrary to that given to this term today: far from being a doctrinal definition loudly proclaimed by the Church,

it is a "teaching (*didascalía*) unpublished and secret, that our fathers kept in silence, free from disquiet and curiosity, well knowing that in being silent one safeguards the sacred character of the mysteries. On the other hand the *cherygma* (which means "preaching" in the language of the New Testament) is always an open declaration, whether it be a doctrinal definition, the official prescription of an observance, a canonical act or public prayers of the Church. Although they call to mind the *doctrina arcana* of the Gnostics, who also lay claim to a hidden apostolic tradition, the unwritten and secret traditions of which St. Basil speaks differ from it notably. Firstly, the examples that he gives in the passage that we have mentioned show that St. Basil's expressions relating to the "mysteries" do not concern an esoteric circle of a few perfect men in the interior of the Christian community, but rather the ensemble of the faithful participating in the sacramental life of the Church, who are opposed to the "uninitiated", those whom a progressive catechism must prepare for the sacraments of initiation. Secondly, the secret tradition (*dogma*) can be declared publicly and thus become "preaching" (*cherygma*) when a necessity (for example the struggle against a heresy) obliges the Church to make a pronouncement. So, if the traditions received from the Apostles remain unwritten and subject to the discipline of secrecy, if the faithful did not always know their mysterious meaning, this is due to the wise economy of

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the Church, which surrenders its mysteries only to the extent that their open declaration becomes indispensable. One is here faced with one of the antinomies of the Gospels: on the one hand one must not give what is holy to the dogs, nor cast pearls before swine (Matthew VII:6), on the other hand "there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known" (Matthew X:26; Luke XII:3). The "traditions guarded in silence and in mystery", that St. Basil oppose to oral preaching in public, make one think of the

words that were told "in darkness", "in the ear", "in closets", but which will be spoken "in light", "upon the house-tops" (Matthew X:27; Luke XII:3).

It is no longer an opposition between the *agrapha* and the *eggrapha*, oral preaching and written preaching. The distinction between Tradition and Scripture here penetrates further into the heart of its subject, ranging on the one side that which is kept in secret, and for this reason must not be recorded in writing, and on the other, all that is the subject of preaching and that, once having been publicly declared, can henceforth be ranged on the side of the "Scriptures" (*Graphai*). Did not St. Basil himself judge it opportune to reveal in writing the secret of several "traditions", thus transforming them into *charygmata*? This new distinction puts the accent on the secret character of the Tradition, by thus opposing a hidden fund of oral teachings, received from the Apostles, to that which the Church offers for the knowledge of all; hence it immerses "preaching" in a sea of apostolic traditions, that could not be set aside or underestimated without injury to the Gospel. Even more, if one did this "one would transform the teaching that is preached (to *cherygma*) into a simple name", devoid of meaning. The several examples of these traditions offered by St. Basil all relate to the sacramental and liturgical life of the

Church (sign of the Cross, baptismal rite, blessing of [olive] oil, Eucharistic epiclesis, the custom of turning towards the east during prayer and that of remaining standing on Sunday and during the period of

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Pentecost, etc.). If these "unwritten customs" (*ta agrapha ton ethon*), these "mysteries of the Church" (*agrapha tes Ecclesias mysteria*), so numerous that one could not expound them in the course of a whole day, are necessary for understanding the truth of the Scripture (and in general the true meaning of all "preaching"), it is clear that the secret traditions point to the "mysterical character" of Christian knowledge. In effect, the revealed truth is not a dead letter but a living Word: it can

be attained only in the Church, through initiation by the "mysteries" or sacraments into the "mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to his saints" (Colossians I:26).

The unwritten traditions or mysteries of the Church, mentioned by St. Basil, constitute then the boundary with Tradition properly so-called, and they give glimpses of some of its features. In effect, there is participation in the revealed mystery through the fact of sacramental initiation. It is a new knowledge, a "gnosis of God" (*gnosis Theou*) that one receives as grace, and this gift of gnosis is conferred in a "tradition" which is, for St. Basil, the confession of the Trinity at the time of baptism: a sacred formula which leads us into the light. Here the horizontal line of the "traditions" received from the mouth of the Lord and transmitted by the Apostles and their successors crosses with the vertical, with the *Tradition* - the communication of the Holy Spirit, which opens to members of the Church an infinite perspective of mystery in each word of the revealed Truth. Starting from traditions such as St. Basil presents to us, it is then necessary to go further and admit the *Tradition*, which is distinguished from them.

In fact, if one stops at the boundary of the unwritten and secret traditions, without making the last distinction, one will still remain on the horizontal plane of the *paradoxeis*, where *Tradition* appears to us as

"projected into the realm of the Scriptures". It is true that it would be impossible to separate these secret traditions from the Scriptures, or more

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generally, from "preaching", but one could always oppose them as words spoken in secret or guarded in silence and words declared publicly. The fact is that the final distinction has not yet been made so long as there remains a last element which links Tradition with Scripture the *word*, which serves as the foundation for opposing hidden traditions to open preaching. In order to isolate the pure notion of Tradition, in order to strip it of all that is its projection on the horizontal line of the

Church, it would be necessary to go beyond the opposition of secret words and words preached aloud, ranging together "the traditions" and "preaching". These two have this in common that, secret or not, they are none the less expressed by word. They always imply a verbal expression, whether it is a question of words properly so-called, pronounced or written, or whether of the dumb language which is addressed to the understanding by visual manifestation (iconography, ritual gestures, etc.). Taken in this general sense, the word is not uniquely an external sign used to designate a concept, but above all a content, which is defined intelligibly and declared in assuming a body, in being incorporated in articulate discourse or in any other form of external expression.

If such is the nature of the word, nothing of what is revealed and makes itself known can remain strange to it. Whether it be the Scriptures, preaching or the "apostles' traditions guarded in silence" the same word *logos* or *logia* can equally be applied to all that constitutes expression of the revealed

Truth. In fact, the word ceaselessly recurs in patristic literature to designate equally the Holy Scripture and the Symbols of Faith. Thus, St. John Cassian says on the subject of the symbol of Antioch: "It is the abridged word (*breviatum verbum*) that the Lord has given contracting into a few words the faith of His Testaments, in order to contain briefly the meaning of all the Scriptures." If one next reflects that the Scriptures are not a collection of words about God, but the Word of God (*Logos tou Theou*), one will understand why, above all since Origen, there

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has been the desire to identify the presence of the Divine Logos in the writings of the two Testaments with the Incarnation of the Word, by which the Scriptures were "accomplished". Well before Origen, St. Ignatius of Antioch refused to see in the Scriptures nothing but an historical document, "archives", and to justify the Gospel by the texts of the Old Testament, declaring "For me, my archives, they are

Jesus Christ; my inviolable archives are His Cross and His Death and His Resurrection, and the Faith which comes from Him; He is the Door of the Father, by which enter in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the prophets, and the Apostles, and the Church". If by the fact of the Incarnation of the Word the Scriptures are not the archives of the Truth, but its living body, the Scriptures can be possessed only within the Church, which is the unique body of Christ. Once again one returns to the idea of the sufficiency of the Scripture. But here there is nothing negative: it does not exclude, but assumes the Church with its sacraments, institutions and teachings transmitted by the Apostles. Nor does this sufficiency, this "pleroma" of the Scripture, exclude any other expressions of the same Truth that the Church will be able to produce (just as the fullness of Christ, the Head of the Church, does not exclude the Church - the complement of His glorious humanity). One knows that the defenders of the holy images founded the possibility of Christian iconography on the fact of the Incarnation of the Word: icons, just as well as the Scriptures, are expressions of the inexpressible, and have become possible thanks to the revelation of God, which was accomplished in the Incarnation of the Son. The same holds good for the dogmatic definitions, the exegesis, the liturgy, for all that, in the Church of Christ, participates in the same fullness of the Word as is contained in the Scriptures, without thereby being limited or reduced. In this "totalitarian" quality of the incarnate Word, all that expresses the revealed truth is then related to the Scripture and, if all were in fact to become "scripture", "the world itself could

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not contain the books that should be written" (John XXI:25). But since the expression of the of the transcendent mystery has become possible by the fact of the Incarnation of the Word since all that expresses it becomes in some sort "scripture" beside the Holy Scripture, the question arises as to where finally the Tradition that we have sought by detaching progressively its pure notion from all that

can relate it to the scriptural reality?

As we have said, it is not to be sought on the horizontal lines of the "traditions" which, just as much as the Scripture, are determined by the Word. If again we wished to oppose it to all that belongs to the reality of the Word, it would be necessary to say that the Tradition is Silence. "He who possesses in truth the word of Jesus can hear even its silence (*teis esiuichias autou achouein*)", says St. Ignatius of Antioch. As far as I know this text has never been used in numerous studies which quote patristic passages on the Tradition in abundance, always the same passages, known by everyone, but with never a warning that texts in which the word "tradition" is not expressly mentioned can be more eloquent than many others.

The faculty of hearing the silence of Jesus, attributed to St. Ignatius (of Antioch) to those who in truth possess His word, echoes the reiterated appeal of Christ to His hearers: "He that has ears to hear, let him hear." The words of Revelation have then a margin of silence which cannot be picked up by the ears of those who are outside. St. Basil moves in the same direction when he says, in his passage on the traditions: "There is also a form of silence, namely the obscurity used by the Scripture, in order to make it difficult to gain understanding of the teachings, for the profit of readers." This silence of the Scriptures could not be detached from them: it is transmitted by the Church with the words of the Revelation, as the very condition of their reception. If it could be opposed to the words (always on the horizontal plane, where they express the revealed Truth), this silence which

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accompanies the words implies no kind of insufficiency or lack of fullness of the Revelation, nor the necessity to add to it anything whatever. It signifies that the revealed mystery, to be truly received as fullness, demands a conversion towards the vertical plane, in order that one may be able to "comprehend with all saints" not only what is "breadth and length" of the Revelation, but also its "depth" and its

"height" (Ephesians III:18).

At the point which we have reached, we can no longer oppose Scripture and Tradition, nor juxtapose them as two distinct realities. We must, however, distinguish them, the better to seize their individual unity, which lends to the Revelation given to the Church its character of fullness. If the Scriptures and all that the Church can produce in words written or pronounced, in images or in symbols liturgical or otherwise, represent the differing modes of expression of the Truth, Tradition is the unique mode of receiving it. We say specifically *unique mode*, and not *uniform mode*, for to Tradition in its pure notion there belongs nothing formal. It does not impose on human consciousness by formal guarantees of the truths of faith, but gives access to the discovery of their inner evidence. It is not the content of Revelation, but the light that reveals it; it is not the word, but the living breath which makes the word heard at the same time as the silence from which it came; it is not the Truth, but a communication of the Spirit of Truth, outside which the Truth cannot be received. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (I Corinthians, XII:3). The pure notion of Tradition can then be defined by saying that it is the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church, communicating to each member of the Body of Christ the faculty of hearing, of receiving, of knowing the Truth in the Light which belongs to it, and not according to the light of human reason. This is true gnosis owed to an action of the Divine Light (*Photismos teis gnoseos teis doseis tou Theou*) 2nd Corinthians, IV:6), the unique Tradition, independent of all "philosophy", of all that lives by the "tradition of men,

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after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians II:8). This freedom from every condition of nature, every contingency of history, is the first characteristic of the vertical line of the Tradition: it is inherent in Christian gnosis: "Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free" (John VIII:32).

One cannot know the Truth nor understand the words of Revelation without having received the Holy Spirit; "But where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2nd Corinthians III:17). This liberty of the children of God, opposed to the slavery of the sons of the world, is expressed by the "frankness" (*parreisia*), with which those can address God who know Him whom they worship, for they worship the Father "in Spirit and in Truth" (John IV:23, 24).

Wishing to distinguish Tradition from Scripture, we have sought to strip the notion of all that could make it akin to scriptural reality. We have had to distinguish it from the "traditions", ranking these latter, together with the Scriptures and all expressions of the Truth, on the same horizontal line where we have found no other name to designate it than that of Silence. When therefore Tradition has been detached from all that could receive its projection on the horizontal plane, it is necessary to enter another dimension in order to reach the term of our analysis. Contrary to analyses such as philosophy since Plato and Aristotle conceives them, and which end in dissolving the concrete by resolving it into general ideas or conceptions, our analysis leads us finally towards the Truth and the Spirit, the Word and the Holy Spirit, two persons, distinct but indissolubly united, whose twofold economy, while founding the Church, conditions at the same time the indissoluble and distinct character of Scripture and of Tradition.

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The culmination of our analysis - Incarnate Word and Holy Spirit in the Church, as the twofold condition of the fullness of the Revelation - will serve us as a turntable from which to set forth now on the way of synthesis and to assign to Tradition the

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place which belongs to it in the concrete realities of ecclesiastical life. It will first of all be necessary to establish a double reciprocity in the economy of the two Divine Persons sent by the Father. On the one hand, it is by the Holy Spirit that the Word is made incarnate of the Virgin Mary.

On the other hand, it is by the Word, following His Incarnation and work of Redemption, that the Holy Spirit descends on the members of the Church at Pentecost. In the first case, the Holy Spirit comes first, but with a view to the Incarnation, in order that the Virgin (Mary) may be able to conceive the Son of God. Come to be made Man. The role of the Holy Spirit is here then functional: He is the power of the Incarnation, the virtual condition of the reception of the Word. In the second case, it is the Son Who comes first, for He sends the Holy Spirit Who comes from the Father, but it is the Holy Spirit, Who plays the principal role: It is He Who is the aim, for He is communicated to the members of the Body of Christ, in order to deify them by grace. So here the role of the Incarnate Word is, in its turn, functional in relation to the Spirit: It is the form, so to speak, the "canon" of sanctification, formal condition of the reception of the Holy Spirit.

The true and holy Tradition, according to Filaret Of Moscow, **does not consist uniquely in visible and verbal transmission of the teachings, the rules, institutions and rites: it is at the same time and invisible and actual communication of grace and sanctification.** If it is necessary to distinguish what is transmitted (the oral and written traditions) and the unique mode according to which the transmission is received in the Holy Spirit (Tradition as the principle of Christian knowledge), it will none the less be impossible to separate those two points; hence the ambivalence of the term "tradition", which designates simultaneously the horizontal line and the vertical line of the Truth possessed by the Church. Every transmission of a truth of faith implies then a communication of the grace of the Holy Spirit. In effect, outside of the Spirit Who "spoke by the prophets",
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that which is transmitted cannot be recognized by the Church as word of Truth, word akin to the sacred books inspired by God and, together with the Holy Scriptures, "recapitulated" by the Incarnate Word. This wind of Pentecostal fire, communication of

the Spirit of Truth proceeding from the Father and sent by the Son, actualizes the supreme faculty of the Church: the consciousness of revealed Truth, the possibility of judging and of discerning between true and false in the Light of the Holy Spirit: "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us" (Acts XV:28). If the Paraclete is the unique Criterion of the Truth revealed by the Incarnate Word, He is also the principle of the Incarnation, for the same Holy Spirit by Whom the Virgin Mary received the faculty of becoming Mother of God, acts as function of the Word as a power for expressing the Truth in intelligible definitions or sensible images and symbols, documents of the faith, of which the Church will have to judge whether or not they belong to its Tradition.

These considerations are necessary to enable us to find again, in concrete cases, the relationship between the Tradition and the revealed Truth, received and expressed by the Church. As we have seen, Tradition in its primary notion is not the revealed content, but the unique mode of receiving the Revelation, a faculty owed to the Holy Spirit, which renders the Church apt to know the Incarnate Word in its relationship with the Father (supreme gnosis which is Theology, in the proper meaning of this word, for the fathers of the first centuries) as well as the mysteries of the Divine Economy, from the creation of heaven and earth of Genesis, to the new heaven and new earth of the Apocalypse. Recapitulated by the Incarnation of the Word, the history of the Divine Economy will make itself known by the Scriptures, in the recapitulation of the two Testaments by the same Word. But this unity of the Scriptures could be recognized only in the Tradition, in the Light of the Holy Spirit communicated to the members of the unique Body of Christ. The books of the Old Testament (*Torah*), composed over a period of
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several centuries, written by different authors who have often brought together and fused different religious traditions, have only an accidental, mechanical unity for the eyes of the historian of religions. Their unity with the writings of the New Testament

(*Injil*) will appear to him factitious and artificial. But a son of the Church will be able to recognize the unity of inspiration and the unique object of the faith in these heteroclitic writings, woven by the same Spirit Who, after having spoken by the prophets, preceded the Word in rendering the Virgin Mary apt to serve as means for the Incarnation of God.

It is only in the Church that one will be able to recognize in full consciousness the unity of inspiration of the sacred books, because the Church alone possesses the Tradition - the knowledge in the Holy Spirit of the Word Incarnate. The fact that the Canon of the writings of the New Testament (*Injil*) was formed relatively late, with some hesitations, shows us that the Tradition is in no way automatic: it is the condition of the Church having an infallible consciousness, but it is not a mechanism which will infallibly make known the Truth, outside all deliberation and all judgement. In fact, if the Tradition is a faculty of judging in the Light of the Holy Spirit, it obliges those who wish to know the Truth in the Tradition to make incessant efforts: one does not remain in the Tradition by a certain historical inertia, in keeping as a "tradition received from the Fathers" all that which, by force of habit, flatters a certain devout sensibility. On the contrary, it is by substituting "traditions" of these kinds for the Tradition of the Holy Spirit living in the Church, that one runs most risk of finding oneself finally outside the Body of Christ. It must not be thought that the conservative attitude alone is salutary, nor that heretics are always "innovators". If the Church, after having established the Canon of Scripture, conserves it in the Tradition, this conservation is not static and inert, but dynamic and conscious - in the Holy Spirit, Who purifies anew "the oracles of the Lord", "pure oracles: as silver

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proved in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Psalms XII:6). If that were lacking, it would have conserved only a dead text, witness of an ended epoch, and not the living vivifying Word, perfect expression of

the Revelation that it possesses independently of the existence of the existence of old discordant manuscripts or of new "critical editions" of the Bible.

One can say that the "Tradition" represents the critical spirit of the Church. But, contrary to the critical spirit of human science, the critical judgement of the Church is made acute by the Holy Spirit. It will have then a quite different principle: that of the undiminished fullness of Revelation. Thus the Church, which will have to correct the inevitable alterations of the sacred texts (that certain "traditionalists" wish to preserve at any price, sometimes attributing a mystical meaning to the stupid mistakes of copyists), will be able at the same time to recognize in some late interpolations (for example, in the comma of the "three that bear record in Heaven" in the first epistle of St. John) an authentic expression of the revealed Truth. Naturally authenticity has here a meaning quite other than it has in the historic disciplines. Not only the Scriptures, but also the oral traditions received from the Apostles have been conserved only by virtue of the Tradition - the Light which reveals their true meaning and their significance, essential for the Church. Here more than elsewhere Tradition exercises its critical action, showing above all its negative and exclusive aspect: it rejects the "profane and old wives' fables" (1st Timothy IV:7), piously received by all those whose "traditionalism" consists in accepting with unlimited credulity all that is insinuated into the life of the Church to remain there by force of habit. At the epoch at which the oral traditions coming from the Apostles began to be fixed in writing, the true and the false traditions crystallize together in numerous apocrypha, several of which circulate under the names of the Apostles or other saints. "We are not ignorant", says Origen, "that many of these secret writings (3667)

have been composed by impious men, from among those who make their iniquity sound loudest, and that some of these fictions are used by the 'Hypythiani', others, by the disciples

of Basilides. We must then pay attention, in order not to receive all the apocrypha which circulate under the names of saints, for some have been composed by the Jews, perhaps to destroy the truth of our Scriptures, and to establish false teachings. But on the other hand we must not reject as a whole all that is useful for throwing light on our Scriptures. It is a mark of greatness of spirit to hear and to apply these words of the Scripture: 'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good' (1st Thessalonians V:21)." Since the deeds and the words that the memory of the Church has kept since apostolic times "in silence free of disquiet and of curiosity" (St. Basil) have been divulged in writings of heterorthodox these apocrypha, though separated from the scriptural Canon should none the less not be totally rejected. The Church will know how to extract from them some elements apt for completing or for illustrating events on which the Scriptures are silent, but that Tradition recognizes as true. Further, amplifications having an apocryphal source will serve to colour the liturgical texts and the iconography of some feasts. One will use then apocryphal sources, with judgement and moderation, to the extent to which they may represent corrupted apostolic traditions. Recreated by the Tradition, these elements, purified and made legitimate, return to the Church as its own property. This judgement will be necessary each time that the Church has to do with writings claiming to belong to the apostolic tradition. She will reject them, or she will receive them, without necessarily posing the question of their authenticity on the historical plane, but considering above all their content in the light of the Tradition. Sometimes a considerable labour of clarification and adaptation will be necessary, in order that a pseudographic work may be finally utilized by the Church as a witness of her Tradition. It is thus that St. Maximus the Confessor had to make his commentary on the "Corpus (3668)

Dionysiacum", in order to uncover the orthodox meaning of these theological writings, which were circulating in monophysite circles under the pseudonym of

St. Dionysius the Areopagite, adopted by their author or compiler. Without belonging to the "apostolic tradition" properly so-called the Dionysian Corpus belongs to the "patristic tradition", which continues that of the Apostles and of their disciples. (*Nota bene*: As we have said earlier, the "Dionysian Corpus" is most likely either the work of the early Syrian Christian mystic Stephen bar Sadaili, or a disciple of his, and was likely originally written in Syriac, or it is the work of the polyfaceted genius Patriarch Severus of Antioch [465-538], in which case it may have originally been written in either Syriac or Greek) The same could be said for some other writings of this kind. As for the oral traditions claiming apostolic authority, above all in so far as concerns customs and institutions, the judgement of the Church will take account not only of their meaning but also of the universality of their usage.

Let us note that the formal criterion of the traditions expressed by St. Vincent of Lerins: "*Quod semper, quod ubique quod ab omnibus*" (because always, because everywhere because received by all) - can only be applied in full to those apostolic traditions which were orally transmitted during two or three centuries. The New Testament Scriptures (*Injil*) already escape from this rule, for they were neither "always", nor "everywhere", nor "received by all", before the definitive establishment of the scriptural Canon. Whatever may be said by those who forget the primary significance of Tradition, wishing to substitute for it a "rule of faith", the formula of St. Vincent is still less applicable to the dogmatic definitions of the Church. It is enough to recall that the *omnibus* was nothing less than "traditional"; with a few exceptions, it was never used anywhere nor by anyone except by the valentinian Gnostics and the heretic Paul of Samosate. The Church has transformed it into "pure oracles: as silver proved in a furnace of earth, purified seven
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times" in the crucible of the Holy Spirit and of the free consciousness of those who judge within the Tradition, allowing themselves to be seduced by no habitual form. By no natural inclination of the flesh

and the blood, which often assume the appearance of an unconsidered and obscure devotion.

The dynamism of the Tradition allows of no inertia either in habitual forms of piety, nor in the dogmatic expressions that are repeated mechanically like magic recipes of Truth, guaranteed by the authority of the Church. To preserve the "dogmatic tradition" does not mean to be attached to doctrinal formulae: to be within the Tradition, is to keep the living truth in the Light of the Holy Spirit, or rather, it is to be kept in the Truth by the vivifying power of Tradition. But this power preserves by a ceaseless renewing, like all that comes from the Spirit.

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"To renew" does not mean to replace ancient expressions of the Truth by new ones, more explicit and theologically better elaborated. If that were so, we should have to recognize that the erudite Christianity of professors of theology represents a considerable progress in relation to the "primitive" faith of the disciples of the Apostles. In our days there is much talk of "theological development", often without taking account of the extent to which this expression (which has become almost a commonplace) can be ambiguous. In fact, it implies, among some modern authors, an evolutionary conception of the history of Christian dogma. Attempts are made to interpret in the sense of a "dogmatic progress" this passage from St. Gregory of Nazianzus: "the Old Testament manifested clearly the father and obscurely the Son. The New Testament manifested the Son, but gave only indications of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Nowadays the Spirit is amongst us and shows Himself in all His splendor. It would not have been prudent before recognizing the divinity of the Father, openly to preach the divinity of the Son, and

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as long as that of the Son had not been accepted, to impose the Holy Spirit, if I dare to so express myself. But "the Spirit is amongst us" since the day of Pentecost and, with Him, the light of the Tradition:

that is to say, not only what has been transmitted (as would have been a sacred and inert "deposit"), but the very force of transmission conferred on the Church and accompanying all that is transmitted, as the unique mode of receiving and possessing the Revelation. However, the unique mode of having the Revelation in the Holy Spirit is to have it in fullness, and it is thus that the Church knows the Truth in the Tradition. If there was an increase in knowledge of the Divine mystery, a progressive revelation, "light coming little by little", before the coming of the Holy Spirit, it is otherwise for the Church. If one can still speak of development, it is not knowledge of the Revelation in the Church which progresses nor is it developed with each dogmatic definition. If one were to embrace the whole account of doctrinal history from its beginnings down to our own days, by reading the Enchiridion of Denzinger or the fifty in-folio volumes of Mansi, the knowledge that one would thus have of the mystery of the Trinity would be no more perfect than was that of a Father of the 4th century who speaks of the *omoousios*, nor than that of an antenicene Father who does not yet speak of it, nor that of a St. Paul, to whom even the term "Trinity" remains yet strange. At every moment of its history the Church gives to its members the faculty of knowing the Truth in a fullness that the world cannot contain. It is this mode of knowing the living Truth in the Tradition that it defends in creating new dogmatic definitions.

"To know in fullness"; this belongs only to the world to come. If St. Paul says that he now knows "in part" (I Corinthians XIII:12) this *ech merous* does not exclude the fullness in which he knows. It is not later dogmatic development that will suppress the "knowledge in part" of St. Paul, but the eschatological actualization of the fullness in which, confusedly but surely, Christians here below know the mysteries of the

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Revelation. The knowledge *ech merous* will not be suppressed because it was false, but because its role was merely to make us adhere to the fullness, which surpasses every human

faculty of knowledge. Hence, it is in the light of the fullness that one knows "in part" and it is always through this fullness that the Church judges whether the partial knowledge expressed in such or such a doctrine belongs, or not, to Tradition. Any theological doctrine which pretends to be a perfect explanation of the revealed mystery will inevitably appear to be false: by the very fact of pretending to the fullness of knowledge it will set itself in opposition to the fullness, in which the Truth is known in part. A doctrine is traitor to Tradition when it seeks to take its place: Gnosticism offers

the striking example of an attempt to substitute for the dynamic fullness, given to the Church as the condition of true knowledge, a kind of static fullness of a "revealed doctrine". On the other hand, a dogma defined by the Church, in the form of partial knowledge, each time opens anew an access towards the fullness outside of which the revealed Truth can be neither known nor confessed. As an expression of truth, a dogma of faith belongs to the Tradition, without all the same constituting one of its "parts". It is a means, an intelligible instrument, which makes for adherence to the Tradition of the Church: it is a witness of Tradition, its external limit, or rather the narrow door which leads to knowledge of Truth in the Tradition.

Within the circle of dogma, the knowledge of the revealed mystery that a member of the Church will be able to attain, the degree of Christian "gnosis", will vary in proportion to the spiritual measure of each. This knowledge of the Truth in the Tradition will then be able to increase in a person, in company with his increase in sanctification (Colossians I:10): a Christian will be more perfect in knowledge at the age of his spiritual maturity. But would one dare to speak, against all the evidence, of a collective progress in the knowledge of the Christian mystery, a progress which would be due to a "dogmatic development" of the

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Church? Would this development have started in "gospel infancy to end today after a "patristic youth" and a "scholastic

maturity" in the sad senility of the manuals of theology? Or indeed should this metaphor (false, like so many others) give place to a vision of the Church like that which is to be found in the Shepherd of Hermes, where it appears in the features of a woman young and old at the same time, bringing together all ages in the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians IV:13)?

Returning to the text of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, so often misinterpreted, we shall see that the dogmatic development in question is in no way determined by an inner necessity, which would effect a progressive increase in the Church of the knowledge of revealed Truth. Far from being a kind of organic evolution, the history of dogma depends above all on the conscious attitude of the Church in face of the historical reality, in which she has to work for the salvation of men. If Gregory spoke of a progressive revelation of the Trinity before Pentecost, it is in order to insist on the fact that the Church, in her economy in relation to the external world, must follow the example of the divine pedagogy. In formulating these dogmas (cf. *cherygma* in St. Basil, see pg. 14 above), it must then conform to the necessities of a given moment; "not unveiling all things without delay and without discernment, and none the less keeping nothing hidden until the end. For the one would be imprudent and the other impious. The one would risk wounding those without, and the other separating us from our own brothers."

In replying to the lack of understanding of the external world, which could not receive the Revelation, in resisting the attempts of the "disputers of the world" (I Corinthians, I:20) who, in the womb of the Church itself, seek to understand the Truth "after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians II:8), the Church finds herself obliged to express her faith in the form of dogmatic definitions, in order to defend it against the thrust of heresies.

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Imposed by the necessity of the struggle, dogmas once formulated by the Church become for the faithful a "rule of faith" which

remain firm forever, setting the boundary between orthodoxy and heresy, between knowledge within the tradition and knowledge determined by natural factors. Always confronted with new difficulties to overcome, with new obstacles of thought to remove, the Church will always have to defend her dogmas. Her theologians will have the constant task of expounding and interpreting them anew according to the intellectual demands of the milieu of the epoch. In the critical moments of the struggle for the integrity of the faith, the Church will have to proclaim new dogmatic definitions, which will mark new stages in this struggle, that will last until all arrive at "the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (Ephesians, IV:13).

Having to struggle against new heresies, the Church never abandons her ancient dogmatic positions, in order to replace them by new definitions. These stages are never surpassed by an evolution and, far from being relegated to the archives of history, they preserve the character of the ever actual present in the living light of the Tradition. One will be able to speak then of dogmatic development only in a very limited sense: in formulating a new dogma the Church takes as her point of departure dogmas which already exist, and which constitute a rule of faith that she has in common with her adversaries. Thus, the dogma of Chalcedon makes use of that of Nicaea and speaks of the Son consubstantial with the Father in His Divinity, to say afterwards that He is also consubstantial with us in His humanity; against the monothelites, who in principle admitted the dogma of Chalcedon, the fathers of the 6th Council will again take up its formulae on the two natures, in order to affirm the two wills and the two energies of Christ; the Byzantine Councils of the 14th century, in proclaiming the dogma on the Divine Energies will refer, amongst other things, to the definitions of the 6th Council, etc. In each case one can speak of a "dogmatic development" to the extent that

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the Church extends the rule of faith, while remaining, in her new definitions, in

conformity with the dogmas already received by all.

If the rule of faith develops as the teaching ministry of the Church adds to it new acts having dogmatic authority, this development, which is subject to an "economy" and pre-supposes a knowledge of Truth in the Tradition, is not an augmentation of this latter. This is clear if one is willing to take account of all that has been said on the primordial notion of Tradition. It is the abuse of the term "tradition" (in the singular and without an adjective to qualify it and determine it) by authors who see only its projection on the horizontal plane of the Church, namely, that of the "traditions" (in the plural or with a qualification which defines them), it is above all a vexatious habit of designating by this term the ordinary teaching ministry: it is these which have allowed such frequent talk to be heard about a "development" or an "enriching" of tradition. The theologians of the 7th Council distinguish clearly between the "tradition of the Holy Spirit" and the divinely inspired "teaching (*didascalia*) of our Holy Fathers". They were able to define the new dogma "with all rigor and justice", because they considered themselves to be in the same Tradition as allowed the Fathers of past centuries to produce new expressions of the Truth whenever they had to reply to the necessities of the moment.

There exists an interdependence between the "Tradition of the Catholic Church" (viz. the faculty of knowing the Truth in the Holy Spirit) and the "teaching of the Fathers" (viz. the rule of faith kept by the Church). One cannot belong to the Tradition while contradicting the dogmas, just as one cannot either make use of the dogmatic formulae received in order to oppose a formal "orthodoxy" to every new expression of the Truth that the life of the Church may produce. The first attitude is that of the revolutionary innovators, of the false prophets who sin against the expressed Truth, against the incarnate Word, in the name of

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the Spirit to which they lay claim. The second is that of the conservative formalists, the Pharisees of the Church who,

in the name of the habitual expressions of Truth, run the risk of sinning against the Spirit of Truth.

In distinguishing the Tradition, in which the Church knows the Truth, from the "dogmatic tradition" that she establishes by her teaching ministry and that she preserves, we find again the same relationship as we have been able to establish between Tradition and Scripture: one can neither confound them nor separate them, without depriving them of the character of fullness that they possess together. Like Scripture, dogmas live in the Tradition, with the difference that the scriptural Canon forms a determinate body which excludes all possibility of further increase, while the "dogmatic tradition", in keeping its stability as the "rule of faith", from which nothing can be cut off, can be increased by receiving, to the extent that

may be necessary, new expressions of revealed Truth, formulated by the Church. The ensemble of the dogmas, that the Church possesses and transmits, is not a body constituted once and for all, neither has it the incomplete character of a doctrine "in process of becoming". At every moment of its historical existence, the Church formulates the Truth of the faith in its dogmas, which always express a fullness to which one adheres intellectually in the light of the Tradition, while never being able to make it definitively explicit. A truth which would allow itself to be made fully explicit would not have the character of living fullness, which belongs to Revelation: "fullness" and "rational explicitness" mutually exclude one another. However, if the mystery revealed by Christ and known in the Holy Spirit cannot be made explicit, it does not remain inexpressible. Since "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" dwells in Christ (Colossians II:9), this fullness of the Divine Word incarnate will be expressed as well in the Scriptures as in the "abridged word" of the symbols of faith or of other dogmatic definitions. This fullness of the

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Truth that they express without making explicit, allows the dogmas of the Church to be akin to the Holy Scriptures. It is for

this reason that the Pope St. Gregory I the Great brought together in the same veneration the dogmas of the first four Councils and the four Gospels (*Injil*).

All that we have said on the "dogmatic tradition" can be applied to other expressions of the Christian mystery that the Church produces in the Tradition, conferring on them equally the presence of the "fullness of him that fills all in all" (Ephesians I:23). Just like the "divinely inspired didascalia" of the Church, the iconographic tradition also receives its full meaning and its intimate coherence with other documents of the faith (Scripture, dogmas, liturgy) in the Tradition of the Holy Spirit. Just as much as dogmatic definitions, it has been possible for the icons of Christ to be allied with the Holy Scriptures, to receive the same veneration, since iconography sets forth in colors what the word announces in written letters. Says the anti-Photian Synod of the Church (869-870 AD):

"We prescribe the veneration of the holy icon of Our Lord Jesus Christ in rendering to it the same honor as to the Books of the Holy Gospels. For just as by the letters of these latter we all come to salvation, just so by the action of the colors in images, all - learned as well as ignorant - equally find their profit in what is within reach of all. In effect, just as the word is set forth by letters, painting sets forth and represents the same things by colors. Hence, if someone does not venerate the icon of Christ the Saviour, may he be unable to see His face in the second coming."

If we cite here the third canon of the anti-Photian Synod (869-870). Whose acts have been broken by the Church (not only in the East but also in the West, as shown by F. Dvornik in The Photian Schism, London, 1948, pp. 176-177 and

(3677)

passim), it is because it gives a beautiful

example of the rapprochement current between the Holy Scriptures and iconography, united in the same Tradition of the Church. See the sequel of the text just quoted, on the icons of the Mother of God, of angels and of saints. [The reader may wish to compare the above with the words of Mullah Damavandi, cited below.] Dogmas are addressed to the intelligence, they are intelligible expressions of the reality which surpasses our mode of understanding. Icons impinge on our consciousness by means of the outer senses, presenting to us the same supra-sensible reality in "aesthetic" expressions (in the proper sense of the word, that which can be perceived by the senses). But the intelligible element does not remain foreign to iconography: in looking at an icon one discovers in it a "logical" structure, a dogmatic content which has determined its composition. This does not mean that icons are a kind of hieroglyph or a sacred rebus, translating dogmas into a language of conventional signs. If the intelligibility, which penetrates these sensible images, is identical with that of the dogmas of the Church, it is that the two "traditions" - dogmatic and iconographic - coincide in so far as they express, each by its proper means, the same revealed reality. Although it transcends the intelligence and the senses, the Christian Revelation does not exclude them: on the contrary, it assumes them and transforms them by the light of the Holy Spirit, in the Tradition which is the unique mode of receiving the revealed Truth, of recognizing it in its expressions whether scriptural, dogmatic, iconographic or other and also of expressing it anew." (396)

As is known even outside Russian Orthodoxy, St. Seraphim of Sarov predicted with uncanny and terrifying precision World War I and the coming of Soviet Regime. St. Seraphim of Sarov's words were:

"The people have forgotten God: if they do not return to God the world will see a war such as it has never seen and cannot even imagine, and Russia will be taken over by a gang of godless murderers."
(3678)

A more accurate prediction of World War I and the coming of

the Soviet Regime would be difficult to imagine.

Some claim that St. Seraphim of Sarov also predicted the demise of the Soviet Regime. Perhaps so, but in this case the prediction lacks the uncanny and terrifying clarity and precision of the one predicting World War I and the coming to power of the Soviet Regime. This is noted by John & Carol Garrard:

"This argument (that the demise of the Soviet regime was predicted by St. Seraphim of Sarov) first emerged from the pages of the 1994 publication of a lavish coffee-table book written by the architectural historian Mikhail P. Kudryavtsev, *Moskva, Tretiy Rim (Moscow, the Third Rome)*. It is stated in such convoluted terms that few in the West understood it, even those with near-native Russian. Kudryavtsev died before his life's work was published, though he did get to see it in proofs. The tirage (number of copies in the print run) was only ten thousand. Inside the front cover appears the statement that the book has "the blessing of Alksy II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia." The purpose of the book seems innocuous:

"Ancient Moscow is generally held to be the greatest product of the Russian town builder's art, and was seen by the Church as the earthly embodiment of the Celestial City, This richly illustrated history of the city is the first title in a series commemorating the 850th Anniversary of Christian Moscow. A wealth of rare photographs, maps and diagrams, and historical town plans coupled with the author's imaginative reconstructions of XVII century townscapes, bring old Moscow to life."

So far, this is straightforward. The book's publication is part of the hoopla surrounding the 850th anniversary of the founding of Moscow, just as was the publication of *Moscow: 850th Anniversary* and the rebuilding of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior were. Only in the afterword does the ROC's ingenious decoding of the book of Revelation enter. The afterword is entitled "The Orthodox View and Teaching about the Third Rome." Here the Prorohierarch Alexander Saltykov explains Filofey's sixteenth-century portrait of Moscow as the Third Rome

actually predicts the fall of the USSR.

Saltykov's argument is worthy of the Jesuits at their most refined. Soviet ideologues had tried to remake Moscow into the capital of an international movement leading the entire planet to a heaven brought down to earth, in effect a "Fourth Rome", though Saltykov does not use that image. Instead, he argues, there would be no Communist holy city called Moscow: Scripture itself declares the Holy City can move "only three times, for it is done only in the name of the father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And this Trinity is a sacred number. The number three thus represents an eschatological barrier.

Saltykov now turns to the book of Revelation, which provides the precise metaphors describing the entire Soviet period. These are the years when the faithful (Muslim as well as Christian) would be forced to "flee into the desert (or wilderness)". Saltykov alludes to verses 5-14 of chapter XII of Revelation though he does not quote them. When mystified readers (such as the authors) turn to the text, these verses describe the war in heaven fought between St. Michael and his angels against the dragon and the rebel host. When the dragon is cast out of heaven (XII:9) he "persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child" (XII:13). The woman flees into the desert, "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." Saltykov claims the years of Soviet power literalize this metaphor (Who can argue with him on this point?), with the dragon standing for the atheist state, and the "remnant" of the woman's seed, "which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation XII:17) representing the Russian Orthodox. Though Saltykov does not come out and say so, every Russian could understand the unspoken reference to the two wings of Revelation's "eagle". This is the double eagle of the Romanov dynasty, revived post-coup as the symbol of Russia.

It is human nature to want to see pattern in the blizzard of chaos. During the twentieth century, Russians lived through the worst years of their thousand-year history. This has left many susceptible to the idea that prophecy can somehow *explain* all the bloodshed and destruction. And Saltykov is careful to link Filofey's prophecy that Moscow was the Third Rome and a Fourth can never be with St. Seraphim (of Sarov), calling the duo the two saints who head the prophetic ranks of the Russian Church. It may sound ludicrous to

the secular, but it is a comforting explanation for the Russians of seventy-three years of torment at the hands of their own government.

The basic theme of the ROC's campaign to deal with collaboration during the Soviet Period was laid out at the crisis of the coup when the outcome was still undecided. It was there in Aleksy's closing prayer-petition to *Mater Bozhii*, the Mother of God, for her help "to reconcile ourselves to one another, to the truth and to God." Reconciliation would be premised

upon setting a large chunk of the messy historical truth aside and adopting the Church's "Truth", as spelled with a capital "T". The distinction between what Western historians would call "the truth" and the Church's definition of this term is stated by Vladimir Lossky, an important theologian, in his essay "Tradition and Traditions" (see above). He declares that the Church's "Truth in the Light" belongs to it alone and is not perceived "according to the light of human reason. This is the true gnosis owed to an action of the Divine Light (2nd Corinthians IV:6. This freedom from every condition of nature, every contingency of history, is the first characteristic of the vertical line of the Tradition. (See above.) It is a close question whether or not the ROC's version of the "Truth", detached as it is from notions of historicity, fact, and rationality would be anything recognizable to the West. But this is language on another plane.

One week after the coup's defeat, the Church's August 30, 1991 Appeal pleads penitence and seeks forgiveness. Here the ROC, in a brilliant stroke, pointed to the émigrés' own words as the path to follow. This is the "Prayer for the Salvation of Russia", which was established at the first Council of the Russian Church Abroad in 1921, in Sremske Karlovce, Yugoslavia. It was then read at the Divine Liturgy in place of the prayer for the tsar. After that, it was so read, with slight changes, for seventy-seven years. The prayer is for forgiveness for the *tormentors*:

Accept from us, Thy unworthy servants,
This fervent supplication, and
Having forgiven us all our sins,
Remember all our enemies
That hate and wrong us
And render not unto them according to their deeds,
But according to Thy great mercy convert them:
The unbelieving to true faith and piety,
And the believing that they may turn away from evil and do good.
By Thine all-powerful might,

(3681)

Mercifully deliver all of us and Thy Holy Church
From every evil circumstance.
Free our Russian land
From the cruel godless ones and their power
And raise the Holy Orthodox Russia;
Hearken unto the painful cry of thy faithful servants
Who cry unto Thee day and night
In tribulation and sorrow
Grant peace and tranquility, love and steadfastness, and
Swift reconciliation to Thy people,
Whom Thou has redeemed by Thy precious Blood.
But unto them that have departed from Thee and seek Thee not,
Be Thou manifest,
That not one of them perish,
But all of them be saved and come to the knowledge of Thy truth,
That all in harmonious oneness of mind and unceasing love
May glorify Thy most holy name,
O patient-hearted Lord Who art quick to forgive,
Unto the ages of ages. Amen. (397)

It is said that Celts and Slavs have a great many affinities, and this is most certainly true. However, on one point they differ: Celts have long, keen memories, and can and do hold grudges for generations and centuries. It is said that when an Irishman gets Alzheimer's disease he forgets everything except his grudges. In this respect as in so many others, Spaniards show their Celtic DNA. The Welsh refused to Christianize the Saxons, saying that they hoped that all Saxons would go to Hell. During the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, Spanish priests told the Nationalist troops that they would receive a year's pardon for every Red that they killed. With this important exception noted, it is nevertheless true that Celts and Slavs do have a great many affinities, as we have shown in these pages. To say that Celts and Slavs have a great many affinities does not mean that they

are identical in all respects.

(3682)

There is a story told concerning my paternal grandfather. In the 1930s, in the heart of the Great Depression, when the Communist Party saw its opportunity to gain popular support in U. S. A., a Communist approached my grandfather and said:

"The modern Soviet scientist desn't need God. Science now has taken the place of that superstition, and gives us the true answers."

To which my grandfather answered:

"You simple-minded red jackass. No, on second thought I will not insult my donkey in that way, since he is far more intelligent than you. If suddenly there was no more wheat to be found anywhere, could all the scientists in the world, Soviet or not, make even one grain of seed wheat?"

I have no doubt that countless Russian and Ukrainian peasants answered the Red commissars in exactly those words, allowing for differences of language.

Since the downfall of the Soviet Union, the ROC has had to face the vexed question of the status of Tsar Nicholas II and his family. Many have quite simply stated that the last Tsar and his murdered family should be canonized, while others have denied that Nicholas II was worthy of canonization, neither for his personal merits (though he was at heart a good man of impeccable personal morality, it is difficult to argue that he could be considered a saint on the basis of his personal merits), nor on the basis of the manner in which he governed Russia (though his record is not nearly so negative as it is portrayed by communist propaganda).

Note John Garrard & Carol Garrard:

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"The solution of this dilemma floated in a short response to Krivov (Mikhail Krivov, who claimed that Nicholas II was unworthy of canonization because of his sortcomings as ruler of Russia) printed in the same pages of (the magazine) *Ogonyok*. The liberal commentator Alexander Nezhny began by admitting that what Krivov had stated was historical fact. But '[if] Nicholas II is to be canonized, he would not be grouped with such great political leaders and defenders of Russian sovereignty as Alexander Nevsky and Dmitri Donskoi, but with the first saints canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church, the 'passion-bearing princes', Boris and Gleb.' The 'passion-bearer' category (*strastoterptsy*) is the ROC's lowest level of sainthood. It was originally used in the eleventh century to canonize the first native Eastern Slav saints, the princes Boris and Gleb, the sons of St. Grand Prince Vladimir. This type of sainthood is virtually unique to (Russian) Orthodoxy (though the recognition of the validity of the sainthood of Sts. Boris and Gleb by all Orthodox Churches and also by the Catholic Church might seem to give a *de facto* or quasi-recognition to the category of 'passion bearer'). Boris and Gleb were not killed because of their faith; they were ordered murdered by their (half) brother Sviatopolk to eliminate them as claimants to the throne. It was their nonresistance to their deaths that earned them holy rank.

Nezhny then did something extraordinary. To buttress his argument, he quoted an émigré theologian George Fedotov, whose seminal work, The Russian Religious Mind: Kievan Christianity from the 10th to the 13th Century, was published abroad. Nezhny drew attention to Fedotov's statement that saints Boris and Gleb were canonized as *strastoterptsy* because their nonresistance to evil constituted an imitation of Christ's willingness to undergo crucifixion. Nezhny quotes Fedotov further as saying that such nonresistance "cleanses the murdered victim" [i.e., from the sins they had committed in their lives]. Fedotov perceptively noted that in the 'passion-bearers' category of sainthood we are in the very core of the Russian religious world. Many a Russian saint was canonized for the only obvious reason: his violent death.' It was a straw in the wind. The ROC had not made a habit of reaching out to émigré theologians to justify its decisions. It signaled that the church was already (in 1991) floating the category of

strastoterpty as the appropriate level of sainthood for the Romanovs (i.e., Tsar Nicholas II and his family)." (398)

(3684)

And, one might add, as a solution to the dilemma which threatened to tear the church apart, dividing it in monarchist and non- or anti-monarchist factions, i.e., that of the status of Nicholas II and his family. In truth, the son of Nicholas II, the tsarevich Aleksy Nikolaievich, so savagely murdered by atheist thugs, forcefully calls to mind the Tsarevich Dmitri, son of Ivan IV "the Terrible", of whom we have spoken earlier. In 1197 the facts concerning the assassination of Tsar Nicholas II and his family, the shootings at point-blank range, the bayoneting, the stripping of the bodies of the Tsarina Alexandra and the beautiful tsarovna-s (daughters of the tsar) Olga, Maria, Tatiana and Anastasia and the sexual violations of their corpses, the cremating and dousing in acid of the corpses became public knowledge in Russia. To say that Nicholas II and his family died violent deaths would be a gross understatement. For those subhuman atheist thugs guilty of these crimes there must be a special place in Hell.

Some Bolsheviks suggested that the Tsar's daughters should be gang-raped and murdered in his presence. In fact, the Tsar's daughters were stripped naked, bound and gang-raped, though not in their father's presence. (399)

Tsar Nicholas II and his family were slain on July 16, 1918.

Eight days after the murder of Nicholas II and his family,

Yekaterinburg, the city in the Urals where the imperial family had been held by the Reds or Bolsheviks, and where the murders occurred, was captured from the Reds by the Siberian White Army.

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Officers of the White Army immediately rushed to the Ipatiev house, where local inhabitants informed them the imperial family had been held.

Says Edvard Radzinsky:

"The (Ipatiev) House (as found by the White officers) was a spectacle of hasty departure. All the quarters were trashed. Pins, toothbrushes, combs, hairbrushes, empty vials, and broken photograph frames had been dropped on the floors. Empty hangers hung in the wardrobe, all the stoves in the rooms were stuffed with ashes from burned papers and possessions.

An empty wheelchair stood by the fireplace in the dining room. The old, worn out wheelchair with three little wheels where she had spent all her (last) days, her feet aching, incapacitated from constant headaches. Empress Alexandra's last throne.

The girls' room was empty. A box with one fruit drop, the sick boy (Tsarevich Aleksy's) bedpan, that was all. A woolen blanket hung across the window. The grand duchesses' camp beds were found downstairs in the guards' rooms. No jewelry or clothing at all. '

'Scattered throughout the rooms and the rubbish dump of the Popov House, where the guards had lived, they found what had been most precious to the (imperial) family the icons. There were books as well. Her (the Empress'? one of the tsar's daughters? Radzinsky does not say) brown Bible with its bookmarks, a prayer book, On Suffering Grief, and, of course, The Life of Saint Seraphim of Sarov, Chekhov, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Averchenko, volumes of War and Peace, all this had been dropped in the rooms or dumped on the rubbish heap.

In the bedrooms they (the White officers) found a well-planed board, this was the board on which the sick boy (the Tsarevich Aleksy) played and ate. There were also numerous vials of holy water and medicine. In the entry lay a box of the grand duchesses' hair, which had been cut off in February (1918) when they had had the measles.

In the corner of the dining room lay the slipcover of one of the (Tsar's) daughters' headboards. The cover bore the bloody trace of wiped hands.

In the rubbish heap of the Popov House they found the St. George's ribbon that the Tsar had worn on his greatcoat until the last days. By that time the house's former inhabitant, the servant Chemodurov. And the tutor Gilliard had already gone to the Ipatiev House.

(3686)

Chemodurov was an old lackey, the archetype of the loyal Russian servant, a kind of devoted Chekhovian Firs who all his life walked behind his master like a child.

The Tsar had brought Chemodurov to Tobolsk, but when another lackey, young Trupp, came to the Ipatiev House with the children, the Tsar decided to let the old man go get some rest and treatment. In those days, though, tsarist lackeys did not go for treatment - old Chemodurov was sent to prison (by the Reds). He grieved in prison and did not know that prison would save his life. He would wait it out there happily until the arrival of the Whites. Now he had been brought to the Ipatiev House. When Chemodurov saw the icon of Saint Feodor's Mother of God (the Virgin Mary) among the holy icons scattered about the house, the old servant paled. He knew his mistress (the Empress Alexandra) would never part with that icon as long as she lived! They (the Whites) also found her other favorite image of Saint Seraphim of Sarov in the rubbish. Looking at the terrible devastation, the loyal lackey kept trying to find his master's personal belongings. How many times did he enumerate for the investigators everything he had brought from Tsarskoe Selo: one coat of officer's cloth, another of plain soldier's (cloth). One short fur coat (made) from Romanov sheep, four khaki shirts, three high-collared jackets, five pairs of wide trousers and seven box calf boots and six service caps; the old servant remembered everything.

But there were no shirts, no jackets, and no coats.

Books and icons amid abomination and desolation this was the picture of what had happened.

Among the books they (the Whites) found one belonging to the Grand Duchess Olga (one of the Tsar's daughters) Rostand's L'Aiglon in French. She had taken with her this story of the son of the deposed Emperor Napoleon. The eldest daughter of another deposed emperor was rereading the story of a boy who remained faithful to his deposed father to the very

end.

Like the boy, she (Olga) idolized her father. On her chest she wore an image of Saint Nicholas. A poem copied in Olga's hand (writing) and inserted into her book reflected her father's thoughts in their long days together in Yekaterinburg. It remained there like a legacy, hers and his, to those who would come to the looted house:

(3687)

Send us Lord the patience
In this year of stormy, gloom-filled days,
To suffer popular oppression
And the tortures of our hangmen.
Give us strength, oh Lord of Justice,
Our neighbor's evil to forgive
And the Cross so heavy and bloody
With Your humility to meet.
And in upheaval restless,
In days when enemies rob us,
To bear the shame and humiliation,
Christ our Savior, help us.
Ruler of the world, God of the universe,
Bless us with prayer
And give our humble soul rest
In this unbearable, dreadful hour.
At the threshold of the grave
Breathe into the lips of Your slaves
Inhuman strength
To pray meekly for our enemies. (400)

Obviously, Boris Yeltsin, who was not even born in 1918, the year in which Nicholas II and his family were slain, played no part in the hideous murder of Nicholas II and his family. Boris Yeltsin permitted a state funeral and reburial in the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul in St. Petersburg, traditional burial place of the tsars of the Romanov dynasty, even though the Patriarch of the ROC still questioned the authenticity of the remains. The funeral was held on July 17, 1998, exactly eighty

years after the murders of the Tsar and his family. Yeltsin attended the funeral in person, referring to the murdered Tsar and his family as "innocent victims of hatred and violence", and saying that he hoped that the reburial could serve "so that the current generation of Russians could atone for the sins of their ancestors" as the cathedral bells tolled and the soldiers gave a nineteen gun salute. Sincere repentance? Political cant?

(3688)

As I said in another place, history and God will judge Yeltsin on the totality of his actions; it is yet too early for people to make such a judgement.

As John Garrard & Carol Garrard note:

"In retrospect, the (dilemma of) the canonization could not be (re)solved as long as Boris Yeltsin was still president of Russia. (Patriarch) Aleksy had thrown the weight of his prestige against the KGB's attempt to bring Yeltsin down. And yeltsin had played a role in the Romanov saga. The family's last prison was the Ipatiev House in Yekaterinburg. Yeltsin was regional Communist chief there in 1977, and he ordered the house demolished (the corpses had been removed and hidden in a nearby forest). In his memoirs, he excused himself by saying that he was acting on secret orders from the Politburo in Moscow to bulldoze the building, because of fears that it could become a destination for monarchist pilgrims. He exculpated himself by saying that he had no choice but to carry out this senseless decision (I do not doubt for one moment that Yeltsin was telling the truth, but yet I am reminded of those German National Socialist (Nazi) war criminals who at the Nurenburg trials gave the very German excuse that they were "only following orders"). But the odor of regicide tainted him (I am not the only one who finds the "just following orders" defense unconvincing; history and God will judge Yeltsin on the totality of his actions). Even though the (Romanov) family had been long dead and their bodies removed from the house when he (Yeltsin) sent in the bulldozers, Orthodox believers deeply resented the decision (though, in fairness, one must note that the decision had not been Yeltsin's, and had he refused to carry it out, his

superiors in Moscow would have found someone else who would have carried out their order). That the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) renamed the area outside the Ipatiev House the "Square of Popular Vengeance" was another insult laid at his door.

The patriarch needed Yeltsin, who was his ally in the reconstruction of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Furthermore, 1997 would be the year Aleksy consecrated the cathedral walls as the high point of the "850th Anniversary of Moscow" celebrations. Neither Aleksy nor Mayor Luzhkov (of Moscow) wanted anything to dim the joy of that moment. In 1998 Yeltsin ordered the reinternment of the bones of the Imperial (Romanov) Family (which has been exhumed from a forest (3689)

near Yekaterinburg) in the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in St. Petersburg. It signaled his public repentance, not that the monarchists were prepared to forgive. When Yeltsin left the presidency and his handpicked successor Vladimir Putin was elected in 2000, the canonization issue could be resolved expeditiously. August 2000 saw the church saint the entire family as "passion bearers".

Now the faithful needed to learn and important distinction. In the May 31, 2000 issue of the religious supplement in the *Nazavisimaya Gazeta* (Independent Newspaper). An interview with Father Georgi Mitrofanov, a member of the Moscow Patriarchate's Synodal Commission on the canonization, laid out all the issues. The patriarch (Aleksy's) fingerprints are all over this document. The interviewer had been primed. First he asked: **Why did the Commission on Canonization consider it necessary to canonize Nicholas II and the members of his family specifically as passion bearers and not as martyrs?** Father Mitrofanov's answer is instructive:

A martyr's death is for a person who accepts it when there is the possibility to save one's life through renunciation. And the main reason for the death of the Christian is one's faith. The sovereign family died precisely a the sovereign family. Renunciation of the faith was not demanded of them. Moreover, even if we can imagine such an impious picture as that they could renounce the faith, that would not have altered their fate at all. So their death cannot be called a martyr's death. Moreover the people who killed them were rather

secularized (What an understatement!!!) in their worldview and they viewed them primarily as a symbol of Imperial Russia which they hated. For them there was no problem of the faith of the sovereign family(???) .

There is quite a but bubbling beneath the surface here.

By canonizing the *entire* imperial family, the patriarch thinned out the emotion and reduced the focus on the tsarevich (Aleksy, who so powerfully evoked the memory of the Tsarevich Dmitri). By selecting the special category of "passion bearer", Father Mitrofanov links the Romanovs with medieval examples:

(3690)

In our land there really has been a whole multitude of murdered rulers who were passion-bearing princes, for example Mikhail of Chernigov and Mikhail of Tver. Last there even was Tsarevich Dmitri [the same Dmitri-the-Tsarevich to whom 1997's ecclesiastical award for the "Year of the Child" was given]. The sovereign's sanctity in our land seemed to have ceased with the canonization of the passion-bearing Tsarevich Dmitri at the end of the sixteenth century (why?

Why should this be so, Father Mitrofanov?). And it turns out that the last Orthodox sovereign to rule in Russia also was murdered in the way that many rulers perished as passion-bearers (*does this not contradict the previous sentence?*).

By putting this frame around the Romanov story, the ROC made it "turn out" that the last Orthodox tsar was to be ranked in the category of sainthood. [While much of Fedotov's language is copied here, the church no longer needs to reference an émigré theological volume to explain the *strastoterptsy* category. That had been useful in the 1992 *Ogonyok* article but was now old news.]

If it is possible to look at such an explosive issue calmly, Nicholas II's fatal passivity does seem to echo (Sts.) Boris and Gleb's acceptance of death at the hands of their assassins. The imperial court knew his character well. Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich said:

Nicholas II, Tsar of All Rus', supreme commander of fifteen million Russian soldiers, with all the zeal of a supine peasant, chose as his motto "God's Will be Done". [I responded] "Nicky, who taught you to yield to God's will in this way? You call it Christianity, but it sounds more like pagan fatalism."

"Everything is willed by God," replied Nicky deliberately. "I was born on 6 May, the day dedicated to Job the Long-Suffering. I am ready to accept my fate." These were his final words. Words of warning had no effect on him whatsoever, He went to his death believing that it was God's will."

In a time of war, passivity in an autocrat is a disaster. That same passivity, once the individual is pinioned in a helpless position, can look like heroic fortitude. Father Mitrofanov, who is a troubleshooter
(3691)

for the patriarch, emphasized to *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* that the commission believed that it was solely the behavior of the imperial family during its last months that merited this honor:

Here was their spiritual transformation in expectation of death, a reliance on God's help, a rejection of any kind of human resistance, the strength to forgive their future murderers and those who held them in confinement which reflected their marvelous similarity to the life of the passion-bearers of earlier centuries.

To justify Nicholas' canonization, the ROC emphasized a letter sent from Tobolsk by his oldest daughter, Grand Duchess Olga, in the spring of 1918:

Father ask you to tell all those who remain loyal to him and those with whom they might have influence, not to take revenge for him, because he has forgiven everyone and prays for everyone, and to remember that the evil that is now in the world will be stronger yet, but that it is not evil which overcomes evil, but only love.

In an adroit move, the church presented the canonization (of Nichols II and his family) as further evidence confirming the prophecies of St. Seraphim. St. Seraphim had predicted that the first half of the reign of the tsar in question (Nicholas II) would

witness great sorrow and upheaval, but the second half would be a time of great joy and peace. The ROC now explained that St. Seraphim's description of the "first half" of the putative tsar's reign referred to all the earthly years (1894-1917) of Nicholas II's rule. The saint's description the second half of the reign as bright and glorious referred to his glorification in Heaven.

Whatever the contortions in logic, the outcome has given Russian Orthodox believers a positive outlet for their devotion. Walk into a (Russian) Orthodox church, and worshippers can be seen kissing the icon of the murdered family, all in their halos. Sometimes they are in medieval dress, sometimes in tsarist costume. But whatever the clothing style, their arms and hands are the same: held upward from the elbow, with the palms facing out. Their soft hands and relaxed bodies display the classic pose of submission. The collapse of the dynasty as due to the disastrous decisions of Nicholas (3692)

II (to what extent this is true is the subject of vigorous debate, and no firm conclusion can be reached)

seems irretrievably lost to secular dispassionate analysis: hence the powerful appeal of legend and myth. The church's new myth (not "myth" in the sense of a lie or falsehood, but rather the term "myth" as used, for example, by Mircea Eliade) has not led to bloodshed but to thousands and thousands of icons painted and sold in its kiosks.

By 2000 (the Patriarch) Aleksy had successfully subsumed the question of the Romanovs within the larger issue of honoring *novomucheniki*, those Orthodox Christians who suffered death at the hands of the Soviet State because of their faith (it goes without saying that there were many millions of Catholic and especially Muslim *novomucheniki*, something which any Russian Orthodox believer will readily acknowledge). At the same August 2000 bishops' council that canonized the Romanov family as *strastoterptsy*, almost five hundred people, both clergy (bishops, priests, monks) and laity, were canonized as "new martyrs". Aleksy brought them to the foreground. He personally celebrated a Divine Liturgy at a place near Moscow called the Butovo Range Proving Ground - a former facility of the Red Army Artillery - where thousands of just such people (mostly Russian Orthodox obviously, but also including many Catholics and large numbers of Muslims) were executed from 1937 to 1953 (i.e., the days of the Stalinist Terror). A beautiful new icon commemorated their suffering. It was

displayed in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior (2000) and entitled "The Gathering of the New Russian Martyrs and Confessors". There the Romanovs almost disappear in the vast crowd." (401)

At this point I think it wise to repeat the words of Father Mitrofanov cited above:

"A martyr's death is for a person who accepts it when there is the possibility to save one's life through renunciation. And the main reason for the death of this Christian is one's faith. The sovereign family died precisely as the sovereign family. Renunciation of the faith was not demanded of them. Moreover, even if we can imagine such an impious picture as that they could renounce the faith, that would not have altered their fate at all. So their death cannot be called a martyr's death. Moreover the people who killed them were rather secularized in their
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worldview (***the understatement of the century!!!***) and they viewed them as a symbol of Imperial Russia which they hated. For them there was no problem of the faith of the sovereign family."

Certainly I recognize the delicate problem facing the ROC on the question of the status of Nicholas II and his family. However, I am appalled that a priest would use so many *non-sequiturs* and outright falsehoods.

Virginia Rounding summarizes the above thusly:

"The (Russian) Orthodox Church has always been at pains to emphasize that the canonization of the imperial family as "Holy Royal Passion Bearers" (Strastoterptsy) is not intended as an endorsement of autocracy or of Nicholas' reign. Rather, it is a recognition of the saintly way in which the individuals concerned conducted themselves in captivity and of the Christian manner of their deaths. Neither are they officially to be regarded as martyrs (though unofficially they frequently are) as they were not killed specifically on account of their faith but for political reasons (in this case, it is a distinction without a difference). By designating them as "passion bearers" (Strastoterptsy), the (Russian Orthodox) Church has also placed them in a tradition

of holy Russian royals, the first "passion bearers" having been the first national Russian saints, Princes Boris and Gleb, who died in internecine dynastic conflict in 1015 and were canonized in 1072. As Wendy Slater has pointed out, the medieval hagiographers of (Sts.) Boris and Gleb highlight both their nonresistance to violence and their joyful acceptance of suffering in imitation of Christ - not unlike the idealized versions of Nicholas and Alexandra (and their five children).(402)

One recalls the scene in the novel The Brothers Karamazov by Feodor Dostyevsky in which the *staretz* Father Zossima bows before

Dmitrii Karamazov. Dmitrii, who had certainly never thought of himself as a saint, is surprised, and can only mutter "Why?".

The *staretz* Father Zossima replies: "Because you will suffer

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much." How very Russian!

As we have said before, I am not disputing the fact that, except for their martyrdom, Nicholas II and his family did not have the personal merits to qualify them as saints. However, it is also true that the calenders of the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches are filled with saints who are saints only because of their martyrdom, not otherwise possessing the personal merits to be canonized as saints. A classic, though fictitious example is to be found in the novel The Power and the Glory by Grahame Greene. The action of this work takes place during the Mexican Revolution, apparently during the dictatorship of Plutarco Elias Calles, who was described by the Mexican general Enrique Gorostieta as "a barbarian and a fool", an admirer of both Hitler and Stalin. In the photos the truly

Satanic evil of Calles is so obvious that it makes one's blood run cold. Calles bore a close physical resemblance to Adolf Hitler, and the resemblance was far more than skin deep. The main character is Fr. Jose, a priest who is, in many ways, exactly what a priest should not be, yet he fulfills what he sees as his priestly duty, even though no one would have reproached him for not doing so, since it meant almost certain death. When captured, the revolutionaries offer to spare the life of the priest if he will renounce his Catholic faith and proclaim himself a Marxist. The priest refuses to do this, and is executed by a firing squad. In spite of his many faults, many Mexican peasants consider the slain priest to be a saint, a holy martyr.

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One of the many real life victims of Calles was Jose Sanchez del Rio; when he was only fourteen years old, Calles' thugs tortured him to get him to renounce his catholic faith, but he refused, and was executed by a firing squad. his last words being "*Viva Cristo Rey!*" ("Long Live Christ the King!"). Jose Sanchez del Rio, along with other Mexican martyrs, has since been canonized and proclaimed a saint. All hail the memory of the the holy martyr St. Jose Sanchez del Rio. I spit on the memory of the Mexican Revolution! May Calles roast in hell!

During the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, according to Hugh Thomas, 6,832 religious persons were shot by the Reds (whom some outside Spain euphemistically call "Republicans" or "Loyalists"): 12 bishops, 283 nuns, 4,184 priests and 2,365

monks.(403)

This is recalled by the French Catholic poet Paul Claudel in his poem "*Aux Martyrs Espagnols*":

**On nous met le ciel et l'enfer dans la main et nous avons
quarante seconds pour choisir.
Quarante seconds, c'est trop! Soeur Espagne, sainte
Espagne, tu as choisi!
Onze eveques, seize mille pretres massacres et pas une
apostasie!**

We held heaven and hell in the hand and were given
Forty seconds to choose.
Forty seconds, that is all! Sister Spain, holy
Spain, you have chosen!
Eleven bishops, seven thousand priests massacred and not
one
Apostasy!

Hugh Thomas gives a classic example:

"The parish priest of Torrijos, Liberio Gonzalez Nonvela, for example, apparently told the militiamen who took him prisoner, 'I want to suffer for Christ'.
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'Oh you do', they answered, 'then you shall die as Christ did.' They stripped him and scourged him mercilessly. Next, they fastened a beam of wood on their victim's back, gave him vinegar to drink, and crowned him with thorns. 'Blaspheme and we will forgive you', said the leader of the militia. 'It is I who forgive and bless you', replied the priest. The militiamen discussed how they should kill him. Some wished to nail him to a cross, but in the end they shot him. His last request was to die facing his tormentors so that he might die blessing them."(403)

There is a Spanish proverb which says:

"El quien no acepta a Dios como su Senor tendra a Satanas como su tirano."

"He who does not accept God as his Lord will have Satan as his tyrant."

Certainly the history of the world since 1789 leaves no possible doubt that the above-quoted proverb is the absolute

truth.

I recall reading a work by the Indo-Pakistani poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal, though I do not recall the exact reference. In said work by Muhammad Iqbal, the various lesser demons are reporting to Satan, their master. One says:

"Sire, I am pained to report that now there are now on earth many atheists and materialists who do not believe in you."

To this Satan replies:

"Fools! Do you not know that these atheists and materialists are my most faithful servants?"

No one can dispute that Tsar Nicholas II and his family earned the title *strastoterptsy* or "passion-bearers", and at least there are relatively few who would say that, aside from being martyrs, the imperial family by their personal merits

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deserve to be canonized as saints. The question is: does the imperial family deserve to be canonized as full-fledged martyrs as well as *strastoterptsy*? Here they may be different opinions.

Firstly, I should like to note a distinction between the classic examples of *strastoterptsy*, i.e., Sts. Boris and Gleb, and the Tsarevich Dmitri on the one hand, and Tsar Nicholas II and his family on the other. Even the many enemies of Sviatopolk never claimed that he planned to restore paganism or persecute Christianity, while during the time that he reigned, Boris Godunov, whatever other faults and crimes he have been guilty of (and they were many), never persecuted that Church. In other words, Sts. Boris and Gleb and the Tsarevich Dmitri were murdered

for purely political motives, **in no sense could they be considered victims of religious or anti-religious persecution, nor could it be said that they were slain for religious or anti-religious motives.**

On the other hand, those who murdered Nicholas II and his family were militant atheists (to call them "rather secularized in their worldview" is a gross understatement) who persecuted not only Orthodoxy, but also Catholicism and Islam.

Says Christopher I. Beckwith, Professor of Central Eurasian Studies at Indiana University:

"During the reign of unbridled Marxist socialism in the Soviet Union, especially in the 1930s under Stalin, and again later in the People's Republic of China, especially between 1966 and 1976 under Mao, radical Modernists savaged Central Eurasia. Thousands of monasteries, temples, churches, mosques, madrassas, shrines, and synagogues, which contained the artistic
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and architectural heritage of Central Eurasian peoples, were closed or destroyed. For example, by the end of the Soviet Union, "visible religious life had been virtually destroyed. Out of the 50,000 Orthodox churches in the Russian Empire on the eve of the Revolution only a few hundred remained open." Of the many synagogues in the Russian Empire, by 1966 the number remaining in the entire USSR was thought to be only sixty-two. Whereas in 1917 there were 26,279 mosques in the (Russian) Empire, in the USSR at the end of the Brezhnev (1964-1982) era there were about 200. In Azerbaijan alone, there were approximately 2,000 mosques in 1917, but only 55 in 1990." (404)

When it comes to savage, murderous intolerance, so-called "secular humanism" has no peer; in its ranks are Robespierre, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Kim Il Sung, Pol Pot, and Slobodan Milosevic. Based on its track record since 1789, it is obvious that so-called secular humanism is an utterly vicious and evil monster which should be exterminated, and is conclusive proof of

the absolute truth of the Spanish proverb:

He who does not accept God as his Lord will have Satan as his tyrant.

If there is such a thing as a good or virtuous atheist (and I have never known one) it is nothing more than the afterglow of religious training, as someone put it, "the whiff of an empty bottle".

I do not believe for one moment that Father Mitrofanov would be capable of saying the following with a straight face:

"Moreover, the people who killed them (Nicholas II and his family) were rather secularized in their worldview (**once again, the understatement of the century!!!**) and they viewed them as a symbol of the Imperial Russia which they hated. For them there was no problem of the faith of the sovereign family."

Father Mitrofanov must be an example of a rare creature: a

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self-hating priest. He is repeating the secularist idiocy that religious people are always fanatically intolerant, while secularists are always tolerant or at least indifferent. This not only is counterintuitive and totally illogical, but the history of the world since 1789 leaves no doubt whatever that it is completely false. Certainly militant atheists and secularists are perfectly capable of fanatical and bloody-handed intolerance. It is rather strange that there are many who would consider someone who is intolerant of all religions save one or two to be a fanatic and a bigot, while considering someone who is intolerant of all religion to be an enlightened liberal, an apostle of progress and freedom. The Russian Empire under the Tsars made no

pretense of being "secular" or of practicing "separation of church and state"; said empire was officially Orthodox Christian.

Yet, ask the Muslims of the Caucasus and Central Asia which

regime, that of the Tsars or that of the Soviets, was more tolerant towards Islam. In a travel book which I read a few years

ago, the author claimed that many Central Asian Muslims looked back on the time of the Tsars as a lost golden age, and looked on the Soviet period as a long nightmare. The Habsburg Or Austro-Hungarian Empire was not secular and made no protense of "separation of church and state", but was officially Catholic.

Ask the Bosnian Muslims who was more tolerant of Islam, the Habsburgs on the one hand or the Communist regime of Marshall Tito or that of another Communist, Slobodan Milosevic on the

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other. In fact, the Bosnian Muslims were known as the most loyal subjects of the Habsburgs. In 1918, the Bosnain Muslims were the last Habsburg soldiers to stop fighting, remaining loyal to their beloved Emperor Karl von Habsburg and retaining their military organization after all the other nationalities of the Empire had surrendered or simply disbanded and tried to go home.

Ottokar, Ritter von Prohaska was the last surviving knight of the Military Order of Maria Theresa. During World War I Prohaska was an Austrian submarine captain. He told his adventures to John Biggins. In November, 1918 at the close of

the war when the Austro-Hungarian Army was disintegrating, Prohaska was desperately attempting to join his Polish wife in Cracow,

though he himself was Bohemian, as the name indicates. Prohaska describes part of his journey from Pola on the Adriatic to Vienna and finally Cracow:

“The rest of our traveling companions were Bosnian Muslims; dark, hatchet-faced men in grey fezzes who, even in the last hours of the war, had still been frightening the daylights out of the enemy in the trenches on Monte Grappa. A nice irony, I thought, that the last fighting soldiers of Catholic Austria should have been followers of Islam.” (405)

So famous were the Bosnian Muslims for their valor and loyalty to the Habsburgs that there was (or is) a famous Habsburg military march titled: *Die Bosniaken kommen* “The Bosnians Are Coming” (in the days of the Austro-Hungarian or Habsburg Empire, the word *Bosniak* specifically meant “Bosnian Muslim”: Bosnian Catholics were considered to be Croats, while Bosnian Eastern

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Orthodox Christians were considered to be Serbs). (406) Not long ago I was talking to Bosnian Muslim, and said that in my opinion the solution to the problems of the region of the former Yugoslavia was a Habsburg Restoration. Caught by surprise, the Bosnian hesitated for a few seconds, then replied; “You are absolutely right.” As an anecdote, Otto von Habsburg is enormously popular in Spain, and not only among Carlists, who emphasize that their great hero, their “Bonnie Prince Charlie”,

i.e., Carlos de Borbon y Austria-Este as well as his brother Alfonso Carlos, were Habsburgs on their mother's side. The Carlist activist and scholar Jaime del Burgo even wrote a biography of Carlos de Borbon y Austria-Este, the first chapter of which is titled "*Mas Habsburgo que Borbon*" (More Habsburg than Bourbon).

I suppose Father Mitrofanov believes that the Bolsheviks were saintly secular humanists who never persecuted people because of their religion: otherwise his above-quoted statement is incomprehensible. Once again, I am appalled that a priest would say or insinuate such a thing.

There is no escaping the fact that Nicholas II and his family were murdered for religious as well as political motives.

One of the reasons - perhaps the main reason - that the Bolsheviks, Reds or Communists so hated Imperial Russia was because it was "Holy Russia", and they were hated not only for being officially Orthodox, but for being tolerant of Islam. The Bolsheviks murdered the Tsar and his family because they believed

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that the Tsar might serve as a rallying point and figurehead to help unite the fervent but faction-ridden Whites, who were united in little save a violent hatred of Bolshevism. In other words, the Bolsheviks shot the Tsar and his family in order to help them win a civil war, which at that time (July, 1918) was going against them, with the Whites advancing on Moscow from both the east and the south. Thus, the Tsar and his family were

religious martyrs in a way that St. Boris and Gleb and the Tsarevich Dmitri were not; they died because, while they were alive they might

help save both Christianity and Islam from savage persecution.

Secondly, it is true that even had Nicholas II claimed to be a convert to Bolshevism, and therefore to atheism, this would have had little effect on his usefulness to the Whites as a rallying point and figurehead, because all would have known that his apostasy was proclaimed under the most extreme duress, and therefore was not valid. While no one believed that the Tsar would apostasize in order to save his own skin - no one ever suspected him of being a coward - the Bolsheviks could have shot his wife, the Empress Alexandra, and his son, the Tsarevich Aleksy, as well as gang-raped and murdered his four daughters before his own eyes (indeed, this last was suggested by some of the Bolsheviks).

Now, the Empress Alexandra was not in the line of succession, and in any case, for reasons too complex to discuss here, had never been particularly popular among the Russian populace. The Tsarevich Aleksy was in such poor health that very

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few if any people seriously believed that he would or could ever be Tsar. After the assassination of the Tsarevich Dmitri, during the "Time of Troubles" there were two "false Dmitris" who claimed to be the slain tsarevich. So poor was Aleksy's health that the very idea of a "false Aleksy" was so totally absurd as to be virtually unthinkable.

All of the daughters of Nicholas II were very pretty; Olga, Tatiana and Maria were classic Russian beauties, while Anastasia was what would today be called a "cutie pie". Should the lovely daughters of Nicholas II have proclaimed their conversion to Bolshevism (and therefore their apostasy from Orthodoxy and all religion), the propaganda value to the Bolsheviks would have been incalculable. Though there is no record that the Bolsheviks actually proposed the above to the grand duchesses, I have no doubt that they did so, offering them their lives if they would put themselves in the service of Bolshevism and therefore proclaim themselves to be militant atheists and enemies of all religion. Such an offer was obviously refused, and the Bolsheviks had no interest in advertising the fact that the daughters of Nicholas II preferred death to treason and apostasy. While I certainly do not consider myself to be perfect, nor even close, I believe that I may confidently state that the mentality of the Bolsheviks was far more Machavellian, twisted, devious and perverse than my own, I who have often been accused of innocence and naivete, of being too straightforward, having too little of what the Spanish call *mano izquierda* id est, "the left hand"

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(remember, "sinister" literally means "left" as opposed to "right") of being "Quixotic". In other words, if I could think of such a thing as proposing to the grand duchesses that they save their skins by at least feigning a conversion to

Bolshevism, it most certainly occurred to the Bolsheviks. So, the grand duchesses, the daughters of Nicholas II undoubtedly could have saved their skins had they proclaimed themselves to be Bolsheviks and therefore enemies of Orthodoxy and all religion.

There is conclusive proof to what I have just said. At one point the Bolsheviks claimed that the Tsar's two elder daughters, Olga and Tatiana, had embraced the Bolshevik cause, which, of course meant embracing atheism and the renunciation of their Orthodox Christian faith. Among those taken in by this bald-faced lie and slander was an American academic, professor Edward Ross. (407)

So, there is no doubt whatever that the beautiful daughters of Tsar Nicholas II could at the very least have saved their own lives (and perhaps the lives of others as well) had they embraced

Communism and renounced their Orthodox Christian faith, and what I

have said above certainly indicates that the Bolsheviks must have proposed this to them, though, unsurprisingly, there is no written proof of this, though the fact that the Bolsheviks concocted a rumor to the effect that Olga and Tatiana had embraced Bolshevism is conclusive proof of it.

Therefore, Nicholas II and his family deserve to be ranked not only among the *strastoterptsy*, but also among the martyrs for

the faith in the strictest sense.

I have seen icons in which Nicholas II and his family are portrayed as martyrs wearing halos, and in fact I have one in my possession. Nicholas II and his family deserve to be recognized as martyrs not only by the ROC, but by all Eastern Orthodox Churches, and by the Catholic Church, but also by Islam, since the Bolsheviks are militant atheists who equally and savagely persecuted all religion.

Let us now examine the postscript to the martyrdom of Tsar Nicholas II and his family.

"In 1979, the Ipatiev house in Ekaterinburg where Tsar Nicholas and his family were martyred was demolished and paved over with asphalt. In 1990, in his memoirs, Boris Yeltsin admitted 'sooner or later we will be ashamed of this piece of barbarism'. Even so, the pilgrims kept coming, albeit surreptitiously, conducting their own private moments of remembrance on the mournful, barren site.

Meanwhile, in Ekaterinburg after the collapse of Communism in 1991, a simple wooden cross was erected to mark the site of the Ipatiev House." (408)

In 2003 there was officially opened the appropriately named Church on the Blood on the site of the Ipatiev House, which is, of course, a pilgrimage church.

Helen Rappaport continues:

"Out at Ganina Yama, where Yurovsky oversaw the hasty consignment of the bodies (of the Tsar and his family) to the mineshaft that first night, the air in July is heavy with the rich, cloying smell of lilies. On the 17th (of July), the anniversary of the murders at the Ipatiev House, the site is covered with huge ranks of these tall white flowers that sway gently in the humid air. In the traditional Russian iconography of mourning, they have been planted here to symbolize the restored innocence of the soul at death. This once lonely site is now the Monastery of the Holy Tsarist
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Passion Bearers. The actual grave site - a couple of

miles away in the forest glade where (the investigators) Ryabov and Avdonin found the remains in 1979 - was until recently marked only by a simple wooded cross and some plastic flowers. Some 60 metres beyond it lie two small pits where the last pathetically few burnt remains of Maria and Alexey were found.

Standing in front of the bank of lilies at Ganina Yama - a quiet atmospheric spot where the pilgrims tread softly and unobtrusively - one gets an overwhelming sense of the emotional dynamic of a story that, for the faithful, has now been set in stone as a national tragedy encapsulating everything that Russia has lost. Elsewhere on the site there is ... an architectural ensemble of seven picturesque churches built (very, archetypically, uniquely) Russian-style of pine wood without a single nail. With their dainty curves and arches, of their malachite green roofs and delicate golden cupolas and spires, each church is the personal shrine for a member of the Romanov family. ...

...It is only in the dappled shadows of the still rough opening in the ground where the scent of the lilies overwhelms the senses that something intangible on the heavy summer air brings with it a moment of epiphany. In breathing in the sickly aroma, one catches the sense of an enduring romantic tragedy that transcends - if not defies - all the logic of political and historical argument. Here there is an eerie silence, broken only by the occasional softly spoken prayer of the faithful, who stand and look, and sometimes weep. With the sunlight gently filtering down through the birch trees and catching the gold of their great long stamens, the lilies stand like dozens of living white headstones, memorials to innocent young lives cut short.

Back in 1998, travel writer Colin Thubron noted on a visit to a far less commercial Ekaterinburg that the whole Romanov story was already drowned in a 'mist of holiness'. That mist has now become an inundation. As time goes on, it is the sanitized image of the Romanovs as saints and 'Holy Passion Bearers' (*Strastoterptsy*) that will increasingly prevail, no matter what historians may argue, or the archives yield up to us. Ganina Yama is the obligatory place of pilgrimage for any Russian believer, and the high point for any foreign tourist visiting what Russian tour websites now call 'The Romanov Golgotha'. The legend has simply become irresistible; too powerful too emotive, forever perpetuated in the hearts and minds of the many thousands of sincere believers who find their way here.

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Indeed, their numbers are increasing so rapidly that soon the very basic infrastructure at Ganina Yama, as well as the overstretched facilities at the Church on the Blood, will not be able to cope, inundated by an

influx of pilgrims and seekers after God - the needy, the hopeful, the despairing - who now see in their reverence for the martyred Imperial Family a way of atoning for the past, for the deprivations of 73 years of Communism, for the loss of Russian national and spiritual identity. For them it is a way of building hopes for the restoration of faith, and with it a better life.

Attempting, as one inevitably does on contemplating the lilies of Ganina Yama to imagine the true events of that violent and chaotic night in July, 1918, it is those inescapably romantic, evocative images of the Imperial Family that inevitably twist and turn into view. No matter how hard one tries to resist, they nag at one's consciousness ... a boy in a sailor suit ... girls in white dresses ... untainted, murdered children ... a devoted family destroyed ... all of them now forever young, forever innocent and, as they all so fervently wished for in their many prayers, 'At Rest with the Saints'." (409)

Ms. Rappaport has ignored a very important point, i.e., the uniquely Russian-style church made of wood only, without a single nail, now used as the personal shrines for each member of the Romanov family. Some years ago, before the downfall of Communism in Russia, someone wrote that these all-wooden churches were vanishing; new ones could not be constructed, even if the Communist regime had permitted it, because they represented a tradition of craftsmanship which no longer exists, having been destroyed by the Communist regime. Now we see that by a miracle - yes, a miracle - this tradition of craftsmanship **DID** survive, God only knows how, another part of the *Rodina*, Holy Mother Russia, which Communism was unable to destroy and which, in effect, 'rose from the dead' after 73 years of Communism. Holy Mother Russia

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lives, Holy Mother Russia is immortal, the very gates of Hell could not prevail against her, may God be thanked!

Says Colin Thubron in In Siberia (written before 1999):

"The quiet of this empty space is the quiet of enforced forgetting. In Communist propaganda the dead Tsar declined from a blood-thirsty tyrant into a spineless simpleton. Then he disappeared from history. Now, in the void where the Ipatiev house stood, his fate seemed to shed its politics and become the personal tragedy of a gentle but stubborn man, his willful wife and sheltered children.

I walked for a while in its sadness. A splash of color came from three beds of marigolds and Michaelmas daisies. A sightseeing bus arrived, but the only person to dismount was a young woman. She tiptoed across the gravel, and handed me her camera. 'Will you shoot me?' I expected her to stand smiling, but instead she flushed her long hair out over her shoulders, then knelt down on the tarmac at the foot of the white cross. There, in profile, she remained praying and crossing herself for long minutes, while I wondered how many snapshots she wanted.

'Thank you, thank you.' She took the camera and then my hand. 'Olga.'

This was the name of the Tsar's eldest daughter. Perhaps she had been praying for her. 'I'm Colin.' (note: "*Colin*" is the Gaelic form of "*Nicholas*").

'Colin, Nikolai!' - the Russians always linked the names, one a diminutive of the other. She sent me a disconnected smile, then stares around her. 'Look at this.'

'It's been destroyed.'

'And our ruler did this.' From fear or disgust, she would not say Yeltsin.

'But everything's changed now,' I said, for some reason comforting her. 'There will be a church here, and they will be made saints.' Their canonization, I thought, was only a matter of time.

She flared almost angrily. 'They are already saints! They head the saints in the cathedral of heaven!' She spoke with lilting, passionate certainty. 'It's only here, in Russia, that we have been slow to know this. The Russian (Orthodox) Church abroad canonized them long ago. Abroad the Mother of God (Latin; *Mater Dei*; Greek; *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoraditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) took them up to heaven!'

I nodded vaguely, wondering how she knew.

'And not only Nikolai and his Tsarina, but his
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whole family, she took them up, Aleksei, Olga, Tatiana and those others, Doctor Botkin and the servants who died of compassion for them!'

'Your Patriarch in Moscow'

'I do not know about our Patriarch. I do not know him. I have heard that someone has even verified their bones, but I do not know.' She lifted her eyes to the

sky. She did not care for any mortal remains. The family was living in the heaven of her will. 'In the church where I worship, the Mother of God (Church Slavonic: *Bogoraditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) has told St. John the Baptist that they are her ladies in waiting, her favorite children, Olga also, who protects and prays for me.'

I thought doubtfully of the sht capricious Olga, but the woman continued in a rush of celestial detail. St. John the Baptist, the Tsar, Olga, the Virgin Mary the throne-rooms and antechambers of heaven filled up like those of the Winter Palace, astir with favorites and intercessors. Her voice bustled and sang. Twice she called me Nikolai, and I felt flattered. 'Now they all live in the courtyard of the Mother of God (Latin; *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoraditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) , and send our prayers to her. *Direct.*'

On the edge of the desolation a tiny chapel had been raised to the Tsarina's favorite sister, the pious Elizabeth, who was martyred when the Bolsheviks threw her alive down a mineshaft. Years before, she had enchanted the French ambassador by her beauty and innocent seriousness, and after her husband, the Grand Duke Sergei, was blown to bits in the abortive 1905 revolution, she founded an order of nuns to care for the dying and abandoned. Now she was a saint.

Under her chapel cupola sheathed in wooden scales and topped by a high cross, we entered a sanctuary blazing with votive candle-flames, and Olga prayed to an icon of Ste. Elizabeth floating in glory above her mineshaft.

'We had lost all that history until now,' she said. 'For years we lived in a dark valley - twenty million gone in the last war (World War II), and forty million more taken by Stalin. And nothing in return! Only in 1991 the Mother of God (Church Slavonic: *Bogomater*) gave back the truth which Communism had concealed for eighty years.' Her eyes glittered over me unfocused as she replaced the Soviet myth (why use euphemisms? It is "The Soviet Lie!") with her own. The next moment we were standing, astonished, where a sheaf of flickering lights enshrined an icon of the Imperial Family, newly done: they had already been turned into

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saints. Olga set a taper before them with shaking hands, crying: 'There they are!' Her kisses fell softly on their painted hems and slippered feet. I examined them in fascination. In their icon they (the Tsar and his family) had acquired the elongated bodies and court robes of Byzantine saints, and their tapering hands held up white crosses. Crowned and haloed, they seemed to gaze out with a sad foreknowledge of their end. Their features echoed one another's, as in some inbred clan,

and they were all washed in the same amber light. All the vitality of remembered photographs - the moods and strains of real life - was emptied and stilled. Sainthood did not allow for that. Even the emergent individuality of the princesses - the imperious beauty Tatiana, the plump tomboy Anastasia - was drowned in this mis of holiness.

Olga said: 'Soon, Nikolai, there will be a resurrection of the Church.'

'You mean a new tsar?' It was barely conceivable. Two years before, a young Romanov claimant had travelled to Russia with his mother, and been received with bewilderment and official circumspection.

'No, not a tsar,. Even Olga demurred. 'But a celestial union. The Church on earth will be united with the Church in Heaven! Soon, very soon.!' Her voice started its hypnotic music again. 'Light for the future of humanity!'

I said dully: 'When?'

'At any moment! Because now the Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoraditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) wants to carry Russia upward. Quickly, quickly Russia is going to the light! Perhaps it will happen through grief, Then the heart of Russia will open! A new, holy Russia!'

It was an old Orthodox idea: that suffering would flower into purity. Out of the anguish of history - even of daily, Chekhovian frustration - a new world must be born. It made sense of sorrow, of tedium. It made suffering dangerously embraceable. It seemed to heal Time" (410)

As anyone knows who has read the 19th century Russian novels, in pre-communist Russia and Ukraine pilgrimages were very prevalent indeed. One of the most prestigious of religious periodicals in pre-Soviet Russia was the quarterly *Russkii Palomnik*, literally "The Russian Pilgrim". Today this quarterly

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is once again being published, the late Father Herman being one of the original editors.

There are stories in which Tsar Nicholas II and/or members of his family have miraculously intervened in people's lives. These stories are broadcast on the religious radio station Radio

Radonezh, sold in church foyers and kiosks, and thus disseminated both electronically and in print.

Olga and Tatiana, the two oldest daughters of the Tsar, were trained and served as nurses in World War I. Maria and Anastasia, the two younger daughters, were not old enough to be trained and serve as nurses during World War I, but nevertheless visited wounded soldiers and tried to lift their spirits, heroically trying to maintain a cheerful façade in spite of the suffering around them. The presence of the beautiful Maria and the "cutie pie" Anastasia no doubt did help to raise the spirits of the wounded soldiers. Though not nurses, Maria and Anastasia did at times don nurses' uniforms.

Says Wendy Slater:

"A woman named Nina Kartashova tells how, when she was sick with pneumonia, she saw a young nurse, aged about seventeen, in her bedroom. The nurse gave her name as "Maria" (the Tsar's daughter Maria would have been seventeen in 1916, at the height of World War I) and spoke with a St. Petersburg accent. She covered the sick woman with a (Russian) officer's overcoat, which she said had belonged to her Papa, and remarked: "You will be quite well today. Papa told me. Today is his birthday. (Birthday of Nicholas II - May 18, Gregorian calendar, May 05, Julian Calendar, or Old Style [O.S.], used in Russia until 1918)" When Nina Kartashova woke the next morning, she found a branch of fresh lilac in a vase, and a rosary, which had belonged to her late grandmother and was buried with her, hanging on an icon
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of Christ in her bedroom.

The story is unusual in that it focuses on one of the Tsar's daughters (Nicholas himself, 'Papa', is an absent but benevolently powerful figure) and also the saint's physical presence. Maria is clearly described: 'a round face with big grey eyes, something dignified and gentle in her expression. She wore a simple pale grey dress (part of a nurse's uniform?).' She explained to Nina Kartashova that she was 'neither a dream nor an apparition. It is just that sometimes, *in extremis*, people can see another world.'"(411)

Virginia Rounding notes:

"A question that inevitably suggests itself, now that the (Russian) Orthodox Church sees itself as triumphant in Russia, having seen off eighty years of state atheism, and that the late imperial family has become an accepted part of Orthodox devotion, is whether the lives and deaths of Nicholas, Alexandra, Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia, and Alexei may indeed be interpreted as examples of victory contained in defeat, of the resurrection that first requires a death. In 1981, a special issue of the magazine "Orthodox America" contained the following assertion: "In 1917, Metroplitan Mazarius of Moscow saw in a vision the Saviour speaking to Tsar Nicholas: *You see, said the Lord, two cups in my hands: one is bitter for your people, and the other is sweet for you.* In the vision the Tsar begged for the bitter cup. The Saviour then took a large glowing coal from the cup and put it in the Tsar's hands. The Tsar's whole body then began to grow light, until he was shining like a radiant spirit. Then the vision changed to a field of flowers, in the middle of which Nicholas was distributing manna to a multitude of people. A voice spoke: *The Tsar has taken the guilt of the Russian people upon himself and the Russian people is forgiven.*" Perhaps it was during his own "passion" that the ex-Tsar came closest to his people. And perhaps through the recollection of this passive suffering those people oppressed by the Soviet system - particularly religious believers - were able to grasp him as an invisible icon, recognizing in the imperial family a quality found in St. Seraphim (of Sarov), and in the image of *Christ Bound Before the People* - an embracing of the role of victim. With all its ambiguities, this, I would suggest, accounts in great part for the strength of devotion to the Holy Royal Passion-Bearers felt by Russian believers who have witnessed the suffering of a persecuted Church and

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who continue to experience difficulties in their daily lives. And it is perhaps in a sense fitting that Nicholas and Alexandra, who set such store by their belief in the Orthodox "common people", should themselves have become an object of veneration for so many of them. There will be those who conclude that those who see the death of Nicholas II as sacrificial and who venerate the icons of the Holy Royal Passion Bearers are as deluded as were the figures portrayed on them when they put their faith in a French charlatan (Nizier Anthelme Philippe Vachot) and a Siberian peasant (the false *staretz* Grigory Rasputin). Others will be

less certain, having learned at least one thing from the lives of Alix and her beloved Nicky - that simple explanations can be misleading, that human beings are infinitely complex, as is their relation with historical events, and no conclusion can be drawn that is not contingent. The image of Nicholas and his family that the faithful have chosen to remember, to the exclusion of other more ambivalent images, is that encapsulated in the final words of Alix's letter to her husband of March 3, 1817, when she had just learned of his abdication: "I hold you tight, tight in my arms and will never let them touch your shining soul."(412)

Below is an essay by Stella Rock which appeared in the November/December 2010 issue of the monthly "Russian Life" (Montpelier, Vermont) titled: "On the March: The (Russian) Orthodox Church Revives Mass Pilgrimages":

"If statistics are to be believed, or even half believed, the Russian Orthodox Church has a problem. Almost eight out of ten Russian adults are now baptized Christians - the same number who, by their own admission, don't pray, fast or celebrate feasts.

Russians may identify themselves as Orthodox in surveys, but are little interested in participating in the life of the Church. And yet there is an interesting dynamic that has all but passed unnoticed. Believers might not be keeping Sabbath by stepping out to church - but they are on the march all the same.

Like the rest of Europe, Russia is witnessing a curious and marked rise in pilgrimage. The rise is most noticeable in mass walking pilgrimages, called *krestnye khody*, "processions of the cross". These pilgrimages may last hours, days, even months, and unite hundreds, sometimes thousands of believers in symbolic journeys often perceived as helping to rebuild Russia, or to

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cleanse the nation of Soviet sins. The reunion of the Russian Orthodox Church with the Church Abroad, for example, was celebrated by a "spiritual-educational program 'Under the Star of the Mother of God,'" in which processions from eight distant corners of Russia (two of which begin in Athos, Greece and Jerusalem) walked to Moscow, inscribing an eight-pointed star across the country. Some participants walked for more than a year.

One of the largest annual pilgrimages in Russia today is the Velikoretskoye procession of the cross. Participants cover some 150 kilometers in a grueling five-day circular walk, with one rest day at the riverbank shrine where they venerate the icon that has

led the procession all the way from Kirov. The pilgrimage is promoted as an ancient tradition that commemorates the discovery, on the banks of the Velikaya River, of an icon of St. Nicholas.

According to legend, more than six hundred years ago the inhabitants of Khlynov (now Kirov, although the town is debating a return to its pre-revolutionary name of Vyatka) were anxious to move this wonder-working icon to the security of their regional capital. The icon had other ideas, but finally allowed itself to be moved when the people promised to bring it back to its "birthplace" in the village of Velikoretskoye once a year, for a day of celebrations. This feast, on June 6, is the high point of the pilgrimage, when pilgrims confess, receive communion and bathe in the river of holy spring where the icon was found. The icon is then escorted back to Kirov and reinstalled in the cathedral.

This journey is not for the faint-hearted. Pilgrims rise most days at 2 A.M., and struggle through marshes, fields and forests for up to 18 hours, before collapsing for a few hours of sleep on the floor of a village school or under an army tent. Locals like to tell the story of an American who joined the procession several years ago and - on encountering a particularly impenetrable bog - declared in frustration, "how can you have been walking this route for six hundred years and not laid asphalt yet?" They laugh and shake their heads. "It has to be hard, otherwise it wouldn't be a procession of the cross."

Father Vladimir has been filming the pilgrimage for years. "One of the pilgrims asked me - why film this? There's just mud wherever we go, mud, mud, mud. And people walking, walking, walking. People watching it will wonder why on earth they should come here, when there is nothing but mud", he says, smiling beatifically. "But the mud is beneficial, its healing, it cleanses the soul." It also bonds people: the going

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is so difficult in places that the procession thins almost to one or two, and pilgrims form human chains to help each other through thigh-high water and mud almost as deep, collectively heaving baby carriages and wheelchairs over swamps and fallen trees.

The weather, too, purifies that faithful. "St. Nicholas teaches pilgrims with rain, snow, hail, heat, cold at every procession of the cross", one local woman explains. This year, as last year, the procession leaves Kirov in torrential rain. Thin and expensive hiking slickers are useless against the downpour, and the more experienced pilgrims are easy to spot, wrapped like candies in sheets of builder's plastic or shower curtains. Children are enveloped in plastic trash bags and secured to pull-along luggage carts.

On the second day of the pilgrimage, the sun beats down hard enough to burn noses and necks, but fails to dry up the rivers that have appeared in the creases and dips of Kirov's rolling fields. Lyubov, an art historian who has walked in the procession for the last 18 years, recounts how their party of academics, joining the pilgrimage out of curiosity in the late 1980s, was warned that there was a particular section of the journey where it always rains. "We didn't believe it. We were in sandals and light clothing, It was really hot. And suddenly, as we set foot on that territory, it rained hail." A storm breaks for us there too, pouring down hailstones like frozen peas and scattering pilgrims into the trees.

The sheer physical struggle involved in the pilgrimage does not deter the infirm or elderly, however, Pilgrims recount the tale of a partially paralyzed man who joined the procession on crutches and, having developed weeping blisters under his arms, sought the blessing of the priest leading the procession to return home. "No", he was told, "you should keep going. As long as you continue, others will do too." He made it to Velikoretskoye, so the story goes.

Another pilgrim joined the procession despite being in the final term of her pregnancy, believing that any birth that took place on the pilgrimage would be especially protected by St. Nicholas. She duly went into labor while walking and Father Alexander, the imposing but genial secretary of Vyatka diocese, was obliged to remind pilgrims via the local newspapers that "the procession of the cross is not a suitable place to give birth", and that sick or pregnant pilgrims must seek the permission of their doctor as well as the blessing of their parish priest before participating.

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Some of those who join the procession are seeking miraculous healing. St. Nicholas is reputedly kind to his devotees, and miracle great and small are a regular occurrence. The spring at Gorokhovo, which pilgrims reach on day three, is believed to be particularly efficacious. In recent years, believers have apparently been cured of asthma, leg pain, infertility, exzema, even cataracts. "One woman who had really poor vision undressed and took her glasses off to bathe in the spring", we are told. "Afterwards she got dressed and went back to the church to read the Akathist [Akafist in Church Slavonic, Russian and Ukrainian], began to search for her glasses - turns out she'd left them back at the dpring. She forgot them because she could see. She didn't need them anymore."

According to Andrei, who has led the restoration of the ruined church at Gorokhovo since 1998 ("We've been

building for 12 years, as we can, as we find the means, gradually. Where would we hurry to, with eternity before us?"), the most significant miracle is the increasing number of pilgrims who make their way through Gorokhovo, from all over the world - England, Vietnam, Germany, America.

If you stand still and watch the procession, Father Vladimir tells us, it would be two and a half hours before the last straggler passed you by. Yet back in 1992, a mere two hundred pilgrims participated in the first officially permitted procession following what is believed to be the pre-revolutionary route from Kirov to Velikoretskoye and back. In 2000 the pilgrimage was awarded "All Russia" status by the Patriarchate, and began to attract thousands of believers annually.

While its appearance in pilgrim guide books and on Orthodox web forums has no doubt contributed to and increase in numbers, the vast majority of the pilgrims we meet say they decided to join the procession after hearing about it from someone they knew. Father Alexander agrees that word of mouth is the main driver of the pilgrimage's growth. "One, five or six years ago," he recalls, "one woman from Rostov-on-Don came. Within three years three busloads came."

Today, 20,000-30,000 pilgrims participate - some walking the whole way, others joining in to escort the icon out of Kirov, or simply attending the festivities at Velikoretskoye. While these figures are astonishing, they haven't yet reached pre-revolutionary heights. In 1915, some 50,000 pilgrims made it to the shrine.

Father Alexander, who has the onerous task of overseeing diocesan arrangements for the procession, says that about four years ago, "the procession of the
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cross suddenly sharply increased in size. ... very nearly from four thousand to ten thousand, just like that, in a moment." While this might appear cause for celebration, father Alexander recalls that worrying about the pilgrims' well-being kept Metropolitan Khrisanf up at night. "He came to me and said, 'I saw women with babes in arms on television! Where will they and their children sleep? Are there enough tents for everyone?'" The diocese and local government now collaborate to ensure that, at the very least, pilgrims' basic needs are met. While diocesan literature stresses that all pilgrims must take responsibility for their own food, sleeping arrangements and health care needs, at every village in which pilgrims spend the night there are huge army tents, rows of chemical toilets, and free porridge and hot water served from army field kitchens.

Since 2001, the procession has been accompanied by ten to fifteen volunteers from peresvet, the national

search and rescue organization. The bulk of Peresvet's work is rather mundane - hunting for lost children or elderly relatives, administering first aid to 100-150 persons daily - yet conditions are such that, on occasion, they must think creatively. "This year a man collapsed with a bad heart", says Sergei, a young Peresvet worker. "There was no ambulance nearby, since there are no roads at that point, so we improvised a stretcher from materials in the forest and took turns carrying him the five or six kilometers to Monastyrskoe, where a cardiac ambulance was waiting for him." While Peresvet volunteers carried him, doctors - regional volunteers seconded to the team - monitored his blood pressure and administered medicine.

There are also small threats that loom large. Almost every year someone is bitten by one of the potentially lethal ticks that lurk in the region's otherwise Eden-like landscape. Rest areas and campsite places are sprayed in advance with tick-repellent, but there is plenty of untreated undergrowth to brush against.

While the bishop no doubt sleeps easier with Peresvet volunteers among their pilgrims, not everyone approves of the increased concern with health and safety. Vladimir Krupin, a writer and local celebrity who believes that democracy is "killing Russia", cites one of the women who continued to make the pilgrimage throughout the Soviet persecutions: "Ambulances came to meet the procession around 1994. And straight away people began to feel bad. Margarita - you will of course have heard of her, she made the pilgrimage 70 times - she said that if they weren't here, people

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wouldn't feel bad. But they see the ambulances and collapse immediately." When there is no option but to rely on the Holy Spirit for support, pilgrims keep walking.

According to Sergei, the Peresvet volunteer, the number of casualties has indeed increased, but not because medical services are more visible or even simply because pilgrims are more numerous. "The fact of the matter is that earlier pilgrims were better prepared, morally and spiritually. They walked with faith in the Almighty. Now there are a lot of people who themselves don't know where and why they are walking. For many it's simply a tourist excursion, an adventure. Many come for a break in the countryside, some for company's sake, others are forced along by their parents. Therefore, there are more demands on us, and on the doctors."

Today pilgrims are greeted with biscuits and cups of water - even hot tea and pies in some of the villages - but locals have not always been so hospitable. In the Soviet era, pilgrims were castigated as locusts

destroying the newly planted crops, or as charlatans deceiving honest workers with their talk of miracles. Under Khrushchev the procession was banned, Velikoretskoye church was closed and the holy spring boarded up. The mere handful of pilgrims - mostly local women - who attempted the journey were hunted down with dogs. This bitter legacy is reflected in the fact that, when the pilgrimage was once again permitted, barely any of the villages the procession passed through welcomed the pilgrims. Father Vladimir recalls searching for somewhere to sleep one night in the early nineties, with a child under one arm and a semi-paralyzed grandfather in tow. Turned away from every door, eventually "a family of Azerbaijanis took pity on us, and took us in. Not Russians, not even Orthodox Christians, but Muslims. ... They fed us well, and wouldn't take a kopek from us."

[Note that Azerbaijanis are Shi'a Muslims - a fine symbolic expression of the special affinities between Shi'ism and Sufism on the one hand and Spanish Catholicism and Russian Orthodoxy on the other. Note that the Azerbaijanis, Shi'a Muslims, were neither taken in by communist lies nor intimidated by the thugs of the Soviet state.]

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Many locals now willingly host pilgrims - the lucky ones may get a bed or a sofa, but most arrange themselves, sardine style, on the floors of living rooms, attics, or barns. Churches and schools are also opened, so that pilgrims can have somewhere dry, if not warm, to sleep. Olga, a soft-spoken woman who works in a local kindergarten, is caring for 30 pilgrims in a house that has been loaned to the local monastery for the duration of the Velikoretskoye festivities. "Naturally, we have to feed the pilgrims. It's good work - earlier this doing of good works was a tradition, people just did it ... we are doing it because the abbot has asked us to."

Olga and her helpers see their good works as "obedience" to the Church, using monastic terminology to explain their role. That they have shopped and hunted down extra crockery, prepared soup and buckwheat porridge. On June 6, when the small village of Velikoretskoye is inundated with pilgrims (many arriving in buses to join those who have arrived on foot), they keep the bathhouse (*banya*) - a traditional wooden affair in the garden - heated, and quietly feed pilgrims in

shifts on the verandah at the back of the house. "Everything is changed by the procession, not just those who walk it, but those who take in pilgrims too", Father Vladimir muses, considering how things have changed in the last decade. "Everyone has become kinder."

The potential of the pilgrimage to transform those involved with it is welcomed by the Church, and Father Alexander sees it as "a very powerful tool for catechism. ... You may start the procession not knowing how to pray - some even not knowing how to cross themselves - but after walking the whole way, you return a different person." This "walking Sunday school" offers, Father Alexander believes, an informal and supportive environment in which to learn Christian practices. (Russian) Orthodox church services are long and complicated, and the numerous reprimands dishes out by the self-appointed guardians of Orthodox behavior found in most parishes can put off less experienced worshippers. The Velikoretskoye pilgrimage, although punctuated by liturgies and regular prayers, is a more relaxed affair, and those on the spiritual and physical margins of the procession don't have to join in with everything.

Many initially join the pilgrimage to test their physical strength, or out of curiosity, but are drawn back year after year. The process of "becoming churched", of moving from curiosity to regular church attendance and an "Orthodox life-style", is - local

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librarian Tatyana believes - a gradual one, and "everyone travels at their own speed". Although Tatyana's grandparents were born in Vyatka well before the Revolution, she first heard about the Vilikoretskoye pilgrimage from a local author. Her first procession of the cross, in 1996, "wasn't that of a believer, but that of an ethnologist: to understand that sort of local tradition that a person working in the local history department of the town library should know about. So it was a strictly academic interest. And I can't say that on the second procession I began to be "churched" either. ... It's a long path to God, along which you somehow or other make your way." Tatyana started taking her son along with her when he was 11 or 12. Now, at the age of 20, she says, he goes by choice, "although not every year".

Lyubov found herself recalling her grandmother, a deeply religious woman who lived in a village seven or so kilometers from Velikoretsoye. "When I walked over that ground ... I understood that my ancestors walked here, my grandmother, my great-grandmother. And I suddenly understood that I am that link in my line, in my family. My grandmother, my great-grandmother, gave to me, and I must give to someone. And that chain doesn't

break ... and the procession of the cross is that kind of chain."

The number of children and young people on the pilgrimage is testimony to the success of pilgrims like Tatyana and Lyubov, and the diocesan clergy, in ensuring that the next generation of "the Vyatka land" continue to fulfill their ancestors' promise to St. Nicholas.

Yet the revival of the pilgrimage has significance beyond (the) Kirov region, and not simply because the Patriarch deems it of national importance. Nadezhda, a pilgrim from Samara, highlighted the modern miracle of Velikoretskoye - if in the Soviet era police cars barricaded the route so that pilgrims could not access the riverside shrine, today pilgrims are escorted by policemen, and barricades stop the traffic so that pilgrims can pass in and out of Kirov safely. Local government authorities, the police and other state employees work in concert with the clerical hierarchy to ensure that the pilgrimage prospers, and in this the Velikoretskoye procession reflects a broader trend.

The Russian Orthodox Church is on the march, metaphorically and - in some senses - literally reclaiming Russian soil. This year legislation was drafted that promises to return to religious institutions property confiscated by the Bolsheviks. In reviving processions, the Church is reminding Russian

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society of its Orthodox heritage by very publicly re-enacting it - they travel through what is now predominantly secular space, halting traffic in city centers, passing through villages without functioning churches, praying at springs and semi-ruined buildings which once had religious significance but were desecrated or demolished during the Soviet period. The processions are gradually (*Why hurry, with eternity before us?*) transforming the landscape, just as surely as they are transforming the pilgrims themselves."

Since Russian Orthodoxy and Spanish Catholicism have special affinities with Shi'ism and Sufism, above and beyond the general Catholic-Shi'a and Eastern Orthodox-Shi'a affinities, one may ask if Russian Orthodoxy and Spanish Catholicism have special affinities among themselves. This is a potentially large topic which would require much research, so we will touch on it only briefly.

Because of its profound inclination towards mysticism, Spanish Catholicism is often said to have an "Eastern" quality.

The Dominican and Jesuit Orders are of Spanish origin; St. Dominic de Guzman and St. Ignatius of Loyola were both Spaniards. Yet, ironically, the order considered to be the most Spanish of all is not. We refer to the Carmelites, which, as we have said in another place, was originally an Eastern Orthodox Order, which came to Western Europe with the retreating Crusaders. The Carmelites are considered to be the most Spanish of all Catholic Orders because they are the most mystical of all.

Recently there was published a beautiful book by Leonid Ouspensky titled Theology of the Icon. In said book Mr. Ouspensky cites the German bishop Dr. K. Gamber:

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"The Roman Catholic Church will eradicate its present errors and will arrive at a new renaissance (bad choice of words, at least in translation) only when it is able to incorporate the fundamental strengths of the Eastern (Orthodox) Church: its mystical theology based on the great fathers of the Church, and its liturgical piety. One thing seems beyond doubt: the future does not lie in a reconciliation with Protestantism (Amen to that!!!), but in an inward union with the Eastern (Orthodox) Church, that is, in a steadfast spiritual contact with it, with its theology and piety." (413)

As far as he goes in the paragraph above, I am in complete agreement with Bishop Gamber.

In Political Apocalypse: A Study of Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor, Ellis Sandoz notes:

"Mysticism does not stand apart either from theology or from liturgical worship in Eastern Orthodoxy. Both theology and liturgy are suffused by the experience of persons and the common experience of the Church. There is no notion of a cleavage between

individual experience and the common faith as in Western mysticism. Dogmas are defined in the light of experience and serve, in turn, to guide persons toward the attainment of an increasingly profound life in the Spirit. Neither faith nor theology is conceivable without mysticism."(414)

In general or relative terms, Ellis Sandoz is perfectly right. However, what he does not make clear is this: that of which he speaks is a question of degree rather than kind. Eastern Orthodox scholastic theology does exist, though its relative importance is much less than in Catholicism. See Orthodox Dogmatic Theology by Fr. Michael Pomazansky. Also, the western or Catholic Church also has an extremely rich mystical tradition, something which Sandoz, if he does not deny it, appears to trivialize it.

To give only three examples which come to mind immediately,

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John Scotus Erugena, Hugh of St. Victor, Richard of St. Victor and St. Bernard of Clairvaux are considered to be philosophers as well as mystics. The same could be said of Dante Alighieri, as we have said in the previous chapter: see his "Il Paradiso", third and final part of the La Divina Commedia. St. John of the Cross is called "the greatest of the mystical theologians", something which would be an oxymoron would Sandoz right in an absolute rather than relative sense. As we have noted in the previous chapter, In the works of such Catholic thinkers as St. Bernard of Clairvaux (12th century) and Walter of St. Victor (12th century) one encounters a viewpoint identical to that of the Eastern Orthodox Church in reference to the point at issue.

In fact, it is questionable to what degree, if at all the

words of Ellis Sandoz cited above could be applied to Spanish Catholicism. If what Sandoz said above were absolutely true, why would Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) find St. John of the Cross so interesting. Note that in his novels, notably Demons, which title, for some strange reason, is often translated as The Possessed, Dostoyevsky mentioned that "the Spanish mystics" were taught in the Russian Orthodox Churches of his day. Since the word *demon* is the same in Russian and in English, I find this to be inexplicable, as though a translator assumed that he or she knew better than Dostoyevsky himself what he meant to say.

That, among the various Eastern Orthodox Churches (Greek, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Georgian, Rumanian, et cetera) it should be the Russian Orthodox Church, and, to my knowledge,

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within the gamut of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, it is only the Russian Orthodox Church which finds St. John of the Cross and the other Spanish mystics so interesting. Note that Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov), Ouspensky and Sandoz, though they speak in the name of Eastern Orthodoxy in general, in reality very much speak from a Russian Orthodox viewpoint.

At this point I can do no better than quotes the words of Sarah Hobson, speaking of her visit to Qum:

"I wanted to stay in Qum, to participate further in this (Iranian Shi'a) religious life, and to learn more about Islam. I felt I had touched only the surface, even though that surface seemed misleadingly smooth, misleadingly simple. So many of the rules, the recommendations, the beliefs of Shi'a Islam seemed clear and easy to grasp. Yet I felt that below there was something far more complex, more intricate, of philosophies and theological arguments which were

beyond my understanding. Perhaps, if I could have more time here (in Qum), I would manage to go deeper, to understand the mystical undertones of Islam, its esoterics, its thought patterns. Perhaps I would just understand, for I felt here in Qum that the religious leaders and teachers were closer to knowledge of truth than I had encountered in people elsewhere."(415)

My time in India convinced me that books are no substitute for a living Pir. I, to, should like to spend time in Qum, to learn of Shi'a Islam in depth, of its mysticism and esoterism. In Delhi I gave a talk on Muslim Spain at the tomb of Shaykh Nizamuddin. I remember my audience was composed mostly of very saintly looking men with white beards. Afterwards I was decorated with a leis of marigolds.

The journalist Robin Wright tells of her visit to Qum:

"In stark contrast to the simplicity of
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(Ayatollah) Khomeini's barren home was a second religious landmark in Qum. The bustling new computer center at the Golpaygani Seminary (*Madrassa*) (is) an impressively yellow brick building with blue tiled trim.

The computer center (in Qum) was the brainchild of Ayatollah Ali Korani, a gentle cleric with a white beard and a white turban who had not even known how to type when he decided, about the time of Ayatollah Khomeini's death in 1989, that (Shi'a) Islam had to meet modernity in the form of computers. The idea grew out of his own rather unusual research.

Since I was a child I have loved Imam Mahdi, our Twelfth Imam who disappeared," he (Ayatollah Korani) told me when I called on him at the computer center, where he and a young cleric were engrossed in a new software program.

Some of us believe from reading Islamic sources that he (Imam Mahdi) will come back at the same time as Jesus. The coming of the (Imam) Mahdi is certain because the Prophet Muhammad said it would happen. He (Imam Mahdi) will come first and go to Qods (Jerusalem). Then Jesus will appear from Heaven and they will pray in Qods together. And then there will be unity between Christians and Muslims," (Ayatollah Ali) Korani explained."(416)

In Spain, mysticism is the lifeblood of religion, whether

Muslim or Christian, and no doubt was the life-blood of Druidism in Spain in pre-Roman, pre-Christian times.

The above is of crucial importance, because nearly all the population of al-Andalus was composed either of Spanish Catholics, i.e., the Mozarabs, or of descendants of Spanish Catholics converted to Islam. In this last category must be included Ibn Hazm of Cordoba, Ibn Arabi al-Mursi, Ibn Abbad of Ronda, and the poets Ibn Quzman (*Quzman*, pronounced "Guzman" in al-Andalus, is the same as the Spanish "Guzman"; both are of Gothic origin) and the above-mentioned Abu Bakr Ibn al-Qutiyya (*ibn al-Qutiyya*, pronounced "ibn al-Gutiyya" in al-Andalus, means "son of the

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Goth"). The list could go on and on and on. In fact, nearly all the great figures of the history of al-Andalus as well as nearly all the general population either were Mozarabs or were descendants of Mozarabs converted to Islam. Even the Caliphs of Cordoba are included in this category, because far more Iberian, Celtic and Visigothic blood flowed in their veins than did Arab blood. Did the Caliphs of Cordoba themselves feel a twinge of "Shi'a tendencies", ironically helping to provoke the fear of Fatimid subversion?

There is another fact which seems to indicate Shi'ism, open or clandestine, or at the very least strong Shi'a tendencies among the population of al-Andalus and, perhaps, even in the case of the great Caliph Abd ar-Rahman III. I refer to the prevalence of the feminine name *Zahra*, usually pronounced "*Zahara*" or "*Zahira*" among Hispano-Muslims.

The title "Zahra" for Fatima, daughter of the Prophet Muhammad is extremely common among Shi'as; I would not go so far as to say that said title is unknown or never used among Sunnis, though I have never heard it said by a Sunni nor have I read it in Sunni literature. At the very least, the title "Zahra" for Fatima, daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, is very rarely or never used by Sunnis. Usually in the form of the transcriptions of Hispano-Muslim vocalizations "Zahara" or "Zahira", the title "Zahra" is found to this day as a feminine personal name and in place names in Southern Spain. We have already mentioned the caliphal city near Cordoba, "Medina az-Zahara", which is "Madinat

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az-Zahra" in correct, classical Arabic, built by the Caliph Abd ar-Rahman III. I also recall visiting the picturesque present day village called "Zahara", not far from Ronda.

Over the main gate of the Caliphal residence in Medina az-Zahara or Madinat az-Zahra was a statue of a woman, said to have been that of a "favorite" of the Caliph named "Zahra" or "Zahara".(417) Did this statue really represent a "favorite" of the Caliph or did it represent Fatima Zahra? Should this be the case, it would indicate that the Caliph Abd ar-Rahman III was himself a clandestine Shi'a; this is all the more credible when we recall that said residence was within the caliphal city called *Madinat az-Zahara*. Would the great Caliph Abd ar-Rahman III have been so frivolous as to to name a city, and perhaps some villages and small towns after a "favorite", and to adorn the main gate to the caliphal residence in Madinat az-Zahra with a statue of said

favorite? Is this really plausible?

King Charles II of England and Scotland was certainly a clandestine Catholic, as was probably his cousin, the great Cavalier and cavalry leader Prince Rupert and the great Cavalier and soldier James Grahame, Marquis of Montrose; however, all these men kept their Catholicism "in the closet" for the sake of both the Stuart Dynasty and the greater good of the Catholic Church. Had Abd ar-Rahman publicly declared himself to be a Shi'a, this would have undermined the legitimacy of his own dynasty, and, perhaps, have led to rulers coming to power who would have been bitterly and bloodily anti-Shi'a.

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Some will no doubt object that "Zahra", usually in the typical Hispano-Muslim vocalizations "Zahara" or "Zahira", was a rather common feminine personal name in Muslim Spain, and is still occasionally used as such to this day in Southern Spain. The above is perfectly true, but it indicates the prevalence of Shi'ism or at least strong Shi'a tendencies among the Hispano-Muslim population. "Fatima" is, of course, a common feminine personal name among the Shi'as of Iran and perhaps other countries, but I have never heard of "Zahra" as a feminine personal name among Sunnis outside of Muslim Spain.

It is also said that in Cordoba in Muslim times there was a statue of the Virgin Mary above that gate of the city called "Bab al-Qantara", which led to the bridge over the Guadalquivir, and another such statue over the principal gate of Pechina, near Almeria.(418)

We have already mentioned the many connections between the Virgin Mary and Fatima Zahra; did these statues in cities of Muslim Spain really represent the Virgin Mary or did they represent Fatima Zahra, or, perhaps, had the two become fused in the popular imagination? I have never heard of any statues of Muslim holy men in Muslim Spain.

As is evident from what we have said above, al-Andalus was a land of Sufism, being second only to Persia, and - though this is doubtful - Muslim India in this respect. Sufism saturated the very air of al-Andalus, indeed it was Sufism which won the bulk of the population of al-Andalus to Islam.

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Says Seyyed Hossein Nasr:

'A few examples in the vast and intricate relationship between Shi'ism and Sufism may make more clear some of the points discussed so far. In Islam in general, and Sufism in particular, a saint is called a *wali* (abbreviation of *waliallah* or 'friend of God') and sanctity is called *wilayah*. As already mentioned, in Shi'ism the whole function of the Imam is associated with the power and function of what in Persian is called *walayat*, which comes from the same (Arabic) root as *wilayah* and is closely connected with it. Some have even identified the two. In any case according to Shi'ism, in addition to the power of prophecy in the sense of bringing a divine law (*nubuwwah*) and (*risalat*), the Prophet of Islam, like other great prophets before him, had the power of spiritual guidance and initiation (*walayah*) which he transmitted to Fatimah and Ali (ibn Abi Talib), and through them to all the Imams. Since the Imam is always alive, this function and power is also always present in this world and able to guide men to the spiritual life. The 'cycle of initiation' (*da'irat al-walayah*) which follows the 'cycle of prophecy' (*da'irat al-nubuwwah*) is therefore one that continues to this day and guarantees the ever-living presence of an esoteric way in Islam.

The same meaning pertains to *wilayah* in the sense that it concerns the ever-living spiritual presence in Islam which enables men to practice the spiritual life

and to reach a state of sanctity. That is why many Sufis since the time of Hakim al-Tirmidhi have devoted so much attention to this cardinal aspect of Sufism. There is, to be sure, a difference between Shi'ism and Sufism on how and through whom this power and function operates as well as who is considered as its 'seal'. But the similarity between the Shi'ah and the Sufis concerning this doctrine is most startling and results directly from the fact that both are connected in the manner mentioned above with Islamic esoterism as such, which is none other than *wilayah* and *walayah* as used in the technical sense in both Shi'ite and Suufi sources.

Among the practices of the Sufis there is one that is closely associated in its symbolis meaning with *wilayah*, and in ites origin with the Shi'ite *walayah*. It is the practice of wearing a cloak and handing it from the master to the disciple as a symbol of the transmission of a spiritual teaching and the particular grace associated with the act of initiation. Each state of being is like a cloak or veil that 'covers' the state above, for symbolically the 'above' is associated

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with the 'inward'. The Sufi cloak symbolizes the transmission of spiritual power which enables the disciple or *murid* to penetrate beyond the everyday state of consciousness. By virtue of being presented with this cloak or veil in its symbolic sense he is able to cast aside the inner veil that separates him from the Divine.

The practice of wearing and transmitting the cloak and the meaning of this act are closely associated with Shi'ism, as affirmed by ibn Khaldun in the quotation cited above ('The Sufis thus became saturated with Shi'ah theories. (Shi'ah) theories entered so deeply into their religious ideas that they based their own practice of using a cloak (*khirqah*) on the fact that Ali (ibn Abi Talib) cothed al-Hasan al-Basri in such a cloak and caused him to agree solemnly that he would adhere to the mystic path. (The tradition thus inaugurated by Ali (ibn Abi Talib) was continued according to the Sufis, through al-Junayd, one of the Sufi *shaykhs*.'

From the Shi'ite point of view, Shi'ism is the origin of what later came to be known as Sufism. But here by Shi'ism is meant the esoteric instructions of the Prophet, the *asrar* which many Shi'ite authors have identified with the Shi'ite 'concealment', *taqiyyah*. ... It is true that one can discern 'Shi'ite' elements even during the life-time of the Prophet, and that (both) Shi'ism and Sunnism have their roots in the very origin of the Islamic revelation, placed there providentially to accommodate different psychological and ethnic types. According to the famous *Hadith-I kisa'* (the tradition of

the garment) the Prophet called his daughter Fatima along with Ali (ibn Abi Talib), (Imam) Hasan and (Imam) Hussein and placed a cloak upon them in such a manner that it covered them. The cloak symbolizes the transmission of the universal *walayah* of the Prophet in the form of the partial *walayah* (*walayah-I fatimiyyah*) to Fatimah and through her to the Imams who were her descendants. There is a direct reference to the esoteric symbolism of the cloak in a well-known Shi'ite *hadith*, which because of its significance and beauty is fully quoted here:

'It has been accounted of the Prophet - upon him and his family be peace - that he said: 'When I was taken on the nocturnal ascension to heaven and I entered Paradise, I saw in the middle of it a palace made of red rubies. (The Archangel) Gabriel opened the door for me and I entered it. I saw in it a house made of white pearls. I entered the
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house and saw in the middle of it a box made of light and locked with a lock made of light. I said, 'Oh Gabriel, what is this box and what is in it?' Gabriel said; 'Oh friend of God (*habiballah*), in it is the secret of God (*sirrallah*) which God does not reveal to anyone except to him whom He loves.' I said, 'Open this door for me'. He (Gabriel) said, 'I am a slave who follows the divine command. Ask thy Lord until He grants permission to open it.' I therefore asked for the permission of God. A voice came from the Divine Throne saying, 'Oh Gabriel, open its door', and he opened it. In it I saw spiritual poverty (*faqr*) and a cloak (*muraqqa'*). I said, 'What is this *faqr* and *muraqqa'*?' The voice from heaven said, 'Oh Muhammad, there are two things which I have chosen for thee and thy people (*ummah*); from the moment I created the two of you. These two things I do not give to anyone save those whom I love, and I have created nothing dearer than these.' Then the Holy Prophet said, 'God - exalted be His Name - selected *faqr* and the *muraqqa* or me and those two are the dearest things to Him.' The Prophet directed his attention toward God and when he returned from the nocturnal ascent (*Miraj*) he made Ali (ibn Abi Talib) wear the cloak with the permission of God and by His command. Ali (ibn Abi Talib) wore it and sewed patches on it until he said, 'I have sewn so many

patches on this cloak that I am embarrassed before the sewer.' Ali (ibn Abi Talib) made his son (Imam) Hasan to wear it after him and then (Imam) Hussein and then the descendants of (Imam) Hussein one after another until the *Mahdi*. The cloak rests with him now.'

Ibn Ali Jumhur as well as the later Shi'ite commentators upon this *hadith* add that the cloak worn and transmitted by the Sufis is not the same cloak cited in the *hadith*. Rather, what the Sufis seek to do is to emulate the conditions for wearing the cloak as the Prophet wore it and through this act to become aware to the extent of their capability of the divine mysteries (*asrar*) which the cloak symbolizes.

The whole question of *walayah* and the cloak that symbolizes it makes clear the most important common element between Sufism and Shi'ism, which is the presence of a hidden form of knowledge and instruction.

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The use of the method of *ta'wil* or spiritual hermeneutics in the understanding of the Holy Qur'an as well as of the 'cosmic text', and belief in grades of meaning within the revelation - both of which are common to Sufism and Shi'ism - result from the presence of this esoteric form of knowledge. The presence of *walayah* guarantees for Shi'ism and Sufism alike a Gnostic and esoteric character, of which the doctrine and the characteristic manner of instruction present in both are natural expressions.

Closely associated with *walayah* is the concept of the Imam in Shi'ism, for the Imam is he who possesses the power and function of *walayah*. The role of the Imam is central to Shi'ism, but we cannot deal here with all its ramifications. But from the spiritual point of view it is important to point to his function as the spiritual guide, a function that closely resembles that of the Sufi master. The Shi'ite seeks to encounter his Imam - who is none other than the inner spiritual guide - so that some Shi'ite Sufis speak of the Imam of each person's being (*Imam Wujudika*). If one leaves aside the Shari'ite (law giving) and also cosmic functions of the Imam, his initiatory function and role as spiritual guide is similar to that of the Sufi master.

In fact, just as in Sufism each master is in contact with the pole (*Qutb*) of his age, in Shi'ism all spiritual functions in every age are inwardly connected with the Imam. The idea of the Imam as the pole of the universe and the concept of the *Qutb* in Sufism are nearly identical, as asserted so clearly by Sayyid Haydar Amuli when he says:

'The *Qutb* and the Imam are two

expressions possessing the same meaning and referring to the same person.'

The doctrine of the universal perfect man (*al-insan al-kamil*) as expounded by ibn Arabi (al-Mursi) is very similar to the Shi'ite doctrine of the *Qubt* and the Imam, as is the doctrine of the *Mahdi* developed by later Sufi masters. All these doctrines refer essentially and ultimately to the same esoteric reality, the *haqiqat al-muhammadiyah*, as present in both Shi'ism and Sufism. And in this case as far as the formulation of this doctrine is concerned there may have been direct Shi'ite influences upon later Sufi formulations.

Another doctrine that is shared in somewhat different forms by Shi'ites and Sufis is that of the 'Muhammadan Light' (*al-nur al-Muhammadi*) and the initiatic chain (*silsalah*). Shi'ism believes that there
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is a 'Prophetic Light' passed from one prophet to another and after the Prophet of Islam to the Imams. This light protects the prophets and Imams from sin, making them inerrant (*ma'sum*), and bestows upon them the knowledge of divine mysteries. In order to gain this knowledge man must become attached to this light through the Imam who, following the Prophet, acts as man's intermediary with God in the quest for divine knowledge. In the same way, in Sufism, in order to gain access to the methods which alone make spiritual realization possible, man must first become attached to an initiatory chain or *silsalah* which goes back to the Prophet and through which a *barakah* flows from the source of revelation to the being of the initiate. The chain is thus based on a continuity of spiritual presence that much resembles the 'Muhammadan Light' of Shi'ism. In fact later Sufis themselves also speak of the 'Muhammadan Light'. In the early period, especially in the teachings of the (6th) Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, the Shi'ite doctrine of the 'Muhammadan Light' and the Sufi doctrine of the spiritual chain meet, and as in other cases have their source in the same esoteric teachings of Islam.

Finally, in this comparison between Shi'ite and Sufi doctrines one should mention the spiritual and Gnostic stations (*maqamat-i 'irfani*). If we turn to a study of the lives of the Prophet and the Imams as for example, found in the compilation of Majlisi in the *Bihar al-anwar*, we will discover that these accounts are based, more than anything else, upon the inner spiritual states of the personages concerned. The goal of the religious life in Shi'ism is, in fact, to emulate the lives of the Prophet and the Imams and to reach their inward states. Although for the majority of Shi'ites this remains only a latent possibility, the elite

(*khawass*) have always been fully aware of it. The spiritual stations of the Prophet and the Imams leading to union with God can be considered as the final goal toward which Shi'ite piety strives and upon which the whole spiritual structure of Shi'ism is based.

Now in Sufism also, the goal, which is to reach God, cannot be achieved except through the states and stations *hal* and *maqam* which occupy such a prominent position in the classical treatises of Sufism. The Sufi life is also one that is based on the achievement of these states, although the Sufi does not seek these states in themselves but seeks God in His Exalted Essence. Of course in Sufism nearly all members of an order are conscious of the states and stations whereas in Shi'ism only the elite are aware of them, but this is quite natural inasmuch as Sufism as such is the path

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for the spiritual elite whereas Shi'ism concerns a whole community, possessing its own exoteric and esoteric division and having its own elite as well as its common believers (*'awamm*). But in the special significance given to the spiritual stations in the Shi'ite account of the lives of the Prophet and the Imams, there is a striking similarity with what one finds in Sufism. Here again, both refer to the same reality *id est*, Islamic esoterism, with the practical and realized aspect of which the spiritual stations are concerned.

Having considered these few instances of the relationship between Shi'ism and Sufism, in principle we must now discuss briefly how the relationship between the two has manifested itself in Islamic history. During the lifetimes of the Imams, from the first (Ali ibn Abi Talib) to the eighth (Ali al-Ridha, in Persian usually called *Ali Reza*, there being in Persian no definite article, such as the Arabic *'al-*', nor is there a sound equivalent to the Arabic sound generally transcribed as *'dh'*, which in Persian is pronounced as *'z'*), the contact between the two was most intimate. The writings of the Imams contain a treasury of Islamic gnosis. The Nahj al-Balaghah of Ali (ibn Abi Talib), one of the most neglected works of Islam in modern studies of the Western Islamicists, the Sahifah Sajjadiyyah of the fourth Imam, Zayn al-Abidin, called the 'Psalms of the Family of the Prophet', and the Usul al-Kafi of Kulayni, containing the sayings of the Imams, outline a complete exposition of Islamic gnosis and have served in fact as a basis for many later Gnostic and Sufi commentaries. Although their technical vocabulary is not in all respects the same as (that of) the works of the early Sufis, as shown by (Louis) Massignon, the doctrines and spiritual expositions contained therein are essentially the same as one finds in the classical Sufi treatises.

During the lifetimes of the Imams there was intimate contact between the Imams and some of the greatest of the early Sufis.

Hasan al-Basri and Uways al-Qarani were disciples of Ali (ibn Abi Talib), Ibrahim al-Adham, Bishr al-Hafi and Bayazid al-Bastami were associated with the circle of the (6th) Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq; and Ma'ruf al-Karkhi was a close companion of the (8th) Imam (Ali) Ridha. Moreover, the earliest Sufis, before being called by this name, were known as ascetics (*zuhhad*) and many of them were associated with the Imams and followed their example in the ascetic life. In Kufa such men as Kumayl, Maytham al-Tamar, Rashid al-Hajari, all of whom were among the early Sufis and ascetics, belonged to the entourage of the Imams. The 'companions of the
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lodge' (*ashab al-suffah*) before them, like Salman, Abu Dharr and Ammar al-Yasir, are also both poles of early Sufism and the early members of the Shi'ite community.'
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Below is an essay by Seyyed Hossein Nasr concerning Shi'ism and Sufism in the Safavi period:

"The Safavid period is one of the outstanding epochs in the intellectual and spiritual history of Islamic Iran, although its artistic and political life is much better known to the outside world than what it created in the domains of Sufism, philosophy and theology. Particularly in *Hikmat* - that combination of philosophy and gnosis which should be translated as theosophy rather than philosophy as currently understood in the Occident - the Safavid period is the apogee of a long development which reaches back to the 6th/ 12th century and the introduction of new intellectual perspectives into Islamic civilization by Suhrawardi and Ibn 'Arabi (al-Mursi). Likewise, in Sufism and the religious sciences the sudden flowering of activity in the 10th/16th century is based on the important but little studied transformation that was taking place in Persia since the Mongol invasion.

Persia did not become Shi'I through a sudden process. Ever since the 7th/13th century Shi'ism was spreading in Persia through certain of the Sufi orders which were outwardly Sunni - that is, in their *madhhab* they followed one of the Sunni schools, usually the Shafi'i. But they were particularly devoted to 'Ali and some even accepted *wilaya* (or *valayat*, in its Persian pronunciation), that is, the power of spiritual direction and initiations which Shi'is believe was bestowed upon 'Ali by the Prophet of Islam. It was

particularly this belief that made the transformation of Persia from a predominantly Sunni land to a Shi'I one possible. The Shi'is consider Safi al-Din Ardabili, the founder of the Safavid Order, as a Shi'I, whereas the research of modern historians has revealed him to be a Sunni. The same holds true of Shah Ni'mat-Allah Vali, the founder of the Ni'matallahi order, which is the most widespread Sufi order in contemporary Persia. In a sense both contentions are true depending on what we mean by Shi'ism. If we mean the Shafi'i scholl of madhhab, then these Sufi orders such as the Safavi and Ni'matallahi were initially Sunni and later became Shi'i. If, however, by Shi'ism we mean the acceptance of the valayat of 'Ali, then in this sense these orders

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were inwardly Shi'I during this period and became outwardly so during the Safavid era.

In any case the role of Sufism in the spread of Shi'ism and the preparation of the ground for the establishment of a Shi'I Persia with the Safavids remains both in the direct and active political role played by the Safavi Order and in the religious and spiritual role of other orders, such as the Kubraviyya and especially the Nurbakshiyya, which more than any other order sought to bridge the gap between Sunnism and Shi'ism. Shaikh Muhammad Ibn 'Abd-Allah, entitled Nurbaksh, who died in Ray in 869/1464-1465, made indirect claims to being the Mahdi and sought to bring Shi'ism and Sunnism closer together through Sufism. His successors Faizbakhsh and Shah Baha al-Din continued the movement in the same direction and finally became fully Shi'i. A celebrated member of this order, Shaikh Shams al-Din Muhammad Lahiji, the author of the best-known commentary upon the Gulshan-I raz, a work which is a bible of Sufism in Persian, was thoroughly Shi'I while being an outstanding Sufi. The story of his encounter with Shah Ismail (Safavi) and the question posed to him by the shah as to why he always wore black, to which he replied that he was always mourning the tragic events of Karbala, is well known. And it indicates the complete transformation that had taken place within the Nurbakshshi order so that it became totally Shi'I in form. We observe the same process within the Ni'matallahi and Safavi orders. Both Shah Ni'mat-Allah, who came to Persia from Aleppo, and the Shaikh Safi al-Din from Ardabil were at first Sufis of Sunni background such as the Shaziliyya and Qadiriyya brotherhoods. But the inner belief in the valayat of 'Ali gradually transformed the outer form of the orders as well into thoroughly Shi'I organizations, although the inward structure of these orders, being Sufi, remained above the Shi'I - Sunni distinctions. The Ni'matallahi order became Shi'I during the Safavid period itself, while the

Safavi order began to show Shi'i tendencies with Junaid, who was attracted to the Musha'sha' movement, and became fully Shi'i with 'Ali b. Junaid. In all these cases, however, a similar process was occurring. Sufi orders with Shi'I tendencies were inwardly transforming Persia from a predominantly Sunni to a predominantly Shi'I land. Therefore, Sufism is the most important spiritual force to be reckoned with in studying the background of the Safavid period.

As for the intellectual background of the Safavid era, there also the theoretical and doctrinal aspect of Sufism, known as gnosis ('*irfan*), plays a fundamental (3737)

role along with schools of philosophy and theology. The very rich intellectual life of the 10th/16th and 11th/17th centuries did not come into being from a vacuum. There was a long period of preparation from the time of Suhrawardi and Ibn 'Arabi (al-Mursi) to the advent of the Safavid renaissance, a period which, although spanning nearly four centuries, remains the most obscure in the intellectual history of Persia. Yet without a knowledge of this period an understanding of Safavid intellectual life is impossible.

There are four major intellectual perspectives and schools of thought, all clearly defined in traditional Islamic learning, which gradually approach each other during the period leading to the Safavid revival: Peripatetic (*mashsha'i*) philosophy, illuminationist (*ishraqi*) theosophy, gnosis ('*irfan*) and theology (*kalam*). It is due to the gradual intermingling and synthesis of these schools that during the Safavid period the major intellectual figures are not only philosophers but also theologians or gnostics. The very appearance of the vast syntheses such as those of Sadr al-Din shirazi attest to the long period preceding the Safavid renaissance which made these all-comprehending metaphysical expositions possible.

The usual story of Islamic philosophy, according to which it was attacked by Ghazzali and after an Indian summer in Andalusia disappeared from Muslim lands, is disproven by the presence of the Safavid philosophers and metaphysicians themselves. The fact that they were able to expound philosophical and metaphysical doctrines and ideas matching in rigour and depth anything written before or after in traditional philosophy is itself proof of the continuity of Islamic philosophy after the attacks of Ghazzali and Fakhr al-Din Razi. Actually, in the 7th/11th century the mathematician and theologian, Nasir al-Din Tusi, who was also one of the foremost of Islamic philosophers, revived the Peripatetic philosophy of Ibn Sina (Avicenna), which had been attacked by both of the above-mentioned theologians, through his philosophical masterpiece the *Sharh al-isharat*, which is

a reply to Razi's criticism of Ibn Sina's last philosophical testament, the Isharat wa'l-tanbihat. Henceforth, Persia continued to produce philosophers who followed upon Tusi's footsteps. His own students, Qutb al-Din Shirazi, author of the monumental philosophical opus Durrat al-taj in Persian, and Dabiran Katibi, author of the Hikmat al-'ain, continued the tradition immediately after him. In the 8th/14th and 9th/15th centuries Qutb al-Din Razi and a whole group of philosophers who hailed from Shiraz and the surrounding regions also wrote
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important philosophical works. Among them Sadr al-Din Dashtaki and his son Ghiyas al-Din Mansur Dashtaki are particularly noteworthy. The latter, the author of Akhlaq-I Mansuri in ethics, a commentary upon the Haykil al-nur of Suhrawardi and glosses upon Tusi's commentary upon the Isharat, lived into the Safavid period and was very influential upon the major Safavid figures such as Sadr al-Din Shirazi, for whom he has been mistaken by many traditional scholars as well as by some modern historians. Many of the cardinal themes of Safavid philosophy and metaphysics may be found in the writings of Ghiyas al-Din Mansur and other figures of the period, not one of whom has by any means been studied sufficiently.

Even these philosophers, who were mostly Peripatetic, were influenced by the Ishraqi theosophy of Suhrawardi, especially in such questions as God's knowledge of things. After the founding of this new intellectual perspective by Suhrawardi in the 6th/12th century, its teachings spread particularly in Persia and became more and more integrated with Avicennan philosophy as seen in the case of Ghiyas al-Din Mansur and similar figures from the 7th/13th to the 10th/16th century. And this ishraqi interpretation of Avicennan philosophy is one of the characteristics of the intellectual life of the Safavid period, as seen to an eminent degree in the case of the founder of the School of Isfahan, Mir Damad.

There is also the basic question of gnosis to consider. The teachings of the founder of the doctrinal formulation of gnosis in Islam, Muhyi al-Din Ibn 'Arabi (Ibn 'Arabi al-Mursi), spread through Persia rapidly, especially through the works and direct instruction of his pupil, Sadr al-Din Qunyavi. Henceforth nearly all the masters of Sufism in Persia, such as 'Abd al-Razzaq Kashani, Ibn 'Arabi (al-Mursi)'s eminent commentator, Sa'd al-Din Mamuya, 'Aziz al-Din Nasafi and such famous poets as Fakhr al-Din 'Araqi, Auhad al-Din Kirmani and 'Abd al-Rahman Jami, were deeply influenced by the gnostics teachings of Ibn 'Arabi. Jami in fact wrote several commentaries upon Ibn 'Arabi's works as well as

composing on the themes of gnosis independent treatises such as the Lava'ih and Ashi'at al-lama'at.

Certain philosophers and theosophers began to incorporate this form of teaching into their schools. Ibn Turka of Isfahan, the 8th/14th century author of Tamhid al-qawa'id was perhaps the first person who sought to combine *falsafa* and *'irfan*, philosophy and gnosis. In the following centuries this tendency was accelerated in the hands of a few Shi'I gnostics and sages such as Sayyid Haidar Amuli, author of Jami al-
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asrar, which is so deeply influential in Safavid writings, Ibn Abi Jumhur, the author of Kitab al-mujli, which is again a doctrinal work of Shi'I gnosis, and Rajab Bursi, known especially for his Mashariq al-anwar. The importance of the work of these figures for the Safavid period can hardly be over-emphasised, because it is they who integrated the sapiential doctrines of Ibn 'arabi into Shi'ism and prepared the ground within Shi'I intellectual life for those Safavid figures who achieved the synthesis between philosophy, theology and gnosis within the cadre of Twelver Shi'ism.

As for theology or Kalam, in its Shi'I form it reached its peak in a certain sense with the tajrid of Nasir al-Din Tusi. During the centuries preceding the Safavid period a very large number of commentaries and glosses were written upon it by Shi'I theologians while the Sunni theologians of Persia such as Taftazani and Davani - at least in his early period - continued to develop the Ash'ari Kalam, which had reached its peak with Fakhr al-Din Razi. In fact, this outspoken theological opponent of the philosophers was also influential in many ways among Shi'I theologians and thinkers.

In this domain also gradually philosophy and theology began to approach each other. It is difficult to assert whether a particular work of Sayyid Sharif Jurjani of Jalal al-Din Davani is more Kalam or Falsafa. Moreover, certain glosses and commentaries upon the Tajrid, such as those of Fakhri and especially of Sammaki, who influenced Mir Damad, contain many of the themes that belong properly speaking to Hikmat and Falsafa and were adopted by the Safavid philosophers. The long series of commentaries upon the Tajrid, which has not been studied at all fully, is the source of many of the important elements of Safavid philosophy.

From this vast intellectual background there gradually emerged the tendency towards a synthesis of the different schools of Islamic thought within the background and matrix of Shi'ism, which because of its inner structure was more conducive to the growth of the traditional philosophy and theosophy which reached its full development in the 10th/16th and 11th/17th centuries.

The advent of the Safavids, which resulted in Persia's becoming predominantly Shi'I, along with temporal conditions such as peace and stability and the encouragement of the religious sciences, which in Shi'ism always include the intellectual sciences (*al'ulum al-'aqliyya*), aided in bringing nearly four centuries of intellectual development to fruition. And so with such figures as Mir Damad and Sadr al-Din
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Shirazi, usually known as Mulla Sadra, an intellectual edifice which has its basis in the teachings of Ibn Sina, Suhrawardi and Ibn 'Arabi and also upon the specific tenets of Shi'ism as found in the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet and Imams reached its completion. A synthesis is created which reflects a millennium of Islamic intellectual life.

For both religious and political reasons the Safavids sought from the very beginning of Shah Ismail's reign to foster the study of Shi'ism and to encourage the migration of Shi'I scholars from other lands to Persia. Of scholars of non-Persian origin most were Arabs either of the Jabal 'Amila region in today's Lebanon and Syria or of Bahrain, which included in the terminology of that day not only the island of Bahrain but the whole coastal region around it. There were so many Shi'I scholars from these two regions, which had been strongholds of Shi'I learning, that the two biographical works, Lu'lu' al-Bahrain by Yusuf b. Ahmad al-Bahrani and Amal al-'amil fi ulama Jabal Amil by Muhammad b. Hasan al-Hurr al-Amili, are devoted to the accounts of the scholars of Bahrain and Jabal 'Amila. Such men as Shaikh 'Ali b. 'And al'Ali Karki, Shaikh Baha' al-Din 'Amili, his father Shaikh Husainm a disciple of Shaikh-I sani, and Ni.mat-Allah Jaza'iri, all of Arab extraction, were some of the most famous of a large number of Shi'I scholars and theologians who were responsible for the major renaissance of Shi'I religious learning during the Safavid period.

It has often been said, even by such authorities and *Edward G.) Browne and Qazvini, that the very emphasis upon religious and theological learning during the Safavid period stifled science and literature and even Sufism. This is only a half-truth which overlooks previous conditions and what was actually happening in these fields. The emphasis upon the study of the *Shari'a* and theology, while helping to unify Shi'I Persia, did not stifle activity in other domains until the second half of the 11th/17th century, when a reaction against Sufism set in. As far as literature is concerned, it is true that this period did not produce another Hafiz or Sa'di, but such poets as Sa'ib Tabrizim Kalim Kashani and Shaikh-I Baha'I (Baha' al-Din 'Amili) cannot be brushed aside as insignificant.

Moreover, there are two types of poetry which reach a new mode of perfection at this time: the poetry dealing with the life, sufferings and virtues of the Shi'I Imams, which is particularly associated with the name of Muhtasim Kashani, and poems in which the doctrinal teachings of Sufism or gnosis, as well as theosophy, are set to Persian verse. In this latter case the

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Safavid period witnesses the interesting fact that most of its great philosophers and gnostics were also poets, some of commendable quality.

As for science a decline had already set in in Islamic science with the Saljuqs, after which the mathematical sciences were revived by Nasir al-Din Tusi and his scholl at Maragha. The early afavid period continued this tradition of mathematics and stromony, whose centre of study in the 10th/16th century was Herat. Only in the following century did the study of mathematics begin to decline in the *madrasas*. As for medicine and pharmacology, this period, far from being one of decline, produced outstanding figiures like Baha' al-Adula to the extent that some have called it the golden age of pharmacology.

The case of Sufism is somewhat different and more complex. During the early Safavid period Sufism flourished spiritually and even politically, until, due to the danger of a Qizilbash uprising and a certain mundaneness which had penetrated into some Sufi orders possessing worldly powers, a religious and theological reaction set in against Sufism as seen in the figure of the second Majlisi. But many of the earlier religious scholars and theologians like the first Majlisi and Shaikh-I Baha'I were either Sufis or sympathetic toward Sufism. Moreover, it was because and not in spite of the spread of Shi'I religious learning that the type of metaphysical and theosophical doctrine associated with Mir Damad and Mulla Sadra became current. Such forms of thought would have been inconceivable without the Shi'I climate established by the Safavids. Even if the Shi'I 'ulama opposed the *mutasawwifa* in late Safavid times, 'irfan or gnosis continued to be taught and tudied within the traditional Shi's madrasa system itself, in which milieu it survives to this day in Persia. Those who know most in Persia even today about Islamic philosophy and even the "theology of Aristotle", or in other words Plotinus, wear the turban and belong to the class of religious scholars; they are not "free thinkers" who are *hakims* in spite of being Shi'I divines. The establishment of centres of religious learning by the Safavids and the emphasis placed upon Shari'I and theological learning undoubtedly diverted much of the energy of the intelligentsia to these fields and indirectly diminished activity in other

fields. Not only did it not destroy the intellectual sciences, however, but it was an essential factor in making possible the appearance of the vast metaphysical syntheses for which the Safavid period is known.

The major Sufi orders of the 9th/15th century such as the Nurbakhshi, Ni'matollahi and Qadiri, not to
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speak of the Safaviyya themselves, continued into the Safavid period and flourished into the 11th/17th century. Naturally most of these orders acquired a purely Shi'I colour and centred most of all around the Eighth Shi'I Imam, 'Ali al-Rida (generally known in Iran as "Imam Ali Reza"), who is the "Imam of initiation" in Shi'ism and to whom most Sufi orders in the Shi'I and Sunni world are attached through Ma'ruf al-Karkhi. Many eminent Sufi masters of the 10th/16th century in fact lived at or near Mashhad, as we have seen in the case of Muhammad al-Junushani, 'Imad al-Din Fazl-Allah Mashhadi and Kamal al-Din Khwarazami, all spiritual descendants of 'Ali Hamadani. All these masters expressed a special devotion to Imam Rida. Likewise the masters of the Ni'matollahi Order, such as some of the actual descendants of Shah Ni'mat-Allah from whom most of the present-day orders in Persia derive, were thoroughly Shi'I, although here the order was attached most of all to 'Ali himself.

A Sufi order which to this day considers itself as the purest Shi'I Sufi order, the Zahabi, was also active during the early Safavid period. The Zahabis, like most other Shi'I Sufi orders, believe that even before the advent of the Safavids the basic chains (*silsila*) of Sufis were Shi'I but hid their Shi'ism through the process of concealment (*taqiyya*). The Zahabis claim that only with the advent of the Safavids did the necessity for *taqiyya* subside so that the orders were able to declare themselves openly Shi'I in Persia. Among all the orders the Zahabis consider themselves as being the most intensely Shi'I, and being especially devoted to Imam Rida they add the title *razaviyya* to the name of their *silsila*.

An outstanding example of a Sufi work belonging to the Safavid period and typical of a Shi'I Sufi order in its new setting is the *Tuhfat al-'abbasiyya* of the Zabali master, Muhammad Ali Sabzivari, a contemporary of Shah 'Abbas II and, interestingly enough, the *mu'adhdhin* (he who calls the prayers) of the mausoleum of Imam Rida at Mashhad. The work consists of an introduction, five chapters, twelve sections and a conclusion. The titles of the chapters and sections are as follows:

Chapter I - On the meaning of *tasavvuf* and *Sufi*, why there are few Sufis, why they are called so and the signs and characteristics pertaining to them.

Chapter II - On the beliefs of the Sufis in unity

(*tauhid*).

Chapter III - On the beliefs of Sufis in prophecy (*nubuvvat*) and Imamate (*imamat*).

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Chapter IV - On the beliefs of Sufis concerning eschatology (*ma'ad*).

Chapter V - On the dependence of the Sufis upon the Shi'i Imams.

Section I - On the virtue of knowledge.

Section II - On continence and asceticism.

Section IV - On hunger and wakefulness.

Section V - On self-seclusion.

Section VI - On invocation.

Section VII - On reliance upon God.

Section VIII - On contentment and surrender.

Section IX - On worshipping forty days.

Section X - On hearing pleasing music and on that all pleasant music is not the singing that is scorned in the Shari'a.

Section XI - On ecstasy and swoon.

Section XII - On the necessity of having a spiritual master, and the regulations pertaining to the master and the disciple.

Conclusion - On the sayings of the Sufis concerning different subjects.

An examination of the contents of this work reveals that it deals very much with the same subjects as one finds in the classical treatises of Sufism such as the *Kitab al-luma'*, *Risala gushairiyya* and *Ihya' 'ulum al din*. The only difference that can be discerned is in its relating the chain of Sufism to the Shi'I Imams and its relying not only upon the Qur'an but also upon Prophetic *Hadith* and traditions of the Imams drawn from Shi'I sources, whereas Sufi works within the world are based upon the Qur'an and Prophetic *Hadith* mostly of the *sihah* literature. As for the role of the Imams, this is a major point that distinguishes Sufism in its Shi'I and Sunni settings. In the chain of nearly all the orders that are widely spread in the Sunni world such as the Shaziliyya and Qadiriyya the Shi'I Imams up to Imam Rida appear as saints and spiritual poles (*qutb*), but not as Imams as this term is understood specifically in Shi'ism. In Shi'I Sufi orders the presence of the same figures is seen as proof of the reliance of Sufism upon the Imams, as the fifth chapter of the *Tuhfat al-'abbasiyya* demonstrates in a typical manner.

Besides the type of Sufism represented by the Zahabi and other regular orders during the Safavid period, there are two other kinds of Islamic esotericism to consider: the first is the case of those like Mir Abu'l-Qasim Findiriski and Baha' al-Din Amili who were definitely Sufis and are recognized as such by the Sufi

orders, but whose initiatic chain and
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spiritual master are not known; the second is the case of gnostics like Sadr al-Din Shirazi who definitely possessed esoteric knowledge usually in the form of Hikmat - which also implies means of attaining this knowledge - but who did not belong, at least outwardly, to any sufi orders, so that the means whereby they acquired this gnostic knowledge remains problematic. Mulla Sadra, while being a thorough gnostic like Ibn 'Arabi (al-Mursi), wrote his Kasr al-asnam al-jahiliyya against those in his times who pretended to belong to Sufism and whom he calls *mutasavvif*, using this term in the particular context of his time and not as it has been employed throughout the history of Sufism.

In fact, what we observe during the Safavid period is that as the Sufi orders become more popular and acquire in certain cases a worldly character, a reaction sets in against them from the quarter of the religious scholars. Henceforth within the class of the 'ulama it is no longer socially acceptable to belong to one of the well known sufi orders so that esoteric instruction is imparted without any outwardly declared Sufi organization. Moreover, the term 'irfan, or gnosis (By gnosis we mean, of course, that knowledge which is related to being and results from the union between the subject and the object, and not the Christian heresy of the 3rd century.) is employed with respect in place of Tasavvuf, which from the 11th/17th to the 12th/18th centuries falls into disrepute in the circles of exoteric authorities of the religion. That is why, while Baha' al-Din 'Amili practiced Sufism openly, Qazi Sa'id Qumi, whom a contemporary authority has called the Ibn 'Arabi of Sufism, refers constantly to 'irfan, but never claims to be a Sufi in the usual sense that is found within the *turuq*, although without doubt he was a Sufi. To this whole situation must be added the initiatic role of the Twelfth Imam for the *elite* of Shi'ism in general, and the fact that the whole structure of Shi'ism possesses a more esoteric character than we find in the exoteric side of Sunnism. This fact made it possible for esoteric ideas to appear even in certain exoteric aspects of Shi'ism.

As a result, the Safavid period presents us with not only the regular Sufi masters of the well known orders, but also with gnostics and Sufis of the highest spiritual rank whose initiatic affiliation is difficult to discern. Moreover, the gnostic dimension of Islam penetrates at this time into philosophy and theosophy of Hikmat, and most of the important figures of this era are thinkers with the highest powers of ratiocination and with respect for logic while at the same time seers with spiritual visions and

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illuminations. It is hardly possible to separate philosophy, theosophy and gnosis completely in this period." (420)

One recent illustration of Haidar Amoli's statement "Shi'ism is Sufism, Sufism is Shi'ism" is the recent book Soaring to the Only Beloved by the Shi'a scholar Abu Muhammad Zaynul 'Abidin. (Qum, Iran, 2001)

A brief digression, the purpose of which will soon be made clear.

We have spoken of *Advaita Vedanta* a number of times in this book. *Vedanta* simply means "philosophy of the Vedas", in other words, philosophy based on the Upanishads, of which we have spoken. To anyone with any knowledge of Indo-European philology, the meaning of *Advaita* is obvious. *Dvaita* is from the Sanskrit *Dva*, meaning "two", see Latin: *duo*; German: *zwei*; Gaelic: *da* or *dha*; Welsh: *dau* (mas.), *dwy* (fem.); Persian: *do*; Church Slavonic, Russian & Ukrainian: *dva*; . In a number of Indo-European languages besides Sanskrit, including English, "a" used as a prefix means negation, for example: "apolitical", "anormal", "amoral", et cetera. So, *Advaita* would mean "not two", or, more precisely "non-dual". *Vedanta* therefore improves on Plotinus, who spoke of "The One". However, "one" is still a numeric, - therefore spatio-temporal - category. While *Advaita* would mean "beyond all numeric categories".

Besides *Advaita Vedanta*, there is also *Bhakti Vedanta*, *Bhakti* meaning "devotion". So, we have "Vedanta of Love and Devotion".

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Obviously, the two do not necessarily contradict or preclude one another.

There are no doubt followers of *Bhakti Vedanta* who are simply unable to comprehend the sophisticated metaphysics of *Advaita Vedanta*. There are no doubt other followers of *Bhakti Vedanta* who simply consider *Advaita Vedanta* and its sophisticated metaphysics to be irrelevant, love and devotion being, in their opinion, "the one thing necessary"; in this they are mistaken, because this attitude is an example of intellectual and spiritual sloth or laziness, which is one of the **Seven Deadly Sins**. On the other hand, every follower of *Advaita Vedanta* is also a follower of *Bhakti Vedanta*, because without love and devotion, *Advaita Vedanta* is incomplete. Thus Shankara, the leading figure of *Advaita Vedanta* was also a follower of *Bhakti Vedanta*, as his many devotional works demonstrate. It is notable that in Kashmir, **Mirabai**, the great poetess of *Bhakti Vedanta* is revered by both Hindus and Muslims.

One is reminded of the great mystical poet Kabir, who to this day is claimed by both Hindus and Muslims. The tale is told that when Kabir died the Hindus wished to cremate his body and the Muslims wished to bury it. When the sheet covering Kabir's body was removed, it was found that it had become a large mass of flowers; the Hindus cremated half the flowers and the Muslims buried the other half.

Said Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, whom we have cited a number of times:

"The meaning of confrontation (*mukhasamah*) [in this context] is that when a traveler (on the mystic path) abandons a spiritual practice, in reaction the reality of the practice abandons him and takes away its efficacy and grace. Since a spiritual act is in essence good and luminous, when the soul is emptied of its effects, the void created in the soul of the wayfarer will be filled with darkness and evil. The fact is that "Nothing but good is found in God. As to the evil, ugliness and darkness, they come solely from our own souls."

Accordingly, every evil and ugliness that may arise is derived from our own souls and cannot be attributed to God. And evil is not from You (god).

As this statement indicates, it becomes clear that Divine Emanations are not exclusive to certain people; rather, because of His Kind Lordship and infinite mercy, they are extended to all human beings whether Muslims, Jews, Christians or Zoroastrians, and even worshippers of fire and idols."(421)

Obviously, Allamah Tabataba'i, devout and fervent Shi'a though he was, cared little for names and labels, but rather for meanings and substance. Allamah Tabataba'i had few if any more fervent admirers than myself.

Allamah Tabataba'i was certainly one of the greatest Shi'a scholars of the 20th century. Allamah Tabataba'i was author of Al-Mizan, his monumental twenty volume commentary on the Qur'an, which we have cited so frequently in the present work, and also of the eloquent, lucid and comprehensive manual of or introduction to Shi'ism, known in Iran simply as Shi'ah, but whose title has sometimes been translated as Shi'ite Islam in the English-speaking world, as well as a whole host of books and essays on philosophy and theology far too numerous to list here. Certainly a most excellent proof of Haidar Amoli's saying "**Shi'ism is Sufism, Sufism is Shi'ism**" is the fact that Allamah Tabataba'i was not

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only knowledgeable on Sufism and at times wrote on Sufi topics,

but was himself a Sufi initiate, a practicing as well as a theoretical Sufi.

Of course, in the Sufi writings of Allamah Tabataba'i one finds specifically Islamic elements, and echoes of other Sufis, both Shi'a and Sunni, and specifically Shi'a elements. One also finds echoes of many Christian mystics, notably the Cappadocian Fathers (especially St. Gregory of Nyssa), St. Macarius the Elder of Egypt, Hugh of St. Victor, Richard of St. Victor, Dante Alighieri (see Paradiso, third and final part of the Divina Commedia), Ste. Catherine of Sienna, St. Gregory Palamas, St. John of the Cross, Maria Maddalena de Pazzi, St. Seraphim of Sarov, Elder Michael of Valaam, the Staretz Silouan and Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov). As is true of many other Sufis and Christian mystics, one also encounters echoes of *Bhakti Vedanta*. Below are some of the specifically Shi'a elements found in the Sufi writings of Allamah Tabataba'i.

"One may argue that these stations are exclusive and attainment to this level of Divine knowledge is solely confined to exalted prophets and infallible *Imams* - may God's greeting and peace be upon them all - and that others have absolutely no access to it. In response we say that positions of prophethood and imamate are exclusive, but reaching the station of absolute *tawhid* and annihilation in the Divine Essence; which is considered the same as *wilayat* is not exclusive at all. In fact it is to this plane of perfection that prophets and *Imams*, may Peace be upon them, have called the community of believers." (422)

"The mystery of this limitation was that the ultimate achievements of their gnosis (*ma'rifah*) was the realization of the Truth contained in "*la ilaha ill'allah*" (*There is no god but Allah*), the effects of which lead one to witness the Divine Essence that
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encompasses all Attributes of His Perfection and Beauty. But wayfarers of the *ummah* of the Nobles Messenger have gone far beyond this station and have

realized subsequent stations that cannot be described nor defined. The reason is that all injunctions and precepts of Islam point to the fact that **Allah is greater than that which can be described.**

Based on this fact, stations traversed by a Muslim traveler inevitably lead to a point that cannot be explained or contained in ordinary descriptions and expository expression. This is in effect due to the relationship that exists between spiritual traveling in Islam and the profound and blessed Word that **Allah is greater than that by which He can be described.**

[Note here echoes of the Sanskrit words of the Upanishads "neti, neti" of that called in the Christian Tradition 'Apophatic Theology' in Greek and 'Via Negativa' in Latin, as well as echoes of Advaita Vedanta.]

For this reason, the earlier prophets themselves did not think of a station beyond that of witnessing Divine Names and Attributes so that they could set out on the wings of determination and fly toward that designated nest. Hence, whenever they were afflicted with various kinds of trials in this world, they would appeal to and find deliverance in the spiritual and supersensory initiatic power (*walayāt-i ma'nawī*) of the Noblest Messenger, Imam Amir Ali al-Mu'minin Ali, al-Sadiqat al-Kubra Fatimah Zahra and her pure offsprings. It was this very station of the Greatest Spiritual and Supersensory Initiatic authority (*walayāt-I kubra-yi ma'nawiyah*) which delivered these prophets from their afflictions and ordeals."(423)

"Verily, my Protecting Friend (*Wali*) is Allah, Who has sent down the Scripture and he befriends the Righteous (*salihin*). Qur'an VII:196.

First of all, in this verse the Prophet affirms the absolute *walayah* of the One over himself and says that, "my Protecting Friend (*Wali*) is He Who is the caretaker of the affairs of the righteous." Second, it becomes clear that at the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) there lived some individuals from among the sincere ones who had reached the station of righteousness, and God, the Sustainer was the caretaker of their affairs. From what has been said, the mystery of the prayers of earlier prophets and their appeal to the Five members of the Household of Purity (*Khamsah-*
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yi Al-i Taharat), or to the Pure Imams becomes clear; and the exalted status of the Imams' station of righteousness becomes more evident; a status so exalted that Abraham beseeched God to be connected to

them." (424)

"This station is the station of certainty (*yaqin*) and God has called those who attain it His friends (*awliya'*). This statement made by Amir al Muminin Ali (ibn Abi Talib) (may God's greetings be upon him) points to the station attained by such travelers:

...who has seen his way, has traversed his path, has recognized its minaret, and has removed its veils. He has attained a degree of certainty which is like the certainty of the rays of the sun.

And in another statement he has described such a wayfarer in the following terms:

"The truth of the Knowledge of discernment descends upon them from all directions, and the spirit of certainty becomes their companion. That which seems harsh and difficult to the spoiled souls, becomes smooth and easy to them. They become intimate with what the ignorant is afraid of. They are confined in bodies in this world while their spirits dwell in the highest realms of the Kingdom [of God].

It is at this stage that the gates of unveiling and vision (*kashf wa shuhud*) shall be opened to the wayfafer. ...

...While the traveler on the path of God is involved in normal activities, he has certain links and connections with God. Endless waves of yearning flow in his heart, and flames of love consume his inner being. The pain and suffering of separation melt his heart. No one except God is aware of his inner ferment. Yet, whoever looks at his countenance will realize that love of God, longing for the Truth, and quest for His Sacred Being has turned him into such a state.

This description makes it quite clear that lamentation, supplication, and invocation of the Immaculate [Shi'ite] Imams, as reflected in the prayers narrated from them, were neither pretentious acts nor were they intended for teaching and guiding the people. Such misconceptions arise from ignorance and the lack of perception of realities on our part. Their stations

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are more exalted and their status much more noble than to let them make statements devoid of substance and truth, or to invite people toward God through a series of unpropitious supplications and meaningless prayers. Is it correct that we say that all those fiery and

heart-warming invocations, weeping and lamentation of the master of all masters, Hadrat Amir Al-Muminin 'Ali (ibn Abi Talib) and those of Hadrat [Zayn al-'Abidin] Sajjad, may God's greetings be upon them, were not genuine but were spurious and merely composed for educating others? Never! And by all means never! Those religious leaders and spiritual guides, may God's greetings be upon them all, had passed beyond the stages of wayfaring toward God, had entered into His sanctuary, and subsequently, had attained the station of subsistence after annihilation (*baqa' ba'd al-fana'*), which is in fact, subsistence in the Beloved Worshipped One (*baqa bil-ma'bud*). Theirs are states that contain the two realms of Unity and multiplicity (*wahdat wa kathrat*). They see the light of Divine Unicity constantly in the manifestations of the world of contingency and in the multiplicity of God's Kingdom and Earth. Therefore, in accordance with the exalted degree of perfection that they have achieved, they always observe the fundamentals of the realms of God's Kingdom and of the Earth. In other words, they do not withhold themselves from observing the most minute commands of the Divine Law, or manner, and/or any other conditions appropriate for their stations. At the same time, they keep their attention focused on the higher realms. That is the reason they are called the luminous creatures (*mawjudat-I nuriyah*)."(425)

"The need to refer to an *ordinary* teacher is at the initial stages of spiritual journey. However, when the traveler is honored by authentic visions and the theophany of Divine Attributes and Essence (*mushahadat wa tajalliyat-I sifatayah wa dhatiyah*), association with such a teacher is no longer necessary. As to the *particular* spiritual teacher and master, he is the one who is specifically designated to guide people in spiritual matters. They are the Prophet of Allah (Muhammad), and his true and legitimate successors [i.e., the Shi'ite Imams] and viceregents. The wayfarer cannot dispense with the companionship of and attachment to the *particular* teacher under any circumstances even if he reaches his desired spiritual destination. Obviously what is meant by attachment and companionship (*murafaqat*) is inward attachment and companionship of the Imam with the traveler, and not
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necessarily outward and physical association. Because the reality of the Imam is none other than the station of his luminosity that dominates over the world and its inhabitants. As to the Imam's corporeal being, even though it has its own nobility and grace in relation to other human beings, nonetheless, it is not the source of

any consequence or particular efficacy or dispensation in the affairs of the universe.

To further clarify this point, it is important to mention that the source of all that which finds concrete existence and manifestation in the world of creation is the Divine Names and Attributes of God. Therefore, it is on the basis of this fact that the Imams have said: "The wheel of the world of being, the heavens, and the entire universe turns by our hands and everything takes place with our sanction and permission:"

It is through us that God is known and
it is through us that God is worshipped.

Accordingly, in the process of wayfaring, the traveler traverses within the planes of the Imams' luminosity. Any spiritual station he may ascend of status he may attain, the Imam already possesses and accompanies the wayfarer in the plane and station.

By the same token, the Imam's companionship and friendship is necessary even after the attainment of the desired spiritual goal of union (*wusul*) with the Beloved, for it is he who must teach the traveler the rules and manners of the abode of the Divine Names (*lahut*). Therefore, companionship of the Imam in every situation is an important, and perhaps *the most important* condition and requirement of spiritual journey. There are profound mysteries to this fact that cannot be confined in words and description, but the traveler must discover them through discernment and intellectual intuition." (426)

"The reality of *gnosis* (*'irfan*) originates from Amir al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abi Talib, may God's greetings be upon him. The number of (Sufi) orders that have accepted and spread this reality [his *wilayah*] generation after generation and from masters to disciples exceeds more than one hundred. But the principal branches of *tasawwuf* do not exceed twenty-five. All of these (Sufi) orders trace their origin to Hadrat 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, may God's greetings be upon him. Among these twenty-five (Sufi) orders, two or

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three belong to the *khassah* (i.e., Shi'ites) and all the rest belong to the *'Ammah* (i.e., Sunnis). Some of these orders also trace their origin to Imam Rida (also known as "'Ali Reza), may God's greetings be upon him, through Ma'ruf al-Karkhi. However, our order, which is the same as that of the late Akhund (mulla Husayn Quli), does not originate from and is not related to any of

these chains (*silsilah*).”(427)

“At every age, there may exist numerous Friends of God (*Awliya' Allah*) who have attained perfection and are qualified to provide spiritual guidance to aspiring wayfarers. However, at any given age, there is only one Pole/Imam under whose spiritual authority (*wilayah*) are all friends of God and in whose name they provide guidance. It is necessary for the wayfarer to focus on him and feel his presence. This is what is meant by companionship (*murafaqat*), The term “Particular Teacher” (*ustad-I khass*) refers to this authority. In Shi'ism, during the period of Greater Occultation this authority belongs exclusively to the Twelfth Imam (May God's greetings be upon him). See Allamah Tihrani's comments on Bahr al-'Ulum's *Risala-yi Sayr wa Suluk*, pp. 166-167, n. 137.”(428)

In the preceding chapter we spoke of the *Tafsir* of Imam Ja'afar as-Sadiq, the 6th Shi'a Imam and its influence on Sufi verse, and, indirectly, on St. John of the Cross. Said *Tafsir* is a mystical commentary on the Qur'an, which uses both allegory and symbolism, in the sense used in the preceding chapter. A critical edition of Imam Ja'afar as-Sadiq's *Tafsir* with a French translation has been published by Paul Nwyia (*Melanges de l'Universite Saint-Joseph*, Tome XLIII, fasc. 4, 1967). However, most unfortunately, I do not have access to this. Prior to Paul Nwyia's work said *Tafsir* existed in only two manuscripts. At present, I only have access to that part of Imam Ja'afar as-Sadiq's *Tafsir* cited by Sulami, which is, lamentably, incomplete;

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notably, specifically Shi'a references have been deleted from the Sulami version. There is one copy of the Sulami version of Imam Ja'afar as-Sadiq's *Tafsir* which does contain one explicitly Shi'a reference, which we give below:

Qur'an II:27: "Adam received from his Lord the names."

"Ja'afar said: Before any of His creation existed, God was. He created five creatures from the Light of His Glory, and attributed to each one of them one of His names. As the Glorified (*mahmud*), he called His Prophet Muhammad (which also means "the praised" or "the deserving of praise"). Being the Sublime (*'ali*) He called the Amir of Believers 'Ali. Being the Creator (*fatir*) of Heaven and earth, He fashioned the name Fatima. Because He had names that were called (in the Qur'an) the most beautiful (*husna*), He fashioned two names (from the same triliteral Arabic root HSN) for Hasan and Hussein. Then He placed them to the right of the Throne." (429)

Below are other selections from Ja'afar as-Sadiq's *Tafsir*, with a few comments by Michael A. Sells.

Unfortunately, I do not have access to a copy of the whole *Tafsir*.

(IMAM) JA'AFAR'S COMMENTARY ON THE QUR'ANIC MOSES

Qur'an VII:142:

"We designated for Musa (Moses) thirty nights and We completed them with ten more; the appointed time of his Lord was thus complete ay forty nights. Musa said so his brother Harun (Aaron): "Govern in my place among my people and act in the best interest; do not follow the way of those who would cause corruption."

Qur'an VII:143:

"When Musa came at our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said: "Lord, show me that I might gaze upon You." He said: "You will not see me. Look at the mountain. If it stays in place, you will see me." But when its Lord appeared to the mountain, He caused it to
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shatter and Musa was struck down unconscious. When he awoke, he said: "Glory to You! I have turned back to You in repentance and I am the first of the believers."

When Musa came to our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, Ja'afar said: The appointed time was the time for seeking a vision.. Ja'afar also said (that) Musa heard words coming forth from his humanity and attributed the words to Him (God) and he spoke to him from the selfhood of Musa and his servanthood. Musa was hidden from his self and passed away from his

attributes (*sifatih*). His Lord spoke to him from the realities of His meanings. Musa heard his own attribute from his Lord, while Muhammad heard from his Lord the attribute of his Lord and thus was the most praised (*ahmad*) of the praised (*mahmudin*). Therefore the station of Muhammad was the lote tree of the furthest boundary while the station of Musa was at-Tur (mt. Sinai). When God spoke to Musa on (Mt.) Tur, He annihilated its attributes so that no vegetation has ever appeared upon it and it is the abode of no one.

He said: "Lord, show me that I might gaze upon You." Ja'afar said: "He confided in his Lord concerning the matter of seeing Him because he saw the phantom of His words upon his heart." He replied: "You will not see me," that is, you are not able to see me because you pass away. How can that which passes away (*fanin*) find a way to that which abides (*baqin*)?

"Look at the mountain." Ja'afar said: The mountain was struck by the knowledge of beholding, was split and shattered. The mountain was destroyed by mere mention (*dhikr*) of beholding its Lord and Musa was struck down upon seeing the mountain fall to pieces.

How would it be, then, if one were to behold his Lord with his own eyes, face to face! The Lord's face-to-face vision in respect to the servant is the annihilation of the servant. The servant's face-to-face vision of the Lord and in the Lord is enduring.

He said: Three things are impossible for servants in regard to their Lord: manifestation, contact, and insight. No eye can see Him, no heart can attain Him, and no intellect intuit Him. The origin of intuition is innate disposition; the root of connection is the interval of distance; the root of witness is apparition.

Concerning His saying: "You will not see me. Look instead at the mountain," Ja'afar said: He occupied him with the mountain and then manifested Himself. Were it not for Musa's preoccupation with the mountain, he would have been killed, struck unconscious, never to awake.

Concerning his saying: "Glory to You! I have
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turned back to you in repentance", Ja'afar said: He affirmed the transcendence of his Lord, acknowledged toward Him his own weakness, and disavowed his own intellect. "I have returned to You from my self and no longer rely upon my knowledge. Knowledge is what You have taught me and intellect is what You have graced me with. "And I am the first of the believers". That is, surely You (Allah) cannot be seen in the world."

Qur'an XX:9:

Has the account of Musa reached you?

Qur'an XX:10:

How he saw a fire and said to his people: "Stay behind, I make out a fire. Perhaps I can return from it with an ember or find at the fire some guidance.

Qur'an XX:11:

When he approached it, he was called: "O Musa!"

Qur'an XX:12:

Indeed I, I am your Lord. Take off your sandals. You are in the sanctified valley of Tuwa.

Qur'an XX:13:

I am the one who selected you, so listen to what is revealed!

Qur'an XX:14:

I am Allah, there is no god but I, Worship me and perform the prayer in remembrance of me."
Quran XX:11-12. "When he came to it, a voice called out: O Musa, I, I am your Lord." Ja'afar said: Musa was asked "How did you know that the call was the call of the real?" He said: Because he annihilated me, then encompassed me, and it was as if all the hairs on my body were speaking from all sides about the call, and were themselves on their own power responding to the call! When the lights of awe encompassed me and the lights of majesty and *jabarut* addressed me, I knew that I was being addressed on the part of the truth. The beginning of the address, "Indeed, I" was followed by another "I". This repetition of the "I" indicated to me that no one but the real can refer to himself
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with two consecutive phrases. I was astonished and that was the way-station of passing away. So I said: You, You are that which has endured and will endure and Musa has no station with you nor does he dare to speak except that You make him endure in Your enduring and give him Your attribute so that You are the addresser and the addressee together. He replied: No one can bear my address but I and no one can respond but I, I am the speaker and the spoken-to and you are in-between, a phantom upon whom falls the way station of speaking.

Qur'an XXVI:48:

"They Said: we believed in the Lord of the
two worlds!
The Lord of Musa and Harun

Qur'an XXVI:49:

He Said: "You believed in him before I gave you
permission.
He is your chief who taught you sorcery: you will
surely know!

Qur'an XXVI:50:

I will cut off your hands and legs, alternatively,
an crucify you all together."
The said: "No harm To our Lord is our return."

"They said: No harm, to our Lord is our return."
Ja'afar said: Whoever feels the trial in it is not a
lover. Rather, whoever witnesses trila is not a loover.
Rather, whoever does not take pleasure in the trial in
love is not a lover. DO you not see that when the first
signs of love came upon the sorcerers, their own
destinies faded away and became of little concern
through the submission of their spirits in the witness
of their Beloved, so thay they said: "No harm"?

**(IMAM) Ja'afar's Interpretation of Muhammad's Prophetic
Vision:**

While Moses looked at the Mountain, which was
obliterated by the divine theophany, Muhammad is said in
the Qur'an to have gazed upon "it" (the antecedent is
never specified) in such a way that his eye neither
swerved aside nor exceeded it appropriate function.
Exactly what Muhammad saw (the Deity, the angel
Gabriel, etc.) and what the Qur'an means by saying "his
eye neither swerved nor exceeded" are central themes of
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Sufi meditation on the mystical experience and the
possibility of vision or witness (*shahada*) of the
Divine. The interpretation attributed to (Imam) Ja'afar
of this famous passage are also representative of
another aspect of Islamic interpretation: the
attribution to one person of several different
interpretations. Thus (Imam) Ja'afar is said to have
given at least three interpretations of the opening
Qur'anic oath (*Qur'an LIII:1*), "by the star when it
falls (hawa)."

What is central to the Qur'anic passage, and
brought out further by Ja'afar, is the play between hawa
(to fall, to set) and the homonym used later on to
mean desire. The Qur'an announces that Muhammad does not

speak out of desire (*hawa*), as do, it is implied, poets who are inspired by the jinn. Muhammad, as (Imam) Ja'afar goes on to make explicit, speaks out of the divine command (*amr*) and prohibition (*nuha*). Not only does he proclaim his message out of the divine command, but he completes the Islamic way of life, the shari'a, by refining the commands and prohibitions that were central to all previous prophetic communities

As in all Sufi interpretations of these verses, the ambiguity over the object seen (him/it) becomes a centerpiece of linguistic play and mystical meditation. Because we are in the context of *fana'* (passing away) in which the Sufi passes away in mystical union with the Divine, the standard grammatical distinction between self and other, human and Divine, reflexive and nonreflexive, begins to break down. At these points the translations make use of the locution (self) to indicate the ambiguity of the object pronoun and the breakdown of the reflexive/nonreflexive grammatical distinction at the point of mystical union.

(IMAM) JA'AFAR'S COMMENTARY ON MUHAMMAD'S VISION

Qur'an LIII:1-12 (Surah an-Najm):

By the star when it falls:
Your companion has not gone astray nor is he
deluded
He does not speak out of desire
It is nothing less than an inspiration inspired
Taught to him by one of great power
And strength that stretched out over
While on the highest horizon
Then it drew near and descended
At a distance of two bows' length or nearer
He revealed to His servant what he revealed
The heart did not lie in what it saw
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Will you then dispute with him on his vision?

Qur'an LIII:13-18:

He saw it descending another time
At the lote tree of the furthest limit
Therein was the garden of sanctuary
When there enveloped the tree that enveloped it
His gaze did not turn aside nor did it overreach
He had seen the signs of of his Lord, great signs.

Qur'an LIII:1-12:

"By the star when it falls"
(*hawa*). (Imam) Ja'afar said: This is the way-station of

manifestation and veiling from the hearts of the knowers.

Concerning the saying of the Most High: "by the star when it falls," it is related of (Imam) Ja'far ibn Muhammad that he said: "The star is Muhammad, peace and blessings upon him. When he fell light diffused from him."

He said: "The star is the heart of Muhammad. "When it falls," "that is when it cuts itself off from everything other than Allah.

"Your companion has not gone astray nor is he deluded", (Imam) Ja'afar said: "He did not stray from his nearness even for the blink of an eye.

"He does not speak out of desire (*hawa*). (Imam) Ja'afar said: "How could he speak out of desire, he who proclaims the coming forth of unity, and completes the *shar'a* with the proper command and prohibition? Rather he proclaimed only through command and was silent only through command. He was given the command as an approach to the real. He was given the prohibition as a warning and chiding.

Then it drew near and descended.' (Imam) Ja'afar said: "In its nearness, how-it-was was cut off from all understanding. Do you not see that God Most High veiled Jibril (Gabriel) when Jibril came near, and when his Lord came near to him?"

He (Imam Ja'afar) also said: Muhammad, God's peace and blessings upon him, came near to the insight and the faith that was placed in his heart, and he descended in the quiet of his heart to what he had come near. All doubt and anxiety was removed from his heart.

"At a distance of two bows' length or nearer." (Imam) Ja'afar said: "He brought him(self) near to him until he was two bows' lengths away. Nearness on the part of God Most High has no limit, while nearness on the part of the servant has limits.

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"He revealed to him what He revealed." (Imam) Ja'afar said: "Without intermediary between the two of them, secretly to his (Muhammad's) heart. No one knows him(self) without intermediary but him(self) except at the final end, when he gives intercession to his community."

Of his saying, "It drew near and descended," (Imam Ja'afar) as-Sadiq said: "When the lover draws as near to his beloved as is possible, he is overcome by utter terror. Then the truth treats him with complete gentleness because nothing but complete gentleness can endure utter terror. That is the meaning of the saying, "He revealed to His servant what He revealed," that is: what was, was, and what happened, happened, and the lover said what a lover says to his beloved, treated him gently as the lover treats the beloved, and told him

the secret a lover tells his beloved. They kept it secret and let no one in on it but the two of them. For that reason he said: "He revealed to His servant what He revealed." No one knows that revelation except the One Who revealed it and the one to whom it was revealed.

"The heart did not lie in what it saw." (Imam) Ja'afar said: "No one knows what he saw except the seer and the seen. The lover has come near to the beloved, as intimate and confidant to him. God Most High said: "We raise in degree whomsoever We will" (Qur'an VI:83).

"He has seen the signs of his Lord, great signs." (Imam) Ja'afar said: "He witnessed marks of love beyond what can be told."

(IMAM) Ja'afar on Abraham and the Ka'aba

(Imam) Ja'afar's short discussion on the Ka'aba, or as it is known in Arabic, the "bayt" (dwelling), constructed according to the Qur'an by Abraham and his son Ismael is less complex than the previous discussion. Yet it offers an important discussion of the spirituality of Islamic ritual prayer (sala), the physical motions and position (rak'a) of the prayer, its spatial orientation (the qibla or direction of the Ka'ba marked by the prayer niche), and the intimacy it provides with the Divine, an intimacy associated throughout the Qur'an with Abraham, the intimate (al-khalil) of God and builder of the Ka'aba.

(IMAM) JA'AFAR'S COMMENTARY ON ABRAHAM AND THE KA'BA

Qur'an II:125: When We made the dwelling (bayt) a refuge for people and a sanctuary - so make the station (3761)

of Ibrahim (Abraham) a place for prayer! - and we made a covenant with Ibrahim and Isma'il that they should purify the house for those who would circumambulate it, withdraw to it, or make the positions (rak'a) of prayer.

"When we made the dwelling a refuge for people." It is reported of (Imam) Ja'afar ibn Muhammad that he said: "The dwelling here is Muhammad. Whoever believes in him and in the truth of his message enters into the fields of refuge and faith." "The station of Ibrahim": that is, the station of the qibla (the direction facing the Ka'ba or bayt). He made your heart the station of knowing and your tongue the station of witness and your body the station of obedience. Whoever maintains it will have his prayer answered completely.

(IMAM) JA'AFAR AND SUFI UNDERSTANDING OF THE

QUR'ANIC AFTERLIFE

Contrary to some stereotypes about the Qur'anic afterlife, a nonphysical (though never antiphysical) notion of paradise does exist within the Qur'an, as is made clear in the following passage. The passage begins on a cosmic level (a garden whose breadth is the Heavens and the earth) and then moves toward an intimate questioning of the human person, his hopes, angers, and motivations, with a central meditation on forgiveness and remembrance.

Qur'an III:133-136.

And race to a forgiveness from your Lord
And a garden whose breadth is the Heavens and earth
Made ready for the self-vigilant.

Who spend in ease and in adversity
And check their wrath and show forgiveness to
others

Allah loves those who show kindness
And those who when they corrupt others or oppress
themselves
Remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their
offense
-who forgives offenses but Allah?
And do not persist knowingly in what they did
For them is a reward of forgiveness from their
Lord

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And gardens with rivers flowing underneath
Eternal there
Fine is the recompense for those whose deeds are
fine.

In the passages that follow here, (Imam this aspect of Qur'anic spirituality by integrating it into the sophisticated Sufi psychology of the human heart. In many Sufi interpretations of the temporal ("after") and spati) Ja'afar extends all (heavens and hells) aspects of the afterlife are transformed into an interior reality, the heart-secret or destiny, that lies behind or within each person. Both the afterlife and the bounty of the compassionate Deity given to humankind in this life, one example of which is included below, are interiorized within the Sufi symbolic interpretation. The selections conclude with a reference to the creation and "renewal of creation", which could be interpreted as a reference to creation and the final resurrection (*qiyama*), or as a reference to the original creation and keeping it in existence

through bestowal of life and fertility. While not abandoning these possibilities, Ja'afar's commentary stresses creation and renewal as a cycle of original coming-to-be, annihilation in mystical union (*fana'*), and the final abiding (*baqa'*) of the human in the Divine and the Divine in the human.

The reader will note that the following passages take very small sections and comment on them without referring to their larger Qur'anic context. This kind of commentary exists in a world where the larger context is presumed to be known by the audience. For the reader not immersed in the Qur'an, contextual questions will no doubt arise that would require lengthy Qur'anic quotations and explanations of them, something beyond the scope of this book. Yet the interpretations of (Imam) Ja'afar here can be appreciated on another level without a large contextualization apparatus. Although they might seem atomized in the way they are presented, certain key themes and images in Ja'afar's commentary keep coming back and will set the stage for later Sufi developments.

(IMAM) JA'AFAR'S COMMENTARY ON SELECTED AFTERLIFE VERSES

Qur'an XLIII:70-72.

Enter the garden, you and your spouses, gladdened!
Around them plates of gold will be passed and cups
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of gold Containing what each self craves and what pleases the eye you are there, eternally! That is the garden that you have inherited with what you have done.

"Containing what each self craves and what pleases the eye." (Imam) Ja'afar said: "What the self craves and what pleases the eye are two distinct categories. All of what the garden contains, of bliss, gratification, and pleasures - next to what pleases the eye - is like a finger pointed into the sea. The gratifications of the garden have a limit and an end because they are created. The eye finds no pleasure in this enduring abode, but rather in the enduring One (*al-baqi*), the majestic, the Most High. There is no limit in that, to attribute, no end.

Qur'an LV:11:

"In it are fruit and date palms with unfolding calyxes". (Imam) Ja'afar said: "The real made the hearts of his friends into gardens of intimacy (remember St. John of the Cross in the previous chapter) He planted in them the trees of knowing, roots firm in the secrets of

their hearts, branches standing in the presence of witness. In every time they gather the fruits of intimacy. This is what is meant by his saying "In it are fruit and date palms with unfolding calyxes", that is, of all kinds. Each one gather from it a kind according to the capacity of his labor and what is unveiled for him of the manifestation of knowing and the traces of friendship with the Divine."

Qur'an LXXVI:21:

"And their Lord quenched them with a drink that was pure." (Imam) Ja'afar said: "He quenched them with unity in their hearts' secret. They were lost (*tahu*) to everything other than Him, not waking except upon the vision, the lifting of the veil between them and Him, and the taking of the drink in what it was taken from. No state from Him endures. He comes forth in joy, in presence, in seizure."

Concerning "a drink that was pure", (Imam) Ja'afar said: "He purified them with it of everything other than Him, since no creature can be in any way pure of defilement."

Qur'an LXXXII:13-14.

"Surely the pious are bound for bounty and surely the corrupt are bound to Hell-fire." (Imam) Ja'afar (3764)

said: "The bounty is insight and witness. The Hell-fire consists of ego-selves; they contain kindled fires."

Qur'an LXXV:13:

"He is one who creates and renews His creatures." (Imam) Ja'afar said: "He creates and then annihilates everything that is other than Him. Then he renews His creation and causes it to endure in His enduring." Concerning the words "He is the One Who creates and renews His creation," (Imam) Ja'afar as-Sadiq also said: "That is, He clothes the enemies in the garb of friends so they might be led along little by little. He clothes His friends in the garb of enemies that they might not admire themselves. Then, at the moment of death, He renews His creation."

(IMAM) JA'AFAR'S LETTER SYMBOLISM AND MYSTICAL EXEGESIS OF THE OPENING OF THE QUR'AN

The first sura of the Qur'an begins with the phrase "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful." This phrase is also pronounced at the beginning of every surah of the Qur'an, though it is

only with the first that the phrase is considered an integral part of the surah. The first section of the commentary focuses on the first Qur'anic verse, I:1, taking each letter (short vowels excluded) of the phrase and discussing its symbolic meaning. For example, the first expression, "in the name of", in Arabic is "bismi". Thus the major letters (the trilateral Arabic root BSM) will each be attached to a key word based on one of the letters. In another example, (Imam) Ja'afar associates the letter "A", the Arabic "alif", which in Arabic is a straight vertical line, with a column, making a connection not through a key word that begins with "alif", but through the shape of the letter. The column will become central in Sufi meditation on columns of light. These letter-symbols occur at the very beginning of (Imam) Ja'afar's commentary. (Imam) Ja'afar's commentary on the first words of the Qur'an is an example of the kind of letter symbolism that has been popular in the Islamic world to the present day. The commentary also contains a fourfold hierarchy of interpretation that might bear interesting comparison with similar hierarchies in medieval Kaballah (Jewish mysticism) and Christian mysticism.

(IMAM) JA'AFAR'S COMMENTARY ON THE BEGINNING OF THE QUR'AN

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I: Introduction: It is related of (Imam) Ja'afar ibn Muhammad that he said: "The book of Allah has four aspects: The expression, the allusion, the subtleties, and the realities. The expression is for the masses, the allusion for the elite, the subtleties for the Godfriends, and the realities for the prophets.

I:1 *Bismi Allahi ar-Rahmani ar-Rahi*, (in the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful)

I;1: *bismi*. It is said of (Imam) Ja'afar ibn Muhammad that he said: The *b* is His enduring (*baqa'*) and the *s* is His names (*asma'*) and the *M* is His dominion (*mulk*). The faith of the believer - his remembrance is through his enduring. The service of the seeker - his remembrance is through his names. The knower passes away from the kingdom into its King.

I:1 He also said: *bism* has three letters (the trilateral Arabic root *BSM*). The *B* is the *bab* (gate) of prophecy. The *S* is the *sirr* (secret) of the Prophet to the elite of his community. The *M* is the kingdom (*mulk*) of the faith which includes the white and the black.

I:1 It is related that when (Imam) Ja'afar ibn

Muhammad was asked about the verse *Bismi Allahi ar-Rahman ar-Rahim* (in the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful) he said: "The *B* is the splendor (*baha'*) of Allah and the *S* is His brilliance (*sana'*) and the *M* is His glory (*majd*). Allah is a God of every thing, the Compassionate to all His creatures, the Merciful for His believers especially. Of (Imam) Ja'afar it is related that he said of the word *Allah* (in this verse) that it is the complete name because it has four letters: the *A* - and that is the column of unity; the first *l* and that is the tablet (*lawh*) of understanding, the second *l* is the tablet (*lawh*) of prophecy, and the *h* is the furthest reach of allusion. *Allahis* a singular name, unique, that cannot be attributed to anything; rather, all things are attributed to it. Its interpretation is the object of worship which is the God of creation, yet beyond any perception of what-it-is and any comprehension of how-it-is - veiled from all gaze and imaging, covered by its majesty from all perception." (430)

Once again, I regret that I do not have access to a complete edition of Imam Ja'afar's *Tafsir*. I only hope that the selections to which I do have access - these are quoted above - could be

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considered representative.

Some have claimed that the *Tafsir* of Imam Ja'afar is apochryphal, that it is the work of Sunni Sufis. Why a Sunni, Sufi or not, would falsely attribute the authorship of something to a Shi'a Imam I have no idea. Paul Nwyia cites Louis Massignon:

"One cannot absolutely reject *a priori* the attribution of sentences of the the mystical *Tafsir* to Imam Ja'afar, due to the remarkable doctrinal congruence which one encounters between certain of these sentences and the fragments invoked independently (of said *Tafsir*) by certain Orthodox Imamis and by *Ghulat* (Nusayris and Druses)." (431)

Paul Nwyia continues:

"Whatever may be the historical origin of the *Tafsir* attributed to Imam Ja'afar, one fact is certain in regards to the history of Sufism, and which is of great interest to us here: the entrance of said *Tafsir* in the Sufi ambience occurs at the same moment in

which the Sunni Sufi mystical doctrine was being formed and when was born the Sufi technical vocabulary. This is where (Imam Ja'afar's) influence is most decisive and where it represents for us the most ancient examples of the introspective and experiential reading of the Qur'an of which we are seeking the origins." (432)

"(Imam) Ja'afar (as-Sadiq) read the Qur'an by way of his own experience within which operates a synthesis of the letter (of the Qur'an) and its symbolism. From here on is initiated a new exegesis in which the reading of the Qur'an and the reading of the (mystical) experience produces a new interpretation of the Qur'an.

This (historical) research totally vanishes with (Imam) Ja'afar, because the references to historical events give way to an interior history which overflows the letter of the Qur'an. Thus, the invisible legions which sustain the Prophet (Qur'an IX:40) are not angels fighting for him at Badr, as is understood by Muqatil and the Sunnis, but are rather "the legions of certitude, of the confidence in God and of abandoning ones self to Him". In the same way, "the Seven to be recited" (Qur'an XV:87) are not the seven verses of the *Fatiha*, nor the seven longest surahs of the Qur'an, but
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are rather the seven exceptional favors (*karamat*) awarded to Muhammad as aid to him in an emergency, "the Good Council" (*huda*), the gift of prophecy, mercy, compassion, friendliness and sociability, goodness, tranquility (*sakina*), and the Glorious Qur'an which contains the Supreme Name of God. This introspective reading which transmutes exterior history into interior history involves continual recourse to the symbolic interpretation of the text. Thus, "purify My Temple for the circumnambulators" (Qur'an XXII:26) for (Imam) Ja'afar becomes "Purify your soul of all dealings with transgressors and of all rapport with that which is other than God." (433)

"In all these texts, where Muqatil resorts to artifices of the imagination in order to explain the obscurities of the Qur'anic verses, (Imam) Ja'afar turns to the symbolic allusion (*isara*), and this allusion reverts to the experiences of the spiritual life. This correspondence between the letter of the verse and the course of experience, (Imam) Ja'afar discovers equally in the numerous cosmic symbols which mark the Qur'anic recitals. If God subjects man to "night, day, the sun and the moon" (Qur'an XVI:12, this is symbolic of the heart of man being subject to that to which is totally subject. This correspondence is even more clearly expressed in the commentary on verse

XXVII:61 (of the Qur'an), the text of which says: "Is not He Who made the earth a resting place, and made in it rivers, and made on it mountains, and between the two seas made a barrier; Is there any god with God? No! most of them do not know." All of the cosmic elements for Ja'afar become "allusions" by which are seen the realities of the religious consciousness: "Is not He Who made the earth a resting place", that is to say, he explains, He Who in the hearts of His friends (*awliya*) made a resting place for His knowledge, Who put in each soul the rivers of the abundance of His bounty. Who made strength for the mountains of relinquishment and surrender and the ornament of the lights of sincerity, of the certainty of love (*ahabba*) and "Who made a barrier between the two seas", that is to say, between the heart and the soul (*nafs*) so that the soul is not dominated by the gloom of the heart. The barrier which He made between them is composed of His Presence and of reason." (434)

Imam Ja'afar in his Qur'anic commentaries also makes use of the symbolic value of Arabic letters. This is a rather arcane

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topic to most people, and we will deal with it only briefly; it has been touched on the the selections from Imam Ja'afar's *Tafsir* quoted earlier. Imam Ja'afar's symbolic values of the Arabic letters bears no resemblance whatever to that of the Jewish Kabbalists, who based their symbolic values of the Hebrew alphabet on the numeric values assigned to said letters. To my knowledge, Christian mystics never made use of letter symbolism in their mystical interpretations of the Bible.

At the beginning of Surah III of the Qur'an are the disjointed Arabic letters ALM (*Alif, Lam, Mim*). In this Imam Ja'afar finds profound symbolism:

"The disjointed letters, within the Qur'an, are the allusions (*isarat*) to the unity, to the oneness, to the permanence and to the subsistence of God for Himself, without the aid of the which is not Him." (435)

A great part of Imam Ja'afar's letter symbolism is not possible to apply to works written in an Indo-European language, such as English, Spanish, Persian or Urdu, because it depends on the trilateral roots which form the basis of Semitic languages, such as Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac, but are completely alien to the structure of Indo-European languages.

For example, the first word of the Qur'an is "*Bismi*", derived from the trilateral root *BSM*. Though lacking a precise meaning in and of itself, said trilateral root is used to form words which have something to do with "name", as *Bismi* means "in the name of". *B* is also the first letter of *Baqa*, meaning "the permanence (of God)", *S* = *aSma*, the names (of God), *M* = *Mulk*,

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the kingship (of God). However, *BSM* may also be read thusly: *B* = *Bab al-nunuwa*, "the gate of prophecy", *S* = *Sirr al-nubuwa*, "the secret of prophecy", communicated by the Prophet Muhammad to the elite of his community, *M* = *Mamlakat al-din*, the royalty of the religion which encompasses whites and blacks. (436)

The above is a brief sample of the letter symbolism of Imam Ja'afar.

More interesting than the letter symbolism of Imam Ja'afar is his use of Qur'anic texts to symbolize the mystical experience and the stages of the mystical path.

Qur'an XLIII:71:

"And therein shall be whatever their souls desire, and whatever may delight their eyes;"

Commenting on the above Qur'anic phrase, Imam Ja'afar

says:

"What a great distance there is between that which the souls desire and that which delights the eyes! All the goodness, all the delights and all the pleasures which Paradise contains, compared with that which delights the eyes, are a a finger dipped in the ocean. In effect, the pleasures of Paradise are limited and have only one object, so that you might believe, that while the eyes are not delighted, within the Eternal World, save by the vision of the Subsistent - may He be exalted! Or of that which knows neither limit, nor end, nor can be described." (437)

Qur'an LXVIII:34:

"Truly, for the pious ones with their Lord are the gardens of Bliss."

Imam Ja'afar comments thusly on the above verse:

"For he who fears sin, his final abode shall be the Paradise of the delights; for he who fears God, all sails shall be lifted to the fore so that he may
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finally contemplate God in all His Glory." (438)

Imam Ja'afar's meaning is clear. Those whose religious aspirations do not go beyond their carnal desires, their beatitude shall be precisely the satisfactions of said desires "in the Paradise of delights". The others, those who seek God for Himself, they are set out on the way which leads to the fulfillment of their desires, which is the contemplation of God, the Beatific Vision. This blessing is, for Imam Ja'afar, symbolized by Qur'an LVI:32-33:

"And fruit abundant
Neither failing nor forbidden"

Imam Ja'afar continues:

"They shall neither be denied the sacred knowledge nor the divine assistance - but there is one frustration which they must overcome - nor prevented from enjoying the nearness of God, without which all their being is an empty solitude." (439)

Imam Ja'afar gives two perspectives, the temporal and the eschatological, by way of contrast: those whose reward shall be to live in the nearness of God, in other words, to be blessed by His vision, the others are those who in this world are favored by sacred knowledge (*ma'rifa*) thanks to a special divine assistance.

What is *ma'rifa*? It appears at one and the same time as both the foundation and the summit of the religious edifice, as the point of departure and as the way which leads to God. This paradox means that *ma'rifa* has not one meaning, but several, and one must watch carefully the contexts in which it is used. One meaning of *ma'rifa* may be translated as "knowing", which characterizes man

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as part of nature, not on the religious side, but rather in his interior. Another meaning of *ma'rifa* is *ma'rifa halqa*, which characterizes man as creature, but within the sphere of religion.

Yet another meaning of *ma'rifa* has its seat within the heart, where is made a place for no one but God. This *ma'rifa* is a "Way to God", growing within the heart like a tree whose branches rise to the presence of God.

Imam Ja'afar uses a stream of twelve branches to symbolize *Ma'rifa* (in the sense of sacred knowledge):

"Of the *ma'rifa* (sacred knowledge), it flows from twelve sources, and people of each category, according to their rank, drink from one of these sources according to their capacity.

- ❖ 1.) The first source is the source of the testimony of the unicity (of God).
- ❖ 2.) The second is the source of servitude (to God) and taking joy in it.

- ❖ 3.) The third is the source of sincerity.
- ❖ 4.) The fourth is the source of truthfulness.
- ❖ 5.) The fifth is the source of humility.
- ❖ 6.) The sixth is the source of contentment and the surrender of the self to God.
- ❖ 7.) The seventh is the source of quietude and gravity.
- ❖ 8.) The eighth is the source of generosity and confidence in God.
- ❖ 9.) The ninth is the source of certainty.
- ❖ 10.) The tenth is the source of reason.
- ❖ 11.) The eleventh is the source of love. &
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- ❖ 12.) The twelfth is the source of familiarity and of the solitude which is the source of *marifa* itself from which flow all the sources.

He who drinks from one of the sources savors its sweetness and aspires to drink from the source that is above it, and thus goes from source to source until he reaches the beginning; and when he reaches the beginning, he is realized in God."(440)

In the above, Imam Ja'afar expresses the mystical quest as an ascension from source to source or stage by stage. The same idea is found not only in Sufism, but in the writings of Christian mystics, notably the writings of St. John of the Cross.

Qur'an XXV:61:

"Blessed is He Who made in the Heavens the constellations and made in it a lamp (the sun) and the moon illuminating."

Commenting on the above verse, Imam Ja'afar says that the constellations refer to the symbolism of the "correspondences" between the cosmos and the human heart. Imam Ja'afar notes that in

the Qur'an God calls the Heavens *sama*, from the verb meaning "to elevate", because of its arrogance, while the human heart is called *sama* because, by way of faith (*iman*), and sacred knowledge (*ma'rifa*), it is elevated indefinitely and without limits.

Besides this correspondence, Imam Ja'afar mentions another correspondence between the twelve houses of the zodiac and the "constellations" of the heart, which are:

- ❖ 1.) Faith (*Iman*);
- ❖ 2.) Sacred knowledge (*Ma'rifa*);
- ❖ 3.) Reason;

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- ❖ 4.) Certitude;
- ❖ 5.) Islam;
- ❖ 6.) Good actions (*Ihsan*);
- ❖ 7.) Renunciation;
- ❖ 8.) Awe;
- ❖ 9.) Hope;
- ❖ 10.) Love;
- ❖ 11.) Quietude and gravity; &
- ❖ 12.) The desire for rapture or ecstasy (*walah*). Once again we find the number twelve, but among the twelve degrees named, only four appear in both lists. In effect, each list supplements and completes the other. (441)

Shi'a Islam has a clerical hierarchy, something not true of Sunni Islam. Imam Ja'afar and Sufism after his time reintroduced

into Islam, Sunni as well as Shi'a, a hierarchy based on *ma'rifa* or sacred, esoteric knowledge. Imam Ja'afar recognizes three degrees among believers, and this hierarchy is in intimate relation to the pluralistic structure of the Qur'anic text. As the Qur'anic text is at once literal meaning, symbolic allusion and spiritual indicators, just so the believers are divided into commoners, initiates and saints or prophets. The common believers know only the letter or expression, which means the beauty of the literary style. Above the common believers are the initiates who find, behind the literary expression, the "allusions" (*ishara*) which stop neither at the letter nor the style, but rather go

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beyond them to something else. This other thing cannot be a known object nor an allusion to a known symbol, but rather it has become a touch of grace, an esoteric symbol, a hidden or occult meaning (*latifa*) within the lecture of the Qur'an as a mysterious fruit which God grants only to His friends, the *awliya*. In summary, it is the sacred truth (*haqiqa*), synthesis of the known and the hidden, at once truth and reality, the truth of the *latifa* or hidden meaning, the reality of the allusion (*ishara*). The Prophet who is at once an initiate and a saint, holds all the secrets of the *haqiqa* or sacred knowledge, and being at once of the initiates and of the saints, is for this reason a prophet.

Qur'an XXXVII:164-165:

"And there is not one of us, but for him is an assigned place, and truly we are they who rank themselves in order."

Qur'an XXXV:32:

"Then made We the inheritors of the Book (Qur'an) those whom We chose from among Our servants; and of them is he who follows the middle course, and of them is he who is the foremost in goodness by God's permission: This is that which is the greatest excellence."

Says Imam Ja'afar commenting on the above verses:

"Those who hurt themselves (*zalim*), the others who see the goal (*muqtasid*), and finally those who are at the head (*sabiq*) for their good works." (442)

The Qur'an mentions those who hurt themselves, who cannot approach God save for His favor, and none of the *zulm*, plural of *zalim* influence the Divine Election (*isitifa'iya*). Next come those who see the goal, but they are situated between fear and hope, and

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in the end those who are at the head, those who grew in the shelter of the Divine Plan.

The above exegesis by Imam Ja'afar was the beginning of many Sufi expressions concerning the three classes of believers.

Bistami said:

"The *zalim* is in the sphere of science, the *muqtasid* is within the sacred, esoteric knowledge, and ecstasy is for the *sabiq*."

Said Tirmidi:

"Faith is for the *zalim*, sacred, esoteric knowledge for the *muqtasid*, reality for the *sabiq*."

Junayd said:

"The *zalim* loves God for himself, the *muqtasid* loves God for Himself (i.e., for the sake of God), and the *sabiq* annihilates his own will within the will of God." (443)

Imam Ja'afar made the connection between the three classes of believers and the three psychic faculties of man: the soul, the heart and the spirit. Said Imam Ja'afar:

"The soul is *zalima*, the heart *muqtasid*, the spirit *sabiq*.

- ❖ 1.) He who deals with the temporal world with his soul is *zalim*.
- ❖ 2.) He who seeks the beyond with his heart is a *muqtasid*. &
- ❖ 3.) He who seeks God with his spirit is a *sabiq*."

An anonymous Sufi saying which very likely was originally written by Imam Ja'afar says:

"The *zalim* is the soul, because it is never familiarized with God; the *muqtasid*, is the heart, because it is changeable at all times; the *sabiq* is the spirit which is never absent from contemplation." (444)
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The chapters of Imam Ja'afar's *Tafsir* which deal with Moses and the Prophet have already been cited.

As has been indicated before, the *Tafsir* of Imam Ja'afar in the form in which it has come down to us is somewhat enigmatic. Said *Tafsir* is not included in al-Kulayni's monumental collection of the sayings (*Hadith*) of the Shi'a Imams. This absence cannot be an anti-Sufi bias, for we have seen that mystical ideas are abundant in the sayings of the Shi'a Imams in al-Kulayni's collection; certainly al-Kulayni had no anti-Sufi bias. Moreover, the *Tafsir* of Imam Ja'afar was compiled by Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Numani, a disciple of al-Kulayni. (445) Perhaps al-Kulayni's work was interrupted by death, and his disciple did not presume to add to the work of his master. Most unfortunately, al-Numani's compilation of Imam Ja'afar's *Tafsir* has not come down to us in a complete form, though one may hope that a copy of al-Numani's original compilation may yet be discovered somewhere. Two

recensions of Imam Ja'afar's *Tafsir* have some down to us, one by ibn Ata, one by Sulami; both are incomplete, having all too obviously been "edited" or "censored" in order to remove blatantly Shi'a material. As we said above, Sulami's recension, rather inexplicably, does indeed contain one blatantly Shi'a paragraph.(446) However, as we have noted, more subtle Shi'a elements are evident in both recensions.

One possible indication of the sort of "editing" or "censorship" of which we are speaking is the fact that the versions of the *Tafsir* of Imam Ja'afar which have come down to us

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include chapters on Moses and the Prophet Muhammad, but not Jesus; for a Shi'a, this is virtually inexplicable, for reasons which we have already given in this chapter. Since, if you will pardon the expression, the "*Christology*" of Shi'ism is not identical to that of Sunnism, the chapter on Jesus may have been eliminated by Sunni editors, along with much else.

When all is said and done, the importance of the *Tafsir* of Imam Ja'afar is enormous. It proves that the Shi'a Imams were participants in the very birth of Sufism, and proves how true are the words of Haidar Amoli: "***Shi'ism is Sufism and Sufism is Shi'ism.***"

Many early Christian commentarists on the Bible, notably St. Gregory of Nyssa, Origen and St. Augustine, were masters of the use of allegory in their Biblical commentaries; the mystical allegories of the Biblical commentaries of St. Gregory of Nyssa greatly influenced St. Gregory Palamas and finally St. John of the

Cross. Allegory was used a great deal in medieval literature in western Europe and continued to be used in such works as Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan and Idylls of the King by Alfred Lord Tennyson.

The early Muslim commentarors on the Qur'an were the heirs of early Christian commentators on the Bible who made such extensive use of allegory. In the preceding chapter we have noted the distinction between allegory and symbolism. Allegory is not absent in the *Tafsir* of Imam Ja'afar, and never fell completely out of use. However, Imam Ja'afar was, so far as we are able to

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determine, the first to use symbolism in Qur'anic commentary; symbolism came to be widely used in Sufi literature in Arabic, Persian and Urdu, and finally appears in the poetic works of St. John of the Cross and their prose commentaries. This is not only proof of the debt of St. John of the Cross to the Sufis, it is yet another of many connections between St. John of the Cross on the one hand and Shi'a Imams on the other. The mystical nightingale of Castile (what a Sufi image, that!) owed much not only to the Sufi poets of Persia and al-Andalus, but also to the Shi'a Imams.

Finally, the *Tafsir* of Imam Ja'afar is yet another proof that the sayings of the Shi'a Imams are a treasury of mystical knowledge, and that the Shi'a Imams were present at the very birth of Sufism.

There are Shi'as who are Sufis, and there are Sunnis who are Sufis, as in Christianity there are mystics who are Catholics and mystics who are Eastern Orthodox. One might therefore be inclined

to consider Shi'ism and Sufism as separate phenomena, having to do with distinct aspects of Islam. However, such is not the case. There is indeed a relation or connection between Shi'ism and Sufism, though this relation is practically impossible to define and very difficult to describe, at least in a brief fashion.

Said Imam Ja'far as Sadiq:

"Islam, replied the Imam Ja'afar when questioned about the difference between Islam and the (Shi'a) faith in the *valayat* (religion of Divine Love, i.e., mysticism or Sufism), is the belief in the uniqueness of God And the recognition of the prophetic mission of Muhammad. Thanks to Islam, the Law (*Shari'a*) prevents
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crimes and regulates dealings between people, marriage, or inheritance, according to rules that all must respect, and prayer and pilgrimage are ritually organized. But the true faith is an esoteric (spiritual, mystical) guide for the heart Belonging to the faith involves Islam, but not the other way around, in the same way that one cannot approach the Ka'ba without entering the Great Mosque in Mecca, but one can enter the Great Mosque without going to the Ka'ba." (447)

We have the testimony of ibn Khaldun, who was neither a Sufi nor a Shi'a:

"Thus the Sufis were heavily influenced by Shi'a theology. Shi'a doctrines so influenced the religious ideas of the Sufis that they based their use of the cloak (*khirqah*) on the fact that Ali (ibn Abu Talib) bestowed such a cloak on Hasan al-Basri, and had him solemnly swear to follow the mystic way. The fact that the Sufis assigned primacy within mysticism to Ali caused them to have intense pro-Shi'a tendencies. This and other Sufi ideas which we have noted demonstrate that the Sufis adopted pro-Shi'a beliefs into their body of doctrine." (448)

Notes Muhammad Ja'afar Mahjub:

"Just as the Sufis trace their line of initiatic affiliation by way of the "dervish cassock" (*khirqah*), handed down from master to disciple in successive generation, thus becoming their connecting "chain", (*silsila*) of mystical affiliation, the members of the

fraternities of chivalry also adduced documents prove their adherence to lines of chivalric orders, and wore special attire ... All these rites and lines of affiliation were traced, without exception, back to the Prophet's son-in-law, (Imam) 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, establishing him as the supreme source of the virtues of futuwwa." (449)

As is shown by the example of St. Bernard of Clairvaux among others, in Medieval Christendom as well as Islam, chivalry had a religious aspect which often became predominant.

Haydar Amoli, the great Persian Shi'ite disciple of ibn Arabi al-Mursi, affirmed that Shi'ism and Sufism are one, that Shi'ism

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is Sufism and Sufism is Shi'ism. (450)

In the introduction to his *magnum opus* Jami al-Asrar (The Compendium of Secrets), Haydar Amoli says:

"After my affirmation of the truth of Sufism, certain persons were troubled by some of its more abstruse and esoteric aspects with regard to the Real such people imagined that I was availing myself of invalid and other spurious means. May they realize that this was not the case and that in reality I was only drawing upon the the religion of my own forefathers - the Infallible Imams. Because of their extreme ignorance, the majority of Sufis think that the Imams were devoid of the excellences and superior insights of Sufism. Moreover many Shi'ahs also believe that the knowledge of their Imams is restricted to that same knowledge which is in common use amongst themselves. In fact there is not a single form of knowledge but that the Imams are the source of that knowledge; there is not a secret or hidden wisdom that they are the mine from which it may be extracted; they are the teachers of the Shari'ah and the leaders of the Tariqah and the poles of the Haqiqah; they are the caliphs and the viceregents of Allah in the heavens and the earth; they are the manifestation of the power and majesty of Allah in his mulk - the earth and heavens - and in his malakut - the realm of the spirits and angels. I swear by God that if they did not exist, then the heavens would not be standing, the earth would not be outspread and the creatures would not be living in them." (451)

An unknown commentator of Fasl al-Kitab (The Decisive Book) by Sayyid Qutub al-Din Nayrizi, who appears to have read Risalat al-Faqr (Treatise on Poverty) by Haydar Amoli, says:

"I have written this book after seeing some of the ignorant believing that there is a contradiction in terms between the way of the faqr (the state of the faqir on the path to Allah) and the way of the Shi'ah. In it I have demonstrated that any Shi'ah who is not of the people of poverty and spiritual journeying is not of the Shi'ah and every faqir who is not a Shi'ah is not a true faqir nor a salik (spiritual traveller), since these two matters are of their nature connected - the way of poverty being the way of the Infallible (3781)

Imams: to profess Shi'ism means that one follows them in their actions and their worship. Thus anyone who is neither a faqir nor a salik is in reality beyond the pale of Shi'ism, even though he may call himself a Shi'ah." (452)

Henry Corbin summarizes the position of Haydar Amoli thusly:

"Sayyed Haydar (Amoli) is an Imami Shi'a, for whom Shi'ism constitutes integral Islam and the esoterism of Islam. It constitutes integral Islam, because it is founded on the *Shari'at* (the positive religion), the *Tariqat* (The Mystic Way) and the *Haqiqat* (Realization of Spiritual Truth); it is the esoterism of Islam, because the *Haqiqat* is the esoteric aspect of the *Shari'at*, which is exoteric, and because of those who are at one and the same time the treasurers and the treasure of the esoteric, i.e., the Holy Imams. The real situation is this: The Shi'as vituperate the Sufis, and the Sufis vituperate the Shi'as. In this case, the Shi'as have only the *Shari'at*, or the external religion, while the Sufis forget the origin of their *khirqah* (the robe, symbol of consecration) and leave the *Haqiqat* (the internal religion) suspended in life. The one and the other commit the same error in that both believe that the teachings of the Holy Imams do not deal with the highest knowledge, though, in fact, they (the Holy Imams) were its initiators. The true and tried believer (*mu'min momtahan*) is he who, in acquiring the cause and the integral teachings of the Holy Imams, acquires the totality: *Shari'at*, *Tariqat* and *Haqiqat*. This is why, compared to a Shi'ite who goes no further than the *Shari'at*, it is the Sufi who is the true Shi'ite. On the other hand, compared to a Sufi ignorant of the origin of his *khirqah*, it is the integral, complete Shi'ite who is the true Sufi. All

the effort of Haydar Amoli, throughout his great work Jami al-Asrar, is to convince one party not to reject the other. The fundamental thesis is this: the true Shi'ites are the Sufis, a proposition to be understood in the reciprocal sense as well: the true Sufis are the true Shi'as." (453)

"The preceding pages recapitulate the theses sustained throughout the Jami al-Asrar. He (Haydar Amoli) appeals to the simple Shi'ites and the simple Sufis; at the very least, they must respect and accept one another, comprehending that each complements the other. However, this is only the first peaceful stage, after which comes the final conclusion which summarizes the teaching of the whole book, that most definitely
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they both (i.e., Sufis and integral, complete Shi'ites) are Shi'as in the true sense, the integral, complete Shi'as." (454)

The great Shi'a thinker Rajab Bursi (d. 1411) combines Shi'a theology and Sufism, particularly that of the great Hispano-Muslim Ibn Arabi al-Mursi, in such a way that they are inseparable, that one cannot determine where the one leaves off and the other begins. In the case of Rajab Bursi, as in the case of Haidar Amoli and the great Shi'a thinkers of Safavi Persia, it is indeed true that Shi'ism is Sufism and Sufism is Shi'ism. Below we give an example of the above. In these selections from his Mashariq al-Anwar (Lights of Certainty), his major work, Rajab Bursi is commenting on sayings by Jesus, Muhammad and Ali ibn Abi Talib:

The Glorious Lord (Jesus) says in the Gospel (Injil): "Know thyself, oh man and know thy Lord. Thine external is for annihilation and thine internal is Me."
And the master of the Shar'a (Muhammad) said: "The most knowledgeable of you about his Lord is the most knowledgeable about his self."
And the Imam of Guidance (Ali ibn Abi Talib) said: "He who knows his Lord knows his self."
Commentary: The knowledge of the self is that a man knows his beginning and his end, from where he came and to where he is going, and this is based upon true knowledge of "delimited" existence. And this is knowledge of the first effulgence which overflowed from

the Lord of Might. Then Being flowed from it and was made Existence by the command of the Necessary Existent... And this is the single point which is the beginning of the "engendered things" and the end of all "existent things" and the Spirit of spirits and light of the apparitional incorporeal beings....

This is the first number and the secret (that explains the difference between) of the Inclusive Divine Unity and the Transcendent Exclusive Divine Unity. And that is because the essence of God is unknowable for man. So knowledge of Him is through His qualities. And the single point is a quality of God, and the quality indicates the Qualified, because by its
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appearance God is known. And it is the flashing of the light which shines out from the splendor of the Exclusive Unity in the sign of the Muhammadan Presence. To this the following statement alludes:

"Whoever knows You, knows You through this sign."

This is supported by another saying:

"Were it not for us, none would know God. And were it not for God, none would know us."

Thus, it is the Light from which dawn all other lights, and the One from which appears all bodies, and the mystery from which is generated all mysteries, and the intellect from which springs all intellects and the Soul from which appears all souls, and the Tablet which contains the hidden secrets and the Throne which spreads throughout heaven and earth. and the Mighty Throne that encompasses all things, and the Eye by which all other eyes see, and the Reality to which all things testify in the beginning, just as they testified in the Exclusive Unity to the Necessary Existent. It is the highest limit of the knowledge of all Knowers the means of access to Muhammad and Ali through the reality of their knowledge, or, through the knowledge of their realities. But this gate is covered by the veil (indicated in):

"But we give unto you of knowledge only a little"

(*Qur'an* LXXXV: 170).

To this alludes the statements of the Imams: that which was given to the Near Angels of the people of Muhammad was little, so how can the world of man (have more)? And on this topic is the statement:

"Our cause is bewilderingly abstruse, no one can bear it except a sent prophet and not even an angel brought nigh."

He who connects with the rays of their light has known himself because then he has recognized (the difference between) the essence of existence and the reality of that which is made to exist, and the absolute single uniqueness of the served Lord. The knowledge of the self is the knowledge of the self is the knowledge of "delimited" existence. This is none other than the Single Point whose exterior is Prophethood and whose interior is Saintship. Thus he who knows Prophethood and Sainthood with true knowledge knows his Lord. So he who knows Muhammad and Ali knows
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his Lord....

... But, if the pronoun in his word "nafsihi" refers to God it means "God Himself warns you that they (the Prophet and the Imam) are the spirit of God and His word and the soul of existence and its reality."

So in two ways it means:

"He who knows them knows his Lord."

Thus at the time of death he will see with the eye of certainty none but Muhammad and Ali because the Real is too glorious to be seen by the eyes. And the dead one at the time of his death will testify in the Real state and station and see nothing but them at the time of death because he sees with the eye of certainty. Thus Amir al-Muminin (Ali) said:

"I am the eye of certainty and I am death of the dead." This is indicated in the Kitab Basa'ir al-Darajat (collection of Shi'a hadiths) from the Imam Ja'far:

"No one in the East or West dies, whether he loves or hates (Muhammad and Ali), but that he will be brought into the presence of Ali and Muhammad. Then he will be blessed or condemned."

This will be at the time of the Trumpet ... the soul will be returned to its body. At that time he will see none but Muhammad and Ali because the Living Self-subsistent, glorified by His name, is not seen by mortal eye, but is seen by the eye of spiritual perception. To this alludes his statement:

"The eyes see him not in the visible realm, but the minds see him through the realities of faith." The meaning is that His existence is testified to because His exterior is invisible and His interior is not hidden. ...

...If we pursue the subject of the existent beings,

that they end in a single point which is itself but a quality of the Essence and cause of the existent beings, we may call it by a number of names. It is the Intellect mentioned in the statement:

"The first thing God created was the Intellect."

And this is the Muhammadan Presence according to (the Prophet's) statement:

"The first thing God created was my light."

It is the first of the created existents that came
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forth from God, exalted be He, without any intermediary. We call it the First Intellect. And inasmuch as created things get the power to think from it, we call it the Active Intellect. And insomuch as the Intellect emanates to all existent things who in turn perceive the realities of all things by it, we call it the Universal Intellect. So it is absolutely clear that the Muhammadan Presence is the point of light and the first appearance, the reality of engendered things, the beginning of existent things and the axis of all circles. Its exterior is a quality of God, and its interior is the hidden dimension of God. It is the Greatest Name outwardly and the form of the rest of the world. Upon it depends whoever disbelieves or believes.

Its spirit is a transcript of the Exclusive Unity that abides in the Divine Name. And its spiritual form is the meaning of the earthly and heavenly kingdoms. And its heart is the treasure house of the life which never dies. This is because God, exalted be He, spoke a word in the beginning which became light. Then He spoke a word which became spirit. And then he caused the light to enter that spirit (or that light to enter that word).

He then made them a veil, which is His word and His light, and His spirit and His veil. And it permeates all the letters and bodies. This permeation is one in number, as is the permeation of speech with the alif and permeation of all names with the Holy Name. The (word) is the beginning of all (things) and the reality of all (things), so that all (things) speak by means of the tongue of spiritual "state" and "station". It testifies to God through His primordial oneness and to Muhammad and ALi of their fatherhood and sovereignty. To this points the statement:

"Ali and I are the fathers of this community."

So if they are the fathers of this community it follows that they are the fathers of the rest of the nations, according to the proof from:

"The specific is over the general and the higher over the lower", not the opposite. If it were not so, there would never be any creation to specify Him through.

"If it were not for thee I would not have created the spheres."

So that the Acts proceed from the Qualities, and the Qualities proceed from the Essence. And the Quality which is the Leader of Qualities is in the created
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things, namely the Muhammadan Presence.(455)

B.T.Lawson notes:

"While Rajab Bursi has been condemned by some authors as holding an immoderate belief in the Imams, most who have written about him also speak quite highly of his poetry.

It is perhaps the poet in him that speaks in such strong terms. Poets, we are told, perceive reality intensely. It is therefore not surprising that they express themselves with equal intensity. While it would not be a complete mistake to attempt to classify Rajab Bursi's religious doctrine on the basis of his deeply felt experience of his love for the Imams, his book is not doctrine in the strict sense. That his mind was active and searching is clear from the above excerpts. And his recourse to "explanations" of the spiritual laws laid bare throughout his Mashariq, based on Ibn Arabi (al-Mursi)'s ideas, appealed to him possibly as much for what they said as for what they left unsaid. In the end, it would be difficult to answer the question:

Was Rajab Bursi more in love with the Imams or the (Sufi) ideas that made this love reasonable?"(456)

Obviously, for Rajab Bursi there was, and could be, no separation between Shi'ism and Sufism.

Qazi Sayyid Nuru'llah al-Husayni al-Mar'ashi al-Shustari, though Persian by birth and blood, is generally considered to be the greatest Shi'a scholar of India. His family came from Amol, as did Haidar Amoli. His grandfather moved to Shustar in Khuzistan, from whence the name "Shustari". His father, Sayyid Sharif al-Husseini Shustari, was a great scholar, as well as poet

of some merit. One of his quatrains beautifully reflects the Shi'a (and also the Christian, particularly the Spanish Catholic and Russian Orthodox) philosophy of martyrdom:

If your wicked enemy sheds your blood
Your blood makes you honorable (surkh-ru) on the Day of
Judgement, The heart bleeds that you were killed and like a
Candle, None but your enemy was at your head. (457)
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This philosophy of martyrdom is also very typical of Spanish

Catholicism, As we shall see, during the Spanish colonial period in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona, the Spanish missionaries sought occasions for exposing themselves to death for *ad Maiorem Gloria Dei* (for the Greater Glory of God), and thus achieving "the crown of martyrdom". This is also shown as recently as the accounts of the Catholic martyrs murdered by Marxists during the Mexican Revolution and the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39. We have also seen that it is very typical of Russian Orthodoxy.

Sayyid Nuru'llah Shustari was made Cadi (hence the title *Qazi*) of Lahore by the Moghul Emperor Akbar. He was flogged to death early in the reign of Jahangir in circumstances which are still obscure and, indeed, controversial. Hence, in India Sayyid Nuru'llah Shustari is known as "Shahid-i-Salis", the Third Martyr. (458)

Nuru'llah Shustari's comments on Haidar Amoli are interesting. In agreement with Haidar Amoli, Qazi Shustari noted that, among the sufis, only the Naqshbandiyya Order were bigoted Sunnis, who pretended that Abu Bakr was the founder of their order

so that they could deceive the Sunnis due to fear and self interest. According to the Qazi, Sayyid Muhammad Nur Baksh and Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani had proven that all Sufi orders were founded by the Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib. Also, the great sufis themselves had said that sufis do not adhere to any specific school of jurisprudence, but that they followed the most

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comprehensive school of jurisprudence. According to the Qazi, this proves that they did not adhere to any school of Sunni jurisprudence, but practised Shi'ism, as Shi'ism has the most comprehensive school of jurisprudence, but due to the necessity of *taqiyya*, they could not openly admit this.

The Qazi's notes on the early sufis indicate their relations to the Ahl al-Bayt and/or their devotees. Bahlul ibn Amr was a great devotee of Jafaar as-Sadiq, the sixth Imam, and supported the Imam in his debates with Abu Hanifa. Bishr ibn al-Haris became a sufi under the influence of Musa al-Kazim, the seventh Imam. Shaqiq Balakhi, Ibrahim ibn Adham ("Abu ben Adam, may his tribe increase"), Sheikh Ma'ruf al-Karkhi and Sari al-Saqti also benefitted directly from the teachings of the Imams.

The Qazi also gives a list of later sufis, a list too long to repeat here, which he considered to have been Shi'as. However, of the Hispano-Muslim Sufis, the Qazi lists only ibn Arabi al-Mursi. Had he known of them, the Qazi would certainly have included ibn Masarrah of Almeria, Abul Abbas ibn al-Arif of Almeria Abul Abbas al-Mursi, ibn Abbad of Ronda and Yusuf Qalandar al-Andalusi in the above-mentioned list. The Qazi also lists a

number of hakims or philosophers, specialists in Hikmat, as having been Shi'as, including al-Farabi and ibn Sina. Had he known of them, the Qazi would certainly have included the Hispano-Muslim thinkers ibn Saba'in, ibn al-Khatib of Granada and ibn al-Sid of Badajoz in this second list.

The Qazi says that the Sufis and hakims mentioned in the above

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lists practiced taqiyya because of the atrocities perpetrated against Shi'as by Sunni rulers. Like all true mystics, the Qazi condemned the liars and frauds among the sufis, particularly those who boasted of their paranormal powers. (459)

The great Persian Shi'a scholar Jamalud-Din Mutahhar al-Hilli wrote a polemical defense of Shi'ism titled: Najh al-Haqq wa Kashf al-Sidiq. Fazlu'llah ibn Ruzbihan, a Sunni scholar of Transoxiana, wrote a refutation of al-Hilli's work titled Ibtal Nahj al-Batil. However, Qazi Shustari proceeded to write a "refutation of the refutation". Interestingly, besides defending al-Hilli's Shi'ism from the attacks of Fazlu'llah, the Qazi also defends Sufism from the attacks of al-Hilli. He quite accurately noted that al-Hilli made no distinction between genuine sufis and sufis who were frauds, liars and heretics.

Haidar Amoli had said that those who perceived themselves in Divine Theophany were followers of *ittihad* (infusion of God in a creature), and thus were heretics. Haidar Amoli noted that true sufis do not believe in *ittihad*. Their opinions proceeding from ecstasy affirm that they had rejected all thoughts and ideas concerning the non-Divine, they therefore believed in nothing but

Being. How, therefore, could they believe in ittihad, as this concept presupposes belief in duality and plurality, when, according to them, duality and plurality do not exist? In these circumstances, there can be no question of belief in them.

Commenting once again on Haidar Amoli, the Qazi demonstrates that al-Hilli contradicts himself, because in other books he

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affirmed the opinions of *hakims* (philosophers) who identify Being with Reality and ascribe the existence of the world of phenomena to God. As water heated by the sun is called "water of the sun" (or, to use a more contemporary example, as tea brewed by being heated by the sun rather than on a stove or over a fire is called "sun tea"), so the world of phenomena exists because of God. The Qazi also explains the real meaning of Unity of Being and agrees with the sufis that the phenomenal world is the outward expression of Reality. The Qazi attacks Fazlu'llah's exposition of the relationship of Real Being to non-being as superficial and based on theories of scholastic philosophers.(460)

The Qazi bitterly attacked al-Hilli for reducing sufi worship to music and dancing, noting that the sufis devote their time to prayers and worship and renounce sensual pleasures, and, once again, accuses al-Hilli of ignorance.(461)

Now, if Shi'ism and Sufism are the same, then every Shi'a is a Sufi and every Sufi at least a crypto-Shi'a. The first part of this last statement is essentially true; every Shi'a is indeed to some degree a Sufi, though this degree varies a great deal from one person to another, not forgetting, as Haydar Amoli says, the

only true, integral, complete Shi'a is also a full-fledged Sufi. A Sunni Muslim may be completely non-Sufi, having nothing of the Sufi about him and having nothing whatever to do with Sufism. However, for a Shi'a this is not possible; the very fact of being a Shi'a makes him a Sufi in some degree or another. The second part of the statement is much more difficult to accept; there are

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indeed Sunni Sufis who reject and even condemn certain Shi'a doctrines and practices. Nevertheless, it is true that every Sufi, though be confessionally Sunni, no matter how much he may condemn certain Shi'a doctrines and practices, by the very fact of being a Sufi inevitably has certain "Shi'a tendencies". All Sufis have a certain reverence for the Shi'a Imams, particularly Ali ibn Abi Talib.(462) Though nominally Sunnis, the sufis or dervishes of the Suhrawardiyya, Chishtiyya and Kubrawiyya orders are devoted to the Ahl al-Bayt and the Twelve Imams. The Chishtiyyas believe that on the night of the *Miraj* the prophet Muhammad (On Whom Be Peace) bestowed the *khirqah* (cloak) on Ali ibn Abi Talib while, on the contrary, the request of the first three caliphs for the *khirqah* or cloak was rejected by Divine command.(375) The Chishtiyyas consider Ali ibn Abi Talib to be the founder of their order, as do the Kubrawiyyas.(463) According to Khwaja Banda Nawaz Gisu Daraz, Ali ibn Abi Talib excelled the first three caliphs in spiritual eminence, courage and "futuwwa" (spiritual chivalry), thus agreeing with the 12th century Crusader Archbishop William of Tyre who said:

"Muhammad's son-in-law Ali (ibn Abi Talib) was the

best knight, braver and more valiant than any of the other caliphs had been." (See note 100.)

The Khwaja also spoke eloquently of the love of the Prophet Muhammad towards his daughter Fatima, and told the story of the poet Farazdaq's brave defense of Imam Zain al-Abidin at the risk of imprisonment or even death.(464) The Qalandariyya order is

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deeply devoted to Ali ibn Abi Talib and the Ahl al-Bait, whose praises its members sing and who ardently propagate the love for Ali ibn abu Talib and the Ahl al-Bait.(465) Indeed, the Qalandars should be considered a Shi'a order. Saiyid Athar Abbas says that in the 13th century the Qalandariyya Order of Dervishes, founded by Yusuf Qalandar al-Andalusi, (12TH -13TH centuries) was instrumental in spreading devotion to Ali ibn Abi Talib and the Ahl al-Bayt from Turkey to India, and was of crucial importance in introducing, spreading and popularizing Shi'ism in India.(466) Little is known concerning Yusuf Qalandar al-Andalusi. The name or word "Qalandar" is Persian rather than Arabic. It seems most likely that Yusuf Qalandar al-Andalusi acquired the name "Qalandar" in al-Andalus, either because he was of Persian ancestry, due to the influence of Persian Sufis and Dervishes who had come to al-Andalus, or perhaps both were factors. According to al-Maqrizi, Yusuf Qalandar al-Andalusi was known to have visited Egypt and Syria, but not Persia.(467) Also, it would seem more likely that Yusuf Qalandar al-Andalusi acquired his Shi'ism in al-Andalus rather than in the course of his travels.(468)

Says Saiyid Atahar Abbas Rizvi:

"The Qalandars were deeply devoted to music and

loved to sing the songs eulogizing Ali (ibn Abu Talib) and the Ahl al-Bait. ... It was, however, the "Khanqah" of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sehwan (Sind) which until this day has been radiating the love for Ali and the Ahl al-Bait through Persian and Sindi songs. ... Gradually the Qalandars settled down to the "khanqah" (semi-monastic) life and became ardent propagators of the love for Ali and the Ahl al-Bait."(469)

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As is indicated above, the Qalandars very soon spread to India, where they, along with other Sufis and Dervishes, were instrumental in spreading Islam among the Hindus, much as Sufis had done among the Mozarabs of al-Andalus. The Qalandars were also instrumental in spreading Shi'ism among both Hindus and Muslims.

Among the great literary figures of the Qalandars in India was Sharaf ad-Din Panipati (i.e., from Panipat in The Punjab), also known as Abu (Bu) Ali Shah Qalandar (died 1324). Here is a selection from the long Persian poem Masnavi by Bu Ali Shah Qalandar in which Sufism and Shi'ism are so inextricably mixed as to make it impossible to separate the one from the other (which Haidar Amoli said could not be done in any case):

This world is an aged and deceitful hag
She excites every man, young and old.
The men of God have divorced her a hundred times,
For to be her lover is to be faithless to God.
Keep this in mind, young man.
The great Maulavi (Jalal al-Din Rumi) spoke from
experience:
"If you want both God and this world
That is foolishness, absurdity, lunacy."
For the sake of his faith, Ali (ibn Abi Talib) turned
his heart from this world
That is why Ali was made heir to the kingdom of the
Prophet (Muhammad).
The right hand of Muhammad, that Lion of God (a title of
Ali ibn Abi Talib),
He (Ali) became the noble husband of the virtuous Fatima

He (Ali) kicked this world with such force
That she (this world) never entered into marriage with
the saints.
But the ignoble, degenerate Yezid (ibn Muawiyya) married
her (this world);
He (Yezid) made this world his religion and for her sake
plundered.

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Having married this old hag (this world),
He (Yezid) justified shedding the blood of that Sayyid
(Imam Hussein ibn Ali, 3rd Shi'a Imam).
Whoever this old hag (this world) befriended,
She destroyed him in both the worlds.
Why then do you eat the remnant from the table of Yezid?
And make your throat bitter with the bread of Yezid?
(470)

A bolder declaration of Shi'ism would be difficult to
imagine. Though our sources concerning him are so sparse, it seems
obvious enough that Bu Ali Shah Qalandar was a Shi'a. The
unbroken chain of Qalandar *Pirs* or "Masters" being what it is, it
would seem to be almost certain that this Shi'ism began with Yusuf
Qalandar al-Andalusi himself, and that he acquired this Shi'ism
(as well as the Persian name *Qalandar*) in al-Andalus rather than
in the course of his travels.

Below is a poem by the early (12TH century) Persian Sufi poet
Sana'i, showing that Shi'ism or at the very least strong Shi'a
tendencies were present in Persian Sufism at a quite early date:

How excellent Karbala! and that honor it received,
Which brought to mankind the odor of Paradise as if on a
breeze;
And that body, headless, lying in clay and dust,
And those precious ones, hearts rent by the sword.
And that elect of all the world, murdered,
His body smeared with earth and blood;
And those great oppressors, those doers of evil,
Persistent in the evil that they do.
The sanctity of religion and the Family of the Prophet
Are both borne away, both by ignorance and inanity;
Swords are red like precious ruby with the blood of (Imam)
Hussein.
What disgrace in the world worse than this!

And Mustafa (Muhammad), his garments all torn,
And Ali, tears of blood raining from his eyes.
A whole world has become insolent in its cruelty;
The cunning fox has become a roaring lion.
But still unbelievers at the start of the battle,
(3795)

Were reminded of the stroke of Zu 'l-Fiqar (sword of Ali)
Yes, from Hussein they sought satisfaction for their rancor,
but that was not to be;
They had to be content with their own malice and disgrace.
And know that any who speaks ill of those cur dogs (the
murderers of Imam Hussein)
Will be kings in the world to come!(471)

Whether Muslims, or, like the anonymous author of the
graffito ***Chiita na escola***, which appeared in La Coruna, it seems
that Spaniards have a natural affinity to Shi'ism. Many of the
hadiths attributed to the Shi'a Imams have an obvious esoteric or
Sufi character.(472)

Said Haidar Amoli:

"Among all the branches of Islam and the various
Muslim groups, there is none which has vilified the
Sufis as much as the Shi'as have done: in return, no
group has railed against the Shi'as as much as did the
Sufis. And that despite the fact that both groups have
one and the same origin, that they drink from the same
fount; that the end to which they refer is one and the
same."(473)

Haidar Amoli may be pardoned for the rather extreme hyperbole
which he uses to make his point. No one today, after the time of
the Wahhabis, would say such a thing.

It has been noted that some Shi'a mullahs have been violently
anti-Sufi, particularly during the Safavi period, and this
apparent fact used to prove that there is no intrinsic relation
between Shi'ism and Sufism, though of course some Shi'as are Sufis
and some Sufis are Shi'as. However, by this standard ibn Arabi

al-Mursi was also anti-Sufi, since he strongly condemned some of the beliefs and practices of certain Sufis.(474) This is a bit

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like saying that the Pope is anti-Catholic because he disapproves of some of the beliefs and practices of certain people who call themselves Catholics.

The truth is this: though it may be called *Batin*, *Hikmat* or *Irfan*, Sufism is an absolutely vital, organic, impriscindable and indispensable part of Shi'a doctrine, theology, philosophy and spirituality.(475) The same cannot be said of Sunni Islam, though, as we have said, it is most certainly true that there are Sunnis as well as Shi'as who are Sufis. To summarize, a Sunni Muslim may be a complete non-Sufi, have no connection whatever with Sufism in any way, shape or form. However, this is not possible for a Shi'a, who by virtue of being a Shi'a is a Sufi in some degree or another, though this degree varies greatly in individual cases. Conversely, a Sufi, though he be confessionally a Sunni, by the fact of being a Sufi has certain "Shi'a tendencies".

Though the Berber Abul Hasan ash-Shadihla is generally considered to be the founder of the Shadhiliyyah Order, the Hispano-Muslim Abul Abbas al-Mursi was probably more important in the formation of said order. Like his fellow Murciano Ibn Arabi al-Mursi, Abul Abbas al-Mursi considered himself to be a Sufi master in a direct line of succession from Hasan ibn Ali, Second Shi'a Imam; it is reasonable to suppose that Hussein ibn Ali, Third Shi'a Imam and Martyr of Karbala, was the second in

said line of succession after Hasan ibn Ali. It is doubtful that Abul Abbas al-Mursi considered Abul Hasan ash-Shadhili to be his

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spiritual master, though the two knew one another. Certainly Abul Abbas al-Mursi ("al-Mursi" means "from Murcia", as we said before) greatly differs from Abul Hasan ash-Shadhili in some important respects, including elements of a strong Shi'a flavor. Abul Abbas al-Mursi's doctrine of the *Qutb*, roughly translated as "Pole", "Axis" or "pivot" has obvious Shi'a resonances.(476)

As Annemarie Schimmel noted:

"One may assume a close structural relationship between the concept of the "Qutb" as the highest spiritual guide of the faithful and that of the Imam of Shi'a Islam. Not a few mystics claimed to be the "qutb" of their time, and quite a number of them assumed the role of the Mahdi, the manifestation of the Hidden Imam at the end of time. The veneration shown to the Imam and the Qutb, as manifested in the mystic perceptor, is common to Sufism and Shi'ism. The Shi'a teaches:

"Who dies without knowing the Imam of his time, dies as an infidel."(477)

And Jalaluddin Rumi, though a relatively moderate Sufi, said:

"He who does not know the true sheikh, i.e., the Perfect Man and Qutb of his time - is a "kafir" and infidel."(Masnavi 2:3325)

The world cannot exist without a pole or an axis - it turns around him just as a mill turns around its axis and is otherwise of no use.

In later Iranian theosophy, the Qutb is considered the locus of Sarosh, the old Zoroastrian angel of obedience, hearing and inspiration who corresponds in Sufi mythology, either to Gabriel or to Israfil, the angel of resurrection."(477)

The concept of the *qutb* is not found in the works of Abul

Hasan ash-Shadhili, and as it became a key element of the Sufism of the the Shadhiliyyah Order, therefore Abul Abbas al-Mursi of (3798)

Murcia may be considered the real founder of said order. Once again, the strong affinity for Shi'ism evident in so very many Hispano-Muslims.

Abul Abbas al-Mursi's successor as "Shaykh" of the Shadhiliyyah Order was Ibn Ata'illah al-Iskandari. Therefore, Ibn Ata'illah al-Iskandari was a follower of Abul Abbas al-Mursi of Murcia.

Ibn Ata'illah al-Iskandari was not a prolific writer, and wrote mainly aphorisms. What is extremely interesting from our point of view is that some of the aphorisms of Ibn Ata'illah al-Iskandari were appended to the Prayer of the Day of Arafah of Hussein ibn Ali, Third Shi'a Imam and Martyr of Karbala, and are included in most editions of said prayer.(478) Obviously, Shi'as find great affinity between the words of Imam Hussein and those of Ibn Ata'illah al-Iskandari, disciple of the great Hispano-Muslim Sufi Abul Abbas al-Mursi. One would be hard put indeed to find a better proof of the words of Haidar Amoli:

"Shi'ism is Sufism, and Sufism is Shi'ism".

Below we give the Prayer of the day of Arafah by Imam Hussein.

PRAYER FOR THE DAY OF 'ARAFAH

by

Hussein ibn Ali, the Third Imam, the Martyr of Karbala

Praise belongs to God

whose decree none may avert,
and whose gift none may prevent,
No fashioner's fashioning is like His fashioning,
(3799)

and He is the Generous, the All-embracing.
He brought forth the varieties of unprecedented creatures
and perfected through His wisdom all He had fashioned.
Hidden not from Him are harbingers,
nor lost with Him are deposits.
He repays every fashioner,
feathers the nest of all who are content
and has mercy upon all who humble themselves.
He sends down benefits
and the all-encompassing Book (the Qur'an)
in radiant light.
He hears supplications,
averts afflictions,
raises up in degrees,
and knocks down tyrants.

For there is no god other than He,
nothing is equal to Him,
"Like Hima there is naught,
and He is the Hearing, the Seeing" (Qur'an XLII:2)
and subtle, the Aware,
and "He is powerful over all things" (Qur'an
V:120)

O God, I make Thee my quest
and bear witness to Thy Lordship,
acknowledging that Thou art my Lord
and to Thee is my return. (See beginning of Chapter 9)
Thou originated me by Thy blessing before I was a thing
remembered.

Thou created me from dust,
and gave me a place in the loins (of my fathers),
secure from the uncertainty of Fate and the vagaries of
the ages and the years.
I remained a traveller from loin to womb in a time
immemorial of past days
and bygone centuries.
In Thy tenderness, bounty and goodness toward me Thou
did not send me out into the empire of the
leaders of disbelief, those who broke Thy
covenant and cried lies to Thy messengers.
Rather, Thou sent me out to that guidance which had
been foreordained for me, the way which
Thou made easy for me
and in which Thou nurtured me.
And before that Thou were kind to me through Thy
gracious fashioning
and abundant blessings.
Thou originated my creation from a sperm-drop spilled

and made me to dwell in a threefold gloom among flesh,
blood and skin.

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Thou gave me not to witness my creation,
nor did Thou entrust me with anything of my own affair.
Then Thou sent me out into the world for the guidance
that had been foreordained for me, complete
and unimpaired.

Thou watched over me in the cradle
as an infant boy,
provided me with food,
wholesome milk,

and turned the hearts of the nurse-maids toward e.
Thou entrusted my upbringing to compassionate mothers,
guarded me from the calamities brought by the jinn
and kept me secure from excess and lack.

High art Thou, O Merciful! O Compassionate!

Then when I began to utter speech

Thou completed for me Thy abundant blessings.

Thou nurtured me more and more each year

until, when my nature was perfected

and my strength balanced,

Thou made Thy argument incumbent upon me by
inspiring me with knowledge of Thee,

awing me with the marvels of Thy wisdom,

awakening me to the wonders of Thy creation which Thou

Had multiplied in Thy Heaven and Thy
earth,

and instructing me in Thy thanks and remembrance.

Thou made incumbent upon me Thy obedience and
worship,

made me to understand what Thy messengers had
brought

and made easy for me the acceptance of Thy good
pleasure.

Thou were gracious to me in all of this, through Thy
succour and kindness.

Then, since Thou created me from the best soil,

Thou were not satisfied, my God, that I should have one
blessing without another.

Thou provided me with varieties of sustenance
and kinds of garments

and Thy tremendous - most tremendous- graciousness
to me

and Thy eternal goodness toward me.

And finally, when Thou had completed for me every
blessing

and turned away from me all misfortunes,

Thou were not prevented by my ignorance and audacity
from guiding me toward that which would bring me near
to Thee.

For if I prayed to Thee Thou answered,
if I asked of Thee Thou gave,

if I obeyed Thee Thou showed Thy gratitude,
(3801)

and if I thanked Thee Thou gave me more.
All of that was to perfect Thy blessings upon me and
Thy goodness toward me.

So glory be to Thee; Glory be to Thee,
who are Producer and Reproducer, Laudable,
Glorious.

Holy are Thy Names and tremendous Thy bounties.
So which of Thy blessings, my God, can I enumerate by
counting
and mentioning?

For which of Thy gifts am I able to give thanks?

Since they, O Lord, are more than reckoners can count
or those who entrust to memory can attain by knowledge.
But the affliction and hardship, O God, that Thou turned
and averted from me

is more than the health and happiness that came to me.

And I witness, my God, by the truth of my faith,
the knotted resolutions of my certainty,
my pure and unadulterated profession of Unity,
and hidden awareness of my consciousness,
the places to which the streams of light of my eyes
are attached,
the lines on my forehead's surface,
the openings for my breath's channels,
the parts of my nose's soft point,
The paths of my ear's canals,
what my lips close upon and compress,
the movements of my tongue in speaking,
the joint at the back of my mouth and jaw,
the sockets of my molar teeth,
the place where I swallow my food and drink,
that which bears my brain,
the hollow passages of my neck's fibers,
that which is contained in my breast's cavity,
the carriers of my aorta,
the places where my heart's curtain is attached,
the small pieces of flesh around my liver,
that which the ribs of my sides encompass,
the sockets of my joints,
the contraction of my members,
the tips of my fingers,
my flesh,
my blood,
my hair,
my skin,
my nerves,
my windpipe,
my bones,
my brain,,
my veins,
and all of my members,

what was knitted upon them in the days when I was
 a suckling baby,
 what the earth has taken away from me,
 my sleep,
 my waking,
 my being still,
 and the movements of my bowing and prostrating,
 that had I taken pains and had I striven
 for the duration of the epochs and ages
 - were my life to be extended through them -
 to deliver thanks for one of Thy blessings,
 I would not have been able to do so,
 except by Thy grace, which alone makes encumbent
 upon me never-ending and ever renewed
 gratitude to Thee,
 and fresh and ever present praise.
 Indeed, and were I and the reckoners among Thy
 creatures ever so eager
 to calculate the extent of Thy bestowal of blessings,
 whether past
 or appraoching,
 we would fail to encompass it through numbers
 or to calculate its boundaries.
 Never! How could it ever be done!
 For Thou announced in Thy eloquesnt Book (the Qur'an)
 and truthful Tiding,
 "And if you count God's blessing, you will never
 number it" (Qur'an, XIV: 34)
 Thy Book, O God, Thy Message, has spoken the
 truth!
 And Thy prophets and messengers delivered Thy
 revelation that Thou had sent down upon
 them
 and the religion that Thou had promulgated for
 them
 and through them.
 And I witness, my God, by my effort,
 my diligence,
 and the extent of my obedience and my capacity,
 and I say as a believer possessing certainty,
 "Praise belongs to God,
 who has not taken Him a son"
 that He might have an heir,
 "and Who has not any associate in his dominion"
 who might oppose Him in what He creates,
 "nor any protector out of humbleness" (Qur'an
 XVII:3)
 who would aid Him in what He fashions.
 So glory be to Him,
 glory be to Him!
 "Why, were there gods in earth and heaven other

than God,
they would surely go to ruin" (Quran XXI: 22) and be
rent.

Glory be to God, the Unique, the One,
"the Everlasting Refuge" who "has not begotten,
nor

has he been begotten,
and equal to Him there is none" (Qur'an CXII:
2-4)

Praise belongs to God,
praise equal to the praise of the angels stationed
near to Him

and the prophets sent by Him.

And God bless His elect, Muhammad,

the Seal of the Prophets,

and his virtuous, pure and sincere household, and
give them peace.

Then Imam Hussein began to supplicate. He occupied
himself with prayer as tears ran from his blessed eyes. Then
he said:

O God, cause me to fear Thee as if I were seeing Thee,
give me felicity through piety toward Thee,
make me not wretched by disobedience toward Thee,
choose the best for me by Thy decree (qada)
and bless me by Thy determination (qadar),
that I may love not the hastening of what Thou has
delayed,

nor the delaying of what Thou has hastened,
O God, appoint for me sufficiency in my soul,
certainty in my heart,
sincerity in my action,
Llight in my eyes,
and insight in my religion.

Give me enjoyment of my bodily members,
make my hearing and my seeing my two inheritors,
help me against him who wrongs me,
show me in him my revenge and my desires,
and console thereby my eyes.

O God, remove my affliction,
veil my defects,
forgive my offence,
drive away my Satan,
dissolve my debt,

and give me, my God, the highest degree
in the world to come and in this world.

O God, to Thee belongs the praise,
just as Thou created me and made me to hear and to

see;
and to Thee belongs the praise,
just as Thou created me and made me a creature
unimpaired
as a mercy to me,
while Thou had no need of my creation.
My Lord, since Thou created me
and then made straight my nature;
my Lord, since Thou caused me to grow
and made good my shape;
My Lord, since thou did good to me
and gave me well-being in my soul;
my Lord, since Thou preserved me
and gave me success;
my Lord, since thou blessed me
and then guided me;
my Lord, since Thou chose me
and gave me of every good;
my Lord, since Thou gave me to eat
and drink;
my Lord, since Thou enriched me
and contented me;
my Lord, since Thou aided me
and exalted me;
my Lord, since Thou clothed me with Thy pure covering
and smoothed the way for me by Thy sufficient
fashioning:
Bless Muhammad and the household of Muhammad,
aid me against the misfortunes of time and the
calamities of nights and days,
deliver me from the terrors of this world and the
torments of the world to come
and spare me from the evil of that which the evildoers
do in the earth.

O God, as for what I fear, spare me from it,
and as for what I seek to avoid, guard me against it.
In my soul and my religion watch over me,
in my traveling protect me,
in my family and my property appoint for me a
successor,
in what Thou has provided for me bless me.
in my soul humble me,
in the eyes of men magnify me,
from the evil of jinn and men preserve me,
for my sins disgrace me not,
for my inward secrets shame me not,
for my action try me not,
of Thy blessings deprive me not
and to other than Thee entrust me not.

O God, to whom would Thou entrust me?

(3805)

To a relative? He would cut me off.

Or a stranger? He would look at me with displeasure.
Or to those who act toward me with arrogance?
But Thou art my Lord and the Sovereign over my my affair,
I would complain to Thee of my exile and the
 remoteness of my abode,
and that he whom Thou has made sovereign over me
despises me.

My God, so cause not Thy wrath to alight upon me.
If Thou becomes not wrathful with me
I will have no are - glory be to Thee!
But Thy protection is more embracing.

So I ask Thee, O Lord, by the Light of Thy Face by which the
earth and the heavens are illuminated,
shadows are removed,
and the affairs of the ancients and the later folk are
 set aright,
not to cause me to die when Thy wrath is upon me,
nor to send down upon me Thy anger.
The pleasure is thine!
The pleasure is Thine,
to be satisfied with me before that.

There is no god but Thou, Lord of the Holy Land,
the Sacred Monument,
and the Ancient House,
upon which Thou caused blessing to descend
and which Thou made a sanctuary for mankind.

He who pardons the greatest sins by His clemency!

O He who lavishes blessings by His bounty!
O He who gives abundance by His generosity!
O Sustenance to me in my adversity!
O Companion to me in my solitude!
O Aid to me in my affliction!
O Benefactor to me in my blessing!

O my God

and God of my fathers,

Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob!

Lord of Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets,

and his household, the chosen ones!

Revealer of the Torah, the Gospel (Injil), the Psalms and
the Criterion (other name for the Qur'an)

and Sender down of Kaf Ha' Ya' Ayn Sad, Ta' Ha'

Ya Sin, and the Wise Qur'an!

Thou art my cave (of refuge) when the roads for all their
 amplitude constrict me

 and the land for all its breadth is strait for me.

If not for Thy mercy, I would have been among the
 perishing

and thou annulled my slip.

 If not for Thy covering me, I would have been

 (3806)

 among the disgraced,
and Thou confirms me with help against me enemies,

And if not for Thy helping me, I would have been
 among those overcome.
 O He who appropriated loftiness and exaltation to Himself,
 so His friends are mighty through His might!
 O He before whom kings place the yoke of aba
 around their necks,
 for they fear His overwhelming power!
 "He knows the treachery of the eyes and what the
 breaths conceal" (Qur'an XL: 19)
 and the unseen brought by time and fate.
 O He about Whom none knows what He is but He!
 O He Whom none knows but He!
 O He who squeezed the earth onto the water and held
 back the air with the sky!
 O He to Whom belong the noblest Names!
 O He Who possesses kindness which will never be cut off!
 O He Who assigned the cavalcade to Joseph in the barren
 land,
 brought him out of the well
 and made him a king after slavery?

 O He Who returned Joseph to Jacob after "his eyes were
 whitened with sorrow that he was
 suppressing." (Qur'an XII: 84)

 O He Who removed affliction and tribulation from Job
 and restrained Abraham's hands from the sacrifice of
 his son after he had reached old age and
 his life had passed by!
 O He Who answered the prayer of Zachariah
 and bestowed upon him John,
 not leaving him childless and alone!
 O He Who brought Jonah out from the stomach of the
 fish!
 O He Who parted the sea for the Children of Israel,
 then saved them
 and drowned Pharoah and his hosts!
 O He Who sends winds heralding His mercy!
 O He Who does not hurry (to act) against those of His
 creatures who disobey Him!
 O He Who rescued the sorcerers after their (long) denial!
 They had early benefitted from His blessing,
 eating His provision
 and worshipping other than Him;
 they had opposed, denied and cried lies to His
 messengers.
 O God!
 O God!
 O Beginner, O Creator with no compeer!
 (3807)

 O Everlasting who has no end!
 O Living when nothing was alive!
 O Quickener of the dead!

O "He Who is aware of the deserts of every soul"
 (Qur'an XIII: 33)!
O He toward Whom my gratitude was little,
yet He deprived me not!
My transgression was great,
yet He disgraced me not!
He saw me committing acts of disobedience,
yet He made me not notorious!
O He Who watched over me in childhood!
O He Who provided for me in my adulthood!
O He whose favors toward me cannot be reckoned and
 whose blessings cannot be repaid!
O He Who has confronted me with the good and the fair,
and I have confronted Him with evil and disobedience
 in return!
O He who led me to faith before I had come to know
 gratitude for His gracious bestowal!
O He upon Whom I called when I was sick
 and He healed me,
when naked
 and He clothed me,
when hungry
and He satisfied me,
when thirsty
 and He gave me to drink,
when abased
 and he exalted me,
when ignorant
 and he gave me knowledge,
when alone
 and He increased my number,
when away
 and He returned me,
when empty-handed
 and he enriched me,
when in need of help
 and He helped me,
and when rich
and He took not from me.
I refrained from (calling upon Thee in) all of that
and Thou caused me to begin (to call).
Thine are the praise and the gratitude!
O He who overlooked my slip,
relieved my distress,
heard my prayer,
covered my defects,
forgave my sins,
caused me to reach my desire,
 (3808)

and helped me against my enemy!
If I were to count Thy blessings, favors and generous
 acts of kindness
I would not be able to reckon them.

O my protector!

Thou are He who was gracious,
Thou are He Who blessed,
Thou are He Who worked good,
Thou are He Who was kind,
Thou are He Who was bounteous,
Thou are He who perfected,
Thou are He Who provided,
Thou are He Who gave success,
Thou are He Who bestowed,
Thou are He Who enriched,
Thou are He Who contented,
Thou are He Who sheltered,
Thou are He Who sufficed,
Thou are He Who guided,
Thou are He Who preserved (from sin),
Thou are He Who covered (my sins),
Thou are He Who forgave,
Thou are He Who overlooked,
Thou are He Who established (in the earth),
Thou are He Who exalted,
Thou are He Who aided,
Thou are He Who supported,
Thou are He Who confirmed,
Thou are He Who helped,
Thou are He Who healed,
Thou are He Who gave well-being,
Thou are He Who honored
-blessed are Thou
and high exalted!
So Thine is the praise everlasting,
and Thine is gratitude enduringly and forever!
Then I, my God, confess my sins,
so forgive me for them.

I am he who did evil,
I am he who made mistakes,
I am he who purposed (to sin),
I am he who was ignorant,
I am he who was heedless,
I am he who was negligent,
I am he who relied (upon other than Thee),
I am he who premeditated,
I am he who promised,
I am he who went back on his word,
I am he who confessed (my sins)
and I am he who acknowledged Thy blessings upon me
and with me and then returned to my sins.

(3809)

So forgive me for them,

O He Who is not harmed by the sins of His servants
nor needs He their obedience.
He gives success through His aid and His mercy to
whomsoever of them works righteousness.

So praise belongs to Thee, My God and My Lord!
My God, Thou commanded me and I disobeyed
and Thou forbade me and I committed what Thou had
forbidden.
I became such that I neither possessed my mark of
guiltlessness
that I might ask forgiveness
nor any power
that I might be helped!
Then by what means shall I turn toward Thee, O My Protector!?
What, by my ears?
Or my eyes?
Or my hand?
Or my leg?

Are not all of them Thy blessings given to me?
And with all of them I disobey Thee, O My Protector!
Thine is the argument and the means against me.

O He Who veiled me (my sins) from fathers and mothers lest
they drive me away,
from relatives and brothers lest they rebuke me,
and from kings lest they punish me!
If they had seen, O My Protector, what Thou has seen
from me,
they would not have given me respite,
they would have abandoned me
and cut me off.

So here I am, O My God,
before Thee O Lord,
humbled, abased, constrained, despised,
neither possessing guiltlessness that I might ask forgiveness
nor possessing power that I might be helped.
There is no argument with which I might argue,
nor can I say I committed not (sins) and worked not evil.
And denial, were I to deny - My Protector-could hardly
profit me.

How could it ever do that?
For all of my members are witness against me for what I
have done.
And I acted with certainty and without doubt that
Thou will ask me about great affairs,
and that Thou are the equitable Judge who does no wrong.
Thy justice is deadly for me and I flee from Thy every just
act.

If Thou chastises me, O My God, it is for my sins after
(3810)

Thy argument against me;
and if Thou pardon me, it is by Thy clemency,
generosity and kindness.

"There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee
Truly I am one of the wrong-doers" (Qur'an XXI: 87).

There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee!
 Truly I am one of those who pray forgiveness.
 There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee!
 Truly I am one of those who profess Thy Unity.
 There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee!
 Truly I am one of the fearful.
 There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee!
 Truly I am one of those who are afraid.
 There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee!
 Truly I am one of the hopeful.
 There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee!
 Truly I am one of those who yearn.
 There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee!
 Truly I am one of those who say "There is no god
 but Thou".
 There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee!
 Truly I am one of the petitioners.
 There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee!
 Truly I am one of the glorifiers.
 There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee!
 Truly I am one of those who magnify.
 There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee!, my Lord,
 and the Lord of my fathers, the ancients!

My God, this is my praise of Thee exalting Thy majesty,
 my sincerity in remembering Thee by professing Thy
 Unity,
 and my acknowledgement of Thy bounties by
 enumeration,
 even though I acknowledge
 that I cannot reckon them for their multitude,
 their abundance,
 their manifestness
 and their existence from ancient times
 until a present in which Thou has never ceased to
 care for me through them
 from when Thou created me and brought me into
 existence in the beginning of (my) life,
 by enriching me from poverty,
 relieving affliction,
 bringing ease,
 removing hardship,
 dispelling distress,
 and (giving me) well-being in body
 and soundness in religion.

(3811)

Were all the world's inhabitants, both the ancients and
 the later folk, to assist me in attempting to
 mention Thy blessing,
 I would not be able, nor would they, to do so.
 Holy are Thou and high exalted,
 a generous, mighty, merciful Lord.
 Thy bounties cannot be reckoned,

nor Thy praise accomplished,
nor Thy blessings repaid.

Bless Muhammad and the household of Muhammad,
complete Thy blessings upon us
and aid us in Thy obedience.

Glory be to Thee! There is no god but Thou.

O God, truly Thou hears the destitute,
removes the evil,
succours the afflicted,
heals the sick,
enriches the poor,
mends the broken,
has mercy upon the young
and helps the old.

There is no Support other than Thee
and none more powerful over Thee!
And Thou are the Sublime, the Great.

O Freer of the prisoner in irons!

O Provider of the infant child!

O Protector of the frightened refugee!

O He Who has no associate and no assistant!

Bless Muhammad and the household of Muhammad,
and give me this evening the best of what Thou has given
to and bestowed upon any of Thy servants,

whether a blessing Thou assuages,
a bounty Thou renews,
a trial Thou averts,
an affliction Thou removes,
a prayer Thou hears,
a good deed Thou accepts
or an evil deed Thou overlooks.

Truly Thou are gracious,
Aware of what Thou will,
and Powerful over all things!

O God, truly Thou are the nearest of those who are called,
and swiftest of those who answer,
the most generous of those who pardon,
the most openhanded of those who give
and the most hearing of those who are asked of.
O merciful and Compassionate in this world and the next!
Like Thee none is asked of;
and other than Thee none is hoped for.

I prayed to Thee and Thou answered me,
I asked of Thee and Thou gavest to me,

(3812)

I set Thee as my quest and Thou had mercy upon me,
I depended upon Thee and Thou delivered me,
I took refuge with Thee and Thou sufficed me,

O God, so bless Muhammad, Thy servant, messenger and
prophet,
and his good and pure household, all of them.
And complete Thy blessings upon us,
gladden us with Thy gift

and inscribe us as those who thank Thee and remember
Thy bounties.

Amen, amen, O Lord of all beings!

- O God, O He Who owned and then was all-powerful,
was all-powerful and then subjected,
was disobeyed and then veiled (the sin of disobedience),
and was prayed forgiveness and forgave.
- O God of yearning seekers
and utmost Wish of the hopeful!
- O He who "encompasses everything in knowledge" (Qur'an LXV: 12)
and embraces those who seek pardon in tenderness,
mercy and clemency!
- O God, truly we turn towards Thee this evening,
which Thou honored and glorified through Muhammad,
Thy prophet and messenger,
the elect of Thy creation,
the faithful guardian of Thy revelation which bears good
tidings and warning and which is the
light-giving lamp
which Thou gave to those who surrender (al-muslimin)
and appointed as a mercy to the world's inhabitants.
- O God, so bless Muhammad and the household of Muhammad
just as Muhammad is worthy of that from Thee,
O Sublime!
So bless him and his elect, good and pure household, all
of them,
and encompass us in Thy pardon,
for to Thee cry voices in diverse languages.
So appoint for us a share this evening, O God,
of every good which Thou divides among Thy servants,
every light by which Thou guides,
every mery which Thou spreads,
every blessing ehich Thou sends down,
every well-being with which thous clotheses
and every provision which Thou outspreads.
O Most Merciful of the merciful!
O God, transform us now into men successful,
triumphant, pious,
and prosperous.
Set us not among those who despair,
empty us not of Thy mercy,
deprive us not of that bounty of Thine for which we hope,
and set us not among those deprived of Thy mercy,
- (3813)

nor those who despair of the bounty of Thy gift for which
we hope.

Reject us not with the disappointed,
nor those driven from Thy door.

- O Most Magnanimous of the most magnanimous!
O Most Generous of the most generous!
Toward Thee we have turned having sure faith,
repairing to and bound for Thy Sacred House. (the Ka'abah)
So help us with our holy rites,

perfect for us our pilgrimage, (to Mecca)
pardon us,
and give us well-being,
for we have extended toward Thee our hands
 and they are branded with the abasement of confession.
O God, so give us this evening what we have asked of Thee
and suffice us in that in which we have prayed Thee to
 suffice us,
for there is none to suffice us apart from Thee
and we have no lord other than Thee.
Put into effect concerning us is Thy decision,
encompassing us is Thy knowledge
and just for us is Thy decree.
Decree for us the good
and place us among the people of the good!
O God, make encumbent upon us through Thy magnanimity
and mightiest wage,
the most generous treasure
and the lastingness of ease.
Forgive us our sins, all of them,
destroy us not with those who perish,
and turn not Thy tenderness and mercy away from us,
O most Merciful of the merciful!

O God, place us in this hour among those
 who ask of Thee and to whom Thou gives,
 who thank Thee and whom Thou increases,
who turn to Thee in repentance and whom Thou
 accepts
 and who renounce all of their sins before Thee and whom
 Thou forgives,
 O Lord of majesty and splendor!

O God, purify us,
 show us the right way
 and accept our entreaty,
O Best of those from whom is asked!

And O Most Merciful of those whose mercy is sought!

O He from whom is not hidden the eyelids' winking,
the eyes glancing,
that which rests in the concealed,
(3814)

 and that which is enfolded in hearts' hidden secrets!
What, has not all of the been reckoned in Thy knowledge
 and embraced by Thy clemency?
Glory be to Thee and high indeed are Thou exalted above
 what the evil-doers say!
The seven heavens and the earths and all that is therein praise
 Thee,
 and there is not a thing but hymns Thy praise.
So Thine is the praise, the glory and the exaltation of
 majesty,

O Lord of majesty and splendor,
of bounty and blessing
and of great favor!
An Thou art the Magnanimous, the Generous,
the Tender, the Compassionate.

- O God, give me amply of Thy lawful provision,
bestow upon me well-being in my body and my religion,
make me safe from fear
and deliver me from the Fire.
- O God, devise not against me,
lead me not on step by step,
trick me not
and avert from me the evil of the ungodly among jinn
and men.

Then he lifted his head and eyes toward
Heaven. Tears were flowing from his blessed eyes
as if they were two waterskins, and he said in a
loud voice:

- O Most Hearing of those who hear!
O Most Seeing of those who behold!
O swiftest of reckoners!
O Most Merciful of the merciful!
Bless Muhammad and the household of Muhammad,
the chiefs, the fortunate.
And, I ask of Thee, O God, my need.
If Thou grants it to to me,
what Thou holds back from me will cause me no harm;
and if Thou holds it back from me,
what Thou grants me will not profit me.
I ask Thee to deliver me from the Fire.
There is no god but Thou alone,
Thou has no associate,
Thine is the dominion,
and Thine is the praise,
And Thou are powerful over everything.
O my Lord!
O my Lord!

(3815)

Then he said "O my Lord" over and over. Those who
had been gathered around him, who had listened to all of
his prayer and who had limited themselves to saying
"amen" raised their voices in weeping. They stayed in
his company until the sun went down, and then all of
them loaded their mounts and set out in the direction of
the Sacred Monument. (the Ka'aba)" (479)

Below are given the aphorisms of Ibn Ata'illah al-Iskandari
very often appended to the Prayer of the Day of Arafah by Hussein

ibn Ali, Third Shi'a Imam and Martyr of Karbala, and considered by many to be an original part of it:

And he said (May God be pleased with him!)

My God,
I am poor in my richness,
so why should I not be poor in my poverty?

My God,
I am ignorant in my knowledge,
so why should I not be most ignorant in my ignorance?

My God,
the diversity of Thy planning
and the speed of Thy predestined Decrees
prevent Thy servants, the gnostics,
from relying on gifts or despairing of Thou during trials.

My God,
from me comes what is in keeping with my miserliness,
and from Thou comes what is in keeping with Thy
generosity.

My God,
Thou has attributed to Thyself
gentleness and kindness toward me
before the existence of my weakness;
so, would Thou then hold them back from me
after the existence of my weakness?

My God,
if virtues arise from me,
that is because of Thy grace:
It is Thy right to bless me.
And if vices arise from me,
that is because of Thy justice:
It is Thy right to have proof against me.
(3816)

My God,
how can Thou leave me to myself,
for Thou are responsible for me?
And how could I be harmed while Thou are my Ally?
Or how could I be disappointed in Thee, my Welcomer?
Here I am seeking to gain access to Thee
by means of my need of Thee.
How could I seek to gain access to Thee
by means of what cannot possibly reach Thee?
Or how can I complain to Thee of my state,
for it is not hidden from Thee?
Or how can I express myself to Thee in my speech,

since it comes from Thee and goes forth to Thee?
Or how can my hopes be dashed,
for they have already reached Thee?
Or how can my states not be good,
for they are based on Thee and got to Thee?

My God,
how gentle Thou are with me
in spite of my great ignorance,
and how merciful Thou are with me
in spite of my ugly deeds!

My God,
how near thou are to me!
So what is that which veils me from Thee?

My God,
from the diversity of created things
and the changes of states,
I know that it is Thy desire
to make Thyself known to me in everything
so that I will not ignore Thee in anything.

My God,
whenever my miserliness makes me dumb,
Thy generosity makes me articulate,
and whenever my attributes make me despair,
Thy Grace gives me hope.

My God,
if someone's virtues are vices,
then why cannot his vices be vices?
And if someone's inner realities are pretensions,
then why cannot his pretensions be pretensions?

My God,
Thy penetrating decision and Thy conquering will
have left no speech to the articulate
nor any state to him who has one!
(3817)

My God,
how often has Thy justice destroyed
the dependence I built upon obedience
or state I erected!
Yet, it was Thy grace that freed me of them.

My God,
Thou knows that,
even though obedience has not remained a resolute action
on my part,
it has remained as a love and a firm aspiration.

My God,

how can I resolve
While Thou is the Omnipotent,
or how can I not resolve
while Thou is the Commander?

My God,
my wavering among created things
inevitably makes the Sanctuary distant,
so unite me to Thee by means of a service that leads me to
Thee.

My God,
how can one argue inferentially of Thee
by that which depends on Thee for its existence?
Does anything other than Thou manifest what Thou do not
have,
so that it becomes the manifester for Thee?
When did Thou become so absent that Thou are in need of a
proof giving evidence of Thee?
And when did Thou become so distant
that it is created things themselves that lead us to Thee?

My God,
blind is the eye
that does not see Thee watching over it,
and vain is the handicap of a servant
who has not been given a share of Thy love.

My God,
Thou has commanded me to return to created things,
so return me to them with the raiment of lights
and the guidance of inner vision,
so that I may return from them to Thee
just as I entered Thee from from them,
with my innermost being protected from looking at them
and my fervor raised above dependence on them.
"Truly, over everything Thou is the Omnipotent."
and he said (may God be pleased with him!):
(3818)

My God,
here is my lowliness manifest before Thee,
and here is my state unbidden from Thee.
I seek from Thee union with Thee.
I proceed from Thee in my argumentation about Thee.
So guide me to Thee with Thy light
and set me up before Thee through sincerity of servanthood!

My God,
make me know by means of Thy treasured-up Knowledge,
and protect me by means of the mystery
of Thy well-guarded Name.

My God,

make me realize the inner realities
of those drawn nigh,
and make me voyage in the path
of those possessed by attraction.

My God,
through Thy direction
make me dispense with self-direction,
and through Thy choosing for me
make me dispense with my choosing;
and make me stand in the very center of my extreme need.
My God,

pull me out of my self-abasement
and purify me of doubting and associationism
before I descend into my grave.
I seek Thy help, so help me.
In Thee I trust, so entrust me to no one else.
Thee do I ask, so do not disappoint me.
Thy kindness do I desire, so do not refuse me.
It is to Thee that I belong, so do not banish me.
And it is at Thy door that I stand, so do not cast me away.

My God,
Thy Contentment is too holy
for there to be a cause for it in Thee,
so how can there be a cause for it in me?
Through Thy Essence,
Thou are independent of any benefit coming to Thee,
so why should Thou not be independent of me?

My God,
destiny and the Decree of Fate have overcome me,
and desire with its passional attachments
has taken me prisoner.
Be my Ally so that Thou may help me and others through
me.
Enrich me with Thy kindness,
(3819)

so that, content with Thee,
I can do without asking for anything.
Thou are the one who makes the lights shine in the hearts of
Thy saints
so that they know Thee and affirm Thy Oneness.
Thou are the one who makes alterities disappear
from the hearts of Thy lovers
so that they love none but Thee and take refuge in none but
Thee.
Thou are the One who befriends them
when the world makes them forlorn.
Thou are the One Who guides them
till the landmarks become clear for them.
He who has lost Thee - what has he found?
He who has found Thee - what has he lost?

Whoever takes someone other than Thee as a substitute
is disappointed,
and whoever wants to stray away from Thee
is lost.

My God,
how could hope be placed in what is other than Thou,
for Thou have not cut off Thy benevolence?
And how could someone other than Thou be asked,
for Thou has not changed the norms for conferring
blessings?
O He Who makes His beloved friends taste
the sweetness of intimacy with Himself
so that they stand before Him with praise,
and O He Who clothes His saints
with the vestments of reverential fear toward Himself
so that they stand glorifying His Glory -
Thou are the Invoker prior to invokers,
Thou are the Origin of benevolence prior to servants turning
To Thee,
Thou are the Munificent in giving prior to the asking of
seekers,
and Thou are the Giver Who,
in respect to what Thou has given us,
asks us for a loan!

My God,
my hope is not cut off from Thee
even though I disobey Thee,
just as my fear does not leave me
even though I obey Thee.

My God,
the world has pushed me toward Thee,
and my knowledge of Thy generosity has made me stand
before Thee.
(3820)

My God,
how could I be disappointed while Thou are my hope,
or how could I be betrayed while my trust is in Thee?

My God,
how can I deem myself exalted
while Thou has planted me in lowliness,
or why should I not deem myself exalted,
for Thou has related me to Thyself?
Why should I not be in need of Thee,
for Thou has set me up in poverty,
or why should I be needy,
for Thou has enriched me with Thy goodness?
Apart from Thee there is no God.
Thou has made Thyself known to everything
so nothing is ignorant of Thee.

And it is Thou Who has made Thyself known to me in
everything;
thus, I have seen Thee manifest in everything,
and Thou are the Manifest to everything.
O He who betakes Himself to His Throne
with His All-Mercifulness,
so that the throne is hidden in His All-Manifestness,
just as the Universe is hidden in His Throne,
Thou has annihilated created things with created things,
and obliterated alterities with the all-encompassing spheres of
light!
O He Who, in His pavilions of glory,
is veiled from the reach of sight,
O He Who illumines with the perfection of His Beauty
and whose Infinity is realized by the gnostics' innermost
being-
how can Thou be hidden, for Thou are the Exterior?
Or how can Thou be absent,
for Thou are the Ever-Present Watcher?
God is the Granter of Success - and in Him I take refuge!(480)

As aphorisms of Ibn Ata'illah al-Iskandari are very often
added to the prayer of Imam Hussein on the Day of Arafah, so said
prayer of Imam Hussein is included in Shadhili prayer
manuals.(481)

Below is a discourse of Imam Hussein, Martyr of Karbala:

"He Imam Hussein) once said, describing the
difference of worship and motives for it: "There are
those who worship God in fear (i.e., of Hell), and that
is the worship of slaves; there are those who worship
(3821)

God in covetousness (I.e., of Paradise) and that is the
worship of merchants; but there are those who worship
God in thankfulness and this is the worship of free men;
it is the best of worship."(482)

Below are two prayers of Imam Hussein, Martyr of Karbala:

"My Lord and master, is it for the instruments of
torture in Hell that You have created my members and You
have made my entrails to be filled with the *hamim*
(the boiling waters of Hell). My God, if You would
require of me reckoning of my sins, I would request of
Your magnanimity. If You would imprison me with the
transgressors, I would tell them of my love for You. My
Lord, as for my obedience to You it cannot benefit You;
and as for my disobedience, it can do You no harm. Grant
me therefore I pray that which does not benefit

You, and forgive me that which does You no harm. For You are the most Merciful." (483)

Below is a truly mystical prayer of Imam Hussein, Martyr of Karbala:

"My Lord, Oh my Lord, You are my Master. Have mercy therefore on a servant who seeks refuge in You. On You, O Most High, is my reliance, blessed is he whose Master You are. Blessed is he who is a vigilant servant bringing all his troubles before You, Lord of majesty alone. Where in him there would be neither disease nor sickness, rather only his love for his Master. When he complains of his troubles and tightness of throat (with tears), God would answer him and remove his sorrow. When in darkness he comes in supplication, God would grant him His favors and draw him near. Then he shall be addressed "Lo. I hear the *labbayka* O my servant, for you are in my bosom *kanaf* and all that you said We have heard. Your voice delights my angels, behold, We have heard your voice. Your invocations are before me moving behind veils (of light), behold We have removed the curtains for you. Ask me therefore without fear or hesitation, or any reckoning, for I am God." (484)

By way of Ibn Abbad of Ronda, St. John of the Cross is firmly linked to the Shadhiliyyah Order, including Abul Abbas al-Mursi and Ibn Ata'illah al-Iskandari, but also including Hasan ibn Ali, the Second Shi'a Imam, and also to Hussein ibn Ali, the Third

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Shi'a Imam and Martyr of Karbala. As we said before, Abul Abbas al-Mursi of Murcia was an Hispano-Muslim. Thus, we see not only the virtual unity between Shi'ism and Sufism, but also how tightly intertwined and interwoven are Shi'ism and Spain, both Muslim and Christian.

The kinship between Shi'ism and Sufism is sometimes found even in the most unexpected places. It would no doubt surprise many people (myself included) to know that Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was an initiate in *'Irfan* and Sufism. Of course, it is

well to remember that for much of his life Ayatollah Khomeini was a learned and pious 'alim, apparently not much interested in politics. Below is a brief account of Ayatollah Khomeini's work in the fields of 'Irfan and mysticism.

Below is a selection from an essay by Lloyd Ridgeon. I must warn the reader that I do not necessarily agree with all of Mr. Ridgeon's opinions, conclusions and interpretations.

"In his early years in the seminary (or *madrassa*), Khomeini met a series of scholars learned in 'Irfan who were prepared to teach him. When one of these died, Khomeini referred to the suspicion surrounding his teacher's 'Irfani views, which necessitated a preacher declaring from the *minbar* (pulpit) that the individual in question had actually been seen reading the Qur'an. Nevertheless, Khomeini's interest and pursuit of 'Irfan continued unabated, and by 1929 he had composed his first work on the topic. This was a commentary on a Shi'i prayer, *Tafsir Du'a'-yi sahar* (dawn Supplications). In this work, Khomeini supposedly demonstrated the compatibility of the *shariah* with 'Irfan. The commentary also revealed Khomeini's debt to Ibn 'Arabi [al-Mursi] (the great master of 'Irfan from Andalusia [Murcia to be exact] whose work has fascinated Sufis and mystics since the thirteenth century). Khomeini discussed the "Perfect Man", an
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individual whose function had been elaborated on by Ibn 'Arabi (al-Mursi) and his followers in great depth. Simply put, the Perfect Man acts as a conduit between God and His creation, and through whom all of God's attributes may be witnessed.

Khomeini's subsequent work, Misbah al-Hidayat (The Lamp of Guidance), further revealed his attachment to the 'Irfani tradition and perfection of the human being. In a language dense in Akbarian terminology and themes, he "demonstrated an intimate awareness of Ibn 'Arabi's problematic", and amalgamated these with certain ideas that had been formulated by Mulla Sadra. Ibn 'Arabi (and the school associated with him) had elaborated on the theme of the descent and return to God, and the classification of existence into "presences" by which the underlying unity of existence in its absolute and single form (God), and also in its diverse manifestations (creation), may be comprehended. Khomeini's synthesis of these topics within Mulla

Sadra's four journeys (*asfar arba'a*) assumes great significance for some scholars because it legitimized social engagement and political involvement. That is to say, Khomeini's passion for 'Irfan was not an otherworldly diversion from the harsh realities of life in Iran under Reza Shah. Khomeini may have inherited such a persuasion from his master in 'Irfan, Mirza Muhammad 'Ali Shahabadi (died 1950), who "did not believe in public quietism and was one of a small group of mullahs who actively opposed Reza Shah's policies". To unpack the full significance of Khomeini's Misbah al-Hidayat and its political implications it is necessary to summarise and see how the individual - or rather, the Perfect Man - travels from creation to God and back again, and also focus on the identity of such an individual and the outcome of his journey.

Although Khomeini's elaboration of the four journeys is relatively brief, its very location as the terminal point of Misbah al-Hidayat is highly significant. The first journey commences from creation (i.e., mundane existence) to the delimited Truth (*haqq-i muqayyad*), where the beauty of the presence of the Truth is witnessed through the active manifestation of the Truth in the world of existence. In other words, the traveler witnesses the whole of creation as a manifestation of the presence of the Truth. During the first journey he casts aside three veils: those of his carnal soul (*nafs*), his intellect ('*aql*) and his spirit (*ruh*). This permits the annihilation of the self, and he also makes ecstatic utterances (*shathiyat*) "which are condemned as infidelity."

This description of the first journey (like the
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others that follow) manifests Khomeini's debt to the Sufi tradition. Although there is much terminology from the Akbarian tradition, his all too brief treatment of annihilation and ecstatic utterances reflect knowledge of the wider and more general Sufi tradition. Annihilation (*fana'*) became the central doctrine of Sufis in the early medieval period, and it generally meant the stripping away of impermanent, temporal concerns from the wayfarer (inferring that what subsisted was divine). In this process, the wayfarer would often utter ecstatic statements, which are the seemingly "outrageous" declarations made by famous Sufis such as Hallaj's "I am the Truth", or Abu Yazid's "Glory be to Me! How great is My majesty." According to the Sufi world view, at the height of mystical experience, the Sufi is unable to control his actions, and the statements that emerge from the mystic reflect the reality of an underlying unity between lover and beloved.

The second of Khomeini's four journeys is an

expression for travelling from the delimited truth to absolute Truth. In Khomeini's terms, the Truth Most High discloses Himself in the station of complete unicity (*maqam-I wahdaniyyat*). Another way that this second journey is described is travelling from Truth towards the Truth by means of the Truth. This means that the traveler voyages from the delimited God (or the presence that represents God's knowledge of everything) to the Absolute God (which is the presence that transcends all but conceptual knowledge of its ultimate existence). In fact, Khomeini declares that this is the station of annihilation from annihilation, which resembles the doctrine of the celebrated Sufi Junayd of Baghdad (died, 910), by which he probably meant that the wayfarer is not even aware of annihilation or himself because his essence, attributes and acts are annihilated in the essence, attributes and acts of the Truth. Khomeini warns his readers that ecstatic utterances may emerge at this stage, too, and as such reflect imperfections in the spiritual wayfarer, and for this reason he argues that a guide (Sanskrit: *guru*; Persian: *pir*; Arabic: *sheikh*) is necessary. Such a guide does not step outside of the legally permitted ascetic discipline (*riyadat-I shar'i*). The explanation of the second journey indicates that Khomeini was very much a sober-minded advocate of 'irfan, perhaps one that eschewed some of the traditional sufi practices and rituals. Perhaps Khomeini's personal path was a simple form of spirituality that included prayer and scrupulous attention to external and inner purity, in addition to
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the study of speculative mystical writings.

The third journey commences through divine favor: the spiritual traveler starts from the Truth and moves back to the real creation (*al-khalq al-baqqi*) by means of the Truth. Khomeini offers another expression by which to understand this third journey: the wayfarer journeys from the presence of inclusive unity (*ahadiyya al-jami'iyya*) to the presence of the immutable entities (*al-a'yan al-thabita*). These terms would be familiar to scholars of the so-called *wujudi* tradition of Ibn 'Arabi al-Mursi. The first refers to the presence of the Absolute Truth, and the second is God's knowledge of all the things that have the potential to exist in their particular modes. Thus, the immutable entities are every single thing in creation, which are not universals in the Platonic sense. Having passed the stages of annihilation in the first journey, and annihilation of annihilation in the second journey, in the third journey the wayfarer subsists through God. Again, the terminology is typically Sufi: according to the medieval Sufi texts, subsistence (*baqa'*) become apparent as the wayfarer's existence is annihilated, revealing a pure

and obedient individual that lives, acts and knows through God. Moreover, according to Khomeini, at this stage the traveler manifests a complete sobriety (the inference being that no ecstatic utterances are made). Importantly, Khomeini mentions that it is in this journey the the wayfarer yields a portion of prophecy, although he is not permitted the station of legislative prophecy.

The fourth journey is from creation to the creation by means of the Truth., as the presence of the immutable entities to the creatures (which are the entities that have an outward disclosure [*al-a'ayan al-kharijiyyis*]). The traveler is able to witness the beauty of the Truth in all of these entities. Moreover, it is in this station that he brings religion and the law (*din wa shari'a*), makes exoteric commands pertaining to the body and esoteric laws pertaining to the heart and informs the people about God and His attributes and names, encouraging them to turn to their Lord.

The fourth journey is not solely the preserve of the prophets, as Khomeini states that these four can be yielded by the perfect friends, such as 'Ali (Ibn Abi Talib) and his immaculate children (the twelve Imams): "Know that these journeys are also yielded for the complete friends, even the fourth journey, just as they were yielded for our master, the Commander of the Faithful and his immaculate children (God's greetings be upon them)". He legitimizes his position with reference to his spiritual teacher, Shahabadi, whom he

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terms the perfect gnostic (*al-arif al-kamil*): "If Ali had appeared prior to God's prophet he would have manifested the *sharia* of Islam. It is highly significant that Khomeini does not include any other individuals among those who could complete the four journeys. Ali and the immaculate Imams were able to do because

(according to Shahabadi) they shared the same spiritual and exoteric and esoteric stations with the Prophet,

In the history of Shi'ism and *'irfan* there has been considerable debate relating to the spiritual levels of the Prophet and the Sufis (also known as the Friends of God). Ibn 'Arabi al-Mursi is a good example of this, for just as he stated the normative Islamic belief that Muhammad was the seal of the prophets (i.e., the last and best of the prophets), so, too, was there a seal of the Friends of God who enjoyed the same spiritual level as the Prophet, although he did not possess prophetic and therefore legislative authority. Moreover, Ibn 'Arabi (al-Mursi) claimed that he was the Seal of the Friends of God. Although Khomeini's debt to the Great Shaikh (Ibn 'Arabi al-Mursi) is clear in his discussion of the four journeys, he does not specifically identify a Friend of God or gnostic after the twelve Imams who can

complete these four journeys. The significance of this point should not be underestimated, especially as different opinions have emerged on the very topic of political ramifications of Khomeini's discussion of the four journeys. The next section will examine three main perspectives on the issue. The significant point is whether Khomeini believed that he himself had completed the four journeys; that is to say, that he had travelled to God, and returned to creation and implemented the divine laws.

The first perspective is that Khomeini did not believe that he completed the four journeys. Typifying this view is Hamid Algar, who has a favorable opinion of the Misbah al-Hidayat. He states, "[It] ... is less important for the wide erudition it displays than for the complete practical mastery of the art of *'irfan* that underlies it; it is not a digest of received opinions and formulations but the manifest fruit of a powerful and original vision." This last sentence may make it seem that Algar believed that at the very least the Ayatollah had "knowledge by presence"; however, a recent email exchange with Algar has clarified the matter. I asked Algar whether the *insan-i kamil* or Perfect Man (the individual who completed the four journeys) referred to the prophets and Twelve Imams alone. Algar confirmed:

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Insofar as *insan-i kamil* [the perfect man] represents a principle rather than an identifiable individual - although it was indeed manifested in identifiable individuals such as the *Maumim* [the infallible Twelve Imams] - it is a principle which may be striven after if not fully attained ... the assertion that Ayatollah Khomeini believed that he had completed the four journeys and therefore attained the status of *insan-i kamil* is, I think, unwarranted.

Algar's perspective seems to be supported by Alexander Knysh, who has also studied the Misbah al-Hidayat. His analysis of Khomeini's writings indicates that he considered Khomeini more of a "theoretical mystic" than one who had "knowledge by presence". Knysh described the Misbah as "the work of a beginner ... lacking in focus ... embracing a great deal of important, yet often poorly digested information. It seems likely that, at the beginning, young Khomeini was too overwhelmed and fascinated by the tradition to make a coherent rendition of it." However, he also claimed that Khomeini's ideas of viceregency and sainthood rested "on an inextricable fusion of personal experience and putatively objective ontological thinking." The personal experience may refer

to both Khomeini's ascetic spiritual practice and his belief in some kind of spiritual unveiling.

Knysh observes that "it seems likely that he (Ayatollah Khomeini) adopted a number of ascetic practices ... renunciation of worldly delights and desires, self-imposed poverty, scrupulous discernment of the 'lawful' (*halal*) and 'forbidden' (*haram*)." All scholars mention Khomeini's ascetic persona, and his admiration for like-minded clerics, such as Mudarris. Khomeini's repudiation of wealth and worldly attachments was a theme that has been highlighted by the Islamic Republic since his death. When I visited Jamaran (Khomeini's residency in Tehran) which receives visitors from around the world, a guide described how Khomeini had received Eduard Schevarnadze, then foreign minister of the Soviet Union, in a small antechamber (rather than a plush meeting room), where they drank a simple glass of tea together.

However, it is unknown to what extent Khomeini engaged in "practical gnosis" (*Irfan-i 'amali*), which would have involved "a strict regimen of ascetic self-purification leading to a direct perception of the suprasensory realm", and included rituals such as the *dhikr* (pronounced *zikr* in Persian and Urdu) (the
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ritualized repetition of God's names) [very close to *Hesychasm* or the "Jesus Prayer" or "Prayer of the Heart" of the mystics of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and by no means totally dissimilar to some practices of Hindu yoga], night vigils and various supererogatory acts of devotion. Ever since the Islamic Revolution, Khomeini has been more commonly associated with "speculative gnosis" (*Irfan-i nazari*), perhaps because of the negative connotations made about practical gnosis among some clerical circles of Sufism.

The second perspective relating to Khomeini's putative completion of the four journeys is one that errs on the side of caution. An example of this is present in the work of Vanessa Martin, who focuses on the identity of those who had completed the four journeys:

Khomeini's precise position on these ideas was ambiguous. The references in The Light of Guidance suggest that he identified a perfect man as one who has the status of prophets and Imams. He says that the one who understands the fourth journey reaches the level of legislative prophecy, again implying that it is highly unlikely to be possible for ordinary believers. There is, however, a hint that the status of perfect man may be achieved by ordinary mortals, but only the rarest few.

Ms. Martin subsequently suggested that Khomeini's understanding of these ideas influenced his implementation of the *velayat-e faqih*, which will be discussed in the next section.

However, Khomeini's passage within his sections on the four journeys is transparently clear: those who complete the journeys are the prophets and the Imams. The doctrine of the Perfect Man holds that there can only be one at any given time: only a single individual can manifest the totality of the divine attributes and names that reflect the reality of unity in multiplicity. If two such perfect individuals existed, then unity would be negated. This Sufi belief converges with the Shi'i principle that the Twelfth Imam serves this very function. He is the *Khalifa*, albeit in occultation, but present and alive. From this perspective it would be unthinkable for Khomeini even to suggest that the Perfect Man, who has completed the four journeys, could be anyone other than the prophets and Imams. The conflict surrounding the Sufi doctrine of the Perfect Man and the Twelver Shi'i understanding

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of the Hidden Imam was recognized by one of the leading Persian Sufis of the late nineteenth century, Safi 'Ali Shah, who reconciled the difference by stating that true authority lies with the Twelfth Imam, to whom all obedience is due. However, if the gnostic has mystical contact with the Hidden Imam in occultation, the latter's guiding function devolves practically on the *qutb* (or Sufi master). In other words, it is the Imam, in occultation, that is the Perfect Man and appears mystically in dreams or visions to lesser mortals. For the correlation between the Twelfth Imam and the Sufi concept of the Perfect man, see Sayyid Muhammad Husain Tabataba'i, *Shi'ite Islam*, translated by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. His comments in *The Kernel of the Kernel* are also significant, for he witnesses the concrete manifestation of the Divine Names and Attributes in the world of existence, and the "reality of the Imam is the same as the Names and Attributes of God."

A third perspective relating to the possibility of Khomeini completing the four journeys was highlighted in the West soon after the Islamic Revolution by "Time Magazine", which named Khomeini their Man of the Year for 1979. In an attack entitled "Man of the Year: Portrait of an Ascetic Despot", it was observed:

From discussions with former students, talks with Western scholars who have visited Khomeini, profiles prepared by Western intelligence analysts, and the speeches and interviews he has given during this year on

the world stage, it is possible to gain some insight into the Ayatollah's thinking. First and foremost, all sources agree, he is an Islamic mystic who believes that God tells him directly how to apply the principles of the Qur'an and the Shari'a (Islamic Law) to life and politics.

Sharing this view are scholars as Baqer Moin, who have no qualms claiming that Khomeini believed he had undergone all four of the journeys. Moin made this public in an obituary for Khomeini that he wrote for "the Independent" in 1989:

Khomeini's strength and self-righteousness, which enabled him to withstand the enormous pressure of swimming against the tide, was on the basis of his mythical view that he had been through the four journeys sought by the Sufis, to reach absolute unity with God: first, "man to God" leaving behind carnal
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desire; "from God to God". Annihilation in God; from "God to man" returning with Godly attributes to man; and finally from "man to man" merging with the people and God at the same time. Whoever has experienced these journeys becomes the Logos, the "Perfect Man", the "center of the universe". ... What is certain about this contradictory personality was the charisma, sense of expediency and mysticism of a man who maintained that he was the people and God rolled into one, a belief which under certain circumstances could have led to his excommunication.

In his biography of Khomeini published in 1999, Moin was more circumspect, observing that the Ayatollah had never "openly" claimed to have completed the fourth journey. However, it is evident that Moin believed that Khomeini had indeed achieved this feat, noting the usual hesitancy of mystics to reveal their state. Moreover, he cited the opinion of Mehdi Hairi Yazdi, the son of a former student of Khomeini, who was of the opinion that Khomeini had reached the conclusion of the mystical journey.

THE LEGACY OF KHOMEINI'S INTEREST IN IRFAN

Scholars agree that the tradition of *'irfan* had a profound impact on Khomeini, who continued to write on the theme. Moreover, during the 1940s he even held his own classes on *'irfan*, which were restricted to a few select individuals that would later become leading figures in the revolutionary movement and the creation of the Islamic Republic. Although Khomeini subsequently started to focus on other areas of teaching, particularly ethics (*akhlaq*), scholars have recognized that the legacy of *'irfan* and its imperative of social engagement remained with him. During the 1930s and 1940s, he was linked (albeit tangentially) to a number of cases that resisted Reza Shah's reforms. Although Vanessa Martin claims "he was not ... notably activist", it is possible that as a junior cleric Khomeini felt obliged not to overstep the mark and toe the more quiescent line adopted by more senior clerics. Nevertheless, there is much truth in Algar's observation that the "early and intense cultivation of *hikmat* and *'irfan* should not be regarded as a passing

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episode, for it contributed powerfully to the formation of his total person as religious and political leader."

The events of Khomeini's life in the 1960s and into the 1970s, and his unflinching opposition to the Pahlavi regime in particular, have been copiously documented in a number of works. With the success of the Islamic Revolution and the institutionalization of the *velayat-e faqih* (guardianship of the jurist), some would argue that the *'irfani* imperative had yielded its logical conclusion. Moin, for example, rightly argues that a *faqih* could not claim a legislative right (which according to Khomeini was the prerogative of the prophets having completed the four journeys). However, Moin used the term *vilayat-i irfani* ("mystical guardianship") to describe how Khomeini believed the jurist had "power over the precepts of religion, even to the point of suspending them, which is exactly what he did in 1987". According to Moin, "This view clearly contradicts the orthodox view of Islam in which the divine rules cannot be tampered with." His reference to events in 1978-1988 reflects what Said Arjomand terms "the Constitutional Crisis of the 1980s and Khomeini's Second Revolution", in which the full extent of power that the Islamic government could exercise was revealed. Khomeini observed:

Government is a branch of Muhammad's absolute vice-regency, and is one of the first precepts of Islam. It takes precedence over all religious practices such as prayer,

fasting or the hajj pilgrimage. ... I openly say that the government can stop any religious law if it feels that it is correct to do so ... the ruler can close or destroy the mosques whenever it sees fit ... the government can prohibit anything having to do with worship or otherwise if [these things] would be against the interests of the government.

This declaration should not be considered a major innovation in Khomeini's thought, as he had criticized the constitution of the nascent Islamic Republic in 190, which perhaps did not sufficiently reflect his own views regarding the extent of *velayat*. At the heart of Khomeini's declaration is the desire to protect and preserve the interests of Islamic government. If precedents are needed to legitimize such a position (as many observers considered this an innovation,

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tantamount to heresy), the concept of *darurat* or necessity provides a way or the exercise of temporary expedient measures. The call for the establishment of Islamic government had been given by Khomeini when he was resident in exile in Iraq back in the 1960s and 1970s, and it was the preservation of this primary goal that legitimized his (in)famous declaration of 1987-1988. Although *darurat* is a little-discussed concept in the Shi'i tradition, preservation of the Islamic government might have been considered a self-evident necessity, even by those who had little knowledge of the esoteric Islamic tradition so avidly studied by Khomeini as a young man. But some scholars (such as Moin) linked this declaration to the four journeys, and others stated that it is the best manifestation of "the hidden influence of the *'irfan* tradition."

'IRFAN IN KHOMEINI'S POETRY

Throughout his life, Khomeini had a deep affection for Persian poetry, which includes a rich vein of mystical verses. Indeed, the popularity of classical Persian poetry has transcended continents, as it has been frequently observed that during the 1990s the bestselling poet in the United States was Rumi. Indications of Khomeini's inclination for poetry appeared in his early years at Qum in the 1920s, and he started to compose his own verses presumably at the

same time. Some of these have been preserved, and they reveal Khomeini's mystical sentiments and political concerns. The fact that he also littered his prose Arabic works with verses penned by Persian mystical masters is again indicative of his predilection for the poetic tradition.

But Khomeini's prose work by far dominated his literary output, and the explicitly 'irfani element diminished over time to be replaced by ethics, jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and politics. With a few exceptions, this trend continued during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s after the success of the Islamic Revolution. It came as a surprise - perhaps even a shock - when soon after Khomeini's death, Iranians learned of a publication entitled Bada-yi 'ishq ("The Wine of Love"), which was a collection of twenty-three of his *ghazals*. Traditionally, the *ghazal* was used by Sufi poets to express sentiments of love for God, and non-Sufis had used the genre to convey their desires for a more secular beloved. The most celebrated Iranian composer of *ghazals* in the academic and popular

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imagination is Hafez of Shiraz (died 1390), whose *ghazals* continue to evince a range of interpretations, from those who understand his praise of wine and the young serving boy in a literal sense to those who see them metaphorically.

The literary merit of Khomeini's *ghazals* is beyond the scope of this article, a more pertinent subject matter is Khomeini's own consideration of 'irfan and how, and if, this affected his world view. What is worthy of consideration is a letter (included as a preface to Bada-yi 'ishq) written by Khomeini to his daughter-in-law, who instigated the Ayatollah to compose the *ghazals*, in which he discusses mystical experience. Written in the final months of his life, the letter reflected on a mis-spent youth, and Khomeini admitted candidly that "with all of its pages 'The Four Journeys' detained me from the journey to the Friend, and 'The [Meccan] Openings' yielded no opening, and 'The Bezels of Wisdom' offered no wisdom". This apparent denial of having experienced anything mystical is subsequently reconfirmed in Khomeini's *ghazals*:

*The Afar and Shifa of Ibn Sina did not solve
Our difficulty, in spite of all of their profundity and deep
discussions*

And again in another *ghazal*:

*Release me from these countless pains,
 From a heart cut in pieces and a breasts [pierces like] a kebab
 [my] life has passed in sorrow due to separation from the Friend's
 face
 I am a bird in a fie and a fish out of water
 I ahd no share of mystical pleasure (hali na shud) for all of my pain
 and life,
 Old age has come, engulfed in inertia after youth.
 I ot nothing from the lessons and discussions in the seminary,
 Who can reach the ocean from this mirage?
 Whatever I learned and whatever page I turned
 Was nothing but veil after veil.*

This example is typical of most of the *ghazals* in Khomeini's collection, which in general reflect a disappointment that the Friend has remained absent during Khomeini's lifetime, so that it is only with death that the meeting will finally occur

*The end of [my] life is coming but the Friend has not yet come!
 My story has reached a conclusion, but this pain has no end.
 The chalice os death is at handm and I never even saw a chalice o wine
 The years have flown by me, and I have still to feel the sweetheart's
 gentleness.*

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Such verses stand in stark contrast to the rapturous and ecstatic verses of Hafez, who brazenly declared,

*Hair disheveled, perspiring, smilig, drunk,
 [Her] shirt rent open, singing, glass in hand,
 With her challenging eyes and mocking lips,
 She sat down at my pillow last night at midnight
 And leaning over me, in a sad voice
 She whispered, "O my old lover! Are you asleep?"*

It is worth considering whether Khomeini's regret at the Friend's absence should be accepted at face value. That is to say, are there any valid reasons for supposing that Khomeini may have experienced something of a mystical nature in his lifetime, but was reluctant o reveal this? Was Khomeini attempting to stifle the veneration that some felt for the leader of the Islamic Revolution that for many observers resembled a form of untrammled fanaticism? Or was Khomeini, in the last months before his death, being completely truthful, because as an old man approaching his meeting with his maker, he had nothing to lose and less to hide?

Khomeini's *ghazals* bear a certain imprint of one of the major themes found in Hafez's *Divan*; namesl, a categorical refusal o accept the validity of other individuals and groups to claims of ultimate truth. Hafez regarded ascetics, Sufis, philosophers and legal

scholars as hypocrites who desired "to set themselves up as guardians, judges, and examples of moral rectitude." Instead, he praised those who were on the margins of society - who did not hide their sins but were honest in their endeavors (whether worldly or otherwise). These were the beggars, the debauch (*rind*) and the *qalandars*. For Khomeini, the issue was not related to the promotion of non-Islamic morality, but the condemnation of what he viewed as hypocrisy:

*We are at war with the Sufi, the Gnostic and the dervish,
We are in dispute with the philosophy of systematic theology
We have fled from the seminary and escaped from the people
We have been ostracized by the wise and shunned by the common.*

Khomeini's ghazals reflect his desire for an intimate encounter with God, and it is this meeting that informed much of his writing from the 1930s onwards. There is a considerable consistency in Khomeini's mystical works, but conclusive evidence regarding his own completion of the four journeys is lacking. It appears far more likely that Khomeini's *'irfani* tendencies remained purely theoretical, and in this fashion were able to remain within the normative
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framework of Twelver Shi'ism. This does not mean that he denied the possibility of mystical encounters, but it appears likely that Khomeini's belief was that only the prophets and Imams could complete the four journeys. A final point is that Khomeini's *'irfan* reflects a trend that has been witnessed in many locations in the traditional heartlands of Islam. That is, whereas Sufi activity tended to be focused within orders, the twentieth century witnessed a dramatic increase in "intellectual Sufism", which was assisted by the increase of publications of Sufi and *'irfani* works. Khomeini's own spiritual quest and descriptions of the mystical journey are divorced from discussions from discussions of ecstasy and ritualistic practices. (485)

The reader will note some parallels between St. John of the Cross and Ayatollah Khomeini: both were under many of the same influences; Neoplatonism (with all that implies), Ibn 'Arabi al-Mursi, al-Ghazzali, Suhrawardi, the Persian Sufi poets, the Shi'a Imams, especially Imam Hussein, the 3rd Imam, Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, the 6th Imam, and Imam Ali Reza, the 8th Imam. Also, as we have

seen, Spanish Catholicism and Iranian Shi'ism are by no means diametrically opposed nor antagonistic to one another.

However, one will also note a difference between St. John of the Cross and Ayatollah Khomeini. St. John of the Cross was profoundly indifferent to temporal affairs, an attitude very similar to the non-attachment of the Hindu mystics. Some will immediately say that they were two totally different types of people. However, only a little reflexion will reveal that they could not possibly have been "two totally different types of people"; otherwise, Ayatollah Khomeini would have had no interest in mysticism and *'irfan*. However, it is most certainly true that

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St. John of the Cross and Ayatollah Khomeini lived in radically different historical circumstances. To say more would be pure speculation.

I make no claim to be a practical mystic, i.e., to have been granted union with God or the Beatific Vision. However, I did indeed experience something like a revelation or a conversion, somewhat like St. Paul on the road to Damascus.

It was the second year of my course at the university of Miami of Ohio. At the time I was a very young man, only nineteen years old. Out of curiosity I picked up a slim volume titled The Teachings of the Mystics by Walter Stace. On reading this it suddenly came to me that this (Mysticism) was the Truth, that it was what I had always believed in my heart, but did not know how to articulate it nor what to call it. This was a conviction not born of logical argument, but rather like a revelation, as I said

above. My commitment to mysticism has never wavered.

Ayatollah Khomeini gave five homilies on TV in Iran. The learning and elegance of expression manifested in these homilies gives one the impression that as a "TV preacher" Ayatollah Khomeini must have been more like Archbishop Sheen or his Spanish counterpart, Fr. Guerra Campos, rather than like Jimmy Swaggert or Jim Bakker. In these homilies Ayatollah Khomeini repeatedly expressed Sufi ideas and defended Sufism from critics of various types, notably those Ali Abul Hasani scornfully refers to as "Islamic Protestants".

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Below are selections from the homilies of Ayatollah Khomeini which invoke not only Sufis, but also Mysticism in general. Said selections would seem to cause one to doubt some of Mr. Ridgeon's affirmations.

"Who can escape this temple of the self, this idol-temple that is situated within man himself? Man needs a helping hand from the world of the unseen to reach him and lead him out. It is precisely for this purpose, to lead man out of his idol-temple, that all the prophets have been sent and all the heavenly books revealed. They have enabled man to shatter the idol and begin worshipping God." (486)

"He is the First and the Last" (recall: **the Alpha and the Omega**): this may mean that the existence of all that lies between first and last is negated; there is only He (God). Again, "He is the Outward and the Inward": that is, whatever is manifest is He, not from Him. There are different degrees of manifestation, but the manifestations are not separate from the Manifestor. This is difficult to conceive, but once a person has grasped it, it is easy for him to assent to it. (487)

"Regardless of the modes and degree of our perception, reality remains what it is. And the reality is this: there is nothing other than God

Almighty; whatever is, is He. There is no exact image that can be evoked in this respect; the object that casts a shadow together with the shadow itself is imprecise and defective. A preferable image would be the ocean and its waves. The wave has no separate existence with respect to the ocean, although one cannot say the converse, that the ocean is its waves. Waves come into existence only through the motion of the ocean. When we consider the matter rationally, it appears to us that both the ocean and the waves exist, the latter being an accident with respect to the former.

But the truth of the matter is that there is nothing but ocean; the wave is also the ocean. This world is also like a wave with respect to God."(488)

"The mystic rightly described us who depend on rational argument as blind, for even after expounding the Divine Unity, and establishing by means of argument (3838)

that the principle of being is absolute perfection, we are still dependent on our rational proofs and sit outside the wall of proof we have erected without being able to see."(489)

"But man, too, is a mystery, a mystery within a mystery. All we see of man is his outward appearance, which is entirely animal and maybe even inferior to other animals. Man, however, is an animal endowed with the aptitude of becoming human and attaining perfection, even absolute perfection, of becoming what is now inconceivable for him and transcending existence."(490)

"If the body in question has the power of attraction, that is likewise an accident. Where, then, is the body itself? The body itself is a mystery, the shade or reflection of a higher mystery. It is the shadow cast by the Unity of the Divine Essence, for the names and attributes of the Essence that are made manifest to us. Were it not for the (Divine) names and attributes, the world itself would be part of the unseen."(491)

"There are those who ascend by means of gnosis (Divine Wisdom - See: Frithjof Schuon: Gnosis: Divine Wisdom) - to the point where a complete manifestation of the (Divine) Essence enters their hearts - not, of course this physical heart, but the heart where the Qur'an descended, the heart where Jibra'il (The Archangel Gabriel) alighted, the heart that is the point of departure of revelation."(492)

"...Then we spoke of the various forms of manifestation: the manifestation of the (Divine) Essence

to the (Divine) Essence, the manifestation of the Divine Essence to the (Divine) Attributes, and the manifestation of the (Divine) Essence to beings. This last constitutes our beings. To have recourse to another metaphor, imagine one hundred mirrors positioned so that the light of the sun is reflected in each. From one point of view, you might say that there are a hundred lights - one hundred separate, finite lights, each in a mirror. All of them, however, are the light, the same manifestation of the sun visible in a hundred mirrors."(493)

"...Certain hearts are predisposed to denial, hearts that are entirely deprived of the penetration of truth and light. A person with such a heart will not say, "I do not know"; he will say instead, "it is not
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true". He will accuse the mystic of talking nonsense, whereas in reality, he is veiled from the perception of what they (the mystics) are saying. The same concerns that the deniers label "nonsense" are also to be found in the Qur'an and the Sunna (*especially the Sunna or sayings of the Shi'a Imams*), although the deniers will not admit it.

Such denial is a type of unbelief, although not, of course, unbelief as defined by the Shari'a (Islamic Law). It is unbelief to deny what one is ignorant of. All the misfortunes that beset man arise out of his inability to perceive reality and his consequent denial of it. Unable to attain that which the Awliya (great mystics, great Sufis) have attained, he denies it and falls prey to the worst form of unbelief."(494)

"Once a man ceases his denial and beseeches God for a path, a path will gradually open itself before him, for God will not refuse him. Let us, then, at least attain the stage of not denying what is contained in the Qur'an and the Sunna. There are some who claim to believe in the Qur'an and the Sunna, but deny whatever it contains that lies outside their perception. They do not express their denial outright with respect to the Qur'an and the Sunna, but if someone begins to speak on the mystical matters contained therein, they will begin to talk nonsense and deny the truth of what is said. Such denial deprives man of many things. It prevents him from attaining the state needed to set out on the path; it is an obstacle that bars his way.

I recommend to all of you, then, that you at least grant the possibility that what the Awliya attained and experienced is true. You might not declare openly, "It is all possible"; but do not make a downright denial and say, "It is all nonsense"; for if you do, you will

not be able to set out on the path. So, remove this obstacle." (495)

Below Ayatollah Khomeini attacks both the nit-picking legalists and those who would reduce - note that I said "reduce" - religion to merely morals or ethics, or "general niceness", or sentimental philanthropy, or - even worse - "social gospel" or political activism and nothing else:

"The important point to be noted is that Islam
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does not merely consist of its ordinances. Ordinances are secondary, not the essence of religion, and the essence should not be sacrificed to the secondary. Once the late Shaykh Muhammad Bahari, on seeing a certain person approach, said: "He is a just and unbelieving person." We asked how this could be. He (Shaykh Muhammad Bahari) answered: "He is just in that he acts according to the stipulations of the law, but he is an unbeliever because the god he worships is not God." (496)

"When I first went to Qum (soon after the religious teaching institution had been established), the late Mirza 'Ali Akbar Hakim (may God have mercy upon him) was still alive. A certain pious individual (may God have mercy upon him, too), said: "See the level to which Islam has fallen; the doors of Mirza 'Ali Akbar are open to receive students." For some of the 'ulama, among them the late Khwansari and the late Ishraqi, would go to Mirza 'Ali Akbar's house to study mysticism with him. Now Mirza 'Ali Akbar was a very worthy man, but when he died, there was so much suspicion about him that a preacher found it necessary to testify from the minbar (pulpit) that he had seen him reading the Qur'an. This greatly disturbed the late Shahabadi. It is regrettable that some of the 'ulama should entertain those suspicions and deprive themselves of the benefits to be gained from studying mysticism. Similar attitudes prevail toward philosophy, which is actually very straightforward.

Now, if the 'ulama in question had achieved the same goal that is common to all the groups, such disputes would not have arisen. Those who wear cloaks and turbans and denounce the mystics as unbelievers do not understand what they are saying; if they did, they would not denounce them (the mystics)." (497)

"The mystics, the mystically inclined poets, and the philosophers are all saying the same thing, although they use different idioms. The poets have their own terminology and idiom, and among them Hafiz has his own peculiar mode of expression.

If I make repeated use of the same expressions - "manifestation" and so forth - do not object that I have mentioned them already; they must be constantly repeated. Once a group of merchants came to see the late Shahabadi (may God have mercy upon him), and he began to speak to them on the same mystical mystical topics that he taught to everyone. I asked him whether it was appropriate to speak to them of such matters,
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and he replied: "Let them be exposed just once to these "heretical" teachings." (498)

The Invocations of Sha'ban is a litany recited by the Shi'a Imams during the Islamic month of Sha'ban. The mystical quality or character of said litany is obvious to all students of mysticism. In the selection given below, Ayatollah Khomeini affirms that the Invocations of Sha'ban is indeed a mystical statement or document, thus affirming the words of Haidar Amoli:

"Shi'ism is Sufism, and Sufism is Shi'ism".

"Some people who have failed to understand the true meaning of certain terms and expressions used by the mystics, have gone so far as to declare them unbelievers. But let us see whether these concepts and terms do not also occur in the prayers of the (Shi'a) Imams (upon whom be peace).

In the Invocations of Sha'ban, which were recited by all the (Shi'a) Imams (something true of NO other prayer or invocation), we read as follows:

"O God, grant me total separation from other- than- Thou and attachment to You and brighten the vision of our hearts with the light of looking upon You, so that they may pierce the veils of light and attain the fountainhead of magnificence, and our spirits may be suspended from the splendor of Your sanctity. O God, make me one of those who answer You when You call, and who cry out at Your splendor."

What is meant by these pleas? What did the (Shi'a)

Imam mean by

"total separation from the other-than-Thou and attachment to You."?

Why did he (the Shi'a Imam) petition God for this form of spiritual advancement? He (the Shi'a Imam) pleads:

"Brighten the vision of our hearts."

What could this mean if not a form of vision enabling man to look upon God Almighty? As for "pierce(ing) the veils of light and attain(ing) the fountainhead of magnificence" and
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"our spirits may be suspended from the splendor of God's sanctity.",

This is none other than the state that the Qur'an describes Moses as having attained, and none other than the effacement and vanishing of which the mystics speak. Similarly, the process of "attaining" the fountainhead of magnificence is precisely the same as the "attaining" to which the mystics refer. As for "the fountainhead of magnificence", it is, of course, God Almighty; since all magnificence derives from Him, He is the fountainhead.

The terminology used by the mystics, then, is consistent with the Qur'an and the Sunna, and, for this reason, the concept of manifestation which they (the mystics) employ is to be preferred to the constricting notions of causality used by the philosophers."(242)

"We must first understand what is being said, and in the case of the mystic, we must comprehend the inner state that prompts him to express himself in a certain way. Light may sometimes enter his heart in such a manner that he finds himself saying:

"Everything is God".(499)

Remember that in the prayers you recite, expressions occur like "the eye of God", "the ear of God", "the hand of God", and all of these are in the same vein as the terminology of the mystics. There is also the tradition to the effect that when you place alms in the hands of a pauper, you are placing them in the hands of God. Then, too, there is the Qur'anic verse:

"When you cast the dust, you did not cast it, but God cast it" (VIII:17).

What does it mean? That God cast the dust instead of the prophet? That is the literal meaning, which you all accept, but those who experience the reality that is indicated in this verse cannot see matters in the same way, and are bound to express themselves differently. Nonetheless, you will find the expressions they (the mystics) use throughout the Qur'an and especially in the prayers of the (Shi'a) Imams. There is no reason to regard them with suspicion. We must understand why they (the mystics) express themselves in their particular distinct way, and why they have deliberately abandoned the common
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usage of which they are certainly aware.

They (the mystics) have insisted on doing this out of a refusal to sacrifice reality to themselves, and, instead, they have sacrificed themselves to reality. If we understand what such persons are attempting to say, we will also understand the terms which they use, which are, after all, expressions derived from the Qur'an and the traditions of the (Shi'a) Imams.

None of us has the right to say of a certain person or thing "This is God", and no rational person would accept such a claim. However, one may perceive a manifestation of God that is completely impossible to express other than by formulations such as this, which occurs in a prayer concerning the 'awliya (great mystics):

"There is no difference between You and them, except that they are Your servants, whose creation and dissolution lies in Your hands." (500)

Certainly the above selections from his TV homilies leave no possible doubt as the Ayatollah Khomeini's firm commitment to mysticism and *'irfan*.

Ayatollah Khomeini was the author of several Sufi poems, most in the style of Hafiz. Below is an example: *but* is a reference to Buddha, or to an image of Buddha, according to context, while *Butgade* refers to the Buddhist temples present in eastern Iran in pre-Islamic times:

I have become possessed by the beauty spot above your
lip, oh Beloved
I saw your fevered eye, and fell ill.
Freed from self, I beat the drum (with the rhythm of
the chant) "I am the Truth" (reference to al-Hallaj).
Like Mansur al-Hallaj I thus bought myself the gallows.
Sadness (caused by) the stealer of my heart set my soul
on fire.
Till I was overcome, and my fame spread through the
bazaar.

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Open the wine shop door to me day and night.
For I am weary of the mosque and ruhani-ye-madrasa
(religious school, seminary).
I shed the garments of (legalistic, hypocritical) piety
and pretension and put on
The dervish cloak (*khirqah*) of the Chief Magus (Pir-i-
Mughan, Zoroastrian Chief Priest) and achieved
(mystical) consciousness.
The town preacher's (nit-picking, legalistic) moralizing
irritated me.
I sought help from the words of the wine-besotted
drunkard.
Permit me to recall the *butgade* (temple of idols).
I was awakened by the hand of the *but* (idol) of the wine
shop. (501)

For those familiar with the imagery of Persian Sufi poetry,
particularly that of Hafiz, the above is readily comprehensible.

However, a few precisions are in order.

Though the image is not so common, *but* (idol) is used by
the Persian Sufi poets in the same allegorical or metaphorical
sense as "Beloved".

First, a disclaimer. I have never formally studied political
science or political philosophy; what I know about these topics I
have learned in connection with history. I never had political
ambitions. As one may gather from what is said various times in
this work, in genera I have a most unfavorable opinion of politics
and politicians, for obvious motives. I have no systematic
political philosophy, and never intend to redact one. Please note

that what I say below is somewhat abstract, and is more history than politics in the exact sense.

As Amr G.E. Sabet notes:

"Islam re-politicized introduces a new dimension in world politics by reinstating Muslims as subjects rather than mere objects of Western cultural imperial
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hegemony. Imperialism, as Bordieu and Wacquant have observed,

'rests on the power to universalize particularisms linked to a singular historical tradition by causing them to be misrecognized as such' -

this is when imperialism and totalitarianism converge. By articulating an activist agenda for the *ulema*, Khomeini and the Iranian Islamic experience continues to threaten the imperial order, rendering the misrecognized recognized." (502)

Note that the above-mentioned "**particularisms**" were fiercely resisted in large parts of the West itself, notably by the Jacobites of Ireland and Scotland, the Vendeeans and Chouans of France and the Carlists of Spain. During the Russian Civil War there were many factions among the Whites, but at least many of them could be included alongside the Jacobites, Vendeeans, Chouans and Carlists. Once again we quote from "The White Cockade" by Charles Coulombe:

...The Jacobites for Royal James
And Bonnie Charlie as well
And Carlists fought with Spanish names
While Chouans tasted hell.

The brave emerged from old Vendee
And died at Quiberon
Or fought with great old Duke Conde
Or fell at bold Toulon. ...

In far off Russia's blinding snows
The Whites fought for their Tsar
And though their country's sunk in woes

Their glory none can mar. ...

...I beg the King Who reigns above
That to me may be shown
How to fight with savage love
For altar, and for throne.

Nietzsche certainly would not generally be considered as

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belonging in the same company as Jacobites, Vendeeans, Chouans and Carlists. However, in some respects Nietzsche was bitterly opposed to the above-mentioned "particularisms". A Jacobite, Vendeean, Chouan and Carlist would heartily agree with everything Nietzsche said in "On the New Idol", which is contained in Thus spoke Zarathushtra.

So, said "**particularisms**", far from being universal, were savagely resisted in much of the West itself, being imposed only after prolonged and bloody wars. Thus, they can have no possible claim to universal validity.

As Mr. Sabet recognizes, those who were constantly screaming about "imperialism" were themselves agents of said imperialisms, their minds being totally colonized. Supposed "Third World" champions against "imperialism", such as Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, Kim Il Sung and Fidel Castro attempted to impose the inhuman dialectic of a Jewish-German thinker, and were thus themselves agents of imperialism, whose minds were totally colonized.

In South Vietnam, the Hoa Hao Buddhists were the most bitter enemies of the communists, truthfully saying that Marxism is very much a Western doctrine, and that Ho Chi Minh and his successors were, in reality, agents of imperialism whose minds were totally

colonized. The Hoa Hao received arms and ammunition from the French and the Americans, but otherwise ran their own affairs. The area dominated by the Hoa Hao was known as the only part of the Mekong Delta completely free of Viet Minh or Viet Cong, i.e.,

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communists, who feared to enter the area. Both the French and the Americans considered the Hoa Hao to be superb fighters. One shudders to think what has happened to the Hoa Hao under the communist tyranny. The only crime of the Hoa Hao was to defend the true heritage and tradition of Viet Nam against those who would impose a crassly materialist, utterly odious, alien and inhuman doctrine. The most implacable enemies of the true heritage and tradition of Viet Nam were not the French nor the Americans, but rather the communists, i.e., the Viet Minh and the Viet Cong. The Hoa Hao Buddhists are proof of this.

Ho Chi Minh claimed to be a great Vietnamese patriot, but he was a liar: in fact he was an agent of western imperialism whose mind was thoroughly colonized.

Mr. Sabet continues:

"Nevertheless, a discourse of governance has no doubt developed both in theory and praxis which provides a platform from which to engage issues that have dogged Muslims for a long time. Such a development carries significant implications. As John Stempel put it,

"Clerical supremacy as asserted by Ayatollah Khomeini is an implied standing challenge to secular governments everywhere. If it continues to exist and prosper, a centuries-old Western trend of separation between church and state would be reversed".

Stempel was attesting to the fact that Ayatollah Khomeini, the man from Qum who would bring back the faith on the eve of the fifteenth Islamic century, "viewed from whatever perspective, was not an ordinary

man." (503)

In USA and various other countries, the infamous "separation of church and state" is a dogma which must not be questioned; one

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is constantly bombarded by its praises, and any facts which contradict this - and there exists a vast multitude of said facts - are suppressed and "swept under the rug". "Separation of church and state" is something which cannot be questioned.

Essentially, the idea of separation of church and state is the result of the bloody religious wars which devastated so much of western and central Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. It was argued that separation of church and state would bring about tolerance and an end to religious wars. Of course, it was also argued that there was a fallacy here, since, if anything, a secular state could - and probably would - be even more intolerant than a confessional one, simply because a confessional state would tolerate at least one religion, while a secular state could - and probably would - persecute all religions.

Those who still defend separation of church and state are living in a time warp; they are still living in 1788. In 1788 it could have been argued that a secular state would bring about tolerance and an end to religious wars. However, the savage anti-religious persecutions of the French Revolution proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the whole idea of separation of church and state is based on lies, fallacies and inconfessable hidden agendas, that a secular state could be more savagely intolerant than a confessional one. Since the French Revolution it has been

demonstrated time and again that a secular state can be more brutally intolerant than a confessional one, and that, in fact, those who defend separation of church and state have a hidden - or

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not so hidden - agenda; said separation leads first to the marginalization of religion, i.e., reducing it to the "private sphere", and finally to its suppression. Lenin, Stalin and all other Marxist tyrants were fanatical defenders of separation of church and state, as was Hitler. Today it is an everyday occurrence that separation of church and state is used as a pretext for the marginalization of religion, for anti-religious discrimination and even persecution. Yet, all this is conveniently suppressed if not forgotten, and most people are so thoroughly brainwashed that they consider it a undeniable fact that separation of church and state is superior, conveniently forgetting that, for example, Lenin used separation of church and state as his favorite pretext for savage and bloody anti-religious persecution. Anyone who still believes in separation of church and state is either a militant secularist or a brainwashed idiot.

In Tsarist Russia church and state were not separated; Holy Russia was officially Eastern Orthodox, while, in Soviet Russia church and state were indeed separated, as Lenin never tired of affirming. Yet ask the Muslims of the Caucasus and Central Asia if Islam was more tolerated under the Tsars or under the Soviets.

The Austro-Hungarian or Habsburg Empire was officially Catholic; no pretense was made of separation of church and state. Ask the Bosnian Muslims if they were better off under the

Habsburgs or under the communist dictatorship of Marshall Tito, in which church and state were most certainly separated. We have discussed this in greater detail in other parts of this work.

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So, the theory of separation of church and state, based as it is on lies and fallacies, has, for the first time since the end of World War I and the downfall of Tsarist Russia and Habsburg Austria, been seriously challenged, shown not to be invincible. Now the proponents of separation of church and state will have to defend it with proofs and arguments, not merely take it as something beyond question. Also, the downfall of the Soviet Union and the discrediting of Communism in general has weakened secularis in general, since the Communist regimes were the most secular of all, and have been shown to be failures in every respect. Is it only a coincidence that the downfall of the Soviet Union occurred only a short time after the Islamic Revolution in Iran? Does anyone seriously believe this?

I must confess that I have had some doubts concerning *velayat-e-faqih*, or "governance by Shi'a jurisprudents", the present form of government in Iran. Firstly, *velayat-e-faqih* is something of an innovation, which always makes me cautious and doubtful. Secondly, I could think of some very practical or pragmatic objections. However, recently someone made a comment which caused me to view *velayat-e-faqih*, more favorably id est: "Velayat-e-faqih is the very antithesis of separation of church and state."

For the reasons given by Mr. Sabet, I consider the Islamic

Revolution in Iran to be one of the most positive developments of the 20th century.

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We mention in passing the distinction between "idol" and "icon", lucidly explained by St. John of Damascus and more recently in a very succinct manner by Kathleen Raine:

"When is an idol (Greek: *eidolon*) an icon (Greek - *eikonos*) When is an icon an idol? The icon is transparent as a representation of the spiritual reality it depicts: an idol replaces and obscures that reality. ... All is idolatry that takes the outer form to be in itself an object of veneration. But, again, the most tawdry of idols or holy pictures can become transparent vehicles for spiritual meanings when they reflect and transmit a living vision." (504)

St. John of Damascus would agree completely with the above, as would Eastern Orthodox writers on icons. Below is a brief synthesis of the teachings of the brilliant, polyfaceted Russian thinker Fr. Pavel Florensky, born 1882:

"Continuing the patristic tradition, (Fr. Pavel) Florensky believed that 'the icon is a reminder of the archetype on high.' A man does not receive knowledge from outside through contemplating an icon, but evokes in himself the memory of the forgotten depth of being, of his spiritual homeland, and this remembrance brings him the joy of recovering the forgotten truth. the icon, however, contains only a scheme, a sensually perceived "reconstruction" of spiritual experience, of the invisible world, of "mental reality". It presents visually "that which is not given to sensual experience." However, such a "reconstruction" has a particular, specific character-it is a reconstruction at once aesthetic and sacral.

The icon, for Florensky, is a "speculation in visual images," "an aesthetic phenomenon," the highest kind of art," located at the summit of artistic-aesthetic values. The aesthetic here is understood, not in the sense of Baumgarten's aesthetics, but in that deeply mystical meaning which for centuries was taking shape in (Eastern) Orthodox culture, was consolidated in the collections of the Philokalia, and was formulated by Florensky as applied above all to asceticism.

According to this understanding, the icon, while it is an aesthetic phenomenon, is not limited to the
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artistic sphere alone, but exceeds its limits significantly. The icon, Florensky wrote, 'is not a work of art, a product of self-sufficient creativity, but a work of witness, which has need of art along with many other things.' By this he strives to warn his readers against a purely artistic, aestheticizing approach to the icon, which confines itself to the icon's pictorially expressive aspects (however high their level).

True painting, he thought, is something more than a mere pictorial surface. It 'has as its goal to bring the viewer beyond the limits of sensually perceived paint and canvas (or wood: most Byzantine and Russian icons are painted on wood) into a certain reality, and then the pictorial work shares the basic ontological character of all symbols generally, that of **BEING WHAT THEY SYMBOLIZE.**' Here the most important principle of religious and precisely of (Eastern) Orthodox, aesthetics is formulated. Art, as we know, does not claim to be anything else but essentially a work of art either in Platonism or in the Western European idealistic (though NOT medieval Catholic) aesthetics rooted in Platonism, much less in materialism. And this does not exclude, but rather defines its function as sign and symbol, its artistic-aesthetic worth. (Eastern) Orthodox (and medieval Catholic) aesthetics has always regarded this as insufficient."(505)

Because of his unswerving loyalty to the Russian Orthodox Church, on December 8, 1937 Fr. Pavel Florensky was murdered by the Soviet Communists, one of many millions of Muslims and Christians martyred at the hands of Marxist atheism. Oh how sweetly tolerant is separation of church and state!

The allegorical use of the word *but* (idol) by the Persian Sufi poets indicates that they also are aware of the distinction between "idol" and "icon", the acknowledgement of which gives a whole new dimension to the Persian Sufi use of *but* (idol) and *butgade* (temple of idols) Most interestingly, the Persian word *but* (idol) is derived from "Buddha", a reference to the images of

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Buddha once found in Buddhist temples in much of the Eastern Iranian world: from a Buddhist viewpoint, said images are intended to be icons; however, in the minds of the ignorant, stupid and spiritually obtuse they could indeed become idols. Obviously, I am **NOT** saying that the Persian Sufis were or are crypto-Buddhists. There are many possible layers of allegory and symbolism here. However, one must be careful of reading more into something than the author had in mind. In any case, the allegorical use of *but* (idol) and *butgade* (temple of idols) in Persian Sufi verse is not blasphemous nor does it represent a rejection of Islam.

The truth of the words of Kathleen Raine, as well as the words of St. John of Damascus, John Baggley, Pavel Florensky, Leonid Ouspensky, Vladimir Lossky and Henri Nouwen on the same topic as cited above is self-evident from a Christian and Islamic standpoint; to deny said truth is neither Christian nor Islamic - it is Manichaeism. (506)

Mullah Abd ar-Rahman Damavandi was a Persian Shi'a philosopher of the 17th century; unlike many Persian philosophers and theologians, he wrote in Persian rather than Arabic. 215 pages are devoted to Mullah Damavandi in the vast Anthologie des Philosophes Iranien Depuis le XVII Siecle Jusqua Nous Jours edited by Sayyed Jalal ad-Din Ashtiyani of the University of Meshed, Iran. Henry Corbin has published a condensation of the vast anthology titled La philosophie iranienne islamique aux XVII and XVIII siecles (Paris, 1981), and it is from this that I have obtained my information on Mullah Damavandi.

Mullah Damavandi devoted much effort to the question of what is an icon (Greek: *eikonos*) and what is an idol (Greek: *eidolon*). Mullah Damavandi approached said question from various angles and points of view.

From one point of view, an idol is an "opaque" image, which reveals only itself and leads nowhere, while an icon is "transparent", enabling he who contemplates it to pass through it to that which it symbolizes. (507)

The transcendent unity of Being coexists with the multiplicity of existents contingent to it. To see in every existent the Being to which it is contingent, to see in every illuminated object the Light which reveals it, this is the same as the concept of the theophanic form, and is to elevate an image to the rank of icon, redeeming said image from its degradation as an idol.

Idolatry, in contrast, is to see an object as though it were itself the Light which reveals it, thus closing all ways to transcend it. To confuse an existent with the Absolute Being to which it is contingent is to close the ways to transcendence in the same manner, to confuse an idol with an icon. On the other hand, when the image is transformed into an icon, it itself shows the way beyond itself, to that which it symbolizes. The image transformed to an icon is the image invested with a theophanic function. The whole gamut of theophanic forms is an immense iconostasis. (508)

Mullah Damavandi says in his own words:

"All levels and degrees of Absolute Being are icons, because in the mirror formed by the icons may be contemplated the Face of Absolute Beauty. To pass through all levels and degrees of Being, without definitively stopping at one station among the stations (*here a Catholic is reminded of the Stations of the Cross*), and attain Being that truly Is, this is something conditioned by a pre-eternal divine decision, and that is why the Light Verse (Qur'an XXIV:35) tells us:

'God guides unto His Light whomever He wills'

which is to say He guides by the Light invested (*in all theophanic forms*) towards the Absolute Light." (509)

Idolatry consists in immobilizing oneself in front of an idol, that which is so opaque that one is rendered incapable of discerning whether or not it invites one to progress beyond it. The opposite of idolatry is **not** to practice a fierce and Vandalic destruction of idols, but rather it consists in rendering the idol transparent to the Light invested in it, in other words, to transform an idol into an icon, if this be possible, and it is possible save perhaps in a few very extreme cases.

Henry Corbin summarizes thusly the teachings of Mullah Damavandi concerning idols and icons:

"It is an idol, that which attracts to itself the visions of he who contemplates it. It (the *idol*) is opaque, without transparence, and so remains on the level from whence it began. But it is an icon, be it a painted image or a mental image, whose transparence permits he who contemplates it to, with its help, go beyond it to that (*Light*) which traverses it. As beyond a stained glass window is the light which traverses it." (510)

It should be noted that Mullah Damavandi's definition of an icon as contrasted to an idol is allowing for the differences of modes of expression of two different though closely related

traditions, the same as that of St. John of Damascus, Kathleen Raine and the Russian Orthodox theologians mentioned above, especially Fr. Pavel Florensky. Of course, all this is far beyond the comprehension of the feeble, twisted, crypto-Manichaeic little minds of Calvinists, Wahhabis and Taliban.

Other Shi'as besides Mullah Demavandi have defended images. In 1972 in Karachi was published an anonymous book titled Shiaism Explained. The author notes that Muhammad smiled and did not disapprove when his wife Aisha was found to possess and a toy horse. (511)

In a manner reminiscent of both Mullah Demavandi and St. John of Damascus, the anonymous author states:

"It will be remembered that there is a clear distinction between the idols whose worshippers are called polytheist, and the statues which are not worshipped by their makers and (therefore) their making is not in any way against the ideal of Tauhid (Divine Unity).

In any case, any action of which the Prophet Muhammad did not disapprove is therefore permissible." (512)

As we shall note in more detail in the following chapter, in the Indian Subcontinent, Zuljenah, the horse of Imam Hussein, plays an important role in the Muharram processions of Ashura. The image of Zuljenah is called *shabih-e-Zuljenah*. The above-mentioned anonymous author, once again reminding one of both Mullah Demavandi and St. John of Damascus, notes that the *shabih* is nothing more than a "memorial" of Imam Hussein's valiant action of riding into combat at Karbala. Therefore, kissing or garlanding the horse is not idolatry, but only a gesture of love for the

person memorialized by the *shabih*. (513)

Note that the author uses sources to which a Sunni cannot possibly object, i.e., quotations from the Qur'an and a reference from the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad to Aisha. It should be noted that, to put it very mildly, Aisha is not highly esteemed by the Shi'as due to her hostility to Ali ibn Abi Talib and his wife Fatima Zahra, but is highly revered by Sunnis as the favorite wife of the Prophet Muhammad.

In another polemic work, this one published in Lahore in 1979, the Shi'a scholar Ghulam Husain Najafi defends the veration of the *shabih-e-Zuljenah*. First Najafi cites the Qur'an:

By the snorting chargers!
And those that gallop with their hooves striking fire,
And those who rush to the attack at dawn!
And thus stir aloft the dust,
And penetrate through the line of the foe all of them.
(Qur'an C:5)

Najafi continues:

"In these Qur'anic verses the Lord "may He be exalted" has described the majesty of those warriors and horses who consecrate themselves in holy war and go forth to the battlefield of jihad. It seems that when a warrior on jihad's battlefield is praised, then it is also pleasing to God that here be remembrance of the warrior's horse along with the warrior himself.

On the day of Ashura, Shi'as remember those holy warriors who engaged in jihad against the injustice of the Banu Umayyah on thr field of Karbala. So, together with the commemoration of those persons, the faithful also commemorate those horses who on the battlefield of Karbala from thirst and hunger and who, on the field of war, in the manner of holy warriors, were struck by arrows and lances.

O friends of justice! On Ashura the likeness of the horse is a representation of the Karbala martyrs who suffered as innocent victims of oppression. It is

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permissible and not a sin, to set up a likeness for the

sake of establishing the remembrance of a solemn tragedy." (514)

It has always seemed obvious to me that iconoclasm, whether found in Christianity or Islam, is a Manichaeian infection. It is well known that the Byzantine iconoclasts hailed from a part of Anatolia which, not long before, had been a stronghold of Manichaeianism, locally called "Paulicianism". We have commented on the Cathar, Albigensian, or in any case Manichaeian roots of Calvinism, particularly its extreme manifestations, such as the English Puritans, the Covenanters of the Scottish Lowlands and the more extreme of the French Huguenots.

It has been noted by myself and the Southern conservative Charley Reese among others that the Wahhabis are the Puritans of Islam. In another place in this book I have noted that the resemblances between Wahhabism on the one hand and English Puritanism on the other are so close as to be uncanny, making it difficult - virtually impossible to believe that said resemblances are a mere coincidence. Some have speculated that Abdul Wahhab, founder of Wahhabism, was inspired by Calvinism. While not proven, this is perfectly possible and plausible, because, as we have said, the resemblances between English Puritanism and Wahhabism appear to be far too close to be a coincidence. During the period of Puritan dominance in England, there were many English ships in the waters around the Arabian Peninsula, following the route to India. The British *Raj* in India is often thought of as being of

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the Victorian Era, but in fact its beginnings date back to the

times of Elizabeth I, long before the days of Oliver Cromwell and the age of Puritan dominance in England.

Isam Taher al-Oteibi, known as Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, is leader of the Salafis of Jordan, though he himself is a Palestinian. Maqdisi is author of a book titled Milat Ibrahim (The Creed of Abraham), a curiously Jewish sounding title. In Milat Ibrahim, Maqdisi says that anti-Islamic "tyrants" include stone idols, the sun, the moon, trees, graves (a reference to the Sufi and Shi'a practice of visiting the graves of saints and Imams). (515)

R.H. Tawney noted that except for an appropriated name, Puritanism has nothing Christian about it. In deed, Calvinism in general and its extreme forms, such as the English and New England Puritanism and the "Covenanters" of the Scottish Lowlands, is a Judeo-Manichaeen-Nominalist cult which has nothing whatever to do with Christianity save an appropriated or "hijacked" name. Likewise, the *Wahhabis*, *Salafis*, *Deobandis*, *Taliban*, *al-Qaeda*, etcetera, all are a Judeo-Manichaeen-Nominalist cult which has nothing whatever to do with Islam save an appropriated or "hijacked" name.

There is a direct and unbroken line between the ancient Manichaeans, the Byzantine Iconoclasts, the *Bogomils* of medieval Bulgaria, the *Cathars* or *Albigensians* of medieval western Europe, the *Covenanters* of the Scottish Lowlands and the English and New England Puritans, and finally the *Wahhabis*, *Salafis*, *Deobandis*,

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Taliban, *al-Qaeda*, etcetera. All of the above groups may claim to

be Christian (as even some of the original Manichaeans sometimes did) or Muslims, but in reality they are Judaizers, crypto-Manichaeans and Nominalists who have nothing to do with Christianity or Islam, though they may claim to be the only "pure" Christians (as did the Cathars or Albigensians and the English and New England Puritans) or "pure" Muslims, but in fact they have nothing to do with Christianity or Islam save an appropriated or "hijacked" name.

Let no one say that I am quick to denounce crypto-Manichaeans or Crypto-Cathars among Protestants, but that I give those crypto-Manichaeans or crypto-Cathars who claim to be Muslims a free pass.

In this book I have repeatedly denounced the philosophical doctrine known as "Nominalism". So it should surprise no one that I also reject and denounce Nominalism in a slightly different meaning of the word;

I do not care a cumin seed for names or labels. To me, only meanings and substance are important.

In some versions, of Ayatollah Khomeini's sufi poem, in place of "Chief Magus" (*Pir-i-Mughan*) I have seen, is a "Wine Merchant". In specifically Shi'a Persian Sufi poetry, both "Chief Magus" (*Pir-i-Mughan*) and "Wine Merchant" are used to symbolize Ali ibn Abi Talib. "Chief Magus" (*Pir-i-Mughan*) would seem to fit better in the verse in which it appears, as both the Sufi initiation and the Zoroastrian initiation involve the bestowing of a symbolic sacred woolen garment on the initiated.

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Said woolen garment is the cloak or *khirqah* in the case of the

Sufis and the *kusti*, a sacred cord woven of seventy-two woolen threads which is worn around the waist in the case of the Zoroastrians.(516) The image "Wine Merchant" would seem to fit better with the imagery of the succeeding verses. Personally, I prefer the image of the "Chief Magus", as it goes so well with the image of the *khirqah*, which the "Wine Merchant" image does not, and it seems to me that the imagery of the final verses of the poem can stand on its own, but, of course, others may feel differently.

Readers surprised at all this - as I was - should remember that for much of his life Ayatollah Khomeini was a pious and learned 'alim apparently little interested in politics.

The relation between Sufism and Shi'ism is complex, and has been the subject of voluminous studies over the centuries. We can only briefly touch on it here.

It should be obvious that, in spite of the unfavourable political climate, al-Andalus was fertile and well-prepared ground for Shi'ism. To put it another way, it appears evident that Shi'ism must have appealed greatly to the populace of al-Andalus.

There are some positive proofs of the presence of Shi'ism in al-Andalus. Ibn Hazm of Cordoba mentions the existence of Shi'a villages in al-Andalus.(517) Unfortunately, there is no firm indication as to whether these Shi'as were Ismailis or Twelvers. Some have assumed that they were Ismailis because of the proximity of the Fatimids.

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In summary, there is little which indicates if the Shi'as

of al-Andalus were Ismailis, Twelvers or both. I am inclined to think that they were both, i.e., that some were Ismailis and some (the large majority) were Twelvers.

Because it is essentially peripheral to the theme of the previous chapter, we mentioned certain things only in passing. Due to the Almoravid invasion, large numbers of Mozarabs and Jews fled to the Christian Kingdoms of the North. Less well-known is the fact that large numbers of Muslims also fled al-Andalus as a result of the Almoravid invasion, especially, though not exclusively, Shi'as and Sufis, who were brutally persecuted by the Almoravides. Though some of these Muslims fled to the Christian Kingdoms, especially the city of Toledo, a much larger number fled to the Kingdom of Saragossa, the only Hispano-Muslim Taifa Kingdom to remain free of the Almoravides. Saragossa and Tudela, like Toledo, had maintained a sizable Mozarabic population throughout the Muslim period. There is evidence that said Mozarabs were strongly imbued with Shi'ism. We have already that the tympanum of the portal of the Mozarabic church of Ste. Mary Magdalene in Tudela is a scene in which 14 persons are shown, 8 on one side and 6 on the other, with a dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit descending on the 14. Now, as we have said, the number 14 has no special significance in the Christian Tradition, but in Shi'ism it represents Muhammad, Fatima and the 12 Holy Imams.

The tulip and its symbolism have great importance in Shi'a Islam, particularly in Iran. In Persian poetry, the tulip is

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associated with the blood of lovers who die in their quest.

Remember, the wild Iranian tulip (*Tulipa Montana*), is blood red. The tulip also used to symbolize the blood shed in the service of God. In Zoroastrianism, a tulip grows from the cheek of the martyred Siyavush, of whom we have spoken before. Sharbanu was the daughter of Yazdigird III, last Sassanian Shah, wife of Imam Hussein and mother of Ali Zayn al-Abidin, 4th Shi'a Imam. Hence, Zoroastrians join in the Ashura mourning ceremonies for Imam Hussein, as they consider Imam Hussein to be their beloved son-in-law (*dâmâd*). We shall have more to say of this in the following chapter.

In Iranian Shi'ism, the tulip symbolizes the blood shed by Imam Hussein and the other martyrs of Karbala. In Iran the is **the** symbol or icon of martyrdom. (518)

As the tulip has five petals, it also represents the *panj-e-tan*, or *Five Pure Ones*,: Muhammad, Fatima, Imam Ali, Imam Hasan and Imam Hussein. We shall have more to say concerning the *panj-e-tan* in the following chapter.

One is reminded of the symbolism of the five petals of the wild rose, the *quinta essencia*, a symbolism also known in Iran.

Also interesting is the fact that the outer rim of the tympanum of the portal of the church of Ste. Mary Magdalene (or Santa Maria Magdalena) in Tudela is formed by a row of 14 tulips. Also, these tulips do not appear to be springing directly from the soil, and so are not the usual tulips (*Tulipa*) but rather appear to spring from what is called in English-speaking countries the

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Chinese tulip tree (*Liriodendron Chinense*), as the Latin

Liriodendron indicates, a member of the magnolia family. Trees of the magnolia family are found in Asia and North America. The North American tulip tree obviously does not concern us here. The Chinese or Asian (there is really no proof that it originated in China) tulip tree has long since spread to the Middle East, Europe America, grown as an ornamental plant in all these places. It is fairly common as an ornamental plant in Spain and North America, where, of course, it is a relatively recent introduction.

There is an illuminated manuscript of the early 10th century known in medieval Latin as Beatus de Gerona, in Spanish as Beato De Gerona, or, in Catalan as Beat de Girona. Said manuscript, despite its name, was not made in Gerona, where it only appears in the 11th century. The Latin writing in which it is written uses Visigothic letters, so it cannot have been written in Catalunya: after most of Catalunya, including Gerona, was conquered by Charlemagne in the late 8th century, Carolingian letters replaced Visigothic letters, though Visigothic letters continued to be used in Galicia, Asturias, Leon, Castile and al-Andalus.

It was in the monastery of San Miguel de la Escalada (Leon), a monastery of Mozarabic architecture, that a painter named Magius illuminated a series of manuscripts, finishing them in 952. Magius then moved to Tabara, also in the region of Leon, where he began to work on another illuminated manuscript, but his work was interrupted by death. Magius' work was finished by a monk named Emeterius and a nun named Ende. (519) The name "Emeterius"

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indicates that he was a native of Merida, and therefore a Mozarab

by birth. Little is known of the family of Ende, but it is assumed that she was also a Mozarab, or at least of a Mozarabic family. Certainly all the above-mentioned illuminated manuscripts are Mozarabic in style, though, as we shall see, with certain Leonese characteristics.

Page 63 of the Beatus of Gerona contains a most enigmatic painting. Apparently because of missing pages, the manuscript contains no information explaining said painting. The painting can be easily described; there is a what is obviously a Chinese tulip tree and a woman mounted on some mythological beast who holds a cup in her left hand. What does this mean? What is it meant to represent? A communion chalice? The Holy Grail? Both?

Some have claimed that the woman in the above-mentioned painting is the Virgin Mary, while others say that she is Ste. Mary of Magdala, generally known as Ste. Mary Magdalene. Anyone familiar with the conventions of early and medieval Christian iconography knows that saints are always portrayed with a halo, nimbus or aura, which the woman in said painting is not. Now, by the same conventions, angels do not usually have halos. Why not? Because angels are immaterial beings; remember the scholastic controversy about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin?. Therefore, all representations of angels are purely symbolic, as they have no physical form and never had one. Therefore, angels are not usually portrayed wearing halos, which are reserved for saints who once walked the earth and had a physical, human form.

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The beast which the woman is mounted upon is not "The Beast

of the Apocalypse", as some claim, because, in fact, it has not one characteristic in common with said apocalyptic beast. Artistically, the beast in the painting is a typically Leonese element, because it is obviously derived from the Celtic "animal style" or Celtic animal patterns, which figure so largely in the famed Irish illuminated manuscripts. Galicia, Asturias, Leon and Old Castile were all ancient Celtic lands very thinly and superficially Romanized, and later visited by Irish monks and scholars. In the above-mentioned regions, Celtic artistic motifs survive to this day, and were omnipresent in the Middle Ages. This beast, though strange, is not in the least demonic nor fearsome.

Since it is not the Beast of the Apocalypse, what does the beast on page 63 of the Beatus of Gerona represent? Since said beast is one which never existed and never could exist, it means that the woman is mounted on a non-existent beast, in other words, it is another indication that said woman is a symbolic representation of an immaterial being, who never had a physical form; in other words, she is a feminine angel, almost certainly the *Hagia Sophia*, *Sophia Perennis*, Holy Wisdom, the *Daena*. (520)

The Persian mathematician and poet Omar Khayyam wrote:

Imitate the tulip which flowers in *Now Ruz*; take (like the tulip) a cup in your hand, and should the occasion present itself, drink, drink of the wine with gusto in company of a young beauty whose cheeks are the color of the flower.

Now, the tulip (*Tulipa Montana*) is, apparently, a native of

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northern Iran. (521) In other words, the tulip (*laleh* in Persian: "tulip" is a Turkish word) is not a tropical plant. Andalusia,

northern Palestine and southern USA excluding Florida and much of Texas and the Gulf Coast are roughly its southern limits. In Andalusia and southern USA the tulip does NOT bloom in *Now Ruz*, which is the Spring Equinox and falls around March 21, but rather it blooms in May or late April at the earliest. Omar Khayyam recognizes this in another place:

“Come, raise your cup as a tulip in mid-May”

recognizing that the tulip (*Tulipa Montana*) does bloom in May in northern Iran (Omar Khayyam was a native of Nishapur in Khurasan), perhaps a few days earlier in Andalusia and southern USA, where the climate is a bit warmer and Spring arrives earlier. The Chinese tulip tree (*Liriodendron Chinense*) is indeed one of the first plants to flower in Spring, indeed blooming around March 21, when it is covered with tulip-shaped white or pink flowers. Note also that in the first quotation cited above, Omar Khayyam says:

“A young beauty whose cheeks are the color of this flower.”

Now, the wild Persian tulip (*Tulipa Montana*) (and most cultivated tulips) is a brilliant, blood red. (522) A girl whose cheeks are a brilliant, blood red must have already overindulged in wine. The flowers of the Chinese tulip tree are often a rosy red. In the first quotation which we have cited here, Omar Khayyam must have been speaking of the Chinese tulip tree, not the tulip in the strict sense. The tulip flower, whether of the tulip in the strict

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sense (*Tulipa*) or of the Chinese tulip tree, (*Liriodendron Chinense*) is a favorite of the Nosayri Order of the Imami or Twelver Shi'as because it has the form of a cup (as Omar Khayyam

indicated above.), because, as we said in Chapter One, the cup, *krater* or Holy Grail plays an important part in their symbolism.

Also on page 63 of the Beatus of Gerona is a tree, obviously a Chinese tulip tree. In the foliated part of said tree, above the trunk are 13 tulips, interspersed with unopened buds. Six tulips are on one side of the foliage and seven on the other. At the very top of said tree is another tulip which is only partly visible in the painting. It certainly seems to be the case that that the 13 visible tulips represent Muhammad, Fatima and 11 of the Holy Imams, while the only partially visible or partially drawn and painted tulip at the very top of the tree represents the Hidden Imam.

Also, there is a play on words possible in Castilian and Leonese but not in Latin nor Catalan nor English. In Castilian and the now extenct Leonese language the word *copa* has two possible meanings: "cup" and the "foliated part of a broad-leafed tree". In Castilian and Leonese, the 3 parts of a broad-leafed tree are are *raiz* (root), *tronco* (trunk) and *copa*, this last meaning the foliated part of the tree above the trunk. On page 63 of the Beatus of Gerona, the woman mounted on the mythological beast is holding a cup in her hand, as we said above. As we have also mentioned, the cup or Holy Grail plays an important role in the symbolism of the Nosayris. Obviously, page 63 of the Beatus of

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Gerona encloses a wealth of symbolisms, most or all of which are related to Shi'ism, though perhaps mixed with Christian symbolism.

On page 18 of the Beatus of Gerona is a painting titled "The

Joy of the Just on the Day of Resurrection". Each of the Just in said painting carries a harp or lyre, while some hold a cup or chalice in the other hand.

On page 190 of the Beatus of Gerona, which represents the "Adoration of the Lamb (symbol of Jesus) on Mount Zion", all those portrayed carry harps or lyres, and one also carries a cup or chalice.

Note that on pages 18 and 190 of the Beatus of Gerona we see something which corresponds to the iconography of Salman Pak or Salman the Persian in Nosayri symbolism, in which Salman Pak has in his right hand a cup or chalice (or Holy Grail), and in the left hand a lute. Salman Pak is the prototype of those who, without the aid of an earthly master, but aided only by the spiritual magnetism of the Holy Imam, have accomplished it that their souls attain the summit of the mystical Sinai, *Mount Qaf*, the Mount Carmel of St. John of the Cross. (523) Thus it is that the 14th century Persian Sufi Alaoddawieh Semnani could speak of the "Salman Pak of his being" and the "Salman Pak of your being". (524)

Observe how Salman Pak appears in what Henry Corbin called "The Shi'ite Liturgy of the (Holy) Grail" by Abul Hasan al-Aqiqi (mid 9th century):

" The Nosayri explanation takes the form of an
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exegesis of Qur'an LIV:6 'The day when the Caller shall call them to a difficult thing' (in this case, conversion from Zoroastrianism to Islam). This day is that of the Manifestation (*zohur*) of Salman the Persian (also known as Salman Pak, a Zoroastrian by birth), symbolized by the (Arabic) letter *Sin* = "S".

"In his right hand he (Salman Pak) holds a (Holy)

Grail (*ka's*, a cup or chalice) in which is found the Servant of the Light (*'abd al-nur*, c.f., the wine of the *Malakut*). In his left hand he (Salman Pak) holds a lute." (525)

Once again we see that St. John of the Cross was not only a Sufi initiate, but that he was also imbued with Shi'ism.

The above pages dealing with the Mozarabs and Mudejares of the Valley of the Ebro and with the Beatus of Gerona, a product of Mozarabs who migrated to Leon, are most interesting, for the following reasons:

- ❖ 1.) Certainly they demonstrate the presence of Shi'ism in Muslim Spain, and, in the case of the Beatus of Gerona from an early date. They demonstrate that al-Andalus was fertile ground for Shi'ism, in spite of the general unfavorable political climate.
- ❖ 2.) Some have said that any Shi'as in al-Andalus must have all been Ismailis, due to the proximity of the Fatimids in North Africa. We have given examples of Ismailis in al-Andalus. However, I always felt that the Shi'as of al-Andalus were mainly Imamis or Twelvers. While not conclusive, what we have said above certainly seems to indicate that most of the Shi'as of al-Andalus were indeed Imamis or Twelvers.

The powerful evidence of strong Shi'a influence among the Mozarabs all over al-Andalus; the Valley of the Ebro is in Eastern Spain, but those Mozarabs who migrated to Leon and Castile were almost entirely from Cordoba and western Andalusia, the painter Emeterius apparently being a native of Merida in Extremadura, as his name indicates. This would seem to prove beyond a doubt that in al-Andalus Shi'ism, like Sufism, was "in the air", found in all parts of al-Andalus and affected and influenced people who were

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professionally Sunni or Christian (Mozarabs), and did not consider themselves to be Shi'as. The Shi'a influences in the works of St. John of the Cross are further proofs of this. Later in the this chapter and in the following chapter we will show evidence that Spanish Catholic Holy Week, especially Good Friday, celebrations demonstrate

that they are very largely derived from Shi'a celebrations of Ashura, which is yet another proof that in al-Andalus Shi'ism, like Sufism, was "in the air" and affected and influenced people who were confessionally Sunni or Catholic. Spanish Catholicism prepared the ground for Shi'ism in al-Andalus, and later Shi'ism, like Sufism, profoundly influenced Spanish Catholicism in a great many respects.

It has been noted by many, including Dominique Urvoy and M.A. Makki that there were indeed Shi'as in Muslim Spain or al-Andalus, and that said Shi'as were, as nearly as can be determined, invariably of native Spanish or Andalusian origin rather than being of Arab or Berber blood. (526) This is hardly surprising; these Muslims of Spanish origin were either themselves Spanish Catholics (Mozarabs) by birth, converted to Islam, or else were descendants of Spanish Catholics (Mozarabs) converted to Islam. They were largely or principally of Celtic ancestry, and retained many typically Celtic characteristics and customs, as we have seen and shall see.

Very many of the philosophers of al-Andalus, including ibn Saba'in, ibn Arabi of Murcia, ibn Masarra of Almeria, ibn Abbad of Ronda, ibn al-Sid of Badajoz and ibn al-Khatib of Granada either were Shi'as or show the clear influence of Shi'a *kalam*, *irfan* and *hikmat*. (527)

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Many have noted the Mu'tazili elements in Shi'a doctrine, including those great thinkers of the School of Isfahan, as we noted in the previous chapter. This is of great importance to the subject to which we now turn our attention, As the Mu'tazili

doctrine received a warm welcome in al-Andalus, in spite of the unfavorable political situation. There is indeed a connection between Shi'ism and the Mu'tazili, so the presence of followers of the Mu'tazili doctrine favored the spread of Shi'ism in al-Andalus, something especially evident in Ibn Masarra, generally considered to be the founder of Islamic philosophy in al-Andalus, and his school, including Ibn al-Arif, of whom we shall speak presently. The influence of Ibn Masarra and his school is incalculable, in part because of its importance in the formation of Ibn Arabi al-Mursi.

However, at this point it must be emphasized that the Shi'a did not simply absorb Mu'tazili doctrine uncritically and *en toto*. An example of what we are saying is given in a long essay by Grand Ayatollah Javad-i Amoli which appeared in the traditionalist Catholic monthly "Culture Wars" (South Bend, Indiana, May, 2013). Some will no doubt be surprised that an essay by an Imami Shi'a scholar should appear in a traditionalist Catholic publication. Says E. Michael Jones, editor of "Culture Wars":

"Grand Ayatollah Abdollah Javad-i Amoli is considered by many to be Shi'a Islam's greatest living theologian and philosopher. His works include a massive Qur'anic commentary, 28 volumes of which have been published and whose volumes are anticipated to number between 80 and 100 when completed. He is also author of a 19-volume conceptual Qur'anic commentary; 19 titles
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on Shi'a gnosis (including one in 7 volumes); nine titles on philosophy, one of which is a nine-volume commentary on Mulla Sadra's Transcendent Theosophy; five titles on dogmatic theology (*kalam*), including the work presently under your consideration; and 20 other titles (in another 36 volumes) on topics such as jurisprudence (*fiqh*), ethics, human rights, prophetology, Imamology, ritual, and so on. We have published this piece, not because we agree with everything that Grand Ayatollah

Amoli wrote, but to present an example of contemporary Shi'a philosophical thought that will allow the reader to judge for himself how compatible that thought is with the *Logos* of Catholic philosophy."

We now turn to the words of Grand Ayatollah Amoli himself:

"It is important that close attention be paid to this point, that if it is said (in kalamitic discourse, or in the discourse of the speculative theologians of Islam) that 'It is a necessity upon God to send down His prophets and His law', that this is never meant in the sense that God is compelled to do something. The deniers of the efficacy of reason or irrationalists such as the Ash'arites [followers of the school of Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari] never use the term 'necessity' with reference to Prophethood, the Imamate, and so on, because they consider this to be an imposition of a condition on God. On the other hand, rationalists such as the Mu'tazili who believe in the necessity of prophethood consider the sending of heavenly books and apostles for the guidance of society a necessity upon God. But Godly sages such as Avicenna [Ibn Sina] (may God have mercy on his soul) who think along the correct lines of Imami [Twelver Shi'a] belief and are immune from either extreme, while allowing the efficacy of reason, never confuse the 'necessity upon God', which is the false position of the Mu'tazili, and the position of the 'necessity originating from God', which is that of the correct Shi'a position. Thus the meaning of the 'necessity originating from God' is that certainly order and the good originate from God; whereas the meaning of 'necessity upon God' [the Mu'tazili position] means that God is condemned and compelled to do something, and God is above that.

The Imami [Twelver Shi'a] position is that because God is the absolute being, He is the Creator of reason with all its necessities and certainties. Whatever we think of - be it divine law or something else, be it of necessity or not - if it is created, it is from God and of God [it belongs to Him], and nothing exists in the
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world which is not of God. So how is it supposed that it is possible for there to be a necessity in the world and that this necessity not originate from God? Any law that we suppose is either existent or non-existent. If it is non-existent, it does not have jurisdiction, and if it is existent, it is undoubtedly a possible being, and all possible beings are dependent for the source of their being and their cosmic reality on the necessary being."

In the above we see an example of the Imami Shi'a position

which does not slavishly follow the Mu'tazili, yet is also very far from that of the Ash'arites. I also view Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari with something approaching horror. His teachings remind me of those of the English and New England Puritans, in particular that sermon of the Puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards titled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God". In the teachings of Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari I see previewed the teachings of the Hanbalis, the Wahhabis, the Takfiris, Salafis, Taliban, al-Qaida, et cetera, though, of course other elements are present in these later aberrations. As many have noted, "the Wahhabis are the Puritans of Islam".

We shall now deal with the relation between Shi'ism and the Mu'tazili in a more monographic manner, as it is of very considerable importance from our viewpoint.

In Literary History of Persia, his four volume history of Persian literature, E.G. Browne noted:

"Shi'ite doctrine is in many respects Mu'tazili, while Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari, founder of Ash'arism, is viewed with horror."

The truth of the above is universally recognized, and is indeed undeniable.

One must be careful not to go too far with this, as some have

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done. The Shi'a did not adopt Mu'tazilism uncritically and *en toto*. To deal fully with the complex relation between Mu'tazilism and Shi'ism would involve a long exposition of recondite and esoteric philosophical and theological points which are not really germane to our main topic. The Shi'a agree with the Mu'tazili on many points, while agreeing with the Ash'arites on virtually none,

while on other points the Shi'a agree with neither the Mu'tazili nor with the Ash'arites. Henry Corbin has very succinctly dealt with the above in speaking of an encounter between Ja'far as-Sadiq, the 6th Shi'a Imam, and Hisham ibn al-Hakam as recorded by al-Kulayni:

"In relation to certain points which Mu'tazilism and Shi'ism have in common, the episode concerning Hisham (ibn al-Hakam) demonstrates that much is lacking for a full accord between the two. The tonality (Henry Corbin was very fond of musical metaphors) is different between the one and the other, though they are in agreement on numerous points of *kalam*: Shi'a thought does not limit itself to a single *kalam*; rather, it seeks its full expression in *Hikmat Ilahiya* and '*Irfan*". (528)

When all is said and done, there are many points on which Mu'tazilism and Shi'ism are in agreement, and, as was noted by Karen Armstrong:

"The Mu'tazilites gravitated toward the Shi'a." (529)

Therefore, it is very important from our viewpoint that Mu'tazilism found a warm welcome in Muslim Spain, in spite of the unfavorable political climate. As we have noted, the ethnic, cultural and spiritual situation in Muslim Spain was very favorable to Shi'ism, even if the political situation was generally

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unfavorable; under the North African dynasties of the Almoravides (*al-Murabitun*) and the Almohades (*al-Muwahidun*) very much so. Therefore, in Muslim Spain the Mu'tazili acted, as the Spanish say, as *levadura en la masa*, i.e., "leaven in the dough" or "yeast in the dough".

In so many ways the teachings of Imami Shi'ism seems so

"right" so obviously true, so well, profoundly, and thoroughly thought through, that it is very easy to believe that the Holy Imams were indeed "Rightly Guided". As we shall see below, Miguel Asin Palacios has written brief biographies of the early Mu'tazili of Muslim Spain.

At this point I wish to note that in the Western World until very recently almost no information was available concerning Shi'ism. In my course on Comparative Religion at Miami University of Ohio in Oxford, Ohio in the year 1961, when dealing with Islam, no mention was made of Shi'ism, as though it did not exist. In the year 1968, when I enrolled as a regular student at the University of Granada in Spain, I discovered that the head of the Department of Islamic Studies knew almost nothing concerning Shi'ism, and most of what he thought he knew was mistaken. At the time I knew very little concerning Shi'ism save that which I had read in Literary History of Persia by Edward G. Browne. Even so renowned a scholar as Emilio Garcia Gomez, writing in Todo Ben Quzman in 1972, revealed an almost total ignorance concerning Shi'ism, as we shall see later in this chapter.

The following work by Miguel Asin Palacios was written in

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Spain in 1914. We shall see that Fr. Asin was remarkably knowledgeable concerning Shi'ism concerning Shi'ism, remarkable for the time and place. However, for our purposes at least, the following work of his at times frustratingly obscure. For example, Fr. Asin's use of the word *batini* is often fiendishly obscure; one is at times uncertain as to whether he is using it to refer to

Shi'ism, to Ismailies in particular, or whether he is using it as, in the slang used in my undergraduate days at Miami of Ohio, a "waste basket word", a word to which so many meanings have adhered as to make it almost incomprehensible or, so totally lacking in a precise meaning as to be almost meaningless. In other words, as used by Fr. Asin, the word *batini* may mean Shi'a, or it may refer to aberrant sects and teachings which have no connection whatever with Shi'ism. One does the best that one can.

Abu 'Uthman, son of Bahr, of the Arab tribe of Kinana, native of Basora, known by the nickname of *al-Jahiz* (the bug-eyed one), was not Hispano-Muslim, nor did he ever visit Spain. However, for reasons which will become evident, he is important for our study.

Life, Works and Ideas of al-Jahiz

"Abu 'Uthman Amr, son of Bahr, of the Arab tribe of Kinana, native of Basra. known by the nickname of *al-Jahiz* (the bug eyed-one), was born approximately in the year 165 Ah (781-782 AD). His biographers wonder at his great, almost fanatical, love of reading: there was no book which fell into his hands which he did not read from cover to cover; in order to better satisfy his passion for books, he even paid the booksellers of Basra for the right to live day and nights in their bookstores, as though they were his own domicile. He also attended the lessons of the Mu'tazili theologian Abu Ishaq Ibrahim, son of Siyar, known as *al-Nazzam*, who, like al-Jahiz, had been intellectually formed by
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reading books of philosophy. However, the disciple excelled his master, because Jahiz was the author of important works dealing with the Mu'tazili doctrine, and also possessed such a literary talent that his renown as an eloquent writer is popular among Muslims, who consider him to be the prince of eloquence, along with "Umar al-Jattab and al-Hasan al-Basri, princes respectively of political science and wisdom. The Caliph al-Mutawakkil (846-861 AD), who restored orthodoxy against the Mu'tazili doctrine, so admired al-Jahiz, that he considered making him the tutor of his children; but his repulsive physical ugliness dissuaded him from this project. His sense of humor, ironic and wise-

cracking, which some of his works reveal, is recalled in a multitude of anecdotes, recalled by his biographers. Stricken with hemiplegia, he passed the last years of his advanced age in great pain; but not for one moment was he demoralized, say those who visited him, laughing at himself because of his own pain and suffering. That certain books fell on him, him being ill, hastened his death. He died in Basra in 255 AH (869 AD) at the approximate age of ninety years.

The works of this prolific and polyfacetic writer exceed one hundred. His biographer al-Safadi lists 126. Below are given the titles of some of his works which are most interesting from our perspective:

Polemics - Refutation of the anthropomorphists - Book of the Imamate, According to the Doctrine of the Shi'as, Exposition of the Doctrines of the Various Branches of the Zaydis (a sect of the Shi'a), Refutation of the 'Uthmanis (sect of the partisans of the Caliph 'Uthman), Book Concerning the Difference Between the Sect of the Zaydis and that of the Rafizis (a sect of the Shi'a), Refutation of the Doctrine of the Christians, Refutation of the Doctrine of the Jews, Refutation of the Impious Ones Who Deny the Divine Authority of the Qur'an, Treatise Which Seeks to Demonstrate the Gross Ignorance of Ya'qub, Son of Ishaq, al-Kindi (Prince of the Arab philosophers).

Philosophical and Theological - Book of Knowledge, Two Commentaries on This Last Named Book, Book Which Deals Historic Data and the Logical Criteria for Judging Their Authenticity, Book of the Art of Theological Discussion, Book Concerning the Excellence of Scientific Studies, Book Which Deals With the Difference Between a True Prophet and a False One, Questions Relating to the Qur'an, Discourse Concerning the Oneness of God, Book Which Deals With the Creation of the World in Time, The Book of Idols, Book Concerning the Punishments of the Future Life, Book

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Which Deals with the Excellence of the Mu'tazili, Book Concerning Free Will and the Creation by God of Human Acts, Book Which Demonstrates that God Cannot Commit Unjust Acts, Book Concerning the Necessity of the Imamate, Book Concerning the Moral habits of the Princes, Treatise on the Secret of Alchemy.

Literary Topics - The Book of Animals, The Book of Women, The Book of Eloquence and Rhetoric, The Book of Misers, Book of Beauty and its Antithesis, Various letters (rasa'il) or short treatises, among them the following: The Envied and the Envious, The amorous Passion and Women, Debate Between Spring and Autumn, Book of the Square and the Round.

Even though it would appear that only one of the above books was known in Spain (Book of the Eloquence

and Rhetoric), nevertheless we are assured that other book by al-Jahiz were brought to Spain, though their titles are unknown. It is obvious, however, that the literary works were preferred, due to the philological interests of the Spanish alfaqis in the first (Islamic) centuries; but even these works contain a treasure of ideas so copious and encyclopedic that their reading, although the motive was simply literary instruction, must have been quite suggestive.

The same Book of Eloquence and Rhetoric, which is a literary and poetic chrestomathy with notations and commentaries, has a substantive value independent of its educational purpose; in it, for example, are abundant anecdotes and moralistic and ascetic sayings of the early Sufis; it also contains a special treatise concerning asceticism, replete with an enormous quantity of pseudo-Evangelical citations attributed to Jesus and of mystical doctrines of Christian origin.

Another of his literary treatises, the Book of the Square and the Round, serves as a vehicle for expounding on a vast erudition: it pretends, in effect, that the author interrogates another person concerning the most diverse topics concerning Greek and Muslim learning, in which the one who is interrogated remains silent. By this artifice, al-Jahiz rapidly covers all the problems of cosmology, alchemy, physiognomy, palmistry, astrology, magic, natural sciences; plants questions dealing with the differences between races and languages, of biological heredity, causes of longevity, zoological observations; he speaks of industrial arts, and mineralogy; he leaps, with no transition, to religious and philosophical history, and at this point appear the names of Euclid, Pythagoras, Plato, Democritus, Philemon, Aristotle and other Greek philosophers, which cannot now be identified, mixed with the names of Hermes, Jeremiah, St. John the

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Baptist, Zoroaster and St. Paul. In the midst of this somewhat confused and diverse list of ideas, occur at times brief flashes of Neopythagorean, Empedoclean, *Batini* (which in this context means Shi'a, or at the very least includes Shi'ism) and rationalist thought. Let us examine the following: "The knowledge of the Oneness, origin of numbers, to which we shall return, is the most perfect of sciences". "Tell me: Who are the most devout worshippers of the energy of the *Materia Universal*?" "Who are those who call prophet all those who ask God that goodness, justice and mercy reign in the world, and that ignorance be banned from creation?" "Why is atheism not the religion of a single people or nation?" Why has no atheist been made a prophet, nor has any king proclaimed himself to be an atheist, and only a very few persons profess atheism? Why do all religions

have their respective kingdoms and dominions in which they are officially professed, and only the impious have no kingdom of their own? An why all the peoples of the world, past and present, always condemn atheists to death?"

Between jokes and truths, this book, which like many others of al-Jahiz, comes to awaken those independent spirits who desire to free themselves from the crushing bonds in which they are subjected by the Muslim dogma. If one adds to these books those by the same author which deal with theological and philosophical topics, which, without a doubt, entered Spain in the train of those which dealt with literary subjects, and one may understand why, beginning with the date of the introduction of said books there began to exist in Spain Mu'tazilis and Philosophers (and also Shi'as). As an example of the above, most certainly quite notable, that one of the treatises by al-Jahiz which expounds and discusses the doctrines of the Shi'as concerning the necessity of an *Imam*, definer and interpreter of the prophetic revelation.

The philosophical-theological system of al-Jahiz is too vast and complex to treat adequately in this appendix, nor it is possible to redact it, it being that many of his book are as of yet inedited. One must limit oneself to the information provided by historians of the sects. According to them, al-Jahiz added the following thesis to the system of his master al-Nazzam: 1.) All of man's cognitive acts are the necessary and inevitable effects of psychic energy, without the intervention of free will. 2.) Those acts which are called voluntary are not the effects of a specific faculty, but rather they are identified with the operations of the spirit, consciously and deliberately realized; this operation is that which is called "free

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will". 3.) Except for this immanent operation of the will, the intention, other human acts are all, the same as the cognoscitivos, an effect necessary and inevitable, of *nature*, i.e., of the constitutive principle of human essence. Thus, man is owner and arbiter of his intention, for example, of the decision to walk; but, later, the act of walking is in reality a necessary consequence of the physiological energy as natural to man as as the act of burning is in respect to fire. 4.) As a result, all human acts, good and bad, are effects of man, in the sense explained above. 5.) Those human attributes which the Qur'an predicates to God, must be interpreted metaphorically in the negative sense, i.e.,: God is volitional, which is to say that in His acts there is no carelessness nor ignorance. The Corporeal attributes (which the Qur'an predicates to God) must be negated. 6.) The Qur'an, far from being

uncreated and eternal, is, the same as every body, susceptible to substantial transformation and thus, can, be converted to a man or an animal. (I find this virtually incomprehensible.) 7.) The pains of Hell do not consist in that those condemned suffer eternally the pain of combustion in the fire, but rather that its physical nature attracts them toward itself in order that they may be materially converted and transformed into fire. 8.) The existence of one God, as the necessary Being, and the necessity of revelation, are self-evident theses. He who also believes that God is incorporeal, physically invisible and incapable of committing injustices and of desiring that men should sin, is a Muslim. If, believing all of the above, denies it, or defends anthropomorphism and/or fatalism, is an infidel. However, if due to incapacity to comprehend the above dogmas, one is limited to blindly believing that God is his Lord and Muhammad His prophet, he is blameless and does not deserve punishment." (530)

Miguel Asin Palacios has written brief biographies of the first Mu'tazilis of al-Andalus:

FIRST SPANISH MU'TAZILIS

1.) Abu Bakr Farij, son of Salaam, was from Cordoba, where he practiced medicine; but he was mainly dedicated to historical and literary studies. During a journey to the Orient, he visited 'Iraq (Persia) and encountered 'Amr, son of Bahr al-Jahiz, from whom he learned The Book of Eloquence and Rhetoric and others
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of his works, introducing them in Spain. From Farij Ahmad, son of 'Abd Allah al-Habibi of the tribe of Quraish, and others learned much. He died in Velez-Malaga, where his sepulcher still existed at the end of the 4th century AH.

2.) Abu Jafar Ahmad, son of Muhammad, son of Harun, native of Baghdad, introduced in Spain certain books of Ibn Qutaiba, and also certain books of 'Amr, son of Bahr al-Jahiz. Some Spaniards attended his lessons, among them Ahmad, son of 'Abd Allah al-Habibi, of the tribe of Quraish, and perhaps the celebrated grammarian and historian Ibn al-Qutiyya (the Son of the Goth). After travelling about Spain for several years, he returned to the Orient, where he became a minister. Some believed that he came to Spain as a spy.

3.) Abu Wahb 'Abd al-'Ali, son of Wahb, client of the tribe of Quraish and native of Cordoba, traveled to the

Orient and studied jurisprudence in Medina, Cairo and Tunis under the most famous Maliki masters. On his return to Spain he had the opportunity to demonstrate for the Amir 'Abd al-Rahman II the copious and true juridic information which he had acquired, and was named counsel of the supreme court of Cordoba. Besides being a juriscounselate, he was an erudite man and learned in grammar and lexicography; on the other hand, he knew little concerning religious traditions; and though he was pious and ascetic he was suspected of adhering to the Mu'tazili heresy in reference to free will. One of his most assiduous disciples, Muhammad ibn Lubaba, denied the truth of said accusation; however, it is certain that this disciple was also suspected by his contemporaries of adhering to the heresy according to which the human spirit dies with the body, a doctrine which he had learned from his master 'Abd al-'Ali. And when he was asked if his master had learned these doctrines from the books of the mu'tazilis and mutakallims, he evaded the question, limiting himself to saying that he knew nothing concerning these theological problems and that he only repeated by rote the solution to them given by 'Abd al'Ali. He died in the year 262 AH (875 AD) in Cordoba, and was buried in the *Muta'a* cemetery.

4.) Halil, son of 'Abd al-Malik, known as *Jalil al-Gafla* ("the intimate friend of indifference"), the disrespectful nickname given by the orthodox, perhaps because of his neglect of theological subjects, left Cordoba, his birthplace, and travelled to the Orient, where he studied The Qur'anic Commentary of Al-Hasan (3883)

ibn Abi'l-Hasan of Baghdad a Mu'tazili, along with other masters, also Mu'tazilis, according to his disciple 'Amr ibn Fa'id of Basra, also a Mu'tazili. From these teachings he derived his doctrine of free will as cause of human actions, which he publicly professed on returning to Spain. Some of the orthodox, such as the alfaqui Muhammad ibn Waddah, became his friends at the beginning, before his heresy became public knowledge; but very soon he was rejected by all, except for his disciples, among whom was Ibn al-Samina. In the class of the celebrated alfaqui and traditionalist Baqi ibn Majlad, Halil presented himself one day, and wishing to prove the truth of the rumors which were rife concerning the Mu'tazili heresy of Halil, subjected him to the following interrogation concerning four dogmas in the material: "What do you say in regards to the Balance (*mizan*) with which God weighs human acts?" Halil replied that this Balance is the justice of God, and thus, is a balance which has no plates. Halil was then asked: "What do you say concerning the Bridge (*sirat*), over which the

souls must pass in order to reach Heaven?" "Halil replied: that said bridge is the straight path, that is to say, the religion of Islam; all those who succeed in crossing it without deviating are saved. Halil was then asked "What do you say concerning the Qur'an?" Halil exclaimed "The Qur'an, the Qur'an...!", he stammered and said no more, by his silence giving to understand that it was created. Halil was then asked "And what do you say concerning the influence of God in human actions (*qadar*)?" Halil responded that good actions proceed from God, but evil actions from man. "By Allah, exclaimed Ibn Majlad, that is all we need..., I denounce you as an infidel, so that you will pay with your blood for these impieties; but, go, leave here and I do not wish to see you again in my class from this moment on." At his death, a group of alfaquies, led by Abu Marwan ibn Abi 'Isa, invaded his house, and, after separating those which dealt with legal affairs, took his books into the street and burned them.

5.) Abu Bakr Yahya, son of Yahya, native of Cordoba, known by the nickname of *Ibn al-Samina* (son of the Crass), he was gifted with the most varied talents for the various branches of the sciences: literato, historian, traditionalist, juriscounsel, specialist in law concerning contracts and in the redaction of notarial acts, was also a sharp critic of poetic compositions, as he was quite versed in the art of metre; but his main inclination was for rational or philosophical studies, astronomy, medicine and dogmatic
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theology. A disciple of Halil al-Gafla, from him he learned the Qur'anic Commentary of the Mu'6azil al-Hasan of Baghdad, as well as the doctrine of free will. He also visited the Orient and there is where he became more absorbed in the study of polemic and dogmatic theology and in those systems of the *mutakallim*. On his return to Spain, a painful enfermity caused him to remain in his domicile; but to it came people of all condition in order to study the Mu'tazili doctrine, which he publicly professed. He died in 315 AH, 927 AD.

6.) 'Abd Allah, son of 'Umar and grandson of Ubba, was a native of Cordoba, where he held the position of *mufti*, also teaching law in the Alhama Mosque, before 259 AH, 873 AD. It must be noted that he professed the Mu'tazili doctrine of free will. His contemporaries considered him to be a virtuous man.

7.) Abu-l-Hakam Mundir, son of Sa'd, Berber by origin, known as *al-Balluti* because he was a native of the Plain of the Acorns (today the *Valle de los Pedroches*, in the Sierra Morena, north of Cordoba), was born in 273 AH,

886 AD, and, after finishing his studies in Spain, left for the Orient when he was thirty-five years old. He studied in Cairo and Mecca with the most celebrated masters of Law of the day, and in two years returned to Spain, adhered to the *Zahiri* school of law, whose doctrines and methods relating to the criterion of human authority were the antithesis of the official Maliki school. Nevertheless, he came to exercise important juridic and even political positions under Caliph 'Abd al-Rahman III, who eventually named him supreme *cadi* of Cordoba, which office he occupied without interruption until his death in 355 Ah, 966 AD. His freedom of criterion, in oral teaching as well as books, was not limited to law, but also extended to theology. His works, which have not survived, deal with the Qur'an, with law and with theological polemics, contain theses concerning God, which, according to his biographer al-Faradi, received their just punishment in the afterlife. It should also be noted that he maintained theological correspondence with one of the great Mu'tazili masters of the Orient, i.e., Abu 'Amr Ahmad, son of Musa, son of Ithdir, in which is evident the fundamental concept of Mu'tazili theology, which thinks of God, in the Aristotelian manner, as an intelligent Being. Ibn Hazm, who spoke of the sons of al-Balluti, affirms that he was suspected of being a Mu'tazili. His sons were also equally Mu'tazilis, (and also probably Shi'as) as they professed the doctrine of Ibn Masarra." (531)

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For our purposes the story of Ibn Masarra really begins with his father, Abd Allah, who was very much a Spaniard, with blond hair and a ruddy complexion. This last indicates that he was very likely of Visigothic ancestry, as blonds, while not unknown, are not common among Celts. Abd Allah travelled to Basra, apparently to study the teachings of the Mu'tazili. Abd Allah's close friend Khalil had also travelled to Iraq, and on returning to Spain was questioned by an expert in the Islamic Tradition. Khalil's replies may have been garbled by whoever recorded them, but more likely Khalil himself spoke in riddles in order to dissimulate his real views, which might have been considered heretical. Nevertheless, in his replies Khalil made it rather clear that he accepted at the

very least two key Mu'tazili positions, namely: 1.) the the Qur'an is created and not eternal; & 2.) the belief in man's free will. At Khalil's death, a mob of Maliki jurists ransacked his house and burned all except his law books.

Warned by the fate of his friend Khalil, Abd Allah kept his Mu'tazili leanings to himself, imparting them only to his son Muhammad ibn Abd Allah ibn al-Masarrah, otherwise avoiding all mention of them even to his closest friends and disciples. Forced by debts to leave Spain, Abd Allah settled in Mecca, where he died in 286 AH/899 AD, when his son, the future philosopher Ibn Masarrah, was only seventeen. So, it was from his father that Ibn Masarrah first imbibed the Mu'tazili doctrines.(532)

It is obvious that, in spite of the unfavorable circumstances, Mu'tazilism found something in the atmosphere of
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Muslim Spain which was favorable to it. Though Mu'tazilism, being a philosophy, could never become anything like a mass movement, as we said above, in Spain it served, as the Spanish say, as *levsdura en la masa*, i.e., "leaven in the dough" or "yeast in the dough" for the spread of Shi'ism, which, to reiterate, found the ethnic, cultural and spiritual being of Spain to be most favorable, even if, most of the time at least, the political situation was unfavorable. Ibn Masarrah is a perfect example. In summary, the ethnic, cultural and spiritual being of Spain was the *masa* (dough), while Mu'tazilism was the *levadura* (leaven or yeast). Mysticism is so much a part of the Spanish being and character that Sufism, which also evidently favored the spread of Shi'ism,

could be considered as part of the ethnic, cultural and spiritual being of Spain.

Miguel Asin Palacios considered the teachings of Ibn Masarrah to be a union of the doctrine of the pseudo-Empedocles and Mu'tazilism. Now, the "pseudo-Empedocles" is a mysterious personage whose real name, nationality and even the century in which he lived are unknown. The teachings of the pseudo-Empedocles owe something to the pre-Socratic Greco-Sicilian philosopher, but a great deal more to the neo-Platonists, particularly Plotinus, Proclus and Porphyry.

However, more recently Samuel Stern has cast doubt on the above, noting that Fr. Asin's linking of Ibn Masarrah's teachings to those of the pseudo-Empedocles was based only on one passage - in reality only a **single line** - by Sa'id of Toledo in his book
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Tabaqat al-unam, and that said passage is not only very brief - as we said above, only a single line - but also vague, polemical and, according to Stern, conjectural. In other words, Fr. Asin's theory relating Ibn Masarrah to the pseudo-Empedocles was based on data which was not only far too scanty but also dubious for other reasons. What finally convinced Stern was that he discovered Sa'd of Toledo's source in the philosopher al-'Amiri (died 381 Ah/992 AD), in which Ibn Masarrah is not mentioned, but in which the influence of "Empedocles" (whoever he really was) is ascribed to *Batinis*, a term which in the East referred to Ismailis, but in Spain was rather a generic term of abuse meaning "heretic". It would appear that Sa'id of Toledo somewhat arbitrarily associated

- probably for polemical purposes - the name of Ibn Masarraah to al'Amiri's ideas concerning the teachings of (the pseudo) Empedocles. Stern did write:

"I can only say that I can discover in Ibn Masarraah's doctrines as reproduced in later authors no trace of pseudo-Empedoclean doctrines, and think that no one would ever have discovered such traces without the prompting of Sa'd's (of Toledo's) statement."

Commenting on the above citation by Samuel Stern, Lenn E.

Goodman notes:

"...I may be able to show where later writers could have seen (pseudo) "Empedoclean" affinities in (the works of) Ibn Masarraah. But I certainly cannot claim that the evidence would have thrust such notions before our eyes without Asin's prompting." (533)

Obviously, at this late date there can be no certain answer to the above controversy. However, in spite of my very great respect for Miguel Asin Palacios, it seems to me that Samuel Stern
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has the better of the argument. It would appear that the whole idea of the teachings of Ibn Masarraah being based on those of the Pseudo-Empedocles is founded not on solid facts, but rather on the power of suggestion, itself based on a statement apparently made for polemical rather than honest, objective scholarly motives. Neo-Platonic teachings could have - and obviously did - reach Ibn Masarraah from sources which had nothing to do with that mysterious and enigmatic personage known as the "pseudo-Empedocles". None of this detracts in the least from the value and veracity of the rest of the account of Miguel Asin Palacios concerning Ibn Masarraah.

Miguel Cruz Hernandez gives a brief summary concerning Ibn Masarraah and the origins of Hispano-Muslim philosophy:

I. *Origins of Ibero-Islamic Thought*

I.1 *The Eastern Sources of Andalusī Thought.*

"Islam established itself in the Iberian Peninsula between 92/711 and 139/756 (AD). However, while the Umayyad prince 'Abd al-Rahman b. Mu'awiya's persevering campaign to gain mastery over different social groups, (*baladi* Arabs, Berbers, Syrians, Mozarabs and Jews), and structure them within an Arab Islamic monarchy, established the political and social bases of Islam in al-Andalus, the antagonism between the Umayyads of Cordoba and the Abbasids of Baghdad insured that the former would always view with suspicion anything coming from the East. The fourth Umayyad monarch, 'Abd al-Rahman II, was obliged, nevertheless, to restructure his "administration" in accord with the Baghdadi model, which was none other than that inherited from the Sassanians, and commercial relations, together with journeys made in accordance with the precept of pilgrimage, (*hajj*) to the Islamic holy places, encouraged the arrival of Eastern "novelties" in al-Andalus.

Learning was introduced into al-Andalus through five cultural vehicles: (1.) Islamic Law (*fiqh*), first (3889)

of the Awaz'I school and later of the Maliki school, which was the official one of the Umayyad monarchy and in subsequent periods; (2.) ascetic and mystical spirituality (*tasawwuf*), which is recorded early; (3.) esoterism (*batiniyya*), of which examples are found from 271/851; (4.) Mutazili theology, with which the Cordoban physicians Abu Bakr Faraj b. Sallam was familiar as early as the beginning of the 3rd/9th century; and (5.) the sciences (astronomy, mathematics and medicine). It was only later, as we shall see, that philosophy in the strict sense (*falsafa*) became established.

I.2 *The Masarri School*

Muhammad b. Masarra (7 Shawwal 269/19 April 883-8 Ramadan 319/October 20 931) was responsible for the first structuring of Andalusī thought. His father, 'abd Allah b. Masarra (who died in Mecca in 266/899), had initiated him into the Batini, Mu'tazili and spiritual doctrines he had acquired in the east, and he himself founded a small retreat for friends and companions in the caves of the Sierra de Cordoba, where prayer and penitence were practiced. However, the group awakened the suspicions of the official establishment, and Ibn Masarra was, as a result, obliged to spend several years in North Africa and the East, probably returning at the end of the *fitna* (civil war) of the reign of the *amir*

'Abd Allah. Thereupon he summoned a group of followers to his new retreat. We know that he wrote at least two books: Kitab at-tabsira ("The Book of Discerning Explanation" and Kitab al-huruf ("The Book of [the Esoteric Meaning of] Letters"), of which we have only the titles. His thought has been reconstructed by (Miguel) Asin Palacios, thanks, above all, to the evidence of Sa'id of Toledo, Ibn Hazm (of Cordoba) and Ibn 'Arabi (of Murcia).

The thought of Ibn Masarra is a synthesis of Mu'tazili doctrines concerning the unity of God divine justice and free will, and of Sufi theory and practice as expounded by Dhu 'l-Nun al-Misri and al-Nahrajuri. However, he articulated these ideas, if we are to believe the accounts that have come down to us, in an original and personal way. God is that essence to which unity pertains *per se*; and, as there is no analogy whatever for such a sublime mode of being, the divine essence can only be known through ecstatic union with God. In order to make some kind of reference, Ibn Masarra compares the cosmos to a cubic building: its roof is the Divine One; the walls are created beings; five columns symbolize the five basic substances; an
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interior room, lacking doors and windows, is the unknowable Divine Essence, the implication being that reason can find no orifice to penetrate and know it. Outside the building, however, leaning against the walls, is another column of the same essence as that of the five interior ones; and if man clings to this, it serves as an intermediary (*farzaj*) enabling him to attain the exstatic union which leads to God.

The cosmos has its origin in prime matter, symbolized by the Throne, from which all creatures proceed - none can be created directly by God because of His essential sublimity. All creatures have a twin reality: the apparent, or perceptible, and the inner essence. Apparent reality is maintained by Adam, Abraham and Muhammad. Intimate reality is displayed by the archangels Gabriel, Israfil, and Michael; Malik governs the inferno (hell), and Ridwan paradise. Four kinds of phenomena occur in the cosmos: the creation of the material world; the creation of the spiritual world; the preservation and providence of creation; and the last judgement, which rewards or punished.

Prime matter, or the Throne, is structured as a reflection of the divine light which produces the celestial forms, luminous bodies capable of receiving angelic spirits. The first is the universal intellect in which God instils infinite and universal knowledge; this is the divine Pen, whose writing is the universal soul, which gives rise to pure nature. The superabundance of being which springs from God through in intermediary of

pure nature finally covers the ontological hollowness of darkness itself, and this is the origin of secondary matter, which constitutes the universal body out of which the world of generation and corruption proceeds. Upon this world God again sheds His laight, engendering in each one of its forms an immaterial, indivisible spirit, each one of these being distinguished by its relative capacity to receive the divine light. Its conservation is due to its sustaining principles, which are reason and illumination for the spirit, and food and drink for the body. Finally, God has created for all beings four kinds of happiness: distributive, according to the intention of the subject; commutative, according to its constitution; essential, in accord with the perfection of being; and legal, according to obedience to positive law. God knows everything universally and eternally, but does not on this account determine human acts, since, in His omnipotence, he wished to create men free and responsible for their acts. [Note here both the Mu'tazili and the Shi'a influence.]

The human condition, free and responsible, means
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that man requires a rule of life to cleanse the soul of imperfections inherent in the carnal condition of our life here and now. This rule includes the ascetic practices of mortification, penitence, fasting, patience, poverty, silence, humility, prayer, service, brotherly love, faith in God and the conscientious examination of positive acts, this last practice being the most highly prized, since it permits us to discover the progress of the spiritual intent of our acts. Thus, the spiritual rule provides the human spirit with a perfection similar to, but not equal to, that of the prophetic spirit. This gift is the apex of spiritual life, permitting the human soul to reflect, like a well-polished mirror, the image of divine wisdom, in preparation for the definitive joy of union with God.

I.3 *The Disciples of Ibn Masarra*

For all the ears aroused by the Masarris, Muhammad b. Masarra's teachings were highly successful. Mistrust of the thinker had probably emerged by the time of *amir* 'Abd Allah, grandfather of (the caliph) 'Abd ar-Rahman III, and the *faqih* al-Zajjali (died 301/914) later promulgated and "edict" of harsh condemnation which the caliph 'Abd ar-Rahman III ordered to be updated and published after Ibn Masarra's death, the Masarri's being then condemned and their persecution ordered. These Masarris can be grouped into two circles, that of Cordoba and that of Pechina (near Almeria). To the first belonged, among others, three members of the distinguished Muwallad [native Spanish, of Iberian,

Celtic and Visigothic origin, NOT Arabs nor Berbers.] family of the Banu Balluti, namely the physician al-Hakam (died 420/1029), Sa'id (died 404/1013) and 'Abd al-Malik (died 436/1044), while members of the second group included Isma'il b. 'Abd Allah ar-Ru'ayni (circa 339/950-432/1040), his son Abu Harun, a daughter whose name has not survived, her husband Ahmad, and a grandson of ar-Ru'ayni named Yahya.

The Cordoban group involved few notable divergences from the thought of Muhammad b Masarra. On the contrary, ar-Ru'ayni was regarded as the *imam* of the group, receiving the *zakat*, or canonical tithe, and proclaiming that only he knew the authentic esoteric significance of Masarri thought, which he interpreted in a communistic sense, not only with reference to the ownership of goods, but also with respect to sexual relations: "All the things which are owned in this world are illicit ... the only thing which a Muslim is permitted to possess is his daily sustenance, whatever means he might employ to procure it." According to Ibn
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Hazm (of Cordoba), "Isma'il approved marriage or sexual relations contracted for a [specified] period of time as licit."

I.4 *Influence and Significance of the Masarri School.*

Masarri ideology became the principle root of the dialectical thought of the Sufis of al-Andalus, and was highly influential within what (Miguel) Asin Palacios called the "School of Almeria", whose central members acquired such power that the *fuqaha'* of Almeria, led by al-Barji, were the only ones of their time who dared to condemn the burning of al-Ghazzali's writings ordered by the chief *qadi* of Cordoba, Ibn Hamdin. The principle figure of the group was Abu 'l-'Abbas Ahmad b Muhammad b. Musa b. 'Ata Allah b. al-'Arif, who was born in Almeria in 485/1088 and died in Marrakesh in 361/1141 after eating a poisoned eggplant. Leaving aside his strictly Sufi doctrines, I will here simply point out his use of Masarri neo-Platonism, as it appears in his book, Mahasin al-majlis. His main disciples were Abu Bakr Muhammad b. al-Husayn of Mallorca, Abu 'l-Hakam b. Barrajan (died circa 536/1141) and Abu 'l-Qasim b Qasi (died 546/1151), author of a book called Khal' al-na'layn, which was used by Ibn 'Arabi (al-Mursi, i.e., of Murcia).

Acquaintance with the Masarri school is fundamental for understanding the history of Andalusian thought, its continuation in the Almeria School, and the latter's influence on Ibn 'Arabi (of Murcia), giving it a basic role in Andalusian Sufism as a vehicle of the neo-Platonic ideology which structures its dialectical formalization.

Nevertheless, neither the ideological constructs that we will call "encyclopaedic" nor Andalusí philosophy were receptive to its ideology. Ibn Hazm (of Cordoba), the best authority on Masarri thought, rejected it, and the Andalusí philosophers were ignorant of it. (Miguel) Asín Palacios pointed out certain parallels between Masarri ideology and the thought of Ramon Llull, but these are insignificant coincidences and did not in any case come directly from Ibn Masarra, but rather from the ideas of popular Sufi circles at the beginning of the 7th/13th century, more or less contemporaneous with Ibn 'Arabi (of Murcia)." (534)

Henry Corbin, Osman Yahia and Seyyed Hossein Nasr offer a different viewpoint concerning Ibn Masarra and his importance:

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1.) *Ibn Masarra and the School of Almeria*

The importance of this school consists of two facts: it represents in the far west of the Islamic world the esoteric Islam which we have studied in the Orient, and had a considerable influence.

According to his biographers, Ibn Masarra, born in 269/883, was not of Arab race. His father, passionately interested in theological speculations who frequented the mutazili and esoteric circles in Orient, strove to inculcate his beliefs in his son. Unfortunately, he died on a pilgrimage to Mecca in 286/899. On the death of his father, Ibn Masarra, who was only sixteen years of age, was surrounded by disciples. Ibn Masarra and his disciples retired to a hermitage in the Sierra of Cordoba, but soon awakened the suspicions of the common people. Also, the emirate of Cordoba was passing for a critical political situation. Ibn Masarra preferred exile accompanied by two of his favorite disciples.

In Medina and Mecca Ibn Masarra came into contact with the oriental schools. He did not return to his native land until the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III, whose policies were more liberal. Ibn Masarra now developed a philosophical system and a method of spiritual life. Most unfortunately, no one knows either how many books he wrote nor their exact titles. We can only cite two names with any security: The Book of the Sophisticated Explanation (*Kitab al-Tabshira*), which without doubt contained the key to his esoteric system, and The Book of Letters (*Kitab al-Huruf*), which deals with mystical algebra. The master died surrounded by his disciples, in a hermitage of the sierra, in 319/931 (October 20), when he was barely fifty years old.

The reconstruction of the system of Ibn Masarra has

been possible thanks to the patient labor of the great Spanish Arabist Miguel Asin Palacios. His quest was double. On the one hand, for Asin Palacios, the Pseudo-Empedocles was the axis around which revolved the most characteristic Masarran doctrines. [As we noted earlier, I am not in agreement with Asin Palacios on the point, believing that he based a crucial point on far too scanty data.] On the other hand Asin Palacios had to reconstruct the system of Ibn Masarra with the aid of long citations, mainly by Ibn 'Arabi al-Mursi.

The doctrines attributed to Ibn Masarra involve, above all, the following topics: superiority and esoterism of philosophy and psychology (which lead to the encounter with the *ruhaniyya*, the *persona* or spiritual reality of the hidden being); absolute simplicity, ineffability, the mobile immobility of the

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first Being; the theory of the Emanations; categories of souls; individual souls as emanations of the Soul of the world; its preexistence and redemption. This doctrine possesses an ample base, gnostic as well as Neoplatonic.

We insist only in the point that the theory of hierarchical Emanation of the five substances: the primordial element or *Materia prima*, which is the first of the intelligible realities (not to be confused with the universal corporal material); the Intelligence; the Soul; Nature; the second Material. If we have recourse to the Plotinian hierarchy (the One, the Intelligence, the Soul, Nature, Matter), we note immediately the difference between Plotinus and the Islamic Pseudo-Empedocles. The first of the Plotinian hypostases, the One, has been eliminated from the schema and replaced by the first element or the *Materia prima*.

The theory of the primordial intelligible material had considerable influence. We find it not only in the Jewish philosopher Solomon Ibn Gabirol (died between 1058 and 1070), but also in the work of Ibn 'Arabi al-Mursi, which is precisely that which permitted Asin Palacios to partially reconstruct the philosophy of Ibn Masarra. The metaphysical theorem of the five substances or principles of being in the Pseudo-Empedocles and in Ibn Masarra, have their corollary in Ibn 'Arabi al-Mursi the descending hierarchy of the five meanings of the word "material"; spiritual material common to the uncreated and the created (*haqiqat al-haqa'iq*, essence of essences); spiritual material common to all created beings, spiritual and corporal (*Nafas al-Rahman*); material common to all bodies, celestial or sublunar; physical material (ours), common to all accidental beings. Finally, the idea of una "spiritual material" (cf. the *spissitudo spiritualis* of Henry More) was to have a crucial importance in the eschatology of Mulla

Sadra Shirazi and of the Scholl of Isfahan.

The most conclusive testimony concerning the influence of the mystical spirit of Ibn Masarra in the formation of Spanish Sufism is the enormous influence of the esoteric focal point of the school of Almeria. On the death of Isma'il al-Ru'ayni, at the beginning of the VI/XII century, at the time of the dominion of the Almoravides (*al-Murabitun*) in al-Andalus, Almeria became the leading center of all Spanish Sufies. Abu-l-Abbas Ibn al-'Arif established a new rule of the spiritual life (*tariqa*), based in the theosophy of Ibn Masarra. Three great disciples were charged with defunding it: Abu Bakr al-Mallorquin, in Granada; Ibn
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Barrajan, in Seville, and Ibn Qasyi in the Portuguese Algarve, who organized the adepts of the school of Ibn Masarra in a sort of religious militia which bore the mystical name *Muridin*. Its theosophical doctrine and organization manifest important features in common with Isma'ilism. During ten years, Ibn Qasyi reined a sovereign Imam in the Portuguese Algarve. He died in 546/1151." (535)

It is evident that the importance of Ibn Masarra was enormous, even incalculable, even if one recalls only his role in the formation of Spanish Sufism and his great influence on Ibn 'Arabi al-Mursi, by which means it reached even Mulla Sadra Shirazi and the School of Isfahan. The Isma'ili influence on Ibn Masarra's disciple Ibn Qasyi also indicates that Ibn Masarra had a role in the introduction of Shi'ism in al-Andalus, though as we have said, according to all indications, it was Imami or "Twelver" Shi'ism which which came to predominate among the Shi'as of al-Andalus.

There is an aspect of the thought of Ibn Masarra which has only been touched upon, but whose interest and importance is great; it has to do with theophany. As Ibn Masarra says:

"You must know that this ecstatic state, although its essential content is the intuition of God's absolute unity and transcendence, it is at the same time

manifested in the illumination of the soul by a concrete form. It appears in the guise of a house supported by five columns, covered by a raised roof that surmounts the walls, in which there is no open door, so that no one of those who contemplate it can penetrate it. But outside this house stands another column, fastened to the outer wall. This column the *illuminati* may touch, just as they kiss and touch the black stone which God placed outside the sacred House." (536)

Lenn E. Goodman:

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"Voiced in such terms (as those used by Ibn Masarra), these speculations and the meditations surrounding them met and mingled with pagan ideas like Porphyry's about the consecration of idols, in which the god is invested in what would otherwise be inanimate matter. It would take us too far afield to explore the full range of such theories and meditations, from the initiation rites of the pagan mysteries to the transubstantiation of the Host (communion wafer), the charisma of the Shi'ite Imam, the perpetuum of the mobile of the alchemists (which moves by a spirit thaumaturgically inducted into it) ... Suffice it to say that such paradigms of theophany are rarely without philosophic counterparts. For they spring, not from unmediated mystical contemplation [though mystical contemplation may play a part] but from efforts to wrestle conceptually with the Infinite in the here and now [in Christian and Islamic terms, with the Immanence of God in the spatio-temporal world]. Asin Palacios speculates that the outer column might be the Imam, and if the Imam is as charismatic as Shi'ism would suggest, actually bringing to earth something or more than merely something of the divine afflatus, that gloss seems more than credible. Shi'ism is often a vehicle of Mu'tazilite ideas, and clearly was so in the case of Ibn Masarra. But the Neoplatonic portent of his imagined *mandala* (see a Sanskrit dictionary) is visible as well. For the conjunction of the outer column with the walls it abuts signifies the absence of any absolute division between the impenetrable mystery of the Infinite and its manifestation through the Active Intellect or mediating hypostasis, which may touch the mind of the devotee. The image, like that of the Byzantine mystic poet St. Symeon the New Theologian, of sunlight shining on the grass, light mingling with matter in "union without confusion" voices the possibility of the mind's contact (*ittishal*; see Plotinus', *aphe*) with the divine." (537)

So, Ibn Masarra was of vast importance, for his pioneering

work in the foundation of Spanish Sufism, for his influence on Ibn 'Arabi al-Mursi, for his influence of Mulla Sadra Shirazi and the School of Isfahan, and, perhaps most important of all, for his great importance in the introduction and spreading of Shi'ism in Muslim Spain.

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Below is a selection from a historical novel which may most certainly be thought of as a theophany.

As is well known, World War I began in August, 1914. The Germans concentrated their efforts on the Western Front, confident in the slowness of the Russian mobilization. Russia mobilized faster than anyone had thought possible, and decided to open an offensive against the Austrians in order to support the Serbs, and another offensive against the Germans in East Prussia, while the German Army was occupied in the West.

At first things went very well for the Russians. The Germans were amazed by the courage, *elan* and excellent marksmanship of the Russian infantry, who won battle after battle. In Berlin there was panic, with people shouting *Kosaken komen!* (the Cossacks are coming!). However, it was not to be. By the end of August, 1914 the Germans had managed to surround and destroy the Russian 2nd Army at battle inaccurately called "Tannenberg". By no means was this the sole fault of General Samsonov, commander of the Russian 2nd Army. General Samsonov was as brave, good and honorable a man as ever wore a uniform; however, he was by no means a military genius. However, there were others whose guilt was far greater than that of General Samsonov. In fact Samsonov was mainly guilty of

following orders which he knew to be mistaken.

From this debacle, only two emerged with honor unstained: General Martos, who was victorious in every encounter, and had his ideas been followed, even at a late date the tide of battle might have been turned, the course of World War I and perhaps history

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might have been very different, and the ordinary Russian soldiers, those sons of Holy Mother Russia who wore holy medals and icons and marched into battle singing the anthem "God Save the Tsar" and the hymn "God Preserve Your People and Bless Their Inheritance". As General Martos noted, in every case in which the strengths of the opposing forces had been approximately equal, the sons of Holy Mother Russia had proven themselves to be better men than the hated Germans, "the Kaiser's goose-steppers".

In his novel August 1914, Alexandr Solzhenitsyn gives a moving account of the last hours of General Samsonov.

"He (General Samsonov) was born in Little Russia (Ukraine), had been in Moscow, lived in St. Petersburg, in Warsaw, in Turkestan, and beyond the Amur River, yet - though he was no son of the (River) Don by birth (in other words, he was not a Don Cossack) - he was carried irresistibly to the broad-browed hill at Novochoerkassk. Not to the upper part, where Yermak's monument rears up, but downhill toward the Kreshchensky descent, where, on a granite plinth raised only slightly above the cobblestones, lie a Caucasian cloak and a tall Caucasian cap in bronze, as though their owner, Baklanov, had carelessly flung them down and just left.

Left for his grave, in the vaults of the church.
For a soldier's burial.
With victories carved in granite.

Walking was difficult. His legs had lost the habit, and worse still was his shortness of breath: just walking, with nothing to carry, made him wheeze and pant as though he had asthma.

When a man loses his position of superiority, his

means of locomotion, and his means of protection, his body is put to the test, and he finds that the truth about him is expressed, not by his general's tabs, but by a flagging heart, lungs that refuse to expand fully, as though they were two-thirds blocked, weak legs, and unreliable feet that tread awkwardly, stub the ground, stumble over tussocks, moss beds, and fallen branches. If anything can give him pleasure it is not that he is making progress, not the thought that he may yet scrape
(3899)

through, but the holdups ahead, when everybody has to stop and he can lean against a trunk and try to get his breath.

(General) Samsonov was ashamed to ask for a rest, but out of consideration for him they stopped every hour and sat down. Kupchik always spread the horse blanket with alacrity for the commander, whose aching legs were grateful for a chance to stretch out and rest.

But they could not sit for long. The short (August) night and their last chance were hurrying away. Around midnight the stars were obscured and it was too dark to see anything at all. The little group plodded on, single file, informed of each other's whereabouts only by the snapping of twigs, heavy breathing, or the occasional touch of a hand. The path got worse - at one moment boggy ground squelched underfoot, at the next unthinned bushes or dense clusters of young trees barred the way. They assumed that it would be dangerous to stray in the direction of Willenberg. But there were other dangers - they might bump into a German patrol, or get lost altogether. They clung together, called to each other in whispers. There were no more stops for rest. When they came to a ditch Kupchik and the Cossack captain helped Samsonov across, almost dragging him.

Samsonov was oppressed by the burden of his body. Only his body was pulling him on to more pain and suffering, more shame and disgrace. To escape from the disgrace, the pain, the heaviness he had only to release himself from his body. It would be a blissful liberation, it would be like taking the first deep breath after the lungs have been congested.

Only yesterday he had been an idol to whom his staff officers looked for redemption. Since midnight he had been a fallen idol, a millstone around their necks.

Slipping away from Kupchik was the one difficulty. The Cossack orderly kept close behind his general, touching his back or his hand from time to time. But Samsonov tricked him: as they went around a thicket of bushes he stepped aside and stood hidden.

The heavy steps, the crackling, the snapping, passed him by, grew distant, then he could no longer hear them.

There was silence. The perfect silence of

peacetime, with no reminders of battle. The only sound was that of the fresh night breeze sighing in the treetops. This was not an enemy forest, it was neither German nor Russian. It was God's forest, giving shelter to any of His creatures.

Samsonov rested his weight against a tree trunk
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and listened to the forest - close to his ear, the rustle of peeling pine bark; closer to the sky, the cleansing wind.

He felt more and more at peace with himself. He had served long years in the army, had accepted danger and sudden death as his fate, had faced death and been ready for it, yet had never known that it could be as easy as shedding a burden.

But suicide was accounted a sin.

A faint sound - his revolver cocked itself. Samsonov laid his upturned cap on the ground with the revolver in it. He took off his sword and kissed it. He fumbled for the locket with his wife's picture and kissed it.

He took a few steps to an open space. The sky had clouded over. Only one star was visible - obscured for a while, it peered out again. He sank to his knees on the warm pine needles. Not knowing where the east was, he looked up at the star as he prayed.

At first he prayed in remembered words, then without words, kneeling, gazing at the sky, breathing. Then he groaned aloud, shamelessly, like a dying forest creature.

'O Lord, forgive me if Thou canst, and take me to Thy rest. Thou seest that I could do no other, and can do no other." (538)

Abul Abbas ibn al-Arif of Almeria was a 12th century Hispano-Muslim Sufi inspired by ibn Masarra. Only one rather short but dense work of his has survived, the Mahasin al-Majlis or Beauty of the Sessions (539), and there is no evidence that he was a prolific author. Nevertheless, Abul Abbas ibn al-Arif of Almeria must have made a great impression on his contemporaries, and, in effect, his influence is incalculable, as the great ibn Arabi of Murcia cites him no less than eleven times in his magnum opus, Futuh al-Makkiyya. (540)

Lisan al-Din ibn al-Khatib (b. 1333, d. 1375) was a philosopher, historian and poet whose verses appear in decorative
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calligraphy on the walls of the Alhambra of Granada.

Ibn al-Khatib's major philosophical work is: Rawdat al-Ta'rif bi 'l-Hubb al-Sharif (The Garden of Gnostic Knowledge of Divine Love). As the title indicates, this is a work of mystical or Sufi orientation, which owes much to ibn al-Arabi al-Mursi and more to the Ishraqi school of Suhrawardi, Haidar Amoli and Rajab Bursi. As might be expected, ibn al-Khatib's book uses a large number of Shi'a expressions and concepts, such as the theory of "Al-Nur Muhammadi" ("Muhammadan Light") and of the angelic Malakut and Jabarut. (541)

Ibn al-Khatib is an example of the very strong influence of Persian Sufism and of Shi'ism in al-Andalus. This influence is evident in the works of St. John of the Cross and in other characteristics particular to Spanish Christian Mysticism and to Spanish Catholicism in general, as we shall see.

As is also true in the case of Annemarie Schimmel, St. John of the Cross never struck me as a "strange" poet, perhaps because, like Ms. Schimmel, I always read him "as though he were a Sufi." (542)

There is abundant evidence that Abul Abbas ibn al-Arif of Almeria was a Shi'a. Abul Abbas ben al-Arif of Almeria puts much emphasis in his firm belief in free will. (543) Many people erroneously believe that predestination, determinism or fatalism is a dogma of Islam. However, this is far from being the case. In

Sunni Islam there are various opinions on the subject of free will versus predestination, determinism or fatalism. However, in

(3902)

Shi'a Islam belief in free will is the orthodox doctrine, predestination, determinism or fatalism being considered a pernicious heresy which portrays God as a pitiless tyrant and man as an automaton with no free will and therefore no responsibility for his actions.(544) Abul Abbas ibn al-Arif of Almeria also uses the expression "Face of God".(545) A brief digression is called for at this point. The philosopher Mortimer J. Adler (546) recently said that of the three Abrahamic religions, i.e., Judaism, Christianity and Islam, only Christianity affirms that God is both immanent and transcendent. Prof. Adler is a philosopher of Aristotelian orientation, neither an Islamic scholar nor a student of comparative religion. He is mistaken in the above, because Islam particularly Shi'a Islam does indeed emphasize that God is immanent as well as transcendent. It is this common denial of Divine Immanence which is the one point which Judaism and Manichaeism have in common, and makes it possible to speak of Protestantism and Wahhabism as Judeo-Manichaean cults with nothing Christian or Islamic about them save appropriated or "hijacked" names.

The French Calvinists, or *Huguenots*, quite rightly considered the Manichaean Albigensians to be their forerunners and their spiritual brothers. One cannot express the Manichaean base of Calvinism more clearly.

Hilaire Belloc succinctly defines the kinship between

Manichaeism on the one hand and Calvinism - particularly in its

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extremist or "Puritan" form on the other:

"Puritanism is a particular form and degree of Protestantism ("Calvinism" to be more precise) which has specially flourished in England (and New England), Scotland and Wales, but of which there were wide areas throughout the Protestant world, notably in Scandinavia and in Holland. To be a Puritan is almost exactly the same as to be what the old world used to call a Manichaeism. The Puritan and the Manichaeism have the same attitude towards the universe; their creeds work out to the same moral and social practice. But there is one doctrinal difference between them, for while the Manichaeism believes in an evil principle which works side by side with and is equal to the principle of good in the universe, the Puritan, proceeding from Calvin and therefore only admitting one will in the universe, makes both evil and good combine in the same awful God who permits, and in a sense wills, evil, and particularly the sufferings of man.

There is then this difference in doctrine between the two, the old heresy which continually reappears throughout the earlier Christian (and Islamic) centuries and the new heresy of the sixteenth century. But in practice the effects of the two were just the same, and Puritanism made of the society which it affected (or, rather "infected") very much what the Albigensians (in Languedoc in what is now Southern France) in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the Bulgarian heretics (or *Bogomils*) made of theirs in an earlier time still.

The sentiment rather than the conviction that the material world is evil, and therefore that all sensual joy is in essence evil, lies at the root of Puritanism. Joy in the arts, delight in beauty, and the rest of it, are the Puritan's object of hatred. He sees them all as rivals to the majesty of God and obstacles which deflect the pure worship of that majesty."(547)

As Wade Rowland noted:

"The revocation of the Edict of Nantes ostensibly wiped out the Huguenots, whom Pope Clement XI (*reigned 1700-1721*) identified with the execrable race of the ancient Albigenses (Albigensians, Cathars) completely out of France. They (*the Church*) also connected the Cathars to the Manichaeism, which would mean that they saw a continuing line of heretical thought all the way from Mani (*founder of Manichaeism*) to the Huguenots and presumably from there to the Protestants of the

Reformation. You can see it all as a vast cosmic battle
(3904)

stretching over hundreds of years between two competing versions of reality. One side holds the upper hand until about the 17th century and then the other side wins a series of decisive battles we call the Reformation and the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment." (548)

V.P. Vlasto is even more emphatic and plain-spoken than Hilaire Belloc in speaking of the practical identity between Manichaeism and Puritanism:

"Ignoring as we may diverse heresies which flourished here and there, a general survey of early Balkan Slav Christianity would yet be incomplete without some account of the Bogomils. A full exposition of their beliefs and customs must be sought elsewhere.

Briefly, Bogomilism was both dualist and 'puritan'. It was dualist in that it believed that Satan was the creator of the (material, spatio-temporal) universe. All matter therefore derives from an autonomous evil principle at war with God. Our bodies and their functions are unsanctified and cannot be sanctified. Satan made the body of man; the soul only was from God. It was puritan in that it rejected most of the dogmas and rites of the Church as a human superstructure without the authority of (Jesus) Christ - an illusion which Satan has foisted on us. Thus typical Bogomil (the name given to the Manichaeans of Bulgaria) doctrine rejected all the Old Testament except the Psalms and retained in the New (*Injil*) only Jesus' teachings in the Spirit. His (Jesus') whole human life, as partaking of matter, was necessarily mere appearance. Atonement and Redemption became meaningless if man, created not by God but by Satan, never fell. The Mother of God (Latin: *Mater Dei*; Greek: *Theotokos*; Church Slavonic: *Bogoroditsa* or *Bozhii Mater*) and the Cross are hateful debasements; the sacraments, including marriage, valueless; the Doctors of the Church - false teachers. The doctrine of the Trinity was interpreted in various unorthodox ways. Their practice therefore was deceptively simple: prayer to God and to His true emanation, Jesus - especially the Lord's Prayer; non-involvement as far as possible in all the toils of matter, including sexual abstinence; the avoidance of wine and all food of living origin.

There will necessarily be an order of more 'perfect' Bogomils able, unlike the majority of men, to follow the most strict interpretation of these

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abnegatory principles. Further, since the Church goes hand in hand with government, there was a strong element of social protest in Bogomilism, a refusal to obey civil and military authority in any way which conflicted with this conception of 'primitive Christianity'. Naturally over a long period of time doctrine and custom varied from place to place. Some consider this social disobedience the mainspring of the movement's success (both in Bulgaria and later in Languedoc).

The main ingredient in Bogomil belief was the Paulician heresy (i.e., Manichaeism) indigenous to the Byzantine Empire's troubled eastern frontier over against the Monophysite Churches and Islam (Manichaeism, under whatever name - Paulicians, Cathars, Bogomils, Patarenes, Albigensians, etc. has the distinction of having been equally persecuted by Zoroastrianism, Orthodox Christianity, Catholic Christianity, Monophysite Christianity, and Islam). Both the Byzantine authorities and the Armenians took repressive measures against the Paulicians in the eighth and ninth centuries. On several occasions Constantine V Copronymous (reigned 741-775) took the (very) unwise step of forcibly transferring large bodies of Paulicians to Thrace, since, partly by virtue of their strict religious principles, they were a well-disciplined and martial people: the defence of the western approaches to the Imperial City (Constantinople) was a more and more insistent need against Bulgars and others. This Iconoclast Emperor considered Paulicians less dangerous in the religious sense than some of his more Orthodox subjects (we will deal later between the connections between Iconoclasm and Manichaeism). For about a century the heresy continued quietly spreading in Thrace.

The expansion of the Bulgarian state southwards at the expense of the (Byzantine) Empire and its entry into Christendom in the 860s marked a new phase. From the earliest years of their Christianity the Bulgarians were faced not only with rival Christian missions but also with the presence among them of this self-styled pure and primitive form of Christianity (exactly like the later English Puritans). Monophysite Armenians, Jews, and even Muslims, resident in the country, added to the confusion. It is very likely that the Slav peasantry in parts of Bulgaria was from the first in closer contact with Bogomil beliefs than with the Orthodoxy which was then being laboriously imposed on it from above. Dualist (Manichaean) doctrine had the same advantage of theological simplicity that Arianism had for the semi-civilised Germanic peoples.

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The young Bulgarian Church was immediately made

aware of the danger. The last of Pope Nicholas I's Responsa to (Tsar) Boris (of Bulgaria) warns of the danger of false teachings without being specific about heresy as such. A few years later (about 872) the newly appointed Archbishop of Bulgaria received from Peter of Sicily a tract on the Dualist (Manichaeic) heresy which he had been commissioned to investigate by the (Byzantine) Emperor Basil I. John the Exarch attacks heretics, presumably of this (Dualist) persuasion, in his Shestodnevi, written circa 915: he argues at length that there is no evil principle (*zula sila*) in the Creation.

The Paulicians and similar sects could not be stamped out either in Thrace or in Asia Minor; in Bulgarian territory it was far beyond the means of scattered missions to oppose their spread.

The peculiarly Bulgarian form of the heresy, however, does not seem to have arisen before the reign of (Tsar) Peter (927-969); for it was in his time that the eponymous founder of it, Bogomil [Originally, as in some early texts, Bogumil, a calque of Greek *Theophilus* or *Theophilos* (dear to God), but the later and more normal form for a Slav binomial name is generally adopted. It is curious, however, that his followers are always referred to as 'Bogomils' and not, as would be expected, by a derivative from the heresiarch's name. This has led a few scholars to doubt his existence and put the name 'Bogomils' on a par with 'Cathars' - that is, *pure ones* - a name known from the early eleventh century in Languedoc and North Italy.], lived and propagated a personal variant, or selection, of these diverse doctrines. The region in which he worked is not known for certain, but is likely to have been Macedonia (I personally believe that he never existed). Theophlact of Ohrid alludes to 'a beastly heresy', which can scarcely be other than Bogomilism, as developing thereabouts in the years following St. Clement's death (916). Whether Sts. Clement and Naum themselves had to contend with it does not appear from the available sources.

Bogomil's preaching met with marked success. From the middle of the tenth century the sect as a native heresy began to flourish. The Patriarch of Constantinople, Theophlact (*fungebatur* 933-956), sent an official warning to Tsar Peter against this new ('new' only in Thrace or Bulgaria) heresy. The Bulgarian Church itself, after a century of development, as not above reproach and needed in some respects to set its own house in order. This clear from Cosmas the Priest's Tract Against the Bogomils, written

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in 972. He points to many shortcomings in the Bulgarian Church which helped to account for the vigor of this popular movement - in particular, worldliness and

ignorance of the clergy. Cosmas' strictures certainly appear to indicate an element of social protest in the Bogomil movement; its adherents were still largely drawn from the lower classes. His account is also one of the best sources for its beliefs at that stage, though in the nature of things it cannot be taken as a complete and unbiased account.

The havoc wrought by the laborious Byzantine reconquest of Bulgaria during the next half-century was largely responsible for the further dispersion of the Bogomil doctrines. The Paulician sect had even been strengthened about Philippopolis (Plovdiv) by another large transference of its adherent from Asia Minor by (the Byzantine Emperor) John Tzimiskes about 975; they were left undisturbed in their beliefs provided that they kept the Bulgarians at bay. There is nothing to suggest that Tsar Samuel was not himself Orthodox but some members of his family were suspect of Bogomil leanings and he may have found himself, under pressure of political and military needs, obliged to be more or less tolerant to the sect in his dominions.

The Byzantine authorities fared no better in dealing with the heresy in conquered Bulgaria. There is by this time more reason to associate it with a movement of national resistance to (Byzantine) Greek domination and the Hellenization of the country, including the official Church. On top of this Bulgaria was devastated by nomad incursions, especially by the Pechenegs in 1048. And soon Constantinople was too occupied with new difficulties on her eastern frontier to give more than scant attention to Bulgaria. Bogomil religious leaders had no doubt always been recruited, if lapsed Orthodox, from the lower, parish clergy, of Slav race. Now that Greeks increasingly filled the higher ranks of the Bulgarian Church, this dichotomy was rendered more acute and obvious. At the same time, insofar as the movement became anti-Greek, it tended to invade the higher levels of Bulgarian society. It was, in short, becoming more respectable.

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries show the heresy at its most vigorous. From the Balkans it had spread westwards, by the agency of merchants and perhaps Crusaders, via North Italy to Languedoc, where the so-called Albigensian Crusade had to be organized for its suppression. By about 1100 Bulgarian Bogomilism had already penetrated into educated Byzantine circles. (The Byzantine Emperor) Alexius Komeneos (1081-1118) took the drastic step just before his death of having a

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prominent Bogomil leader, Basil, burnt as a heretic. Evidently the movement had come out into the open even within the Byzantine Empire. Several bishops and even one Patriarch - Kosmas Attikos (1146-1147) - were

suspect of contamination by these doctrines. A synod held at Constantinople in 1140 called for the destruction of various pernicious Greek works which contained doctrines similar to those of the Massalians, 'otherwise called Bogomils'. Notices of more or less solidly Bogomil districts within the Byzantine Empire reach to the end of the twelfth century. In the East Balkans the movement was strong enough to require organization on a territorial principle. The main 'churches' were called *Bulgaria* (= Macedonia) and *Dragovitia* (= Thrace) with center at Plovdiv, the former territories of the Slav tribe *Dragovitai* or *Druguvitai*. (549)

The etymology of the term 'Albigensian' is unknown, as the city of Albi contained very few Cathars. The word 'Cathar' is simply a Latinized transcription of the Greek *Kathar*, meaning "pure", no doubt recalling that at one time Bogomilism had penetrated even Greek-speaking Byzantine society. A less frequent term used to refer to the Cathars was *Bulgari*, whose origin is rather obvious.

As we said above, there is a direct and unbroken line between the ancient Manichaeans, the Byzantine Iconoclasts, the *Bogomils* of medieval Bulgaria, the Cathars or Albigensians of medieval western Europe, the *Covenantars* (Scotland's poet laureate, Robert Burns repeatedly refers to "Covenanting fools") and the English and New England Puritans (or "Cromwell's fools") and, finally, the Wahhabis, Salafis, Deobandis, Taliban, al-Qaeda, etcetera.

The connection between Manichaeism, and its later incarnations such as *Bogomilism* in Bulgaria and Albigensianism or

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Catharism in Languedoc was briefly noted by Will Durant in The Age of Faith.

Wade Rowland has dealt with this in greater detail:

"The Cathars were the advance guard of modernism in Europe. Strongly tainted by the pre-Christian Gnostic tradition of esoteric knowledge, in which it was believed that the devout can have access to the innermost secrets of creation and the universe, they shared the view that would be adopted by modern science that there are no necessary limits to human knowledge.

The Medieval Church, following St. Augustine (and numerous other early Church Fathers who wrote in Latin, Greek or Syriac), rejected that view, believing that ultimate knowledge was inaccessible to humans (Who can know the mind of God?), and that it was at best a waste of time, and at worst sinful, to go in search of it (*Ibn Arabi al-Mursi and many other Sufis agreed*), because, such a search was open-ended and therefore endless; sinful because carried to extremes, it distracted men from the rightful focus of their inquiries and attention: their innermost being (*once again, Ibn Arabi al-Mursi and many other Sufis agreed*).

In the dualism of the Cathars lay another harbinger of modernism, a foreshadowing of the fatal undermining of the Catholic doctrines that effectively integrated body and spirit. The material world of the Cathars was not just evil, it was autonomous, and thus existed independent of, and in opposition to the spiritual realm. Men and woman could withdraw from it, as did the *Perfecti* (Cathar clergy), or indulge themselves in it as lay followers tended to do: the choice was theirs. However, in the future, if whole societies were to choose the material in preference to the more rigorous spiritual realm in which to focus their lives, the spiritual would be in danger of withering into irrelevancy, reduced to superstition. This was the great, continuing concern of the Church. The war against the Cathars of Languedoc was but an early and remarkably violent episode in the epic cosmological dispute that would climax with the mathematics and astronomy of Galileo (contrary to popular belief, the quarrel between the Church and Galileo concerned epistemology, NOT astronomy, and the Church, NOT Galileo, was right: see Galileo's Mistake by Wade Rowland), the bloodless philosophy of Descartes (Blaise Pascal said: "I cannot forgive Descartes." Nor can I.), the clockwork science of Isaac Newton (As the romantic poet William Blake said:

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"May God us keep
From single vision and Newton's sleep"

and triumphant scientific revolution that changed the world forever." (550)

Wade Rowland continues:

"It (Catharism) made a shambles of the Catholic worldview as it had emerged from St. Augustine (and other Church Fathers') long labors, incorporating Plato's notion of ideal forms (*The famous Platonic Forms*), and built on the bedrock sureties of man's participation in the actualized existence of the material world. The Cathars insisted that the material world was not of God's making: how could it be if it contained evil, as it clearly did? But Catholic cosmology saw a hierarchy of existence that began in the material world, ascended to man (and the world of Platonic Forms, the Imaginal World of Ibn Arabi al-Mursi and the great Shi'a thinkers of Safavi Persia, of whom Mullah Sadra Shirazi was perhaps the greatest figure), and finally to God. It proposed a transactional reality in which man's consciousness interacted with God's creation to make a material world that otherwise existed only as a potential: the material world, thus actualized, was explained mainly in its usefulness to man (crops ripened, animals multiplied, the sun shone, for the benefit of man), who in turn justified his existence in a quest for salvation in mystical union with God, the Supreme Good. Cathar doctrine was sand in the gears of this lovingly crafted philosophy elaborated over the previous thousand years and more. In the material world of the Cathars, objects were given form and existence by the devil alone. Man was thus removed from his central place in the material world, and set adrift in a void furnished by completely objectified things; this, too, is an essentially modern view of material reality. The Cathars, of course, added the thoroughly unmodern idea that all of material reality was evil; true modernism, scientific positivism has dealt with this archaic embarrassment seemingly unavoidable in dualist worldviews through the simple expedient of disregarding the spiritual realm. (551)

Catharism gave rise to something not mentioned by either Will Durant nor Wade Rowland: Satanism and black witchcraft. If it is Satan and not God who created and rules the material world, then

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it makes perfect sense to worship him. Satanism and black witchcraft appeared in Western Europe shortly after Catharism made its first appearance in Languedoc. One of the names which Satanist cults use for Satan is "The Lord of Matter"; a thoroughly

Manichaeian name and concept.

It is obvious that *scientism* or scientific positivism and scientific materialism on the one hand and Satanism and black witchcraft on the other hand have the same origin.

That black witchcraft flourished in Puritan England and Puritan Massachusetts should surprise no one.

Below is a description of some of the sacrilegious vandalism perpetrated by the neo-Manichaeian fury of the English Puritans:

"One of the things everyone knows about the English Civil War is that Cromwell cancelled Christmas. In (very sober) fact, Christmas was cancelled, but not by Cromwell; it was cancelled by that transhistorical killjoy, a Parliamentary subcommittee exceeding its remit. All Cromwell did was enforce a policy agreed (upon) some years before his became an important voice in government.

The removal of saints' days from the calendar was expected, but the committee went much further. Led by Robert Harley, Brilliana's serious (I can think of more accurate and appropriate adjectives) spouse, they reformed (deformed) the Church calendar just as he had reformed (deformed) Church décor. For Harley, (Crypto-Manichaeian that he was) paintings and stained glass were clutter that could obscure the simple truth of God, and the more beautiful they were, the more tempting and alluring they became, (Prince Rupert of the Rhine, nephew of Charles I, reportedly said: "if it is not ugly it is not Protestant") and therefore the more of an obstacle to true worship (This is pure, unadulterated Manichaeianism: the supposed differences between Puritanism and Manichaeianism are purely nominal and verbal, with no meaning nor substance). The same stern (anti)aesthetic applied to colourful festivals like Christmas, Easter and Saints' days; their very human appeal meant that they distracted believers from
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the motions of the spirit. As such, for Robert Harley the Church calendar too was to take less account of human needs for ritual, striving instead for an order which would allow the elect to approach the God of the Gospels (how can this be reconciled with the doctrine of the Incarnation?) without distraction. The committee therefore agreed that only the Lord's own day, Sunday, was a special day requiring special treatment (Why this totally inconsistent exception?)." (552)

The Anglican Archbishop Laud, a contemporary of Charles I and Cromwell, firmly believed in "the beauty of holiness", as I do. Why Archbishop Laud did not carry his beliefs to their logical conclusion and convert to either Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy is beyond me; ignorance or mental inertia, I suppose. Certainly in his own lifetime Archbishop Laud had observed that Protestantism contains a dynamic which inevitably tends toward Manichaeism (which he would probably have known as "Catharism"), Satanism or devil worship, and atheism.

To refer to Calvinists - particularly the English and New England Puritans and the Covenanters of the Scottish Lowlands - as "heretics" is to give them an undeserved compliment; in fact, they are infidels of a particularly nasty sort. The Amerindians known as "Chinook", of whom we shall speak later, were, even in their pagan days, less infidel, far closer to traditional Christianity, than are the Calvinists, particularly the English and New England Puritans. At least the pagan Chinook had nothing of the Manichaeism or Catharism about them. Only a pure Satanist or atheist (toward which Manichaeism or Catharism inevitably tends) is a far nastier, far more vile infidel than a Calvinist, particularly an English or New England Puritan or Covenanter of

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the Scottish Lowlands.

Below is the short story Young Goodman Brown by Nathaniel Hawthorne. The action takes place in or near Salem, Massachusetts in the 17th century, when the British Colony of Massachusetts Bay was ruled by the Puritan Oligarchy. Young Goodman Brown is

available in many editions and anthologies.

YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN

Young Goodman Brown came forth at sunset into the street at Salem village; but out his head back, after crossing the threshold, to exchange a parting kiss with his young wife. And Faith, as the wife was aptly named, thrust her own pretty head into the stree, letting the wind play with the pink ribbons of her cap while she called to Goodman Brown.

"Deares heart," whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear, "prtithee put off your journey until sunrise and sleep in your own bed tonight. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts that she's afraid of herself sometimes. Pray tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year."

"My love and my Faith", replied Goodman Brown, "of all nights in the year, this one night must I tarry away from you. My journey, as you call it, forth and back again, must needs be done between now and sunrise. What, my sweet, pretty wife, do you doubt me already, and we but three months married?"

"Then God bless you!", said Faith, with the pink ribbons; "and may you find all well when you come back."

"Amen!", cried Goodman Brown, "Say your prayers, dear Faith, and go to bed at dusk, and no harm will come to you."

So they parted; and the young man pursued his way until, being about to turn the corner by the meetig-house, he looked back and saw the head of Faith still peeping after him with a melancholy air, in spite of her pink ribbons.

"Poor little Faith!" thought he, for his heart smote him. "What a wretch I am to leave her on such an errand! She talks of dreams, too. I thought as she spoke there was trouble in her face, as if a dream had warned her that work is to be done tonight. But no, no; it would kill her to think it. Well, she's a blessed

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angel on earth; and after this one night I'll cling to her skirts and follow her to heaven."

With this excellent resolve for the future, Goodman Brown felt himself justified in making more haste on his evil purpose. He had taken a dreary road, darkened by all the glooiest trees of the forest, which barely stood aside to let the narrow path creep through, and closed immediately behind. It was all as lonely as could be; and there is this peculiarity in such a solitude, that the traveller knows not who may be concealed by the innumerable trunks and the thick boughs overhead; so that with lonely footsteps he may yet be passing through

an unseen multitude.

"There may be a devilish Indian behind every tree," said Goodman Brown to himself; and he glanced fearfully behind him as he added, "What if the devil himself should be at my very elbow!"

His head being turned back, he passed a crook of the road, and, looking forward again, beheld the figure of a man, in grave and decent attire, seated at the foot of an old tree. He arose at Goodman Brown's approach and walked onward side by side with him.

"You are late, Goodman Brown," said he, "The clock of the Old South was striking as I came through Boston, and that is full fifteen minutes ago."

"Faith kept me back awhile," replied the young man, with a tremor in his voice, caused by the sudden appearance of his companion, though not wholly unexpected.

It was now deep dusk in the forest, and deepest in that part of it where these two were journeying. As nearly as could be discerned, the second traveller was about fifty years old, apparently in the same rank of life as Goodman Brown, and bearing a considerable resemblance to him, though perhaps more in expression than features. Still they might have been taken for father and son. And yet, though the elder person was as simply clad as the younger, and as simple in manner too, he had an indescribable air of one who knew the world, and who would not have felt abashed at the governor's table or in King William's court, were it possible that his affairs should call him thither. But the only thing about him that could be fixed upon as remarkable was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. This, of course, must have been an optical illusion, assisted by the uncertain light.

"Come, Goodman Brown," cried his fellow-traveller, "this is a dull place for the beginning of a journey.

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Take my staff, if you are so soon weary."

"Friend," said the other, exchanging his slow pace for a full stop, "having kept covenant by meeting you here, it is my purpose now to return from whence I came. I have scruples touching on the matter which concerns you."

"Do you say so?" replied he of the serpent, smiling apart. "Let us walk on, nevertheless, reasoning as we go; and if I do not convince you, you may turn back. We are but a little way in the forest yet."

"Too far! Too far!" exclaimed Goodman Brown, unconsciously resuming his walk. "My father never went into the woods on such an errand, nor his father before him. We have been a race of honest men and good

Christians since the days of the martyrs; and shall I be the first of the name of Brown that ever took this path and kept' -

"Such company, you might say, observed the elder person, interpreting his pause. "Well said, Goodman Brown! I have been as well acquainted with your family as with any among the Puritans; and that is no trifle to say. I helped your grandfather the constable, when he lashed the Quaker woman so smartly through the streets of Salem; and it was I who brought your father a pitch-pine knot, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to an Indian village, in King Philip's war. They were my good friends, both; and many a pleasant walk have we had along this path, and returned merrily after midnight. I would be friends with you for their sake."

"if it is as you say," replied Goodman Brown, "I marvel that they never spoke of these matters; or, truly, I do not marvel, seeing that the least rumor of that sort would have had them driven from New England. We are a people of prayer, and good works as well, and do not abide such wickedness."

"Wickedness or not," said the traveller with the twisted staff, "I have a very general acquaintance here in New England. The deacons of many a church have drunk the communion wine with me; the selectmen of diverse towns make me their chairman; and a majority of the Great and General Court are firm supporters of my interest. The governor and I, too - but those are state secrets."

"Can this be so?" cried Goodman Brown with a stare of amazement at his undisturbed companion. "How is it, I have nothing to do with the governor and council; they have their own ways, and are no rule for a simple husbandman like me. But, were I to go on with you, how should I meet the eye of that good old man, our minister, at Salem village? Oh, his voice would make me tremble both Sabbath day and lecture day."

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Thus far the elder traveler had listened with due gravity; but now he burst into a fit of irrepressible mirth, shaking himself so violently that his snake-like staff actually seemed to wriggle in sympathy.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" he shouted again and again; then composing himself, he continued; "Well, go on, Goodman Brown, go on; but please, do not kill me with laughing."

"Well, then, to end the matter at once," said Goodman Brown, considerable irritated, "there is my wife, Faith. It would break her dear little heart; and I'd rather break my own."

"No, should that be the case," answered the other, then go your own way, Goodman Brown. I would not for twenty old woman like the one hobbling before us that

Faith should come to any harm."

As he spoke he pointed his staff at a female figure on the path, in whom Goodman Brown recognized a very pious and exemplary dame, who had taught him his catechism in youth, and was still his moral and spiritual adviser, jointly with the minister and Deacon Gookin.

"A marvel, truly, that Goody Cloyse should be so far in the wilderness at nightfall", he said. "But by your leave, friend, I shall take a cut through the woods until we have left this Christian woman behind. Being a stranger to you, she might ask with whom I was consorting and where I was going."

"Be it so," said his fellow traveler. "You go through the woods, and let me keep to the path."

Accordingly, the young man turned aside, but took care to watch his companion, who advanced softly along the road until he had come within a staff's length of the old woman. She, meanwhile, was making the best of her way, with singular speed for so aged a woman, and mumbling some indistinct words - a prayer, doubtless - as she went. The traveller put forth his staff and touched her withered neck with what seemed to be the serpent's tail.

"The devil!", screamed the pious old lady.

"Then Goody Cloyse knows her old friend?" observed the traveller, confronting her and leaning on his writhing stick.

"Ah, is that your worship indeed?" cried the good dame. "Yes, truly it is, and in the very image of my old gossip, Goodman Brown, the grandfather of the silly fellow that is her now. But - would your worship believe it - my broomstick has strangely disappeared, stolen, as I suspect, by that unchanged witch, Goody Cory, and that, too, when I was all anointed with the juice of smallage, and cinquefoil, and wolf's bane"

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"Mingled with fine wheat and the fat of a new-born baby," said the shape of old Goodman Brown.

"Ah, your worship knows the recipe." Cried the old lady, cackling aloud. "So, as I was saying, being all ready for the meeting, and no horse to ride on, I made up my mind to go on foot; for they tell me that there is a nice young man to be taken into communion tonight. But now your good worship will lend me your arm, and we shall be there in a twinkling."

"That can hardly be," answered her friend. "I may not spare you my arm Goody Cloyse; but here is my staff, if you will."

So saying, he threw it down at her feet, where, perhaps, it assumed life, being one of the rods which its owner had formerly lent to the Egyptian magicians. Of this fact, howeverm Goodman Brown could not take

cognizance. He had cast up his eyes in astonishment, and, looking down again, beheld neither Goody Cloyse nor the serpentine staff, but his fellow-traveller alone, who waited for him as calmly as if nothing had happened.

"That old woman taught me my catechism," said the young man; and there was a world of meaning in this simple comment.

They continued to walk onward, while the elder traveller exhorted his companion to make good speed and persevere in the path, discoursing so aptly that his arguments seemed rather to spring up in the bosom of his auditor than to be suggested by himself. As they went, he plucked a branch of maple to serve for a walking stick, and began to strip it of the twigs and little boughs, which were wet with the evening dew. The moment his fingers touched them they became strangely withered and dried up as with a week's sunshine. Thus the pair proceeded, at a good free pace, until suddenly, in a gloomy hollow of the road, Goodman Brown sat down on the stump of a tree and refused to go any farther.

"Friend." Said he, stubbornly, "my mind is made up. Not another step will I budge on this errand. What if a wretched old woman should choose to go to the devil when I thought she was going to heaven; is that any reason why I should quit my dear Faith and go after her?"

"You will think better of this by and by," said his acquaintance, composedly. "Sit here and rest yourself a while; and when you feel like moving again, there is my staff to help you along."

Without more words, he threw his companion the maple stick, and was as speedily out of sight as if he had vanished into the deepening gloom. The young man

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sat a few moments by the roadside, applauding himself greatly, and thinking about how clear a conscience he should meet the minister in his morning walk, nor shrink from the eye of good old Deacon Gookin. And what calm sleep would be his that very night, which was to have been spent so wickedly, but so purely and sweetly now, in the arms of Faith! Amidst these pleasant and praiseworthy meditations, Goodman Brown heard the tramp of horses along the road, and deemed it advisable to conceal himself within the edge of the forest, conscious of the guilt purpose that had brought him here, though now so happily turned from it.

On came the hoof tramps and the voices of the riders, two grave old voices, conversing soberly as they drew near. These mingled sounds appeared to pass along the road, within a few yards of the young man's hiding place; but, owing doubtless to the depth of the gloom at that particular spot, neither the travellers nor their steeds were visible. Though their figures

brushed the small boughs by the wayside, it could not be seen that they intercepted, even for a moment, the faint gleam from the strip of bright sky athwart which they must have passed. Goodman Brown alternately crouched and stood on tiptoe, pulling aside the branches and thrusting forth his head as far as he dared without discerning so much as a shadow. It vexed him the more, because he could have sworn, were such a thing possible, that he recognized the voices of the minister and Deacon Gookin, jogging along quietly, as they were wont to do, when bound to some ordination or ecclesiastical council. While yet within hearing, one of the riders stopped to pluck a switch.

"Of the two, reverend sir," said the voice like the deacon's, "I had rather miss an ordination dinner than tonight's meeting. They tell me that some of our community are to be here from Falmouth and beyond, and others from Connecticut and Rhode Island, besides several of the Indian powwows, who, after their fashion, knows almost as much deviltry as the best of us. Morecer, there is a goodly young woman to be taken into communion."

"Mighy well, Deacon Gookin!" replied the solemn old tones of the minister. "Spur up, or we shall be late. Nothing can be done, you know, until I get on the ground."

The hoofs clattered again; and the voices, talking so strangely in the empty air, passed on through the forest, where no church had ever been gathered nor solitary Christian prayed. Where, then, could these holy men be journeying so deep into the heathen wilderness? Young Goodman Brown caught hold of a tree

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for support, being ready to sink down on the ground, faint and overburdened with the heavy sickness of his heart. He looked up to the sky, doubting whether there Really was a heaven above him. Yet there was the blue arch, and the stars brightening in it.

"With heaven above and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the devil!", cried Goodman Vrown.

While he still gazed upward into the deep arch of the firmament and had lifted his hands to pray, a cloud, though no wind was stirring, hurried across the zenith and hid the brightening stars. The blue sky was still visible, except directly overhead, where this balck mass of cloud was sweeping swiftly northward. Aloft in the air, as if from the depths of the cloud, came a confused and doubtful sound of voices. Once the listener fancied that he could distinguish the accents of towns people of his own, men and women, both pious and ungodly, many of whom he had met at the communion table, and had seen others rioting at the tavern. The next moment, so indistinct were the sounds, he doubted whether he had

heard anything but the murmur of the old forest, whispering without a wind. Then came a stronger swell of those familiar tones, heard daily in the sunshine at Salem village, but never until now from a cloud of night. There was one voice of a young woman, uttering lamentations, yet with an uncertain sorrow, and entreating for some favor, which, perhaps, it would grieve her to obtain; and all the unseen multitude, both saints and sinners, seemed to encourage her onward.

"Faith!" shouted Goodman Brown, in a voice of agony and desperation; and the echoes of the forest mocked him, crying "Faith! Faith!" as if bewildered wretches were seeking her all through the wilderness.

The cry of grief, rage and terror was yet piercing the night, when the unhappy husband held his breath for a response. There was a scream, drowned immediately in a louder murmur of voices, fading into far off laughter, as the dark cloud swept away, leaving the clear and silent sky above Goodman Brown. But something fluttered lightly down through the air and caught on the branch of a tree. The young man seized it, and beheld a pink ribbon.

"My Faith is gone!" cried he, after one stupefied moment. "There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil; for to you is this world given." (Spoken like a true Puritan!)

And, maddened with despair, so that he laughed aloud and long, did Goodman Brown grasp his staff and set forth again, at such a pace that he seemed to fly along the forest path rather than to walk or run. The

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road grew wilder and drearier and more faintly traced, and vanished at length, leaving him in the heart of the dark wilderness, still rushing onward with the instinct that guides mortal man to evil. (Once again pure Puritanism!) The whole forest was peopled with frightful sounds - the creaking of the trees, the howling of wild beasts, and the yell of the Indians; while sometimes the wind tolled like a distant church bell, and sometimes gave a broad roar around the traveller, as if all Nature were laughing him to scorn. But he was himself the chief horror of the scene, and did not shrink from its other horrors.

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Goodman Brown when the wind laughed at him. "Let us hear which will laugh loudest. Do not think to frighten me with your deviltry. Come witch, come wizard, come Indian powwow, come devil himself, and here comes Goodman Brown. You may as well fear him as he fears you."

In truth, all through the haunted forest there could be nothing more frightful than the figure of Goodman Brown. On he flew among the black pines, brandishing his staff with frenzied gestures, now giving

vent to an inspiration of horrid blasphemy, and now shouting forth such laughter as to set all the echoes. Of the forest laughing like demons around him. The fiend in his own shape is less hideous than when he rages in the breast of man. Thus sped the demoniac on his course, until, quivering among the trees, he saw a red light before him, as when the felled trunks and branches of a clearing have been set on fire, and throw up their lurid blaze against the sky, at the hour of midnight. He paused, in a lull of the tempest that had driven him onward, and heard the swell of what seemed to be a hymn, rolling solemnly from a distance with the weight of many voices. He knew the tune; it was a familiar one in the choir of the village meeting house. The verse died heavily away, and was lengthened by a chorus not of human voices, but of all the sounds of the benighted wilderness pealing in awful harmony together. Goodman Brown cried out, and his cry was lost to his own ear by its unison with the cry of the wilderness.

In the interval of silence he stole forward until the light glared full upon his eyes. At one extremity of an open space, hemmed in by the dark wall of the forest, arose a rock, bearing some rude, natural resemblance either to an altar or a pulpit, and surrounded by four blazing pines, their tops aflame their stems untouched, like candles at an evening meeting. The mass of foliage that had overgrown the summit of the rock was all on fire, blazing high into

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the night and fitfully illuminating the whole field. Each pendant twig and leafy festoon was in a blaze. As the red light rose and fell, a numerous congregation alternately shone forth, then disappeared in shadow, and again grew, as it were, out of the darkness, peopling the heart of the of the solitary woods at once.

"A grave and dark clad company", said Goodman Brown.

In truth they were such. Among them, quivering to and fro between gloom and splendor, appeared faces that would be seen next day at the council board of the province, and others which, Sabbath after Sabbath, looked devoutly heavenward, and benignant over the crowded pews, from the holiest pulpits in the land. Some affirm that the lady of the governor was there. At least there were high dames well known to her, and wives of honored husbands, and widows, a great multitude, and ancient maidens, all of excellent repute, and fair young girls, who trembled lest their mother should spy them. Either the sudden gleams of light flashing over the obscure fields bedazzled Goodman Brown, or he recognized a score of church members of Salem village famous for their special sanctity. Good old Deacon Gookin had arrived, and waited at the skirts of that venerable

saint, his revered pastor. But, irreverently consorting with these grave, reputable and pious people, these elder of the church, these chaste dames and dewy virgins, there were men of dissolute lives and women of spotted fame, wretches given over to all mean and filthy vice, and suspected even of horrid crimes. It was strange to see that the good shrank not from the wicked, nor were the sinners abashed by the saints. Scattered also among their pale faced enemies were the Indian priests, or powwows, who had often scared their native forest with more hideous incantations than any known to English witchcraft.

"But where is Faith?" thought Goodman Brown; and, as hope came into his heart, he trembled.

Another verse of the hymn arose, a slow and mournful strain, such as the pious love, but joined to words that expressed all that our nature can conceive of sin, and darkly hinted at far more. Unfathomable to mere mortals is the lore of fiends. Verse after verse was sung; and still the chorus of the wilderness swelled between like the deepest tone of a mighty organ; and with the final peal of that dreadful anthem there came a sound, as if the roaring wind, the rushing streams, the howling beasts, and every other voice of the unconcerted wilderness were mingling and according with the voice of guilty man in homage to the prince of

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all. The four blazing pines threw up a loftier flame, and obscurely discovered shapes and visages of horror on the smoke wreaths above the impious assembly. At the same moment the fire on the rock shot redly forth and formed a glowing arch above its base, where now appeared a figure. With reverence be it spoken, the figure bore more than a slight similitude, both in garb and manner, to some grave divine of the New England (Puritan) churches.

"Bring forth the converts!" cried a voice that echoed through the field and rolled into the forest.

At the word, Goodman Brown stepped forth from the shadow of the trees and approached the congregation, with whom he felt a loathsome brotherhood by the sympathy of all that was wicked in his heart. He could nearly have sworn that the shape of his own dead father beckoned him to advance, looking downward from a smoke wreath, while a woman, with dim features of deep despair, threw out her hand to warn him back. Was it his mother? But he had no power to retreat one step, nor to resist, even in thought, when the minister and good old Deacon Gookin seized his arms and led him to the blazing rock. There came also the slender form of a veiled female, led between Goody Cloyse, that pious teacher of the catechism, and Martha Carrier, who had received the devil's promise to be queen of hell. A rampant hag was

she. And there stood the proselytes beneath the canopy of fire.

"Welcome, my children," said the dark figure, "to the communion of your race. You have found thus young your nature and your destiny. My children, look behind you!"

They turned; and flashing forth, as it were, in a sheet of flame, the fiend worshippers were seen; the smile of welcome gleamed darkly on every visage.

"There", resumed the sable form, "are all whom you have revered from youth. You deemed them holier than yourselves, and shrank from your own sin, contrasting it with their lives of righteousness and prayerful aspirations heavenward. Yet here are they all in my worshipping assembly. This night it shall be granted to you to know their secret deeds: how hoary bearded elders of the church have whispered wanton words to the young maids of their households; how many a woman, eager for widows' weeds, has given her husband a drink at bedtime and let him sleep his last sleep in her bosom; how beardless youths have made haste to inherit their fathers' wealth; and how fair damsels - blush not, sweet ones - have dug little graves in the garden, and bidden me, the sole guest to an infant's funeral. By the sympathy of your human hearts for sin

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you shall scent out all the places - whether in church, bedchamber, street, field or forest - where crime has been committed, and shall exult to behold the whole earth one stain of guilt, one mighty blood spot. Far more than this. It shall be yours to penetrate, in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin, the fountain of all wicked arts, and which inexhaustibly supplies more evil impulses than than human power - than my power at its utmost - can make manifest in deeds. And now, my children, look upon each other."

They did so; and, by the blaze of the hell-kindled torches, the wretched, beheld his Faith, the wife her husband, trembling before that unhallowed altar.

"Lo, there you stand, my children", said the figure, in a deep and solemn tone, almost sad with its despairing awfulness, as if his once angelic nature could yet mourn for our miserable race. "Depending upon one another's hearts, you had still hoped that virtue were not all a dream. Now are you undeceived, Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness. Welcome again, my children, to the communion of your race."

"Welcome", repeated the fiend worshippers, in one cry of despair and triumph.

And there they stood, the only pair, as it seemed, who were yet hesitating on the verge of wickedness in this dark world. A basin was hollowed, naturally, in the

rock. Did it contain water, reddened by the lurid light? Or was it blood? Or, perchance, a liquid flame?

Herein did the shape of evil dip his hand and prepare to lay the mark of baptism upon their foreheads, that they might be partakers of the mystery of sin, more conscious of the secret guilt of others, both in deed and thought, than they could now be of their own. The husband cast one look at his pale wife, and Faith at him. What polluted wretches would the next glance show them to each other, shuddering alike at what they disclosed and what they saw!

"Faith! Faith!, cried the husband, "look up to heaven, and resist the wicked one."

Whether Faith obey he did not know. Hardly had he spoken when he found himself amid calm night and solitude, listening to a roar of the wind which died heavily away through the forest. He staggered against the rock, and felt it to be chill and damp; while a hanging twig, that had been all on fire, sprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew.

The next morning young Goodman Brown came slowly into the street of Salem Village, staring around him like a bewildered man. The good old minister was taking a walk along the graveyard to get an appetite for

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breakfast and meditate his sermon, and bestowed a blessing, as he passed, on Goodman Brown. He shrank from the venerable saint as if to avoid an anathema. Old Deacon Gookin was at domestic worship, and the holy words of his prayer were heard through the open window. "What God does the wizard pray to?" said Goodman Brown. Goody Cloyse, that excellent old Christian, stood in the early sunrise at her own lattice, catechizing a little girl who had brought her a pint of morning's milk. Goodman Brown snatched away the child as from the grasp of the fiend himself. Turning the corner by the meeting house, he spied the head of Faith, with the pink ribbons, gazing anxiously forth, and bursting into such joy at the sight of him that she skipped along the street and almost kissed her husband before the whole village. But Goodman Brown looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting.

Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch meeting?

Be it so if you will; but, alas! It was a dream of evil omen for young Goodman Brown. A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man did he become from the night of that fearful dream. On the Sabbath day, when the congregation was singing a holy psalm, he could not listen because an anthem of sin rushed loudly upon his ear and drowned all the blessed strain. When the minister spoke from the pulpit with power and fervid eloquence, and, with his hand on

the open Bible, of the sacred truths of our (Puritan) religion, and of saint-like lives and triumphant deaths, and of future bliss or misery unutterable, then did Goodman Brown turn pale, dreading lest the roof should thunder down upon the gray blasphemer and his hearers. Often, waking suddenly at midnight, he shrank from the bosom of Faith; and at morning or eventide, when the family knelt down at prayer, he scowled and muttered to himself, and gazed sternly at his wife, and turned away. And when he had lived long, and was borne to the grave a hoary corpse, followed by Faith, an aged woman, and children and grandchildren, a goodly procession, besides more than a few neighbors, they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone, for his dying hour was gloom."

In a review of or, rather commentary on the film *Black Swan* which appeared in the February, 2011 issue of the Catholic traditionalist monthly "Culture Wars" (South Bend, Indiana), E.

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Michael Jones notes:

"The story of (the film) *Black Swan* takes as its starting point the Black Swan/White Swan - Odille/Odette dichotomy at the heart of (the ballet) *Swan Lake*. Nina the Ballerina, desperately wants the lead role in a new production of *Swan Lake* by a New York ballet that looks a lot like ABT (American Ballet Theatre). Nina the Ballerina, however, has a problem. She's good at dancing the white swan but not good at dancing the black swan. Enter at this point someone who is the opposite of Nina the Ballerina. She is undisciplined but really good at playing the black swan because she's a slut and drinks a lot and takes drugs. So in order to become a really good (all around) ballerina all Nina has to do is go to a disco, take drugs and engage in lesbian (homosexual, or, in American slang, *dyke*; "lesbian" is far too dignified a word to use for something so unnatural and disgusting, and, besides it is an offense to the people of the Greek isle of the same name) sex.

"The fundamental premise of *Black Swan* is that dancing is sinful. Given that premise, the only way to get (to be) really good at dance is not (by) disciplining the body so that its movement can manifest beauty, but rather sinful behavior of the sort (that) Nina commits during and after her foray into the disco.

America, because of its Puritan heritage, cold

never have produced a work of art like (the ballet) *Swan Lake*, Instead of just being honest and admitting the fact, the cultural Bolsheviks from Hollywood have to demean the beauty they cannot attain and degrade the people whose dedication to art makes that beauty possible. They do this in typically Hollywood fashion by turning high art, i.e., (the ballet) *Swan Lake*, into (R-rated) pornography, i.e., *Black Swan*.

(The ballet) *Swan Lake* inaugurated the Golden Age of Russian ballet, an era which reached its culmination with the (Marius)Petipa/(Pyotr) Tchaikovsky production of (the ballet) *Sleeping Beauty* in 1890. *Sleeping Beauty* masterfully combined all the glorious elements of (Russian) imperial ballet, with its dazzling Tchaikovsky score and choreography by veteran ballet master Marius Petipa. It set the standard for all subsequent productions, garnering excellent response from the knowledgeable and opinionated St. Petersburg critics and balletomanes.

Swan Lake came about as the result of collaboration between two aristocratic cultures, namely the courts of 17th century France and 19th century

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Russia. What we now call Russian ballet was the creation of a Frenchman by the name of Marius Petipa, who was born in Marseilles on Marh 11, 1818. Petipa was Premier Maitre de Ballet at St. Petersburg's imperial theatres from 1871 until 1903 in spite of the fact that he never really became fluent in the Russian language. During that time he left a mark on ballet which in spite of years of revolutionary ferment has never been erased.

French ballet reached its apotheosis in Russia for a number of reasons. Most of them had to do with revolution. Unlike France, which had undergone close o a century of revolutionary turmoil by the time Petipa assumed his position in St. Petersburg, Russia was the quintessential example of pre-revolutionary courtly culture. French emigres had found a home in Russia ever since the expulsion of the Jesuits. Abbe (Augustine) Barruel, the Jesuit who wrote the Catholic history of the French Revolution, a book which would become the textbook for continental counter-revolutionaries, was on his way to Russia after the revolution had made it impossible (for him) to remain in Paris. Not even Napoleon's attack on Moscow could dampen Russian Francophilia. The Russians were determined to imitate French culture no matter what the French did to them. Just as Peter the Great's famous garden Peterhof was a more extravagant version of Versailles, so Imperial Russia during the last quarter of the 19th century was more French than France. Russia is what France could have been if there had been no French Revolution, and (so) it is no surprise that French ballet would find its

apotheosis in St. Petersburg, a city which Peter the Great based on his understanding of the (so-called) French Enlightenment.

Dance in Russia during the Age of Petipa meant being "trained in a school that adhered rigidly to the five turned-out positions of the legs, an erect torso, rounded arms". The epitome of the "Russian" ballerina in the Age of Petipa was Pierina Legnani, who danced her farewell benefit performance in St. Petersburg in 1901. Legnani's specific contribution to the art of Russian ballet, the performance of 32 consecutive *fouettes*, was something which (choreographer and) dance critic Mikhail Fokine (maternal grandfather of Gleb Podmoshensky, later Fr. Herman, of whom we have spoken earlier) referred to as "the most hateful invention of the ballet." Cohen tells us that by 1916 Fokine felt that beauty "had lost out to acrobatics". Other critics weren't so dismissive of "acrobatics". The reviewer in *Novoe Vremya* remarked of Legnani: "For her, it seems (that) there is no such thing as

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difficulty. To grace, artistry, precision and confidence, she joins the extraordinary strength of the steel muscles of her beautifully shaped legs."

Ballerinas, you have probably figured out by now, do not create "steel muscles" in their beautifully shaped legs by engaging in Dionysian (in the Nietzschean sense) frenzy at the local disco. Drugs, alcohol, lack of sleep, similarly, do not tone the musculature of ballerinas. Only hard work does that. Hollywood, unlike ballet, is based on illusion. As Samuel Goldwyn put it, "Sincerity is everything. Learn to fake it and you'll go far." The trouble with Hollywood is its propensity to believe in its own illusions and to extrapolate from that faulty premise to believing that everything is some form of illusion, including ballet (as the Spanish proverb says: "*El ladrón cree que todos son de su condición*", i.e., The thief believes that everyone is a thief). This is why films about ballet are generally so awful. What movies can accomplish with special effects, ballet has to achieve by hard work. Ballet is not wrestling; it is art, and art is a skill that takes a lot of practice. Hollywood achieves this instantly with body doubles, and the net result is that Hollywood either doesn't understand the effort involved in art or holds it in contempt. (The film) *Black Swan* is an unfortunate combination of both.

If Petipa emphasized technique and allowed virtuosity, he did not do so at the expense of drama. Russian ballet training under Petipa included both "character" dances, which is to say, exaggerated forms of ethnic dance (also known as "folk dance"), (an aspect of classical ballet training which has continued to this

day) as well as pantomime. One of the great achievements of the Russian adoption of the French ballet was its ability to hold these two oftentimes contradictory impulses (virtuosity and drama) in a kind of tension from which both benefitted. "Spectacle was also a staple of the Petipa ballet". Petipa always favored "subjects with dramatic content, with a fable that contained a beginning, development, and a denouement arising from it.

From a musical perspective the most important event during the Golden Age of Russian ballet was the premier in Moscow of a young musical conservatory graduate by the name of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The ballet was known as *Swan Lake*. *La Bayadere* was first performed on 23 January 1877 at the Bolshoi Theatre in St. Petersburg, and 28 days later *Swan Lake* was first performed at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow.

"Serious" musicians eschewed ballet music. Tchaikovsky changed all that when he rescued ballet
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music from the stylistic clichés of the 1830s and 1840s by writing *Swan Lake*. At a time when ballet composers had the reputation of writing ballet scores "by the yard", Tchaikovsky rescued ballet music from the skilled if often prosaic efforts of Pugni and Minkus and turned out first class music while at the same time subjecting his inspiration to Petipa's rigorous choreographic and dramatic constraints. As Cohen put it, Tchaikovsky

"Took Petipa's cryptic orders and turned them into rhapsodic passages. From a sentence like "the Christmas tree becomes huge. 48 bars of fantastic music with a grandiose crescendo", came a musical passage that sends shivers up the spine and suggests that paradise actually exists somewhere."

"American dance was born under a bad sign. Ballet has been struggling for over a century in America to escape from it. With the release of (the film) *Black Swan*, dance in America is once again back under the bad Puritan sign of its birth. The unarticulated but implicit premise of *Black Swan* and Puritan American culture is that dance is sinful. The logic of *Black Swan* flows from this premise in the following way: since dance is sinful, in order to be good, a dancer must commit sin. How then is Nina (protagonist of *Black Swan*) going to solve her dancing problem? The answer is simple. The ballet director tells her to go home and masturbate. I am not making this up."

...Puritans hate art and beauty because the existence of both in this fallen world refutes the

premise of innate depravity. Human nature was not obliterated by the fall; it was wounded in original sin, but even in its wounded condition it can still know tyruth, do good, and achieve beauty, especially if fallen human nature finds grace in (Jesus) Christ and is aided by Christian culture of the sort that existed in France and Russia during the rise of the modern ballet.

There is a natural progression from the (gross) Calvinist (Puritan) exaggeration of the effects of original sin to the naturalism (i.e., atheism and materialism) which followed so avidly and quickly in its cultural footsteps. ...

... The best explicator of the psychology behind this trajectory was Nathaniel Hawthorne, the 19th century novelist and writer of tales who was the scion
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of Puritan stock and its most acute critic. Hawthorne's gret, great grandfather was one of the judges during the Salem (Massachusetts) witch trials, and so it should come as no surprise that witches show up in his tale Young Goodman Brown. When Brown, the main character of the tale, bumps into a witch in the forest, he blurts out, 'That old woman taught me my catechism,' and the narrator then adds, 'there was a world of meaning in this simple comment.' Since Goody Cloyse is a witch, this means that Brown learned his catechism from a devil worshipper. This is Hawthorne's way of saying that Calvinism is devil worship. The crucial link in this theological argument is the (gross) Calvinist exaggeration of (the effects of) original sin. Anyone with Hawthorne's sophistication who meditates on the Calvinist doctrine of innate depravity has to conclude as Brown does at the witches' Sabbath in the forest that "Evil is the nature of mankind". If evil is the nature of mankind, then everything a man does is sin. This means that (all) dancing is sinful because every human activity is sinful. Oddly enough the Puritans never got around to describing Capitalism in these terms. In fact, wealth among members of this Judaizing (as well as crypto-M^anichae^an) sect became a sign of election (hence a Puritan who indulged in the lucrative transatlantic slave trade still considered himself to among the "elect", since his wealth proved his "election") In the end Calvinism became the religion of Capitalism in New England, as Karl Marx pointed out in *Zur Judenfrage*, and all human activity other than moneymaking became sinful. Or better, all human activity which interfered with moneymaking became sinful (the notorious **Protestant Ethic** made famous by Max Weber and R.H. Tawney).

Eventually, Calvinism's pessimism about human

nature obliterates all of the distinctions that are necessary to civilized behavior. Hawthorne understood that if (John) Calvin is right, then we should be worshipping the devil, and every occultist knows (that) the *Black Mass* always involves perverse sexual activity and is celebrated on the body of a naked female. If original sin has obliterated human nature (and until the time of John Calvin, 16th century, no one in Christendom or the Christian Tradition [Manichaeans do not count as Christians; as the name indicates, they follow not Jesus, but Mani] ever conceived of nor imagined such a thing), then we cannot hope to achieve the good by our actions. And if that is the case, what is the point of art? If we can't achieve the good, then we can't achieve the true or the beautiful either. And if that's the case then we may as well just worship the
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devil and have a good time (perfect Manichaean logic). If original sin has obliterated human nature, then there is no difference between sodomy and marriage (once again, perfect Manichaean logic). Calvinist cultures end as a result proposing moral oxymorons such as gay (homosexual) marriage. Calvinism leads inexorably to naturalism (i.e., atheism and materialism). The net result was a culture antithetical to beauty of any sort, but antagonistic to (all) dance in particular."

"This is precisely the message of *Black Swan*. It is a direct assault on the art of ballet, released during the height of America's ballet season, which is to say, during (the ballet) *The Nutcracker* season in the weeks leading up to Christmas. *The Nutcracker* is a secular celebration of Christmas; it is also a counter-revolutionary act carried out by the mothers who bring their children to *The Nutcracker* auditions every year. Every year the children get together and kill the rat king, the character who best symbolizes the culture of uncontrolled appetite otherwise known as Capitalism. Every year beauty and courage triumph over greed, gluttony and lust, and Clara ends up in Candy Land where art sublimates appetite into confection.

Did you really think that the cultural Bolsheviks from Hollywood hadn't noticed this fact? Did you really think that they could let widespread counter-revolution of this sort to go unchallenged?"

"To make sure that counter-revolutionary behavior does not spread, the cultural Bolsheviks who run Hollywood have given us the counter-counter-revolutionary *Black Swan*, a film which tells the little girls in tutus and their mothers, "Be undeceived. Evil is the nature of mankind." Beauty, according to the cultural Bolsheviks who gave us *Black Swan*, is really just sex."

Be undeceived, the cultural Bolsheviks who are the successors of Hawthorne's Calvinist devil worshippers tell us, Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness, little girls. Welcome again my children, to the communion of your race!"

"Beauty is, after all a manifestation of *LOGOS* (in Islamic terms the *SPIRIT OF GOD*). Beauty is in fact the good and the true experienced in one simultaneous transcendent burst. We can only hope that when the gaze of the ballet world finally lands on *Black Swan* the outrage that is the only appropriate response to this film will find its proper focus, and that the *bunheads*
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(slang term for the ballet students who wear their hair in a bun) who have been defamed as sluts by this film will march on Hollywood with torches and pitchforks in their hands and demand an apology."

Thus it is clear that Calvinism has nothing Christian about it save an appropriated of "hijacked" name, that in reality it is a Judeo-Manichaeic-Nominalist cult; of course, the same is true of those movements whom the Southern conservative columnist Charley Reese as defined as "the Puritans of Islam"; like the Calvinist Puritans, the "Puritans of Islam" in reality are not Muslims at all, save for an appropriated or "hijacked" name, but rather represent a Judeo-Manichaeic-Nominalist cult.

Thomas Jefferson, third president of USA and author of the Declaration of Independence, is often called "the American sphinx". The reason for the above is that Jefferson was a consummate politician, and those who attempt to write his biography find that it is impossible to know where his genuine convictions end and his political cant begins. Jefferson's cousin, John Randolph of Roanoke, who, very unlike Jefferson, was a true Southern gentleman, called Jefferson "St. Thomas of Cantingbury". A famous example of Jefferson's political cant is the famous line

"...a wall of separation between church and state". His actions both as governor of Virginia and as President of the USA showed that Jefferson knew that this "wall of separation" was schizophrenic, impractical, and carried to extremes likely to lead to the very thing which it was supposed to avoid, i.e., anti-religious persecution.

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Another famous saying of Thomas Jefferson is the following:

"It is of no interest to me if my neighbor believes in one god, in three gods, in eight gods, in a hundred god or no god at all: it neither picks my pocket nor breaks my bones."

Some people refer to the above quotation by Jefferson as "pithy", but in fact it is sheer idiocy, an extreme example of political cant. Certainly Jefferson, who was by no means a fool, knew perfectly well, that, as Richard Weaver noted,

"Ideas have consequences".

In other words, one's neighbor's ideas, including religious ideas may indeed "pick one's pocket and break one's bones". Certainly Calvinism, especially that of the English and New England Puritans and the "Covenanters" of the Scottish Lowlands, has "picked the pockets and broken the bones" of vast numbers of people.

Note that even in purely verbal terms the difference between Manichaeism and Calvinism or Puritanism (whether Protestant Puritanism or Islamic Puritanism) is very slight indeed, and in terms of meaning and substance there is no difference whatever. As Nathaniel Hawthorne clearly saw, Puritanism, like Manichaeism, leads inexorably to devil worship, black witchcraft and atheism.

Many have noted that Satan seems to be the real hero of John

Milton's Paradise Lost, some even going so far as to say that Milton was secretly "of Satan's party". Since Milton was a Puritan, this is certainly no surprise; from a Puritan to a Satanist is but a very small step.

The art of the trobadors grew in spite of rather than because

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of Catharism. Indeed, one can hardly imagine anything more antithetical to Catharism than the trobadors' art. Also, Languedoc, land of the Cathars, forms only a small part of Occitania, land of the trobadors. As we said in an earlier chapter, the real cradle of the trobador art and the region which produced the greatest number of trobadors was **NOT** Languedoc, but rather Limousin (Provençal: *Lemozi*), where Catharism was absent or very nearly so. The basis of the literary language of the trobadors (which some call the *lingua franca* or *koine*) was the dialect of Limousin, **NOT** the dialect of Languedoc, as we have said in an earlier chapter. Many scholars opine that the literary language of the trobadors should be called "Limousine" (Provençal: *Lemosin*) rather than "Provençal". To this day the Catalan language is sometimes called is sometimes called *Llemosi*, *La Llengua Llemosina* or *La Llenguatge Llemosina*: Catalans are proud of the connection of their language to that of the trobadors, of which the Lemousine dialect is the basis.

Thus, it was, and is, no contradiction to say that the Calvinists, especially the Puritans, were at once Judaizers and crypto-Manichaeans, as they themselves at times admitted; it is not really a paradox, much less a contradiction, that Calvinism is

at once the most Jewish and the most Manichaeic of Christian sects, and, indeed has nothing "Christian" about it save an appropriated or "hijacked" name. It really is not such a long step from denying to Immanence of God to saying that the world is a creation of Satan, as God is excluded from the world in both

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cases. Calvinism and such Islamic aberrations as Wahhabism and Taliban are neither Christian nor Islamic; they could only be classified as "Judeo-Manichaeic sects".

Prince Rupert, heroic nephew of Charles I, reportedly said:

"If it is not ugly it is not Protestant."

I personally have known people who became Catholics because they found Catholicism to be "beautiful" religion compared to the ugliness, drabness and banality of Protestantism.

We shall have much more to say concerning "the Puritan demon".

Says the Greek Orthodox scholar Frank Schaeffer:

"There were many unfortunate results following the Reformation. The Protestants smashed religious images and desecrated religious art (as later did the Jacobin atheists of the French Revolution and Marxist atheists MMc.), perceived by the (so called) Reformers to be "idols". They invoked the Biblical commandment against graven images, not infrequently stoning to death monks, nuns or lay people who tried to prevent the desecration of their churches (once again, as did later Jacobins and Marxists). This modern iconoclastic movement - the anti-cultural, anti-liturgical, anti-traditional (and finally anti-sacramental, subjective and reductionist Protestant movement - contributed much to the decline of Christian culture and the rise of an accordingly anti-art, even anti-reality pietism which still dominates most of Protestantism today. As a result, Protestants often became thoroughly disengaged from their own culture, leaving the stage bare in the arts, humanities and politics for the aggressively anti-Christian secularists to take possession of the levers

of cultural power.

The (so-called) Reformation (rather the "Deformation") also opened the door to a renewed spirit of Manichaeism, the ancient heretical belief that the spirit world is superior to the physical world. The Protestant prejudice against the flesh, virtually a denial of the Incarnation (and, indeed, of the Immanence of God - MMC.) is still with us today as manifested in Protestantism's anti-sacramentality, in
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favor of "pure spiritual" worship, in its bias against the arts, icons, imagery, incense, vestments, nature and beauty and its false dichotomy between evangelism and the rest of life's "worldly" activities." (553)

Says Fr. Andrew Greeley:

"Catholics live in an enchanted world, a world of statues and holy water, stained glass and votive candles, saints and religious medals, rosary beads and holy pictures (more accurately: *icons*). But these Catholic paraphernalia are mere hints of a deeper and more pervasive religious sensibility which inclines Catholics to see the Holy lurking in creation. As Catholics, we find our houses and our world haunted by a sense that the objects, events, and persons of daily life are revelations of grace." (554)

Says Fr. Avery Dulles, SJ:

"A symbol is an externally perceived sign that works mysteriously on human consciousness so as to suggest more than it can clearly describe or define. The symbol is a sign pregnant with a depth of meaning which is evoked rather than explicitly stated." (555)

Delete the word "statues" to "icons" and change "rosary beads" to "knotted prayer ropes", and Fr. Greeley's description would also fit the enchanted world of Eastern Orthodoxy.

Says the Russian Orthodox theologian Leonid Ouspensky:

"The sign limits itself to a particular fact, the symbol expresses and somehow incorporates and makes present a higher reality. To understand a sign is to translate a piece of information. ... Symbolism plays a very important role in the (Orthodox) Church, because everything in the (Orthodox) Church has, so to speak, a dual character; material and spiritual. The material is directly accessible to our senses; the spiritual is suggested through symbols." (556)

Leonid Ouspensky continues:

"Symbolism, the language of mystery, reveals the truth to those who know how to interpret it, while concealing it from the uninitiated." (557)

The Russian Orthodox priest Fr. George Mahoney says:
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"Symbols are man's signposts that lead him into communication with the Divine. They are also rational signs of an interior world that is very real, but whose existence will always remain unknown unless human beings learn the importance of religious symbols. Carl G. Jung has pointed out that the impoverished (*Protestant; Jung was son of a Protestant minister*)

West has lost the ability to live with symbols. (*As we said above, this is applicable only to Protestantism, Not Catholicism, as Fr. Greeley has noted.*). From Eastern (Orthodox) Christianity there is a new-felt influence upon Western Christians (*in this case, both Catholic and Protestant*) Christians through the beautiful Byzantine icons, the Jesus Prayer (*Hesychasm*) and the haunting Liturgies so full of hieratic symbols that lead a worshipper into a deep experience of God through vivid sense impressions." (558)

Says the Russian Orthodox theologian Dr. Anthony Ugolnik:

"The Orthodox could better be understood as radical Christian materialists. We perceive God as Immanent in His creation, as inherent in the material world; our symbolism continually calls that Immanence to mind. For all our mysticism, we Orthodox are shockingly "material", as many of our Puritan detractors have noted, in our expression of faith. (*For a Protestant, especially a Puritan, Mammon worshippers by definition, to call someone else "shockingly material" is a vile and cynical hypocrisy, as well as a manifestation of crypto-Manichaeism*) We engage all the senses in worship. With the sacraments as a model, we continually draw a connection between a given "thing" and what it signifies. Thinkers like the religious philosopher (*and mystic*) Vladimir Solovyev can see the whole of the material world as charged with Divinity, with (Jesus) Christ as the Ultimate Theophony in a series of theophanies. This Christ is the fullest expression of God's Immanence in His Creation. (*The doctrine of the Trinity, rightly understood, is **NOT** polytheistic; see the First Chapter of the Gospel According to St. Hohn.*) Our rites of observance, - veneration of icons, vigil lights, blessings these liberate material objects from secular autonomy and

restore their relationship within the scheme of Creation. We take the Christian artists absolutely seriously as a theologian. The iconographer, the musician, the poet and hymnographer, and no less the novelists each of these manipulates a material medium, santctifies it, and restores it to his or her God." (559)
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Few phrases of only eight words have done so much harm and mischief as "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder"; due mainly to a muddleheaded egalitarianism, said phrase has become a commonplace, and to challenge it is to risk being accused of being "undemocratic" and "elitist". Few of those who mindlessly repeat said phrase know that its author was David Hume, and even fewer know that Hume derived it from Galileo, or have bothered to meditate on its philosophical implications.

A whole "mythology", a polite way of saying "pack of lies" has been constructed around the figure of Galileo. The real quarrel between the Church and Galileo did not involve his heliocentric theory, which earlier had been proposed by Copernicus, who had no difficulties with the Church. The quarrel rather concerned Galileo's hypothesis concerning primary characteristics and secondary characteristics, to which were later added tertiary characteristics. Primary characteristics are those apt for mathematical treatment which (though Galileo may not have said it in so many words, he most certainly implies it) alone are objective and real, the others being subjective and ultimately unreal or illusory. The arbitrariness of this should be obvious to all, and some philosophers have noted that there is no reason to assume that those characteristics which are apt for mathematical treatment are any less subjective and illusory than those which

are not. Nevertheless, we have here the beginnings of scientific materialism and what Rene Guenon called "the reign of quantity" (though the rise of the commercial classes or bourgeoisie was also

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a factor in this). This is a long story, too long to treat adequately here. The story of how one aspect of reality after another was arbitrarily declared to be subjective and illusory because it was not apt for mathematical treatment or the scientific method had difficulty dealing with it has been comprehensively and lucidly dealt with by Edwin A. Burtt in The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science (various editions). Part of the "Galileo mythology" is the claim that he was he was really a devout Catholic "whose heart was broken" because he had come into conflict with the Church. This is sheer idiocy as well as a bald-faced lie. The churchmen saw very clearly the implications of Galileo's hypothesis concerning primary, secondary and tertiary characteristics, and if Galileo was unable to do so, then he was an imbecile. In fact, Galileo's above-mentioned hypothesis implies Nominalism, atheism, materialism and nihilism. I could respect Galileo more had he bluntly and honestly proclaimed his Nominalism, atheism and materialism. In another place I said that, like Blaise Pascal, I cannot forgive Descartes. Nor can I forgive Galileo.

Smug in their muddleheaded egalitarianism, which they say is "democratic" (were such indeed the case, it would be a most powerful argument against democracy itself). Many, probably most of those whou mindlessly spout Hume's phrase "Beauty is in the eye

of the beholder" do not think through its philosophical implications, and were anyone to call their attention to this fact, he would no doubt be accused of being "elitist" and

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"undemocratic". One is reminded that Rene Guenon said that the idea of democracy is itself a manifestation of "the reign of quantity".

In another place we have already spoken of Pavel Florensky and his book The Aesthetic Face of Being. Below are what others have said on this topic.

Said Frithjof Schuon:

"The earthly function of beauty is to actualize in the intelligent creature the Platonic recollection of the archetypes. ... There is a *distinguo* to make, in the sensing of the beautiful, between the aesthetic sensation and the corresponding beauty of soul, namely such and such a virtue. Beyond every question of "sensible consolation" the message of beauty is both intellectual and moral: intellectual because it communicates to us, in the world of accidentality, aspects of Substance, without for all that having to address itself to abstract thought; and moral, because it reminds us of what we must love, and consequently be." (560)

Schuon continues:

"The *obligatory* role played by the aesthetic quality in every traditional civilization: no religion is situated outside Beauty, every religion expresses itself through it; every traditional world is a world is a world of Beauty, and this proves Beauty's interiorizing virtue." (561)

Below Schuon defines Sacred art:

"What then is the sacred in relation to the world? It is the interference of the uncreated in the created, of the eternal in time, of the infinite in space, of the supraformal in forms; it is the mysterious introduction into one realm of existence of a presence which in reality contains and transcends that realm and could cause it to burst asunder in a sort of divine explosion.

The sacred is the incommensurable, the transcendent, hidden within a fragile form belonging to this world; it has its own precise rules, its fearful aspects, and its merciful qualities; moreover any violation of the sacred, even in art, has incalculable
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repercussions. Intrinsically the sacred is inviolable, and so much so that any attempted violation recoils on the head of the violator."(562)

Schuon continues:

"The doctrine of archetypes and the attendant understanding of symbolism form the foundation of traditional theories of art and of art itself. We perceive in the sacred art of normal civilizations a recurrent set of principles, functions, and characteristics which vary in their material applications and expressions, but which are everywhere fundamentally the same. Firstly there is the intimate nexus between the ideals of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. The inter-relationships of the three are inexhaustible and there is no end to what might be said on this subject, starting with Plato's immortal declaration that "Beauty is the splendor of Truth". Marsilio Ficino, the Renaissance Platonist, defined beauty as "that ray which, parting from the visage of God, penetrates into all things". Beauty, in most canons, has this divine quality. It is a manifestation of the Infinite on a finite plane and so introduces something of the Absolute into the world of relativities. Its sacred character "confers on perishable things a texture of Eternity."(563)

"The archetype of Beauty, or its Divine model, is the superabundance and equilibrium of the Divine qualities, and at the same time the overflowing of the existential potentialities in pure Being. ... Thus beauty always manifests a reality of love, of deployment, of illimitation, of equilibrium, of beatitude, of generosity."(564)

Below is a poem by Schuon:

Beauty is first and foremost in nature -
Everywhere you see the trace of the Creator.
Then there is great human art -
In every noble work God's favor blooms.
Beauty of language: the genius of Dante.
Braids a garland that links you with God.
Music: a mystery that resounds from heaven,
And brings the inexpressible to earth.
To the magic of music belongs the dance =

The garland of *gopis* circle around Krishna's flute.
Then there is woman: the quintessence of the beautiful-
The reconciling ray of the power of God. (565)

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Says Seyyed Hossein Nasr:

"Beauty plays a vital role in spirituality as expounded and described by Schuon for, as he has written more than once, beauty is to the contemplative person not the cause of worldly dissipation and diversion, but the occasion for recollection, in the Platonic sense, of the spiritual world. Beauty is an extension, a reflexion of Divine Infinitude and as such melts the hardness of heart and removes the obstacles before the mind leading to liberation and deliverance.

There is for Schuon first of all a fundamental distinction to be made between traditional and profane art which can include an art whose subject might be religious such as post-medieval European religious art, both whose language is not symbolic nor is its inspiration suprahuman. Then he distinguishes within the domain of traditional art between sacred art which is directly concerned with the sacred rites and practices of the tradition in question and other types of art in a traditional civilization which, although not directly concerned with cultic and ritual elements of the tradition, reflect its principles through the symbolic language, methods and techniques provided by that tradition. With an incredible knowledge of various types of traditional art, he provides a universal key for the understanding of the spiritual significance of art in different traditional civilizations. ...

...It is this inner nexus between spirituality and art that causes Schuon not only to devote so many studies to questions of traditional art and aesthetics, but also to criticize in a relentless manner post-medieval European art which at once reflects and has abetted the gradual fall of modern man from the state which tradition considers as normal and which European man shared with other members of the human race before beginning on that perilous adventure identified with the Renaissance and the age of rationalism and humanism. Schuon traces the stages of this fall in European art which after the Middle Ages first becomes humanistic rather than hieratic while preserving certain human and natural characteristics in the hands of the greater artists of that age. Then, this early period of rebellion against the medieval artistic norms and in fact the whole medieval philosophy of art as expounded by St. Thomas or Meister Eckhart is followed by an even greater degree of naturalism corresponding to the spread of rationalism on the philosophical level.

Finally, the naturalistic forms in a sense crack under their own weight leading to that dissolution of forms which should properly be called subrealism
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rather than surrealism for it is the level below the world of forms with which such an art deals rather than with the level above it."(566)

Seyyed Hossein Nasr continues:

"The combination of holiness and beauty which characterizes the Messengers of Heaven is, so to speak, transmitted from the human theophanies to the sacred art which perpetuates it: the essentially intelligent and profound beauty of this art testifies to the truth which inspires it; it could not in any case be reduced to a human invention as regards the essential of its message. Sacred art is Heaven descended to earth, rather than earth reaching towards Heaven.

A line of thought close to this one which we have just presented is the following, and we have made note of it more than once: if men were stupid enough to believe for millennia in the divine, the supernatural, immortality - assuming these are illusions - it is impossible that one fine day they become intelligent enough to be aware of their errors; that they became intelligent, no one knowing why, and without any decisive moral acquisition to corroborate this miracle. And likewise: if men like (Jesus) Christ believed in the supernatural, it is impossible that men like the Encyclopedists were right not to believe in it.

Sceptical rationalism and titanessque naturalism are the two great abuses of intelligence, which violate pure intellectuality as well as a sense of the sacred; it is through this propensity that thinkers "are wise in their own eyes" and end by "calling evil good, and good evil" and by "putting darkness for light, and light for darkness" (Isaiah 5:20 and 21); they are also the ones who, on the plane of life or experience, "put bitter for sweet", namely the love of the Eternal God, and "sweet for bitter", namely the illusion of the evanescent world."(567)

We return to Schuon:

"In this connection, the following should also be said: one is only too familiar with the prejudice which would have contemplative love justify itself before a world that despises it, and which would have the contemplative engage himself unnecessarily in activities that turn him away from the end he has in view; those who think in this manner are obviously unaware that contemplation represents for human society a sort of

sacrifice which is salutary for it and of which it is strictly in need, The prejudice in question
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is analogous to the one that condemns the ostentation of sacred art, of sanctuaries, of priestly vestments, and of liturgy: here again there is a refusal to understand, firstly, that not all riches redound to men, but that some redound to God, and do so in the interests of all; secondly, that sacred treasures are offerings or sacrifices that are due to His greatness, His beauty and His glory; and thirdly, that in a society, the sacred must of necessity make itself visible, so as to create a presence or an atmosphere without which it fades from men's minds. The fact that a spiritual individual may be able to do without forms is beside the question, for society is not this individual; and the individual needs society in order to blossom, just as a plant needs earth in order to live. Nothing is more vile than envy with regard to God; poverty dishonors itself when it covets the gold decoration of sanctuaries; it is true that there have always been exceptions to this rule, but they have no connection with the cold and strident demands of iconoclastic utilitarians," (568)

Schuon continues:

"It will be recalled that gold decoration is prescribed by God Himself. And it is significant that neither St. Vincent de Paul nor the holy Cure' d'Ars - both so ardently concerned with the welfare of the poor without for all that forgetting the spiritual welfare without which material welfare has no meaning - ever dreamt of begrudging God His riches; for the Cure' d'Ars, no expense was great enough for the beauty of the house of God." (569)

The Chinook are an Amerindian tribe of the US Pacific Northwest who lived on both banks of the Columbia River in the states of Washington and Oregon. The Chinook together with the following tribes: Cathlamet, Cathiapotle, Chilluckittequaw, Skilloot, Wishram, Clackamas, Clatsop, Clowewalla, Multnomah, Waco and Watlala, speak languages which form the *Chinookan* branch of the great *Penutian* family of Amerindian languages.

Notes Brian Murphy:

"Years ago in a Bulgarian (Orthodox) monastery

during a bitterly cold evening, I started to discern some clearer lines. Some I recognized from different times and places.

I was led to a candlelit sanctuary to see the monks' main treasure: *The Virgin with Three Hands*. The icon, a two-hundred-year-old copy of a much earlier original, is sought out by pilgrims who believe in its miraculous powers. Two hands cradle the infant Jesus. A third hand, crafted of silver, floats at the bottom of the icon and represents the story of St. John Damascene, or St. John of Damascus. An eighth-century civic-spiritual councillor who strongly opposed the (Byzantine) iconoclasts and their fight to scrub Christianity clean of man-made objects of devotion. Legend has it that St. John was falsely accused of conspiring to overthrow the Muslim rulers of Damascus. His punishment was a scimitar blow at his wrist. But, legend says, his severed hand was miraculously reattached after prayers to the Virgin (Mary). The monk who escorted me turned away from the icon and took a simple, rough-hewn wooden cup from a table.

"You may marvel at the icon and all the beautiful objects as ways to contemplate God. That's perfectly fine," he told me, "but don't ignore the ordinary. For me, this old cup is as close to God as any icon or thing of gold."

Drawing spiritual inspiration from the works of man or nature is as old as the oldest talisman. It could be as awesome as cathedrals and temples, or as simple as this monk's cup. Children imagine heaven floating on clouds. A physicist can contemplate the Almighty in the nervous electron. Islamic calligraphers strive to unite the flowing strokes and swirls of Arabic with the sacred words of the Qur'an. The (Amerindian) Chinook tribe of America's Pacific Northwest (see above) has a lovely saying: **Pray with your senses**. It was expanded by the Nicaraguan (Catholic) priest-poet Fr. Ernesto Cardenal, who wrote: **"There is a style, a divine style, in everything that exists, which shows it was created by the same Artist."**

I have come to believe that carpets are one of the great crossroads of these fundamental spiritual and creative yearnings.

Carpets could predate the earliest known forms of writing. Pottery and other utensils may have an older legacy, but it's rooted more in function and practicality. Carpets add elements of flair and fancy. In their *guls* and patterns, they possess unbroken links to the earliest forms of expression and self-awareness. Sociologists and others have explored the spiritual side of carpets. But it's always done with a bit of

academic caution. There is no hard codex, no sacred text, to point the way. Weavers and sellers and others immersed in carpets have no hesitation in heading in that direction, though. They often draw clear lines between carpets and what I can describe only as a protospirituality. It's not an organized and codified set of beliefs. It's more of a sense of wonder and possibilities. The challenge for weavers is the same that has haunted artists forever: trying to sense a divine power and represent this feeling in form and color.

It's the quest to preserve the special "luminous knowledge", in the words of Seyyed Hossein Nasr. In a lecture in May, 2003 at Harvard Divinity School, the Iranian-born author and Islamic scholar suggested that the backbone of traditional societies - "the empowering and illumination of our consciousness" - has been shattered by modern appetites: gobbling up as much information as possible without resting to look for deeper connections. He didn't mention carpets at all in his address. But I wouldn't have been stunned if he had." (570)

As quoted above by (good Irishman, good Celt that he is), Brian Murphy, Padre (Father) Ernesto Cardenal expresses in very elegant and poetic language the truth known by (in chronological order) the Upanishad-s, Advaita Vedanta, traditional (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox) Christianity and traditional Islam, Shi'a and Sunni: God is both Immanent and Transcendent, and that to deny either His Immanence (as do the Manichaeans and crypto-Manichaeans who, with blasphemous, sacreligious and perfidious mendacity, claim to be "pure" Christians or pure Muslims as the case might be) or His Transcendence is heresy and blasphemy. As we said before, In Advaita Vedanta, the word for God Transcendent or the Transcendence of God is *Brahman*, while the word for God Immanent or the Immanence of God is *Atman*.

Says the Greek Orthodox theologian Dr. Nikos Nissiotis:

"Icons and liturgical gestures and actions are a legitimate use of nature which in an eschatological perspective is already restored, in order that the worshipping community may receive the real presence of the Lord coming in His Glory. None of these symbolis elements is an end in itself. None is present as a *sine qua non* condition. Matter and colours and movements and the set forms of an ecclesiastical life are transparent facades set forth in front of the eyes of the faithful by which to look through to the hidden spiritual realities of the celestial world. There is, therefore, no question of the worship of icons or of a superstitious reverence for sacred objects, but rather of respect for every object which is used by the praying community as material selected out of the Creation of God, in order to render His Glory more immediately present around the eucharist which is seen as the omnipotent centre of all worship.

The absence of symbolism in Christian worship is not simply an absence of a secondary item in the Christian life (*as well as a manifestation of crypto-Manichaeism*); rather it denotes a dangerous inclination to dis-incarnate the whole context of Christian faith and to arrive at a kind of spiritualistic monism (*or Manichaeism*). One must see the Orthodox community as grounded precisely on this "materialism" of worship, and blended in with this saved world. A worshipping community prays and offers not only its own gifts, and its own prayer, but the whole creation and the whole world with all its problems, though in a doxological and hymnological way." (571)

As an Eastern Orthodox hymn says:

He who once spoke through symbols to Moses on Mt. Sinai, saying ***I am who is,***
Was transfigured today upon Mt. Tabor before his disciples
And in his own person he showed them the nature of man,
Arrayed in the original beauty of the image.
Having gone up the mountain, O (Jesus) Christ, with your disciples.
Transfigured you have made our human nature,
Grown dark in Adam, to shine again as lightning,
Transforming it into the Glory and Splendor of your own Divinity.

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Harvard University was founded by Puritans. So, the following

is particularly significant.

"Margaret R. Miles of the Harvard Divinity School wants Protestants and others to recover the importance of images and symbols in worship. Their iconoclasm (*part and parcel of crypto-Manichaeism*) has resulted in an age in which people have only secular images on which to concentrate.

In the absence of religious symbols, she says, the secular symbols have taken over and are controlling our values and attitudes. She writes: "*Theory, contemplation in which one is lifted out of one's familiar world and into the living presence of the spiritual world, begins with the physical vision, with a trained and focused seeing that overcomes barriers between the visible and the spiritual world. We need, says someone named Arnheim, to understand through the eyes.*" (Harvard Divinity School Bulletin) (572)

Thus, as one would expect of crypto-Manichaeism, the iconoclasm, the constanly screaming "pagan" and "idolatry" so typical of Protestants leads to the most crass and absolute materialism.

Says Ananda K. Coomaraswamy:

"The reference to iconoclasm is more particularly to the use of images as supports of contemplation. The same rule will apply. There are those, the great majority, whose contemplation requires such supports, and others, the minority, whose vision of God is immediate, For the latter to think of God in terms of any verbal or visual concept would be the same as to forget Him.

[Plotinus, *Enneads, IV.4.:* 'In other words, they have seen God and they do not remember? Ah, no: it is that they see God still and always, and that as long as they see, they cannot tell themselves that they have had the vision; such reminiscence is for souls that have lost it.'

Nicholas of Cusa, *De vis Dei, Ch. XVI:* 'What satisfies the intellect is not what it understands.'

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Kena Upanishad, 30: 'The thought of God is his by whom it is unthought, or if he thinks the thought, it is that he does not understand'.

*Vajracchedika Sutra, f. 38 XXVI, 'Those who see me (Buddha) in any form, or think of me in words, their way of thinking is false, they do not see me at all. The Beneficent Ones are to be seen in the Law (Buddhist Sanskrit: **Dharma**), theirs is a Law-body: the Buddha is rightly to be understood as being of the nature of the Law (Buddhist Sanskrit: **Dharma**), (however) he cannot be understood by any means.'*"]

We cannot make one rule apply to both cases. The professional iconoclast is such either because he does not understand the nature of images and rites [*i.e. he has not read St. John of Damascus and Mullah Demavandi*], or because he does not trust the understanding of those who practice idolatry and/or follow rites. To call the other man an idolater or superstitious is, generally speaking, only a manner of asserting our own superiority (or an expression on crypto-Manichaeism, or both). Idolatry is the misuse of symbols, a definition needing no further qualifications. The traditional philosophy has nothing to say against the use of symbols and rites; though there is much that the most orthodox can have to say against their misuse. **It must be emphasized that the danger of treating verbal formulae as absolutes is generally greater than that of misusing plastic images. [Amen to that!!!]**

We shall consider only the use of symbols, and their rejection when their utility is at an end. A clear understanding of the principles involved is absolutely necessary if we are not to be confused by the iconoclastic controversies that play so large a part in the history of every art. It is inasmuch as he 'knows immortal things by the mortal' that the man as a veritable person is distinguished from the human animal, who knows only the things as they are in themselves and is guided only by his estimative knowledge. The unmanifested can be known by analogy; **His silence by His utterance.** That 'the invisible things of Him' can be seen through 'the things which are made' will apply not only to God's works but also to things made by hands, if they have been made by such an art as we have tried to describe: 'In these outlines, my son, I have drawn a likeness of God for you, as far as that is possible; and if you gaze upon this likeness with the eyes of your heart ... the sight itself will guide you on your way'. This point of view

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Christianity inherited from Neoplatonism: and therefore, as Dante says, "does the Scripture condescend to your capacity, assigning foot and hand to God, but with other meaning." We have no other language whatever except the symbolic in which to speak of ultimate reality: the only

alternative is silence; in the meantime, "The ray of divine revelation is not extinguished by the sensible imagery wherewith it is veiled." (St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, 1.1.9).

"Revelation" itself implies a veiling rather than a disclosure: a symbol is a "mystery". (St. Clement of Alexandria, Protrepticus, II.15 Cf. Rene Guenon, "Mythes, mysteres et Symboles" in Voile d'Isis (Etudes Traditionnelles, 40, 1935. That "revelation" means a "displaying" depends upon the fact that an exhibition of the principle in a likeness, and as it were clothed in the veil of analogy, though it is not an exhibition of the principle in its naked essence, is relatively to what would otherwise be the obscurity of a total ignorance, a true "demonstration".) "Half revealed half conceal" fitly describes the parabolic style of the scriptures and of all conceptual images of being in itself, which cannot disclose itself to our physical senses. Because of this, St. Augustine could say that in the last analysis "All scripture is vain." For "If anyone in seeing God conceives something in his mind, this is not God, but one of God's effects." (St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, III.92.1 ad 4.) "We have no means for considering how God is, but rather how He is not". (St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica. I.3.1 Cf. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, IV.4.22; Maitri Upanishad IV.5.) "There are things which our intellect cannot behold we cannot understand what they are except by denying things of them." (Dante, Il Convivio, III.15) Dicta to this effect could be cited from innumerable sources, traditional [Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christian, Hindu and Buddhist).

It does not follow that the spiritual tradition is at war with itself with respect to the use of conceptual images. The controversy that plays so large a part in the history of art is maintained only by human partisans of limited points of view. As we said before, the question is really one of utility only: it parallels that of works and faith. Conceptual images and works alike, art and prudence equally, are means and must not be mistaken for ends; the end is one of beatific contemplation, not requiring any operation. One who proposes to cross a river needs a boat; "but let him no longer use the Law (Buddhist Sanskrit: *Dharma*) as a means of arrival once he has arrived." *Parable of the Raft*, Majjhima Nikaya, I.135. St.

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Augustine, De Spiritu et Littera, 16.) Religious art is simply a visual theology: Christian and Oriental theology alike are means to an end, but not to be confused with the end. Both alike involve a dual method, that of the *via affirmativa* and of the *via negativa* (Greek: *Apophatika*: Sanskrit: "neti, neti", i.e. "not

this, not this") on the one hand affirming things of God (via affirmative) and of via negative (Greek: Apophatika; Sanskrit: "neti, neti" i.e., "not this, not this") on the one hand affirming things of God by way of praise, and on the other hand denying every one of these limiting descriptive affirmations, for though the worship is dispositive to immediate vision, God is not and never can be "what men worship here". (Kena Upanishad, 2-8) The two waysom mutually exclusive; they are complementary. Because they are so well known to the student of Christian (Catholic and Eastern Orthodox, NOT, repeat NOT Protestant) theology, I shall only cite from an Upanishad, where it is a question of the use of certain types of concepts of deity regarded as supports of contemplation. Which of these is the best? That depends upon individual faculties. But in any case, these are pre-eminent aspects of the incorporeal deity: "These one should contemplate and praise, but then deny. For with these one rises from higher to higher states of being. But when all these forms are resolved, then he attains to the unity of the Person." (Maitri Upanishad, IV.5.).

To resume, the normal view of art that we have described above, starting from the position that "Though he is an artist, the artist is nevertheless a man", is not the private property of any philosopher, or time, or place: we can only say that there are certain times, and notably our own, at which it has been forgotten. We have emphasized that art is for the man, and not the man for art: that whatever is made only to give pleasure is a luxury and that love of art under these conditions becomes a mortal sin;

(For the conditions under which ornamentation becomes a sin, see St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, II-II.167.2 and 169.2 ad 4. Cf. author's "On the relation of beauty to truth" in 'Art Bulletin, XX, pp. 72-77, and "ornament", d. XXI.);

that in traditional art function and meaning are inseparable goods; that it holds in bot respects that there can be no good use without art; and that all good uses involve the corresponding pleasures. We have shown that the traditional artist is not expressing himself, but rather is expressing a thesis: that it is
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in this sense that both human and divine art are expressions, but only to be spoken of as "self expressions" if it has been clearly understood what "self" is meant. We have shown that the traditional artists is normally anonymous, the individual as such being only the instrument of the "self" that finds expression. We have shown that art is essentially

symbolic, and only accidentally illustrative or historical; and finally that art, even the highest, is only the means to an end, that even the scriptural art is only a manner of "seeing through a glass, darkly" (*St. Paul, First Epistle to the Corinthians,, 13:12*), and that although this is far better than not to see at all, the utility of iconography must come to an end when vision is "face to face" (*St. Paul: First Epistle to the Corinthians, 13.12*). (573)

Obviously, like myself, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy did not care a cumin seed for names or labels; note that above he uses indiscriminantly Neoplatonic, Catholic, Hindu and Buddhist sources.

The Manichaeian basis of Protestantism is all too obvious. It is also obvious that Protestantism is not really Christian at all, but rather a Judeo-Manichaeian-Nominalist cult with nothing Christian about it save an appropriated or "hijacked" name. As the Russian Orthodox priest Fr. Seraphim Rose noted, Protestantism is an "anti-tradition". Herman Melville defined Protestantism as a halfway house between Catholicism and atheism.

Claude McKay, son of a Protestant minister and for much of his life a militant communist, describes his "seeing the light":

"My study of the Catholic Church led to the discovery of important facts of which I was not formerly aware. For example, when Catholicism conquered Rome, in its infinite wisdom it abolished the tribune and usury. It put priests in the palace of the tribunes and as Jesus Christ had chased the money-changers out of the temple, the Catholic Church, following in his footsteps, did likewise. But fifteen hundred years
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later the money-changers or usurers were apotheosized and permitted to rule the world by the Protestants. As I continued to get enlightenment, it just flashed upon me that Agnosticism, Atheism, Modernism, Capitalism, State Socialism and State Communism were all children of the Pandora's Box of Protestantism." (574)

Let it be known that Karl Marx defended usury, opposing only

productive capital investment. Thus, it is obvious that when the Communists pretend to be the champions of the workers and the poor, they are liars. It really is not paradoxical at all that the Russian Revolution was financed by Jewish bankers in New York, most notably Jacob Schiff. According to Marx, there was nothing wrong with workers and peasants being exploited by usurers. One can see how right Onesimo Redondo was when, at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939 he said: "Lies are to the Marxists what water is to fish; a necessary element of life." Marxism was chicanery from the very beginning.

Of course, Islam followed traditional Christianity in its ban on usury. By lifting the ban on usury (Arabic: *riba'*, Persian: *riba'khari*), Protestantism indeed "apotheosized the money-changers and usurers" (Persian: *riba'khar* [singular] *riba'kharan* [plural]), and consecrated itself to the worship of Mammon, materialism as its most crass, as Max Weber and R.H. Tawney noted. Protestantism is indeed the whore mother of plutocratic capitalism, which, as a French Monarchist told me at a right-wing rally in Madrid:

"Capitalism is a disease; it causes the production of antibodies, such as Socialism and Communism, and these antibodies are so toxic that they are even more
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lethal than the disease itself."

Joseph de Maistre, defending the aristocratic principle, said that without it, nothing would be left except "the odious hierarchy of wealth". He was exactly right.

It is often forgotten that the French Revolution was very much a "bourgeois revolution", its aim being to impose "the odious

hierarchy of wealth". As has been said before , the French Revolution's motto "liberty, equality, fraternity, really meant "liberty to plunder, equality for the rich, fraternity among thieves", and that the French Revolutionaries "cut off the heads of the aristocrats and the feet of the workers".

One of the battle cries of the Catholic Royalist Vendee insurgents was "death to the bourgeoisie". Describing the rising in Machecoul, one of the principle towns of La vendee, Michael Ross says:

"Machecoul, at that time, was an important centre of the grain trade, with a population of 2,000, including *nouveaux riches* corn merchants, who were heartily detested by the people. The working class suburb of Sainte Croix was ripe for revolt; not only were the people here opposed to the civil constitution of the clergy and the drawing of lots for army recruitment, but they also had personal scores to pay off against the bourgeoisie, by whom they were infinitely more exploited than they had been under the *ancien regime*." (575)

Later in Spain during the Carlist Wars one find the same pattern: aristocrats, peasants and workers favoring the Carlists, but the bourgeoisie favoring the *Liberales*.

There is no possible doubt that the French Revolution was

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utterly evil. Everyone should read Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism by Abbe Augustine Barruel (available in various editions); no one who reads It will ever again be able to view the so-called "Enlightenment" and the French Revolution in the same way. Augustine Barruel has been called dirty names, but no one has been able to demonstrate that what he said is not the truth.

Annemarie Schimmel would call the above "Signs of God". In her book Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam, Ms. Schimmel gives a lengthly and richly detailed account of the "enchanted world" of Sunni Islam. As we have noted many times in this book, Sufism and Shi'a Islam have many particular "Signs of God" in addition to those typical of Sunni Islam.

In a personal communication, Seyyed Hossein Nasr told me:

"Islamic art is the earthly crystallization of the spirit of Islamic revelation, as well as a reflection of the heavenly realities on earth, a reflection with the help of which the Muslim makes his journey through the terrestrial environment and beyond to the Divine Presence itself, to the Reality which is the origin and end of his art."

Charles Le Gai Eaton tells of an English schoolboy of Protestant background who, after visiting the Mosque of Kairaoun in Tunisia, said:

"I never knew religion could be beautiful." (576)

Coming from a Protestant background, it is no surprise that said English schoolboy did not know that religion could be beautiful until he entered a mosque.
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Both Traditional Islam and Traditional Christianity, i.e., Catholic and Eastern Orthodox affirm the Immanence of God, unlike Protestantism.

So far as "disenchanted the world", the Protestants left little for atheists and secularists to accomplish. Atheists, such as Paul Blanshard recognize that "Protestantism has done their work for them".

A disenchanted Protestant world, in which God's Immanence is

denied and He is expelled from the world He created by blather about "idolatry" and "graven images" is a world which must fall into either atheism or Manichaeism. Once again, we see that, despite initial appearances, Judaism and Manichaeism are by no means incompatible. The Salem witch trials should be no surprise; one can hardly imagine a more fertile ground for black witchcraft of the worst sort than the crypto-Manichaean world of Calvinism.

It should also be noted that there is a most uncanny resemblance between the English Puritans and the Covenanters of the Scottish Lowlands (so loathed and detested by Tom Scott) on the one hand and the Wahhabis and the Taliban regime of Afghanistan on the other hand. The British Cavaliers, the American Confederates in the US Civil War, and the anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan all fought against the same "Puritan Demon", an aspect of the "anti-traditional demon". English Puritans, Lowland Scottish Covenanters, Wahhabis and the Afghan Taliban all made rules for which their respective traditions gave no warrant, all present a mutilated and truncated version of the tradition of

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which they claim to be the only "pure" representatives, all condemn or at best ignore the art, aesthetics and mysticism of their respective traditions, and twist and pervert what little remains until it resembles Manichaeism more than anything else.

English Puritans and Lowland Scottish Covenanters wantonly destroyed priceless masterpieces of medieval art; Taliban wantonly destroyed masterpieces of Buddhist art. The English Puritans and the Lowland Scottish Covenanters loaded down people with rules

which had no basis in the religious tradition they claimed to follow; Taliban did the same. The English Puritans and the Lowland Scottish Covenanters forbade amusements even of the most innocent sort, such as kite flying; Taliban did the same. The English Puritans and the Lowland Scottish Covenanters forbade virtually all festivals and celebrations, even including Christians holidays such as Christmas. The Taliban forbade ancient Persian festivals, such as Now Ruz, Shi'a festivals, including Ashura, and, for a time at least, 'Eid, celebrated by both Sunnis and Shi'as. The English and Scottish Lowland Catholics, persecuted by Puritans and Covenanters, have their equivalents in the Shi'as of Afghanistan, persecuted by Taliban. Cromwell's tyranny and the Puritan oligarchy in Massachusetts have their equivalent in the Taliban regime of Afghanistan. We shall discuss this more fully in the next chapter.

Protestantism has no positive content, it is merely a mutilated, truncated and impoverished version of Traditional Christianity, i.e., Catholic and Eastern Orthodox, merely a

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halfway house between Catholicism and atheism or Manichaeism, as the Eastern Orthodox scholar Frank Schaeffer says:

"THE engine of secularization in the Western World."

As we have seen, Herman Melville, writing more than a century before, thoroughly agreed with the above observation made by Frank Schaeffer. The logical end of mutilation is nihilism and nothingness. As we said before, Protestantism has no mystical tradition. The great and very Celtic Welsh writer and mystic

Arthur Machen listed the following as enemies of the spirit:

"Big business, plutocracy, industrialization, science, philosophical naturalism, Liberalism, democracy, Puritanism, Protestantism, atheism, Socialism and Communism." (577)

Says Rene Guenon:

"As soon as the domain of manifested existence is entered, limitation appears in the form of the particular conditions which determine each state or each mode of manifestation; in the course of a descent to ever lower levels of existence limitation becomes ever narrower, and the possibilities inherent in the nature of manifested beings is correspondingly simplified; this simplification proceeds step by step towards a lower level than that of being itself, id est, towards the domain of pure quantity, where it is finally brought to its climax through the total suppression of every qualitative determinant.

Thus it one can see that simplification rigorously follows the descending course which, in current terms derived from Cartesian dualism, would be described as proceeding from "spirit" towards "matter": inadequate as these terms may be as substitutes for "essence" and "substance", they may be perhaps usefully employed for the sake of better comprehension. It is therefore all the more surprising that anyone would attempt to apply this sort of simplification to things which belong to the "spiritual" world itself, or at the very least to so much of it as people are yet able to conceive, for they go even so far as to apply it to religious conceptions as well as to philosophical or scientific (3958)

conceptions.

The most typical example of the above is Protestantism, in which simplification takes the form of both an almost total suppression of rites, together with attributing to morality the predominance over doctrine; and doctrine itself is continually more simplified and diminished so that it is reduced to almost nothing, or at best to a few very rudimentary formulas which anyone can interpret according to his whim and caprice. Besides, Protestantism in its many sects or denominations is the only religious product of the modern spirit, and it was born at a time when said spirit had not yet reached the point of rejecting all religion, but was well on the way to doing so due to the anti-traditional tendencies which are inherent in it and, indeed, are really its defining characteristic. At the apex of this "evolution" (as we would call it

today), religion is replaced by something called "religiosity", id est, by a vague sentimentality which has no genuine significance; this is what is wildly acclaimed as "progress", and it clearly demonstrates how all normal or traditional relations are reversed or inverted in the modern mentality, for (some) people attempt to see it as a "spiritualization" of religion, as though the "spirit" were only an empty frame or an "ideal" as vague and nebulous as it is insignificant and meaningless. This is what some of our contemporaries like to call a "purified religion" (Puritanism again), but it is only "purified" to the degree that it is emptied of all positive content and no longer bears any connection to or relation with any reality whatsoever.

Something else which should be noted is that all self-proclaimed (Protestant) "reformers" incessantly reiterate their claim that they are returning to a "primitive simplicity" which most certainly never existed outside their imaginations (if there: one may be certain that that at least most of them are liars and frauds). This may often be only a convenient way of hiding the real character of their innovations, but it may at times be a delusion of which they themselves are the victims, as it is often very difficult to determine to what degree the apostles of the anti-traditional spirit are truly conscious of the role that they are playing, for they could not play such a role at all unless they themselves already possessed a twisted, perverted mentality. Besides, it is most difficult to see how the claim to "primitive simplicity" can be reconciled with the doctrine of "progress", of which the simultaneously proclaim themselves to be the agents; this blatant contradiction (3959)

is enough in itself to demonstrate that there is something really abnormal and aberrant in all this." (578)

As we noted above at first glance Judaism and Manichaeism might seem to be diametrically opposed, as to Mani and his Zindiq, Bogomil and Albigensian followers the creator God of the Old Testament (*Torah*) is really Satan, and so Manichaeans considered Jews to be Satan worshippers. However, Judaism and Manichaeism agree on one key point: the denial of the Immanence

of God, tending to view it as "idolatry". Hence, it should be no

surprise that Judaism and Manichaeism can and do combine, as in

Calvinism and other movements, such as Wahhabism, Salafism, and Taliban, all of which are really Judeo-Manichaean cults with no relation to either Christianity nor Islam save an appropriated or

"hijacked" name. *Ketzer* is the German word for "heretic";

Martin Luther's definition of the material world as "the Devil's Inn" has an obvious Cathar resonance and origin. Germany, being almost exactly equidistant between Bulgaria, land of the

Bogomils, and Languedoc, land of the Cathars, would have been the

very crossroads of Manichaeism; no wonder that the Protestant parts of Germany were the preferred refuge of the Huguenots. Some

see Manichaean or Cathar elements in some of the operas of

Richard Wagner. The Nazis were very much interested in Catharism.

It is no surprise that most Protestant sects seem more Jewish (in the case of those with a Calvinist base, more Jewish and Manichaean) than Christian, closer to Judaism (and Manichaeism as well, in the case of the Calvinists) than to Catholicism and

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Eastern Orthodoxy, and why a most excellent and convincing case can be made that Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy are closer to Sufism and to Shi'a Islam, and, I believe, Sunni Islam as well, than they are to Protestantism.

Both Shi'a Islam and Sunni Islam affirm the Immanence as well

as the Transcendence of God. However, I believe it safe to say that Divine Immanence is far more forcefully affirmed in Shi'a Islam than in Sunni Islam.

Ergo, as we have said above, Mortimer J. Adler is wrong on one key point; Islam as well as Christianity affirms that God is both immanent and transcendent, and to deny either His Immanence or His Transcendence is a pernicious heresy, as anyone familiar with the Qur'an and the hadiths of the prophet Muhammad (On Whom Be Peace) well knows.

Once again, some sects and movements within Sunni Islam have denied God's Immanence, and, as in Protestantism, condemned it as "idolatry" or even "polytheism". This heresy, this denial of God's Immanence, is among the things denounced as "Islamic Protestantism" by traditionalist Shi'a thinkers, and is decisively refuted by Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari in Fundamentals of Islamic Thought. (579)

In the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39 Catholics and Muslims fought side by side against Marxist atheism; it was said:

"The Pope and Muhammad walk with their arms around one another's shoulders".

In 1937 Fr. Ignacio Menendez-Reigada, a Spanish priest of the

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Dominican Order, said that the status of previous wars known as "Crusades" was more than doubtful, because Muslims believe in God and revere Jesus, the Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist.

However, the present (1937) war in Spain was the holiest war in history, because Christians and Muslims together were fighting

against militant atheism, the common enemy of all religion and civilization.

The same could have been said about the Russian Civil War, but obviously Fr. Menendez-Reigada was not informed concerning the participation of the Muslims of the Caucasus and Central Asia in the White Russian armies. At that time, except for communists propaganda tracts, very little concerning the Russian Civil War was available in any language except Russian, in the memoirs of homesick White Russian émigrés and in the very scanty Russian-language publications of the White Russian émigré press.

The first act of rebellion against the Marxist-controlled Popular Front Government of the Spanish Republic was that of Major (later General) Muhammad Mizzian, a Muslim. The first two Nationalist soldiers killed in the war were Muslims. The first winner of the Cross of San Fernando, highest Nationalist decoration for bravery, was a Muslim.

On September 3, 1936, Hernandez Sarabia, the Under-Secretary of War of the Spanish Republic telephoned Talavera de la Reina to ask about the military situation there, not knowing that it had already been taken by the Nationalists. A Muslim soldier answered the telephone. The Muslim first said, in Arabic:

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"La Allah il Allah. Muhammad rasul Allah. Allahu akbar!" i.e., "There is no god but God. Muhammad is the Messenger of God. God is great!"

Hernandez Sarabia then said.

"Who is speaking? This is Madrid calling. This is Hernandez Sarabia."

To this the Muslim soldier replied:

"Madrid is a bucket of shit and Reds."

Nationalist counterintelligence affirmed that throughout the war not one Muslim was ever a traitor, not one Muslim ever passed information to the Reds. The Muslims were unflagging in their loyalty to the Nationalist cause and their hatred of the Reds.

Juan Urrea Lusareta, chaplain of the Carlist company of the 1st Battalion of Bailen during the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39 says:

"It was very impressive and moving: on the soil of Spain, while certain renegades and apostates insulted the (Catholic) Faith, destroyed and profaned the churches and murdered the priests, on the other hand simple Muslims worshipped God and commended themselves to Him. It was not difficult to see that these men, who wore *jellabas* (typical Moroccan hooded robe) and peasant garb, were simple, devoutly religious people who came to help us. We good (Catholic) Spaniards must be very grateful to them. Their cooperation was very valuable, and their conduct, in spite of the and slanders of the Reds, was disciplined and correct." (580)

The poet Roy Campbell was a Catholic of Highland Scot origin. He frequently attacks Protestantism (especially Calvinism) and Anglo-Saxons as an ethnic group. He also notes that liberal plutocratic Capitalism and Marxism are two sides of the same debased materialist coin. During the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, Roy Campbell fought on the Nationalist side in the elite

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Legion, and much of his poetry deals with that war. In his poetry about the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, Roy Campbell shows a regard for Islam which goes far beyond mere respect. Here is an example from "Dawn on the Sierra of Gredos":

... The shades of night began to trickle
Away, like those whom late the Sickle
And Hammer led to shame and loss

By their own emblems laid quiescent-
So deftly sickled by the Crescent (of Islam),
So soundly hammered by the Cross. (581)

Roy Campbell's major work is a long epic-style poem on the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39 titled "Flowering Rifle". Here are some selections from it. Since the Carlists or "Requetes" are associated with the Muslims with great frequency, we will begin with this:

Rise up you cocks, like Requetes enrolled,
With your red boinas (berets) and spurs of gold,
And crow the Dawn of Victory Afar
"The Requetes have risen in Navarre!" (582)

In the above, Roy Campbell compares the red cockscomb and golden spurs of a rooster to the red berets and golden tassels of the Requetes.

Below Roy Campbell replies to the Reds who charged that the Legionaires and Muslims serving in the Nationalist Armies were "mercenaries":

Azana's (President of the Republic's) ten pesetas to refuse
And fight for five - the Moors (Muslims) were free to choose
And be called "Mercenaries" as we are
Who in the Legion are content with three
While Requetes and Falangistas fight free. (583)

That Moors should fight for us, small wonder, too, ...
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... Poor Islam's had no cause for hesitations
Betwixt Democracy and Dictations,
And well she knows how her victorious aid
By Democratic countries is repaid. ...

... Of Liberty and freedom they've enough
Who've learned to dread the namby-pamby stuff-
They think of each as a blood-dripped Ogress
And know there is most headway where least "Progress."
Remembering Russia, in her injured pride
The Moon of Islam sank their godless tide. (584)

One is reminded of the words of the chief of the beni

Urriaguel, fiercest tribe of the Riff, when in July, 1936 he asked his tribesmen to go to Spain to fight against the Marxists:

"In the name of Allah, in the name of His almighty power! May the Divine Blessings be upon you and those who fight with you in the good cause! Our men (warriors of beni Urriaguel) who are going with must not leave to your oppressors a single hiding place in Spain, and we, with the Empire of Allah at our side, will have exterminated the evil of that tyranny.You will see that to our heroic men death is of no importance."

In Spain the warriors of beni Urriaguel amply demonstrated that their chief spoke the truth. The full text of the speech of the chief of beni Urriaguel, translated into Spanish, was repeatedly broadcast by General Queipo de Llano over Radio Seville, from whence it was heard all over Spain, including in the Red Zone. I have heard from people who at the beginning of the war happened to be in the Red Zone that they copied the text of the speech of the chief of beni Urriaguel and read it to lift their spirits in such a trying time.

On the other hand, out of pure anti-Catholic and anti-Islamic bigotry, nearly all Protestants, inside Spain as well as outside, supported the Marxist atheists, the lackeys of Stalin. It should

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be no surprise that many Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians - perhaps the majority - feel closer to Muslims - particularly Shi'as - than to Protestants.

It is very true that the Immanence of God is far more forcefully and unequivocally affirmed in Sunni Islam, and even more so in Shi'a Islam than in Protestantism. I respect Mortimer J. Adler very much, but he is a philosopher of Aristotelian

orientation rather than an Islamic scholar or even a student of comparative religion.

In his book Islam Between East and West, Alija Ali Izetbegovic says that Islam is intermediate between Judaism and traditional Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

I have noted that many people who grew up under a communist regime, though they themselves may never have been communists, yet retain a residual tendency to think and see things in a Hegelian manner. In what President Izetbegovic says above, one can virtually hear the ghost of Hegel saying: "Judaism; thesis: Christianity; antithesis: Islam; synthesis".

Not that President Izetbegovic's idea as expressed above is completely false, but as President Izetbegovic states it in his quintessentially Hegelian terms, it is so oversimplified as to be misleading. A more accurate continuum would be the following: Judaism: then the Judeo-Manichaeen cults or aberrations found in both Christianity such as Calvinism and Puritanism, and in Islam in the form of Wahhabism, Takfirism, Salafism and Taliban: then non-Calvinist Protestantism: then Sunni Islam: then Shi'a Islam:

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and finally traditional Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christianity. It is thus quite easily demonstrated that Islam, especially Shi'a Islam, is very much closer to traditional Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christianity than is Protestantism, and for many reasons.

The concept of "Face of God" is one of the key elements of Shi'a Islam. It is based on verse XXVIII:88 of the Qur'an and

commentaries on it by Muhammad al-Baqir, the 5th Imam, and Jaafar as-Sadiq, the 6th Imam.(585) The Shi'a concept of the Face of God is not anthropomorphic in any way, shape or form, but neither is it merely "allegorical" or "figurative". There is no space here to give an adequate exposition of it; for the moment, suffice it to say that the Shi'a concept of the "face of God" has to do with the Immanence of God. I can only refer the reader to the splendid monograph on the above topic in Face de Dieu, Face de l'Homme by Henry Corbin.(586)

Abul Abbas ibn al-Arif of Almeria specifically refers to:

"The virtue of intercession (Arabic; *Shafa'a*: Persian; *Miyanji Gari*) for the people on the Day of Judgement" (587),

leaving no doubt that he firmly believed in it. In Sunni Islam, belief in intercession is considered to be *shirk* or polytheism, and thus is strictly forbidden.(588) However, in Shi'a Islam, as we have seen, the principle of intercession is accepted.(589)

Ayatollah Murtaza Mutahhari says that denial of intercession is materialism and denial of the immortality of the soul, and thus

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near to pure atheism.(590) As one might expect, Ayatollah

Mutahhari's defense of the doctrine of intercession closely resembles that of traditionalist Catholic and Eastern Orthodox thinkers in defense of the same doctrine against Protestant, modernist and secularist attacks.

Abul Abbas ibn al-Arif of Almeria repeatedly praises and

evokes the family of the Prophet, for example:

"Pray to God, the Lord of all creatures, for (the Prophet) Muhammad, **and for his family, his companions and his descendants, the pure ones,** until the day of resurrection!"(591) and:

"Pray to God for our (Prophet) Muhammad, **for his family,** and companions, and dedicate to them the most honorific praises!(592)

The repeated references to free will, the "Face of God", intercession and reverence for the family of the prophet Muhammad (On Whom Be Peace) are indeed conclusive proofs that Abul Abbas ibn al-Arif of Almeria was indeed a Shi'a; indeed, this is too much to attribute to merely "Shi'a tendencies" or "Shi'a leanings, particularly notable are the references to intercession, and, even more, to reverence for the Family of the Prophet Muhammad. The reference to "The family of Muhammad, his descendants, the pure ones", is virtually an open declaration or confession of Shi'ism, dangerous though this was at a time when Muslim Spain groaned under the tyranny of the Almoravides or al-Murabitun. In this work we have already given enough references to the Shi'a reverence for the family of the Prophet Muhammad (On

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Whom Be Peace), the "*Ahl al-Bait*", literally "People of the House" (of the Prophet Muhammad).

There are also evidences of Shi'ism, or, at the very least, of strong Shi'ite leanings in the works of the great Hispano-Arabic poet ibn Quzman of Cordoba (12th century). For example, we find the following oath:

Pain, look well. Must you leave me?
Cruel disdain, by him, the Prophet (Muhammad) and
Ali (ibn Abi Talib, first Shi'a Imam) (593)

We also find this couplet:

And this spell, what is it?
For the Prophet (Muhammad) and Ali (ibn Abi Talib) (594)

And this one:

When (one hears) "Blessings on Ali (ibn Abi Talib)"
Add "Blessed be the Prophet (Muhammad) (595)

Emilio García Gómez notes:

"It is strange that in (the works of) ibn Quzman should appear, with a certain frequency, this oath by (the Prophet) Muhammad and Ali (ibn Abi Talib, first Shi'a Imam)." (596)

Ibn Quzman lived at a time when Muslim Spain or al-Andalus groaned under the tyranny of the Almoravides or al-Murabitun, and it was extremely dangerous to reveal any Sufi or Shi'a leanings, so Shi'as had to practice *taqiyya* or "dissimulation" as a matter of self preservation. The references to Ali ibn Abi Talib, first Shi'a Imam, are not strange at all if one supposes that ibn Quzman, like so many Hispano-Muslims, either was a (*crypto*)-Shi'a or at the very least had strong Shi'a leanings, but was forced to practice *taqiyya* for fear of persecution by the

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Almoravides, then the rulers of Muslim Spain, except for Saragossa. The oath by the Prophet Muhammad and Ali ibn Abi Talib is very typically Shi'a. Many things which appear "strange" in the history of Muslim Spain are not strange at all to one with a good knowledge of Sufism and Shi'ism, as well as the strong affinities between Shi'ism (particularly Iranian Shi'ism) on the one hand and Traditional Catholicism, particularly in Spain and

Ireland, and also Russian Orthodoxy, on the other.

Another great Hispano-Arabic poet, ibn Hani (died 362 AH, 873 AD) was a Shi'a, indeed a very militant one. Ibn Hani's open and indeed vociferous Shi'ism forced him to leave al-Andalus at the age of 26 and find refuge with the Fatimids.(597) Obviously, ibn Hani learned his Shi'ism in al-Andalus, as later would Yusuf Qalandar al-Andalusi.

Salma Khadra Jayyusi gives so much importance to Shi'ism in Muslim Spain that she defines the *Fitna*, the period of instability following the downfall of the Caliphate, as a

"... chaotic age of ruler against ruler, tribe against tribe, Arab against Berber, SHI'ITE AGAINST SUNNI, Christian against Muslim." (598)

Abul Abbas al-Mursi, one of the founders of the Shadhiliyyah Order to which ibn Abbad of Ronda belonged, claimed to be an initiate of a direct spiritual succession (i.e., an unbroken chain of spiritual masters) begun by Hasan, second Shi'a Imam and son of Ali ibn Abi Talib.(599) Thus, by way of ibn Abbad of Ronda, the great Spanish Catholic poet and mystic St. John of the Cross

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could be considered a spiritual master in the line of Hasan, the second Second Shi'a Imam.

Henry Corbin very briefly dealt with the question of Shi'ism in al-Andalus, both Ismaili or "Sevener" and Imami or "Twelver", evident in the works of ibn Massarrah of Almeria and a key element in the formation of ibn Arabi al-Mursi.(600) There is, of course, the question as to how much of ibn Arabi al-Mursi's Sufi and Shi'a concepts were acquired in his native al-Andalus and how much

during his travels in the East. There is no chronological difficulty in the idea that ibn Arabi al-Mursi learned of Shi'ism in al-Andalus; while he lived earlier than some of the Hispano-Muslim Shi'as - such as ibn Saba'in of Murcia and ibn al-Khatib of Granada - ibn Arabi al-Mursi lived later than ibn Massarrah, founder of the School of Almeria, ibn Hani of Elvira (near Granada), ibn Quzman of Cordoba and Abul Abbas ibn al-Arif of Almeria.

We note in passing that ibn Saba'in al-Mursi was a Shi'a, an Ismaili to be exact, and that the poet al-Shushtari of Cadiz was one of his disciples.

Like ibn Quzman of Cordoba, ibn Saba'in al-Mursi was of Visigothic ancestry. On the Visigoths, see Chapter 2.

As has been noted, some chapters of the Futuh al-Makkiyya, ibn Arabi al-Mursi's *magnum opus*. might have been written by a pure Imami Shi'a. (601) An example of the above is chapter 39 of the Futuh, which deals with the secret of Salman Pak, Salman Parsi, or Salman the Persian, of whom we have spoken above.

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Salman Pak was son of a Zoroastrian Persian knight who converted to Christianity. Somewhat like King Arthur's knights in the Quest of the Holy Grail, Salman Parsi set out in search of the True Prophet, whom he found in Arabia.

The secret of Salman Parsi gained him admittance into the *Ahl al-Bayt*, "People of the (Prophetic) House". In the *Ahl al-Bayt* Salman Parsi assumed the role of initiator into the secret meaning of past Revelations. Thus, Salman Parsi is one of those

whom the Sufis call "poles", "axis" or "pivots".

In the Futuh, ibn Arabi al-Mursi interprets Qura'n XXXIII:33 (the numerological significance of this is obvious) in a totally Shi'a manner, i.e., as sanctifying the persons of the Fourteen Pure Ones: The Prophet, his daughter Fatima and the Twelve Imams. (602)

We quote the relevant part of Qur'an XXXIII:33:

"...Truly, truly God intends to keep you from every kind of uncleanness, oh you of the People of the House (Ahl al-Bayt), and to purify you with a thorough purification."

Imr ibn Abi Salma, raised by the Prophet Muhammad, said:

"When this verse (XXXIII:33) was revealed the Holy Prophet was in the house of Umm Salema. At the revelation of: "Truly God intends to keep from you every kind of uncleanness, oh People of the House (Ahl al-Bayt) and to purify you with a thorough purification," the Holy Prophet assembled his daughter Fatima, her sons Hasan and Hussein and her husband, his cousin Ali (ibn Abu Talib) and covered the group, including himself, with his own mantle (*khirqah*), and, addressing God Said: "Oh God! These constitute my progeny! Keep them away from every kind of impurity, (keep them) purifies with perfect purification. Umm Salema, the righteous wife of the Holy Prophet, (3972)

witnessing the marvelous occasion, humbly admitted to the Holy Prophet: "Oh Apostle of God! May I also join the group?" To which the Holy Prophet replied: "No, you must remain in your own place, you are in goodness." (603)

The Prophet Muhammad's wife Aisha reports that the above was repeatedly revealed, and her version coincides perfectly with that of Imr ibn Abi Salma and Umm Salema. The above is particularly important, since it is well known that Aisha was **NOT** well disposed towards Fatima and Ali, to such a degree that the name "Aisha" is never or almost never used as a personal feminine name among

Shi'as. Here is Aisha's report:

"One day when the Holy Prophet was wrapped in a black mantle (*khirqah*), there came to him (his grandson) Hasan and the Holy Prophet got him under the mantle. Then came Hussein (his other grandson) and he was also received in like manner by the Holy Prophet under the mantle, when came his daughter Fatima, and the Holy Prophet took her under the mantle. At last came Ali (ibn Abi Talib). The Holy Prophet received him also under the mantle and the Holy Prophet recited the above-mentioned verse of the "Tatheer" (Purification, i.e., *Qur'an XXXIII:33*)."(604)

One anecdote concerning ibn Arabi al-Mursi while he yet lived in al-Andalus is most interesting in this respect. During his youth in Seville, ibn Arabi al-Mursi was a disciple of the woman Sufi Fatima bint Ibn al-Muthanna of Cordoba (known in some sources as "Fatima bint Waliyya"). Though of very advanced years, Fatima bint ibn al-Muthanna of Cordoba was of incredibly youthful appearance, showing that in her youth she had indeed been a great beauty. By ibn Arabi al-Mursi's description, it is evident that Fatima bint Ibn al-Muthanna of Cordoba was of Spanish, probably Celtic and Visigothic, ancestry.

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Fatima bint ibn al-Muthanna of Cordoba on a number of occasions said to ibn Arabi al-Mursi:

"I am your divine mother and the light of your earthly mother."

When ibn Arabi al-Mursi's mother visited her, Fatima bint ibn al-Muthanna of Cordoba said:

"Oh light! This is my son and he is your father! Treat him with filial piety and do not despise him."(605)

Note that "Lady of Light" is one of the titles used by the

Shi'as to refer to Fatima Zahra. Note also that the term "mother of her father" (*umm abiha*) was exactly that used by the Prophet Muhammad to refer to his daughter Fatima Zahra.(606) It is rather obvious that Fatima bint ibn al-Muthanna of Cordoba was a Shi'a.

One must certainly agree with Henry Corbin when he said:

"It appears paradoxical that the proponents of the Western movement known as "Neotraditionalism" (not to be confused with the "Neotraditionalism" mentioned in connection with the Chanson de Roland) should have (*up to the present moment*) taken so little interest in Shi'ism, which is par excellence the esoteric tradition of Islam."(607)

I am in a most excellent position to testify to the accuracy of Henry Corbin's observation.

We have a personal testimony of ibn Arabi al-Mursi himself concerning his formation in al-Andalus.(608) This work is an uplifting, fascinating, often delightful account of the Sufis known to ibn Arabi al-Mursi during his youth in al-Andalus. Ibn Arabi al-Mursi recounts the piety, asceticism, charity, learning, in a few cases even miracles of these Hispano-Muslim Sufis.

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However, the researcher is often frustrated because ibn Arabi al-Mursi says very little concerning the teachings of the Sufis of al-Andalus.

One can find references which certainly sound Shi'a, but all are of the nature of that which is typical of Sufism, be it Shi'a or Sunni, as well as Shi'ism. Thus it is impossible to determine to what extent these references represent Shi'ism or Shi'a influence. Several times ibn Arabi al-Mursi mentions "esoteric teachings" or "esoteric doctrines" which he learned at the feet of

these Hispano-Muslim Sufis, but gives barely a hint as to what these "esoteric teachings" and "esoteric doctrines" were.

A person whom I like and respect very much, don Alfonso de Borbon, Prince of Conde, whom we have mentioned before, believes that Shi'ites were the majority in al-Andalus. For reasons given above, the truth of this is impossible to determine. However, as we have shown, Shi'ism was so prevalent in Muslim Spain that it strongly influenced even the Mozarabs. In fact the impress of Shi'ism is perfectly visible in Spanish Catholicism to this day; we shall have more to say on this topic.

From what we have said above we may come to the following conclusions:

❖ 1.) That the number of Shi'as in al-Andalus was much greater than is generally supposed; &

❖ 2.) That Shi'ism, like Sufism, was in the very air of al-Andalus and affected and influenced people who were not openly nor even consciously Shi'as. Perhaps it would be too much to say, (or, as I believe (3975)

to be much far more probable, it would **NOT** be too much to say) that the whole population of al-Andalus was influenced by Shi'ism as well as Sufism in greater or lesser degree, including not only Muslims but also Mozarabs (Christians), as we have seen, among other things, in reference to the what is called the *Beatus de Gerona* in Medieval Latin, the *Beato de Gerona* in Spanish or *Beat de Girona* in Catalan.

I certainly have no intention of converting this book into one of those "alternative history", "history-fiction" or "what if" novels which are so popular today. However, I wish to make an interesting observation.

As we have seen, Shi'ism was present, indeed pervasive, in al-Andalus, where, like Sufism, it was "in the very air". Now, let us imagine that al-Andalus produced its own version of Shah Ismail Safavi, founder of the Safavi Dynasty, who reached a *modus vivendi* with the Christian Kingdoms of the north, crushed the Berbers as Shah Ismail Safavi crushed the Uzbeks, made a drinking cup of the skull of Yusuf ben Tashufin of the *al-Murabitun* or *Almoravides*, as Shah Ismail Safavi made a drinking cup of the skull of Shaibani Khan of the Uzbeks, and made al-Andalus a stronghold of Shi'ism. This, of course, did not happen, but there is nothing impossible nor unthinkable about it, since, as we have shown, Shi'ism was in the very air of al-Andalus, so much so that, apparently, even the Caliphs of Cordoba were affected by it, as were also the *Mozarabs* or Christians of al-Andalus. What effects, short term and long term, would this have had on the history of Spain and of the whole world? The above is most certainly a fascinating topic for thought and meditation, and, perhaps, even

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one of those "alternative history", "history-fiction" or "what if" novels. IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED. Nothing is inevitable until it happens or does not happen.

Below are some observations which will help the reader to comprehend certain facts.

The Apaches are perhaps the fiercest, craftiest and hardest of desert warriors. Long before the arrival of the Spanish, the Apaches were a nuisance to those sedentary, agricultural Amerindians who live in permanent adobe villages, or, in Spanish,

pueblos, hence their generic name "Pueblo Indians", or, in erudite circles *Anasazi*. The Apaches can travel incredible distances on foot in even in torrid weather, using what the Spanish called the *trote Apache* or *trote lento Apache*, i.e., "Apache dog trot", outlasting if not outrunning a horse; in other words, beating the horse in endurance if not initial speed. It is said that:

"An Apache can live where a lizard would die of hunger and thirst".

Obviously, the Apaches were a nuisance to Spanish New Mexico even before the founding of Santa Fe in 1592. The Apaches proudly say that they are the only North American Amerindians to have fought the white man for three centuries.

The Spanish discovered that for all their toughness and hardiness, the Apaches had certain weaknesses from a purely tactical standpoint: they were never good horsemen, at times using horses for transportation, but nearly always fighting on foot.

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Also, at this time, the Apaches had virtually no firearms, and the Spanish discovered that even very crude armor made from leather or even quilted cotton would give some protection against stone-tipped Apache arrows. Finally, the Spanish discovered that fighting on horseback using a shield and a long lance was effective against the Apaches. In other words, the Apaches were always a nuisance to Spanish New Mexico, but never a real threat to its existence.

Many years later, the Spanish also founded a colony in Texas, with San Antonio as its capital. The Spanish soon found that the eastern or *Lipan Apaches* were very much a nuisance. More than one

governor of Spanish Texas vowed to either exterminate the Lipan Apaches or drive them into the desert, something easier said than done.

In the 18th century a new group of Amerindians, totally different from the Apaches, appeared on the plains of Texas. These were the *Comanches* and their allies the *Kiowas*, who were men of the Great Plains, nomad bison hunters, and, perhaps the finest light horsemen in all history. It was said that a Comanche or Kiowa learned to ride a horse before he learned to walk. A Comanche or Kiowa could pretend to be hit, slide down under the horse's belly, and from that position continue to shoot arrows. The sheer mobility of the Comanches and Kiowas was amazing, almost incredible; they could travel 400 miles in little more than 24 hours. The difficulties this presented to their enemies is all too obvious. Never before and never again would the white man face an

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enemy whose sheer mobility made them almost invincible.

From their first encounter, the Apaches on the one hand and the Comanches and Kiowas on the other were mortal enemies. The Comanches and Kiowas learned from the Spanish to fight on horseback with shields and long lances, and, like the Spanish, found that this style of warfare was very effective against Apaches, especially on the plains of Texas. The Comanches and Kiowas claimed: "It takes two Apaches to kill one Comanche or one Kiowa."

Unable to face the Comanches and Kiowas on the open Plains of Texas, the Lipan Apaches left Texas and joined their fellow

Apaches in New Mexico, Arizona and the contiguous parts of northern Mexico. The Comanches and Kiowas had expelled the Lipan Apaches from the plains of Texas, something the Spanish had never been able to do. Very soon the Comanches and Kiowas were conducting long and murderous raids into Mexico.

The Spanish soon discovered that if the Lipan Apaches had been a nuisance to Spanish Texas, the Comanches and Kiowas were a threat to its very existence. The Comanches and Kiowas inhibited the growth of Spanish Texas, and prevented further Spanish expansion into the Great Plains of North America.

Only the invention of first the revolver and then the breech loading carbine made it possible to break the dominion of the Comanches and Kiowas in the plains of Texas and to put an end to their long and murderous raids into Mexico.

Comanches and Kiowas did not fight at night, except on nights

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of the full moon. Therefore, to this day in parts of Texas, New Mexico and eastern Mexico, the full moon is known as "The Comanche Moon", or *La Luna Comanche*.

Though the Lipan Apaches had been a nuisance to the eastern part of Spanish New Mexico, the Spanish soon discovered that the Comanches and Kiowas were a far greater nuisance. However, the Comanches and Kiowas were never a threat to the very existence of Spanish New Mexico, because, while the Texas plains were ideal both for the way of life and the style of warfare of the Comanches and Kiowas, the terrain of New Mexico was not apt either for the way of life of the Comanches and Kiowas, nor for their style of

warfare.

Due to a film which appeared on television in Spain, some Spaniards became interested in the Comanches and Kiowas. I told them about the Comanches and Kiowas, their horsemanship, etcetera. Someone commented:

"It seems to me that the Comanches and Kiowas had a way of life more beautiful than that of the USA today."

This requires a response in some detail.

Though I never owned a horse, I love horses, and people say I have a "way" with them. I very much enjoy hunting. Had circumstances permitted, I would have been much more of an "outdoor type" than I already am. Also, I confess that I am an "adrenaline addict", that I love the "adrenaline rush".

There is a Texas and New Mexico song titled "Comanche

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Free", or, *Comanche Libre*, as the case might be. To avoid any confusion, if one listens to the words of the song, it is obvious that "Comanche Free" means "free as a Comanche", and that *Comanche Libre* means *tan libre como un Comanche*.

In the vast Comanche and Kiowa heartland which the Spanish called: *Llano Estacado*, i.e., the "Staked Plains", nature was not always kind to nomads who lived in bison-skin tents. The Comanches and Kiowas suffered from heat and cold, tornadoes, drought, thirst, dust, torrential rains, flash floods, high winds, and, at times, skulking Apaches. Yet, withal, the life of the Comanches and Kiowas on the *Llano Estacado* or Staked Plains had a wild freedom and a rugged, savage, poetic beauty, and I have no doubt

that I would have loved it. The Comanches and Kiowas would agree with the words of a song:

Oh give me a home where the buffalo (bison) roam
Where the deer and the (pronghorn) antelope play
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day. ...

Oh give he a land
Where the bright diamond sands
Flow leisurely down the stream
Where the graceful white swan
Goes gliding along
Like maid in a heavenly dream.

When speaking of Spanish New Mexico, it is well to recall that as a result of the great uprising of the Pueblo Amerindians in 1680, all Spaniards had to flee northern New Mexico carrying virtually nothing except their weapons and the clothes on their backs. In 1692 New Mexico was reconquered by Diego de Vargas.

The Spanish New Mexicans had grown to love their harshly

(3981)

beautiful land, and most returned, but found that everything had been destroyed. As we shall see, in 1680 certain things were hidden by the fleeing Spaniards, and on occasion have been found.

However, when all is said and done, it is obvious that much was irretrievably lost and destroyed in the uprising of 1680. Hence, it is no surprise that no Qur'anic fragments or other clearly Hispano-Muslim relics have been found in New Mexico, though some have been found in what is now southeastern USA.

Santa Fe was founded in 1592, marking the foundation of the Spanish colony of New Mexico. As we said above, in 1680 a massive uprising of the Pueblo Indians and the Apaches temporarily obliterated Spanish New Mexico, the survivors escaping to El Paso.

In 1692, the Spanish, led by Diego de Vargas reconquered New Mexico. In 1696 there was another uprising of the Pueblo Indians, which was put down after considerable bloodshed. In effect, for most of its history, Spanish New Mexico lived isolated from the rest of the world: to the south and west there was desert (the journey from northern New Mexico to El Paso was called "*la jornada de la sed*" i.e., "the journey of thirst", or *la jornada de la muerte*, i.e., "the journey of death") and seemingly unlimited Apaches, to the east, first Lipan Apaches, but later, and much worse, Comanches and Kiowas. So, some said that:

"In northern New Mexico, medieval and 16th century Spain was preserved like a fly in amber."

In the previous chapter we spoke at length of *Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe*, i.e., "Our Lady of Guadalupe" or *La Virgen de*
(3982)

Guadalupe, i.e., "The Virgin of Guadalupe" as the Mexicans say, *Reina de Mexico, Emperatriz de America*, "Queen of Mexico, Empress of America" in this case "America" means all the Americas, north and south.

Says Pedro Ribera Ortega:

"As conquistadores and Spanish colonists moved north into what is now southwestern United States, they brought with them the devotion to *La Virgen Santisima de Guadalupe de Tepeyac* (The Most Holy Virgin of Guadalupe of Tepeyac). But the early settlers had their own unique *Madonna* (*Madonna*: in Italian means "My Lady" and is often used as a synonym for the Virgin Mary). (What follows is an account from the *IMMACULATA* magazine, September/October 1996.)

"More than 370 years ago, a wood-carved statue of the Blessed Mother (the Virgin Mary) had already earned historical and spiritual rights to the title "First Lady of Our Land". The formal name for this regal lady is *La Conquistadora*, short for *Nuestra Senora del Rosario, la*

Dama Conquistadora de los Corazones de todos los Pueblos i.e., "Our Lady of the Rosary, the Conquering Lady of the Hearts of All People" .

Shortly before Christmas in the year 1625, Father Alonso Benavides, a Spanish Franciscan, Superior of the New Mexican Missions, brought a thirty-one inch tall wooden image of (The Virgin) Mary to the parish church of the Assumption in Santa Fe (at that time, southwestern United States was part of the Spanish colonial empire, with Santa Fe as the capital of the *Reino de Nuevo Mexico*, i.e., "Kingdom of New Mexico" since 1610. She had been carved in Seville, Spain, years earlier by an unknown artist. *La Conquistadora* first journeyed to Mexico, or *Virreynado de Nueva Espana*, i.e., "Viceroyalty of New Spain", as Mexico was then called, before Benavides lovingly carried her to Santa Fe along *El Camino Real*, i.e., "The Royal Road", the historic trail that stretched two thousand leagues between *Ciudad Mexico*, i.e., Mexico City and Santa Fe.

The Spanish settlers who first colonized the area in 1598 were thrilled with the statue with its bright Mudejar (See chapter 5 concerning Mudejar art) patterns over gold leaf, representing the Assumption. Later generations clothed her as a Spanish queen, and she has thus become *La Reina de Nuevo Mexico*, i.e., "The Queen of New Mexico", for the settlers and admiring local

(3983)

Indians. Her *subditos* i.e., "subjects" then began calling her *La Conquistadora* because she had come to this new land in the days of their founding parents and grandparents, the *Conquistadores*.

In 1680, the local Pueblo Indians staged an uprising after long standing tensions with several bad Santa Fe governors. During this "Pueblo Revolt", twenty-one missionary Franciscan friars were martyred. The people of Santa Fe had to fight their way out of the the pueblo, leaving behind many of their personal possessions, but not their *Conquistadora*. She was saved, although the parish and her shrine were destroyed. The colonists fled to th *La Mision Guadalupe* (*Mission Guadalupe* at *El Paso del Norte* (now Juarez, Mexico). On the outskirts of the city they built a temporary capital in exile, naturally dedicating its chapel to *La Conquistadora*.

Late in 1693, under the famed Governor Diego de Vargas, the Spaniards set out to reclaim Santa Fe under the protection of their patroness. De Vargas vowed to "rebuild her temple and throne". The Spaniards fought hard to reclaim the city, and eventually triumphed.

The following year, 1694, the colonists began an annual thanksgiving observance of their victory by taking *La Conquistadora* from the parish shrine to the encampment site outside of Santa Fe's walls where they

had prayed for victory. A temporary shrine of boughs was erected every year for the event. There a novena of Masses was sung, and then the statue was brought back to the shrine in another solemn procession. This surely is the oldest Marian festival in the United States. It is continued to this day by the *La Cofradia de La Conquistadora de la Catedral de San Francisco y la Arquidiocesis de Santa Fe, i.e., "The Confraternity of the Conquistadora of the Cathedral of St. Francis and the Archdiocese of Santa Fe."*

The original shrine, attached to the Assumption parish of 1626, was destroyed during the Pueblo Revolt. De Vargas built a temporary shrine and church in 1695, which was replaced by a permanent church in 1717, in honor of St. Francis of Assisi. When Santa Fe was named a diocese in 1850, the adobe Church of St. Francis was raised to cathedral status. The French bishop (later archbishop), Jean Baptiste Lamy, whose story is told by Willa Cather in her well known novel Death Comes to the Archbishop, built the present stone structure was pulled down. But the *Conquistadora* chapel was partially spared, its outer half continuing as her chapel today.

There is also a secondary shrine, *El Rosario*, "The Rosary", built in 1807 at the old encampment site of 1693. It is still used as the gathering site for the

(3984)

annual thanksgiving processions at the beginning of summer.

The diminutive but festively adorned *La Conquistadora* has been venerated and feted continuously to this day. It is not a miraculous statue or image as is that of *Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe* "Our Lady of Guadalupe" in Mexico, though we are told that she was blessed at Tepeyac before leaving for the New Mexico mission. Nor does she represent the triumphalist conquering of a weaker people.

Instead, *La Conquistadora* is an historical treasure and a long enduring symbol of a people's unfailing love for the Mother of God - whether they be (American) Indian, Hispanic or Anglo (non-Hispanic white). The Holy Catholic Church has acknowledged this devotion with an Episcopal coronation in the Marian Year of 1954, when *La Conquistadora* visited every parish in the archdiocese, and in 1960, when the Holy Father Pope John XXIII granted a unique papal coronation.

When you come to Old Santa Fe, one of America's favorite pilgrimage and tourist sites, please come and visit *La Conquistadora* - (North) America's oldest Madonna. We pray to her daily as *Nuestra Senora del Amor Conquistador de Todos Los Pueblos.*" (609)

To those unfamiliar with *Mudejar* art and architecture, I

recommend that the reader consult Chapter 5, in which Mudejar art and architecture is dealt with at some length. Mudejar art is basically a later school of Hispano-Muslim art, though Mudejar architecture is often mixed with either Romanesque or Gothic.

The novel Death Comes for the Archbishop by Willa Cather is transparently based on the life of Archbishop Lamy of Santa Fe, of whom we shall have more to speak below. Willa Cather speaks of the reaction of *Pere Latour*, transparently based on Archbishop Lamy, even to biographical details, and his reaction to the typical Spanish-New Mexican art of the *santos* or *santones*:

After supper Father Latour took up a candle and began to examine the holy images on the shelf over the fireplace. The wooden figures of saints, found in even
(3985)

the poorest Mexican houses, always interested him. He had never yet seen two alike. These over Benito's fireplace had come in ox-carts from Chihuahua (a region of northern Mexico) nearly forty years ago. They had been carved by some devout soul, and brightly painted, though the colors had softened with time, and they were dressed in cloth, like dolls. They were much more to his taste than the factory-made plaster images in his mission churches in Ohio - more like the homely stone carvings on the front of old parish churches in Auvergne. The wooden Virgin (Mary) was a sorrowing mother indeed, - long and stiff and severe, very long from the neck to the waist, even longer from waist to feet, like some of the rigid mosaics of the Eastern (orthodox) Church. She was dressed in black, with a white apron, and a black *reboso* over her head, like a Mexican woman of the poor. At her right was St. Joseph, and at her left a fierce little equestrian figure, a saint wearing the costume of a Mexican *ranchero*, velvet jacket and silk shirt, and a high-crowned, broad-brimmed Mexican sombrero. He was attached to his fat horse by a wooden pivot driven through the saddle." (610)

Whatever the literary merits of Willa Cather's novel, in fact it is poorly researched. Some will say that it is, after all, a novel, not history. However, when one transparently bases a novel

on the life of a real person, one should try to be as historically accurate as possible. For one thing, Ms. Cather uses the word "Mexican" where it is obviously NOT applicable. Also, not everything in Spanish New Mexico was simply transplanted from Mexico. The images which pere Latour admires almost certainly did not come from Mexico, but were an indigenous New Mexican product.

In its isolation, Spanish New Mexico developed its own art form, that of the *santos* or *santones*. These are wood carvings of holy personages: those who carve said images are known as *santeros*. I would thoroughly agree with the aesthetic judgement of the fictitious pere Latour; I very much prefer the *santos* or

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santones of Spanish New Mexico to the mass produced plaster images, and have no doubt that the real-life Archbishop Lamy agreed with me, and would also have agreed with me in much preferring them to baroque sculpture. Once again, Ms. Cather reveals her lack of culture and her Anglo-Protestant bias. The "homely stone carvings on the front of old parish churches in Auvergne" would either have been Romanesque or Gothic, in Auvergne perhaps most likely Romanesque, though the carving described would appear to be more Gothic than Romanesque. Indeed, the *santos* or *santones* of Spanish New Mexico do remind me a great deal of Russian icons, much more than they remind me of Byzantine mosaics.

The *santos* or *santones* of Spanish New Mexico have attracted the attention of the *aficionados* of "primitive", "rustic" or *naïf* art, but this sort of thing usually conceals a patronizing attitude very close to contempt and snobbery, as well as a gross

Anglo-Protestant prejudice. Though some of these images are indeed brightly painted, this is more Mexican than Spanish-New Mexican. In fact, most Spanish-New Mexican santos or santones are carved from whatever suitable wood happened to be available at the particular place - juniper, pine, oak, cedar, walnut, aspen or cottonwood - and either totally unpainted, or, perhaps, only lightly stained. Few are "dressed like dolls", something which is once again Mexican rather than Spanish-New Mexican. Said *santos* often remind one of Russian icons, the paintings of El Greco or the sculptures which decorate Gothic cathedrals. I own a *santo* or

(3987)

wood carving representing St. Francis of Assisi, which bears the signature of Hector Rascon, the *santero* who carved it. Said image is carved from a piece of the wood of a cottonwood tree, apparently the wood most available at that particular place. Except for a few stains and very subdued colors, said image is unpainted; except for a piece of cord to represent the rope belt of the habit of a Franciscan Friar fastened to the sculpture by small brass tacks, the image is not "dressed like a doll": in other words, it is a purely Spanish-New Mexican product, not an import from Mexico. Said wood carving forcibly reminds one of a Russian icon or of a painting by El Greco. Hector Rascon is a real artist, though he may lack formal training. His image of St. Francis of Assisi does indeed remind one of a Russian icon or a painting by El Greco.

As we shall demonstrate, a large percentage (*nota bene* that I did **not** say all) of the early Spanish colonists in New Mexico were

Moriscos. Today it is safe to say that all of the descendants of the early Spanish settlers in New Mexico have a great deal of Morisco ancestry.

Today descendants of the early Spanish settlers form a large part of the population of northern New Mexico. The descendants of the early Spanish settlers in northern New Mexico are famous for their craftsmanship in various media, showing echoes of various regions of medieval and 16th century Spain, both Morisco and "Old Christian on all four sides", and is often admired for being "at once rustic and elegant." The cuisine of the descendants of the

(3988)

early Spanish settlers in northern New Mexico, which is quite distinct from the Mexican, is becoming well known and popular in all of U. S. A. Besides being famous for their cuisine and craftsmanship, the descendants of the old Spanish colonists in northern New Mexico have always been famous for their lovely girls. In an interview a well-known personage was asked what was his favorite city in U. S. A., to which he replied:

"Santa Fe (New Mexico), for the women."

To anyone knowledgeable on Hispano-Muslim studies, it is obvious that the mother of Imam Ali Reza, the 8th Imam was Hispano-Muslim, and of Spanish, i.e., Iberian, Celtic and Visigothic origin, rather than Arab or Berber origin.

Though I have quoted it in another place, I cannot resist citing the 14th century Spanish song "*Tres morillas de Jaen*", i.e., "Three Morisca Maids of Jaen". I relate to this song so totally that to me it is virtually autobiographical.

*Tres morillas me enamoran
en Jaen
Aixa, Fatima y Marien.*

*Tres morillas tan lozanas
Iban a coger manzanas
Y hallabanlas cogidas
en Jaen
Aixa, Fatima y Marien*

*Tres morillas tan garridas
Iban a coger olivas
Y hallabanlas cogidas
en Jaen
Aixa, Fatima y Marien*

*Hallabanlas cogidas
Se volvieron desmaidas
Las colores perdidas
(3989)*

*en Jaen
Aixa, Fatima y Marien.*

*Senoritas quienes sois,
Que mi vida destrozais?
Cristianas que eramos moras
en Jaen
Aixa, Fatima y Marien*

*I love three Morisca maids
in Jaen
Aisha, Fatima and Marien.*

*Three Moriscas so lovely
Went to gather apples,
And found them already gathered
in Jaen
Aisha, Fatima, and Marien.*

*Three Morisca maids so attractive
Went to gather olives
And found them already gathered
in Jaen
Aishas, Fatima and Marien.*

*Found them already gathered
They became dismayed
Their faces turned pale
in Jaen
Aisha, Fatima and Marien*

*Young ladies who are you,
Who are destroying my life?*

(We are) Christian girls who once were Muslims
in Jaen
Aisha, Fatima, and Marien.

Below is a couplet from the 16th century, this one in very
"broad", "thick" or "closed" Morisco Spanish:

*Yo soy la mora Moraima
Una morilla de un bel catar*

I am the Morisca Moraima
(I am) A pretty Morisca girl.

Obviously, Morisca girls were not lacking in vanity.

One descendant of the old Spanish families of northern New
(3990)

Mexico is *Victoria Carranza*, stage name Vikki Carr. Though not a
great beauty, Victoria Carranza or Vikki Carr is certainly pretty,
very personable, and sings very well.

More recently, another descendant of the old Spanish families
of northern New Mexico who has become famous is *Demi Lovato*, who
most certainly is a great beauty and, besides, is abundantly
endowed with "charm", "charisma", "personal magnetism", or, as the
French simply say: *je ne se quoi*.

As we said above, many have sensed that among the first
Spanish colonists in what is now the state of New Mexico were
included a large proportion of Moriscos largely or mostly from
what was once the Nazirid Kingdom of Granada. This does not mean
that all said colonists were Granadino Moriscos, nor even that all
the Moriscos among them were from the former Kingdom of Granada. A
few place names, such as the *Rio Chama*, indicate that some of said
early Spanish colonists were Gallegos: *Chama* in Gallego-Portuguese
means: "flame", referring to the fact that in autumn the leaves of

the aspen trees which line the banks of said river turn to the color of flame. As the French-Canadian song *Chanson de Septembre* (September Song) says:

The days grow shorter
When you reach September
And the autumn winds
Turn the leaves (of the trees) to flame ...

Yet another, almost acheingly beautiful French-Canadian song, *Feuilles Mortes* (Dead Leaves), says:

(3991)

The autumn leaves drift by my window,
The autumn leaves of red and gold ...

Many years ago I read a novel about colonial New Mexico in which one of the main characters was a Granadina Morisca who "read the Qur'an behind closed doors". In order to thoroughly investigate this, much research "on the ground" in New Mexico and Southeastern Spain by experts in a number of fields, including musicology, would be required.

There is a striking similarity between Northern New Mexico and a great part of the Nazirid Kingdom of Granada. This is why "spaghetti westerns" are made in Almeria. During my student days in Granada there was a TV documentary about New Mexico. The mother of the family with whom I lived commented on how much Northern New Mexico resembles a great part of the provinces of Granada and Almeria. Like a great part of said Spanish provinces, Northern New Mexico is a mountainous land. The annual rainfall is not much, but thanks to the snowfall in the high country there is a great deal of irrigation water. The land is fertile, and

experts in irrigation, such as the Granadino Moriscos, can make it flourish. The Granadino moriscos were ideal colonists for New Mexico.

If one may for a moment forget the Amerindians, one of the oldest towns in New Mexico is Chimayo, not far from Santa Fe, founded in 1598. In 1810 a Crucifix, probably hidden during the great uprising of the Amerindians in 1680, was discovered near Chimayo. Since then Chimayo has been the great center of

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pilgrimages for the devoutly Catholic Spanish-New Mexicans, the veritable "Compostela of New Mexico" or "Lourdes of New Mexico".

Besides being "the Compostela of New Mexico", Chimayo is also the "Lourdes of New Mexico". Below is an Associated Press clipping for December 3, 2011:

"They come in pain and in prayer, seeking cures and a cup of sand from a tiny adobe church in the New Mexican town of Chimayo.

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Santa Fe says Chimayo has been called the "Lourdes of America".

For two centuries, Hispanic and Native American (Amerindian) pilgrims have sought help from El Santuario de Chimayo, located in a mountain in northern New Mexico. They clutch pictures of sick loved ones, hobble weakly on crutches, promise to give up drinking and show more compassion, and they light candles in front of images of saints and La Virgen de Guadalupe, Patron(ess) of the Americas.

Before they leave, they visit a room in the shrine that house *el pocito*, which means "the little well", a small pit of holy adobe-colored dirt, which some say possesses the power to cure. Just one touch, say those who believe, and cancer might go into remission, an injured knee might heal, and leukemia might be held off long enough to witness a child's birth. Along the wall hang crutches that are no longer needed, material proof from those who say they have been healed.

"People discover that there is something special here when they come with an open heart and mind," said Fr. James Suntum, a (Catholic) priest of Chimayo. "There

is a kind of peace that is available here that you cannot find anywhere else."

(El Santuario de) Chimayo is a National Historic Landmark, described in the landmark citation as a "well preserved. Unrestored example of a small adobe church, notable for its original decorations, including numerous superb religious paintings." Some 200,000 people are estimated to visit each year and (Fr.) Suntum says many of those visits occur during *Semana Santa* (Holy Week).

"Why God would choose this place to do His work here ... I have no idea", said (Fr.) Suntum. "But he has doing His work here and people are experiencing it."

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On a more banal level, the chili peppers of Chimayo are also legendary. In summary, Chimayo is one of the most renowned and colorful towns of Spanish New Mexico.

In several places in Southeastern Spain, nearly always in areas with a strong Morisco heritage, there are fiestas of "Moors and Christians". One may suppose that in times past the "Moors" of said fiestas were Moriscos, the fiesta being a way for them to "let off steam". To this day in Chimayo a fiesta of "Moors and Christians" is celebrated every year. It is generally believed that the festival of Moors and Christians of Chimayo is the oldest folk festival practiced by white people in USA.(611) This is particularly remarkable if one remembers that Chimayo was evacuated during the great uprising of the Amerindians in 1680 and was in effect refounded after the Reconquest of New Mexico by the Spanish under Diego de Vargas in 1692. At the very least, this indicates that many of the first Spanish colonists in New Mexico were from Southeastern Spain.

I am thoroughly familiar with the Morisco domestic architecture of Granada: from photos I get the impression that

there are many Morisco elements in the domestic architecture and furniture of Colonial New Mexico, and that these elements persist until today. Morisco or Mudejar influences are visible even in the ecclesiastical architecture of New Mexico. I quote:

"The *vigas* (ceiling beams) were richly carved in many cases, the designs being more reminiscent of Moorish Spain than of the (American) Indian World.

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This was also true of the corbels supporting the choir loft, and the beams of the exterior *portales* or porches of the mission facade or the cloister of an adjacent monastery." (612)

The "designs being more reminiscent of Moorish Spain than of the (American) Indian world" are what is called in Spain *mudejar*, of which we have briefly spoken above, as well as in Chapter 5.

Though *mudejar* art and even architecture are still very much alive in Andalusia, Aragon and Toledo, there are those who say that "Mudejar art did not cross the Atlantic". In New Mexico are abundant proofs that at least some Mudejar arts did indeed cross the Atlantic.

Were there Moriscos even among the Franciscan Friars? Certainly there is abundant proof that there were Morisco craftsmen or artisans among the first Spanish colonists in New Mexico.

In the Spanish dialect spoken in New Mexico there is an Arabism with a strong Morisco flavour. In New Mexican Spanish the word *ojo* may mean either "eye" or "spring of water". (613) In

correct Spanish, *ojo* means "eye", and, phonetically does not even remotely resemble the two words which mean "spring of water", i.e., *manantial* and *fuenta*, *font* in Catalan. *fonte* in Gallego. However, the Arabic word 'ayn means both "eye" and "spring of water". North of Santa Fe is the town of *Ojo Caliente*, its hot springs famous among the Amerindians long before the coming of the

(3995)

Spanish. *Caliente* in Spanish means "hot". *Ojo Caliente* could well be a Morisco way of saying "hot spring". The hot springs were known to the Amerindians in pre-Spanish times, and the Spanish town at the site was founded long before a peculiarly New Mexican dialect had time to develop, so this Arabism must have come with the early Spanish colonists. Except for the Moriscos, what Spaniards would have used this Arabism? I have lived in Southern Spain for six years and never heard it.

A number of Moriscos appear in the novel Don Quijote by Miguel de Cervantes; it takes but little perception to see that the character Aldonza Lorenzo de Toboso, called "*Dulcinea*" by don Quijote, is a Morisca. "*Dulcinea*" is, of course, the title of one of the songs of the musical play "Man of La Mancha", based on the novel Don Quijote by Miguel de Cervantes. When said play was brought to my NATO base in Germany, I served on the stage crew. I commented to the director:

"Any man who does not have a great deal of don Quijote in him is not worth his salt."

I later saw this phrase used in advertisements for said play, later made into a film. People who know me very well indeed have

defined me as:

'Having a mentality that is medieval and not modern, rural and not urban' "And being an incurable romantic and idealist."

To me Don Quijote is a hero. As a song from said play says, every man needs to find his Dulcinea, the lovely Morisca.

An even more obvious example of a Morisco character in the

(3996)

novel Don Quijote is *el moro Ricote*, the "Moor Ricote". His name comes from the Valley of Ricote in the Province of Murcia, once a heavily Morisco area. In said valley is a small town called "Ojos", famous for its springs.

All those familiar with the silverwork of the Amerindians of Southwestern USA are familiar with the motif called "squash blossom". In reality, this motif has nothing to do with a squash, but represents a pomegranate, a fruit which the Amerindians never saw. Thus, said motif is not autochthonous, but was introduced by Spanish colonists.(614) The Spanish word for "pomegranate" is "granada", so the pomegranate is symbol of the city of Granada. Anyone who has lived in Granada knows that there is nothing more frequent than for Granadinos and Granadinas to wear a gold or silver pomegranate on blouse, lapel, cuffs or necktie. It is a way of saying:

"I am a Granadino (or Granadina) and proud of it."

The Spanish colonization of New Mexico occurred near the end of the 16th century. The Granadino Moriscos had formed part of the Kingdom of Castile and Aragon for nearly a century. All spoke Spanish (though many also spoke Arabic) and knew of the

pomegranate as symbol of the city of Granada. At that time the "Old Christians" of Granada had been Granadinos for a few generations at most; on the contrary, the "New Christians" or Moriscos of Granada were "100 per cent Granadinos", because their ancestors had lived there for millenia, and they did not identify with any other place. The use of the motif of the silver

(3997)

pomegranate (so Granadino) among the Amerindians of Southwestern USA indicates the presence in colonial times of Granadinos very proud to be Granadinos among the first Spanish colonists in New Mexico. This most certainly indicates Moriscos from Granada.

We have already mentioned the parallels between Holy Week in Spain and the Shi'a Ashura. During my years in Granada I heard of celebrations of Good Friday which included autoflagellation and representations of the Crucifixion which were a bit too realistic, leading to serious injury or even death. I was not able to confirm the veracity of these tales. Apparently all this occurred in remote and inaccessible areas of the provinces of Granada, Malaga and Almeria, always areas with a strong Morisco background. Shi'ism would have certainly had different nuances among the Mudejares and most especially the Moriscos than among the Hispano-Muslims. The fact of living in an overwhelmingly Catholic environment would have certainly strengthen any Shi'a tendencies among the Moriscos for reasons given above, though in an unconscious manner and with no intention on anyone's part. One can readily imagine a Morisco or even a Mudejar participating in Good Friday celebrations, saying to himself:

"I do not believe that the Prophet Isa (Jesus Christ), On Whom Be Peace, was crucified, but Imam Hussein, On Whom Be Peace, was most certainly cruelly martyred, and both the Prophet Isa and Imam Hussein are alive and awaited, to return on the Day of Judgement, so in my heart I celebrate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, On Whom Be Peace, and with all sincerity I have great reverence for the Prophet Isa."

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There are numerous testimonies of reverence for the Virgin Mary on the part of the Moriscos. Once again one can readily imagine a Morisco saying to himself:

"Most sincerely I have reverence for Maryam the Virgin, mother of the Prophet Isa, On Whom Be Peace. However, since the Prophet Isa was not crucified, therefore the true Mater Dolorosa (Sorrowful Mother) was Fatima Zahra bint Muhammad, On Whom Be Peace, and to her I direct my devotions."

In remote Morisco villages where even the parish priest might have been a Morisco, one can readily imagine practices typical of Ashura being used during the Good Friday celebrations. It may be that some of the typically Spanish customs connected with Good Friday and Holy Saturday celebrations may have been inspired by Shi'a influence by way of Mudejares and Moriscos.

The history of the Franciscans in what is now Southwestern USA is an epic of heroism and sanctity, with an abundant harvest of martyrs. During the colonial period the Church in New Mexico was under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Durango in Mexico. In practice New Mexico was a Franciscan province, because between Durango and New Mexico was 1500 miles of very rugged terrain full of Apaches. The Franciscans were in charge of the missions among

the Amerindians as well as the spiritual well-being of the white colonists. A large proportion of the white males of New Mexico were Franciscan Lay Brothers.

During the Spanish colonial period in Texas there was a certain conflict between the Spanish soldiers on the one hand and

(3999)

the Franciscan missionaries of the missions on the other. As Paul D. Nathan explains:

"One doesn't have to ascribe the antagonism between the military and the (Franciscan) missionaries to the innate cussedness ("willfulness" in Texan) of the soldiers, as Bancroft does in his bludgeoning way. Blame for the lamentable quarreling that poisoned relations between them must be laid to the mistaken policy of the (Spanish) Crown in setting up these two parallel and inevitably conflicting agencies. The missionary was trained to the belief that his life reached its fulfillment in "the crown of martyrdom" and he joyously sought out occasions for exposing himself to death for the glory of God. The soldier, on the other hand, although he accepted death as a hazard of his profession, certainly avoided it whenever he could, and quite naturally resented, as Colonel Parrilla did, the missionary's contempt for danger - a contempt which exposed the whole community to painful and sudden extermination, and, moreover, made it extremely difficult to defend the (Spanish Texas) frontier, which it was the soldier's business to do."(615)

No one can accuse these Spanish colonial soldiers of cowardice, as their courage was beyond question. Always capable Indian fighters, thinly spread in the extreme (or, in military jargon, "*extremely thin on the ground*"), they faced without flinching Apaches, Comanches, Kiowas, Witchitas and Caddos, enemies as fierce as any soldiers in history ever faced.

The soldiers of the Spanish Legion are known as "*los novios de la muerte*", i.e., "the bridegrooms of death", from one of their

songs, *Soy el novio de la muerte*, i.e., "I Am the Bridegroom of Death". I remember singing the first words of this song, "Legionario, Legionario" (Legionaire, Legionaire). At the beginning of the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939 the chief of the

(4000)

Beni Urriaguel, fiercest tribe of the Rif in Spanish Morocco, proclaimed:

"You will see that to our heroic men death is of no importance."

At the beginning of said war, the redoubtable General Yague was alarmed by the suicidal bravery of the Legionaires and Moors under his command. In Spanish and Arabic he told his men:

"Be misers with your blood; do not die for your cause, make the Reds die for theirs."

No one ever even insinuated that General Yague was a coward; he was simply repeating the philosophy of a soldier:

"Do not die for your cause, make the enemy die for his".

The objective is to be a victor, not a martyr, though martyrdom is certainly a possibility. As the White Russians and Carlists did, one may call fallen soldiers "martyrs for the cause", but NOT if they are suicides, not if they are "crazy fighters" who get themselves killed for no reason.

The Mexican Period is not favorably remembered in New Mexico. So unpopular was the Mexican government that there were two uprisings against it in New Mexico. In 1828 the Mexican Government expelled all clergy of Spanish birth and secularized the mission lands. This meant that New Mexico was left almost without

priests. While the Amerindians in many cases returned to pagan practices, something surprising occurred among the white population. Quite suddenly there appeared the brotherhoods of the

(4001)

Brothers of the Light and the Brothers of the Blood. During Holy Week these brotherhoods did things which the Franciscans would never have permitted, such as autoflagellation until the blood flowed and representations of the Crucifixion so realistic that it is said that men died. The popular name of these brotherhoods was, and is, *Los Penitentes*.

After New Mexico became part of USA, Pope Pius IX heard of the lamentable condition of the Church in New Mexico and decided to take action. Santa Fe was named a diocese (not long afterwards an archdiocese), the first bishop (later archbishop) being a Frenchman, Fr. Lamy. Archbishop Lamy is the protagonist of the renowned novel Death Comes for the Archbishop by Willa Cather, and is the subject of a biography Lamy of Santa Fe by Paul Horgan. It is said that the Pope commented that Spaniards make splendid mystics and martyrs, but that the French are better organizers.

Bishop Lamy was horrified by some of the practices of the Penitentes, and attempted to suppress them. However, the Penitentes did not disappear, but returned to the clandestinity, meeting in secret *moradas*, continuing their strange practices. In 1942 the Penitentes promised to cease and desist from the most extreme of their practices, and were accepted by the Church. Today in New Mexico about 2,500 men belong to the Penitente Brotherhoods.

There are many testimonies to the Lenten Rites of the Penitentes. Of course, these are the public rites; other rites take place in the hidden *moradas* and these are never spoken of.

(4002)

During Holy Week the Penitentes dress in white shorts and black hoods. To the sound of a *pitero* or small flute they bear heavy crosses to the tops of the hills. They lie down on thorns and cactus spines. They flagellate themselves with yucca whips, at times lacerating the flesh until reaching the bone. They cut themselves with knives of obsidian or volcanic glass. On Good Friday the Crucifixion is represented, with a volunteer tied to a cross. At times the volunteer loses consciousness. There are stories of men being nailed to crosses and even dying as a result of a representation a bit too realistic (616).

Julio Puyol says that auto flagellation became part of Holy Week celebrations in Spain only in the first third of the Sixteenth Century. In 1565-66 the Valencia Provincial Council mentions the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday abuses (i.e., autoflagellation) of the Penitentes. (617)

The above is extremely interesting, because until a series of decrees around the year 1500, the Mudejares of Spain were openly Muslims. In other words, the above indicates that autoflagellation and similar Holy Week practices became common in Spain precisely at the time when the former Mudejares, now "Moriscos" or at least nominal Christians, would have become participants in said Holy Week ceremonies. Also note that Valencia, together with Granada, was the region with the highest density of Morisco population. All

this points to a Muslim origin for many Spanish Holy Week customs, including autoflagellation. Among Muslims, these practices are typical only of Shi'as.

(4003)

Some have attempted to attribute an Amerindian origin to the Holy Week practices of the Penitentes of New Mexico. However, this is simply absurd, laughable. To a Spanish colonist, whether "Old Christian on all four sides" or a Morisco who was a clandestine Muslim, the religions of the Amerindians appeared as idolatry and paganism or polytheism worthy only of contempt. The idea that Spanish colonists would copy the religious practices of the Amerindians is ludicrous. In fact, very few if any Amerindians ever joined the Penitente Brotherhoods, though there was and is no barrier to this. Amerindians avoided (and avoid) the *moradas* of the Penitentes.

The Amerindians of the village of Pueblo San Ildefonso are of the *pueblo* cultural group, i.e., they are peaceful, agrarian and live in permanent villages or *pueblos* of adobe, and speak a language of the *Tewa* branch of the *Tano* or *Tanoan* language family. The *Tewas* live in several *pueblos* or villages, not far from Santa Fe, New Mexico. The names of said *pueblos* or villages are: Tesuque, Nambe, Pojoaque, San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, and San Juan. The *Tewas* have been Catholics for several centuries, thanks to the efforts of the Franciscan Friars.

Interestingly, the language of the Kiowas, very fierce nomad bison hunters, is also of the *Tano* or *Tanoan* family, though their allies, the equally fierce nomad, bison-hunting Comanches, speak a

language of the *Uto-Aztecan* family.

The "squash blossom" motif, really a pomegranate, symbol of

(4004)

Granada, of which we have spoken before, is used to decorate the the pottery of Pueblo San Ildefonso; a famous example of this is on a bowl made by Nicolasa Peña, maternal aunt of Maria Montoya de Martinez, or simply "Maria Martinez", a well-known personage of whom we shall speak at some length. (618)

Maria Montoya, known as Maria Montoya de Martinez or simply Maria Martinez after her marriage to Julian Martinez, was a pure-blood Tewa Amerindian woman of Pueblo San Ildefonso. She was known as the belle of Pueblo San Ildefonso. Tewa girls are often very pretty: Joyce Da, granddaughter of Maria Montoya de Martinez, is most certainly a beautiful woman. Maria Montoya de Martinez became world famous thanks to her artistry in ceramics: interestingly her husband, Julian Martinez (Tewa name: *Po-Ca-No*), was a painter of considerable renown. (619)

Devout Catholics, Maria and her family made a Holy Week pilgrimage to Chimayo when Maria was ten years old. As they neared Chimayo in their wagon, they passed through a Spanish village. On a hill above the village was a square, squat windowless building with a large wooden cross in front. Ana, Maria's sister, asked their father, Tomas Montoya, what the building was.

"That is a *morada* or church", replied Tomas. "It belongs to the Penitentes."

"Who are the Penitentes?", asked Ana.

"It is their religion", answered Tomas.

"Are they not Catholics like us?", continued Ana.

(4005)

Tomas answered:

"Yes, they are Catholics, but this is something besides that belief, the way the *kiva* (ceremonial site) is with us." (620)

Though the word *kiva* is Hopi and not Tewa, in both Spanish and English it has come to refer to the ceremonial sites of all the Amerindians known as *Pueblos*. Below is a description of the *kivas* of San Ildefonso:

Tewa *kivas* may be found or square, semi-subterranean or at ground-level. Some are entered by ascending a ladder or stairway to the roof and then descending a second ladder through a ceiling opening down to the *kiva* floor. Others are entered through doors at ground level. Tewa *kivas* may stand isolated in the plaza or be integrated into a village house block. At the village of San Ildefonso, visitors can see an example of both an isolated round *kiva* with a stairway entrance and an integrated square *kiva* with a ground-level doorway. All Tewa *kivas* are constructed of adobe and carefully maintained.

Kivas are the scenes of preparation for village rituals: both men and women participants practice for their performance inside the *kiva*. When a public performance is to begin, the participants move from the *kiva* to the dance plaza, symbolizing the Tewa origin myth that describes how the first people emerged from a world below this one. Private rituals not performed for the public also take place in the *kivas*, which are off-limits to all non-Indian visitors." (621)

During their Holy Week pilgrimage, the Montoyas stayed with a white Spanish family who lived about half a mile outside Chimayo. Though the Amerindians of Pueblo San Ildefonso lived on friendly terms with their white Spanish neighbors, Maria and her sisters had never before been inside a non-Amerindian home. Many

things about the home of the white Spanish family were strange and wonderful to Maria and her sisters. Having lived six years in

(4006)

Andalusia, the description of said home gave me a feeling of nostalgia.

When Holy Thursday came, the mother of the white Spanish family asked the Montoyas if they wished to see the Penitente Procession.

"Is it all right for the girls to go?", asked Reyes, the mother of Maria and her sisters.

"If they are quiet and pray their Rosaries" (*Tasbih* in Islamic terms) said Tomas. "This is something holy, and the girls must be careful how they act. I think I will go with my *compadre* (close friend) and take part in the procession. He asked me to do that, and it is a great honor to be invited. I do not want to refuse such an honor when it is offered to me. I never knew of an (American) Indian man being asked to do that before."

"Nor did I" said Reyes. "Will you be all right?"

"I will be all right", replied Tomas. "It is religion, and that is all right." (622)

When they reached the place where the Penitente procession was to pass, Reyes told the girls:

"Kneel and pray your Rosaries. Keep your eyes down while you are praying, do not talk nor laugh. Remember, this is these people's religion. It is serious, and it means a lot to them. It is not like our dances, where everyone is supposed to be happy and religious, too." (623)

Maria heard the piercing, mournful sound of the *pitero*, closed her eyes and prayed the Rosary.

On the way back to Pueblo San Ildefonso, Ana asked Tomas,

"Father, why did they whip themselves?"

"Why do you ask that?", asked Tomas.

(4007)

"Because I want to know", said Ana.

"You are not supposed to know that they whip themselves," replied Tomas. "Reyes, didn't you tell the girls not to look?"

"Of course I did, I told them to kneel and pray the Rosary (*Tasbih*) and not look up at all", answered Reyes.

"You should obey your mother", said Tomas.

"I did obey her. I knelt down and prayed my Rosary, and I did not look up until I had said all the decades", replied Ana.

"Next time be sure that you obey everything that you are told", said Tomas.

"Yes, father, but why do they whip themselves?", Ana insisted.

Tomas replied: "It is their religion. It is different from the (American) Indian dances in that way. The (American) Indian religion is to be happy, but the Spanish religion is to be sad. That is why they are two different peoples." (624)

Before proceeding, we wish to make an observation.

The Cheyennes are an Amerindian tribe of western North America, speakers of a language of the Algonquian family, long known as "the fighting Cheyennes". The northern Cheyennes were allies of the Sioux or Dakota, while the southern Cheyennes were sometime allies of the Comanches and Kiowas.

Here are some notes concerning the Tewa dances:

"For most events, long parallel lines of dancers move in unison to the beat of one or more drums. The dancers sing as they dance, or a chorus of male singers stands close by the dancers and accompanies them. These public performances often last from sunrise to sunset, demanding great endurance from performers who range in age from three years to over eighty. Each ritual

occasion is the united expression of the entire Tewa community and helps reinforce Tewa Pueblo Indian (4008)

traditions." (625)

"The Tewas' native religious system focuses primarily on group rather than individual concerns. Religious activities seek group harmony and community health and promote seasonal changes and weather control more often than they mark changes in an individual's status or celebrate personal religious experiences, As an extension of this concern for group welfare, the Tewas honor animals and plants that are part of their environment, seeking a harmonious coexistence with the natural world.

Fundamental to the Tewa religion are the many supernaturals who can use their power either constructively or destructively. One important type of supernatural is called *okhua* by the Tewas but is more commonly known to non-Tewas by the Hopi Pueblo term *katchina*. Okhuas or Katchinas are sometimes described as spirits of the dead. Only people who have devoted their lives to religious activities, however, will join the katchinas after death. In private ritual performances, men who have been ritually initiated embody the katchina spirits, which may be male or female mythical characters, animals, insects, or plants. Katchina dancers wear elaborate masks that hide their human identity even from Tewa women and children. It was masked katchina dances that especially troubled the early Spanish missionaries, and, probably for that reason, Tewa katchina dances are no longer open to the public. No outsiders are allowed to witness these most sacred performances, and the Tewas will not speak to visitors about the masked beings or their ritual appearances.

Historically, the Tewa Indians had several esoteric religious societies that were responsible for performing specific rites during the annual ritual cycle. There were societies of medicine men, hunters, warriors, women, and, the most visible and interesting to visitors, the *kossa* ("k'ohsaa") clowns. The current state of these societies is difficult to determine because they are not openly discussed with outsiders. Apparently, some societies no longer function in Tewa villages, but the *kossa* clowns of San Juan and San Ildefonso are, without question, still active. Their numbers are few, but they dedicate themselves to the spiritual and ritual life of the village, and, like members of all religious societies they must be instructed in highly esoteric matters and ritually initiated for life. They supervise some of the public performances and engage in ritual buffoonery, reversing

and inverting reality by doing things incorrectly or
(4009)

backwards. Thus, they help reinforce socially acceptable behavior by demonstrating what is unacceptable, using pantomime, speech, or ridicule of people who have broken Tewa social norms."(626)

"Tewas also find beauty in songs. They admire their composers for their skill at creating new songs or remembering the traditional ones. The beauty of repetition and understatement are important aspects of Tewa songs. Singers also bring beauty to the ritual when they sing with strong, clear voices. Note the simple yet elegant use of metaphor in the following section of a Tewa song:

*Oh our Mother the Earth, oh our Father the Sky,
Your children are we, and with tired backs
We bring you the gifts that you love.
Then weave for us a garment of brightness;
May the warp be the white light of morning,
May the weft be the red light of evening,
May the fringes be the falling rain,
May the border be the standing rainbow.
Thus weave for us a garment of brightness
That we may walk fittingly where grass is green,
Oh our Mother the Earth, oh our Father the Sky! (627)*

"The native calendar, however, is not the only one that dictates when a village ritual will be held: since contact with Europeans, the Tewa people have also observed certain Catholic holy days. The Catholic and native calendars coexist, with the result that some traditional winter dances are regularly held on or near Christmas and some spring dances are held at Easter. In addition, all the Tewa villages have patron saints who are commemorated by native dances on feast days each year. Santa Clara Tewas, for example, celebrate their feast day every August 12, Ste. Clara's Day. Some villages celebrate other saints' days, such as Santiago Day or San Pedro DAY, WITH NATIVE DANCES. Dances performed on Christian holidays communicate both native and Christian meanings and messages. Although the Nambe Tewas may perform the buffalo dance "for the baby Jesus" on December 24 or 25, even dancing in the church itself, the choreography remains unaltered, and native messages about hunting success and need for snow still predominate.

The equinoxes and solstices mark temporal change and solar reversals. They are important times for Tewa ritual performance because they signal seasonal transitions. Village events acknowledge these transitional times, often through symbolic reversals

and inversions and through humor. In September, when the growing season is almost over and the hours of sunlight decrease, the clowns become particularly active, publicly displaying behavior that is backwards, improper, and often very funny. Their performances temporarily turn the social world topsy-turvy. Dancers and singers may also take part in symbolic reversals during the equinoxes and solstices. In some events, men impersonate women, and vice versa. Symbolic reversals may include the imitation of outsiders as performers dress and act like Anglos, Hispanics, or other Indians, such as Kiowas, Comanches, Apaches or Navajos. Just as the natural world is in a state of transition and "confusion" during equinoxes and solstices, so the Tewa world mirrors it through performance,

In order to better understand Tewa symbolic reversals, as well as Tewa notions of humor, consider the antics of clowns. Tewa clowns are powerful figures associated with fertility, health, and the sun. As masters of burlesque, they make fun of dancers and singers in solemn public performance, village residents and officials, including the governor, and even the sacred katchinas." (628)

"The Christmas *matachines* dance is the next public performance held in San Juan. Of Spanish derivation, the dance has a European Christian theme; the San Juan Indians say that it was "taught to us long ago by the missionaries". Perhaps because of its foreign origin, the village governor and staff are responsible for organizing its performance.

Some researchers argue that the *matachines* dance symbolizes the battles between Christians and Moors, while others claim that it depicts the legend of Montezuma. Its European origin, however, is not debated. The music has been traced to sixteenth-century European tunes, and the Tewas often hire Hispanic musicians to play the violin and guitar for the event. *Matachines* dance steps feature skips, turns, and other movements not typical of Tewa dance. One Tewa man observed that the *matachines* dance could not be Tewa in origin because the steps begin on the left foot and Tewa steps always begin on the right foot," (629)

"*Matachines* Dance (San Juan). This dance, performed in (Pueblo) San Juan each year on December 24 and 25, is believed to be of Spanish and Christian origins, taught to the Indians by the early Franciscan missionaries. Its movements and accompaniment are not typical of Tewa dance and music. The dancers execute skips, hops, swing kicks, and polka steps in many

intricate choreographic patterns while visiting Hispanic musicians play tunes traceable to sixteenth-century Europe on the violin and guitar.

The matachines dancers include men who wear black pants and vests trimmed in beadwork, beaded moccasins, scarves over their mouths, and black fringe over their eyes. On their heads they wear miters from which long, colorful streamers flow down their backs. One young girl, called Malinche, dressed in a white sweater over a white or solid-color dress, dances among the matachines or with the male soloist, called Monanča. He is distinguished from the matachines by his conical crown topped with a small crucifix. A small boy wearing a bull's hide and carrying two sticks as forelegs takes the role of *el toro*. The bull. There are also two clowns or *abuelos* ("grandfathers") who wear masks and carry whips.

San Ildefonso also holds a matachines dance on December 25, similar to the San Juan version. Sanyta Clara's summer moiety performs its version on the same day. The Santa Clara Malinche wears a tan-colored manta decorated with Tewa symbols, and the accompaniment is provided by drummers and a male chorus. Versions of this dance are performed at other Pueblo and Hispanic villages throughout New Mexico, as well as in some Mexican communities." (630)

Interestingly, St. John's Day, so important in Spain, is also celebrated at Pueblo San Juan, where San Juan, or St. John, is the patron saint.

"The one ritual performance that attracts more visitors to (pueblo) San Juan than any other is the patron saint's day celebration on June 24, St. John's day. ... Public activities actually begin on June 23, with vespers in the Catholic Church and a buffalo dance in the plazas. The buffalo dancers appear three times, the last at sunset. Though Tewa Indians perform several types of buffalo dances, this version is said to have been borrowed from the Hopis. Its "foreign" origin may explain why it is held in summer at (Pueblo) San Juan rather than during the winter, as are most buffalo dances. It may once have been a primarily imitative dance featuring symbolic reversals, one of them being the season of presentation itself. Today, this buffalo dance serves as a prelude to the Comache dance performed on the following day.

An early morning mass begins the feast day. In recent years, the priest has said much of the mass in

Tewa, and sometimes the buffalo dancers perform briefly in the church. After Mass, a procession carries the statue of St. John the Baptist to a cottonwood bower erected in the north plaza. By noon, sixty to one hundred dancers have filed out of the big kiva to perform the Comanche dance. Because this dance is an imitative performance involving a tribal reversal, it seems a logical choice for an event so close to the summer solstice. Still, the dance is not invariably performed every year; in 1983, for example, (Pueblo) San Juan presented its green corn dance, which carries no connotations of reversal.

The Comanche dance is one in which the Tewa men have considerable freedom in costume construction. They enjoy showing off their most elaborate and garish outfits. It is not uncommon to see male Comanche dancers with dyed feathered war bonnets and bustle, bone breast plates, beaded mocassins (all of the above is typical of Comanches and Kiowas, but NOT of Pueblo Indians, Tewa or not), and wild designs of red, blue, yellow, or green face and body paint. Most elements of a male Comanche costume are traded or purchased from Plains Indians at intertribal gatherings called powwows. Unlike their male counterparts, Tewa women who perform in the Comanche dance are conservatively attired in typical Pueblo dresses, with a lace-trimmed shawl over one shoulder and a woven sash at the waist. The difference in costume is echoed in the execution of the dance steps; the men exaggerate Tewa movements and frequently let out loud yelps, whereas the women remain demure and perform their movements as they would for any other Tewa dance.

All day the village is crowded with Anglos (non-Hispanic whites), Hispanics, Tewa, and other Indian visitors. When the dancing and feasting are over, a small group of San Juan Indians, Hispanics and the Catholic priest return the statue of St. John to the church. The Hispanic participants are neighbors who often join in the activities of the San Juan parish church.

San Juan consultants say that this event is "to honor the saint", but the performance also celebrates the power of the sun at the summer solstice and symbolically helps the sun change its path. Early descriptions of this celebration mention not only song and dance, but also ritual foot races. At (Pueblo) San Juan this traditionally was a relay race between two teams, one made up of men from the north side of the village and the other of men from the south side. The race track ran from east to west, like the path of the sun, (Pueblo) San Juan's patron saint's day celebration

clearly has both Catholic and traditional Tewa religious foundations." (631)

Ms. Sweet continues:

"Over the years of contact with successive waves on non-Pueblo peoples (some Amerindian, such as Apaches, Navajos, Utes, Comanches and Kiowas, some not, i.e., Spaniards, French voyageurs, Mexicans, English-speaking North Americans) the Tewa Indians have developed innovative yet conservative techniques for keeping their ritual performance cycle intact. In the early years of coexistence with the Spaniards, the Tewas and other Pueblo Indians practiced what some anthropologists call "compartimentalization". By adopting but deliberately practicing separately (that is, keeping in separate "compartments") certain aspects of Spanish culture, the Pueblos managed to keep the borrowed traits as additions to, rather than replacements for, their native customs. An example is the separate practice of Catholic and kiva rituals. With the relaxation of Spanish policies (after the suppression of the revolt of 1680), the Tewas began more freely to combine, recombine, and juxtapose the foreign with the native. Yet, they continued to practice a cognitive form of compartmentalization by remaining aware of the origins of most borrowed elements. They are masters at discriminately selecting foreign objects and practices and interlacing them with existing Tewa traditions, all the while maintaining a clear distinction between what came from "us" and what came from "them". ...

...The results of this selected interlacing of cultural features can also be seen in many village performances. The Comanche dance, for example, compares with other Tewa dances in having a formation of two long parallel lines. The women wear typical Tewa costumes, carry ears of corn and sprigs of evergreens, and contain their movements in tewa style. The music resembles that of the Tewa buffalo dance, and the whole performance is a gesture of thanksgiving, a celebration of life, and a prayer for community health and prosperity. At the same time, the male dancers and singers wear costume knowingly adopted from the Plains Indians. Some of the song texts include Comanche words. Since the Comanche dance is frequently performed at a patron saint's day celebrations, a Catholic element also appears; at least some of the performance is done before a statue of the pueblo's patron saint. The people remain well aware of the Tewa, Comanche, and Spanish Catholic sources of the dance's symbols.

(4014)

A Catholic Mass at a Tewa pueblo parish church may show the interlacing of a few Tewa elements into a "foreign" event. The altar is often decorated with traditional rain or cloud symbols. During the 1970s, the parish priest at Pueblo San Juan began saying parts of the mass in Tewa and printing Tewa translations of prayers for the congregation. During a patron saint's day celebration or on Christmas Eve, Tewa dancers sometimes perform in the pueblo parish church." (632)

Below are described some dances typical of San Ildefonso:

BUFFALO DANCE:

"There are many versions of Tewa buffalo dances; Kurath and Garcia (1970) identified five types based on the number of buffalo and other game animals represented. At San Ildefonso, the buffalo dance, also called the *game animal* dance, begins with a dawn ceremony and features two buffalo, a game mother, two antelope, and dozens of deer. As many as forty additional side dancers, equal numbers of men and women, appear in some years, with the male-side dancers wearing one-horned headdresses.

Each animal represented has a particular movement style and choreographic pattern. The antelope dart about with small running steps; the deer walk with deeply bent knees, leaning on two sticks held as forelegs; and the movements of the buffalo and game mother include slow meandering walks and quick steps in place with frequent pivots. The San Ildefonso game mother traditionally wears a red floral-patterned shawl with long fringe over her black manta-dress. The antelope and deer wear antler headdresses, and the buffalo, bison headdresses. All the performers wear black face paint. Several drummers and a chorus of male singers accompany the dancers.

Because bison are associated with hunting and with the snow needed for spring moisture, buffalo dances are traditionally held in winter, though segments may often be seen during summer theatrical productions. San Ildefonso regularly holds its buffalo dance on January 23 in honor of the village's patron saint." (633)

COMANCHE DANCE:

"Every Tewa village has a version of the Comanche dance in its repertoire. One Tewa consultant told me that the songs contain some words believed to be of Comanche origin and that the dance is reminiscent of a time when some Comanche warriors were 'sent home

crying' after a battle with the Tewas, The San Ildefonso Tewas present the Comanche dance along with a buffalo dance on their patron saint's day, January 23.

Male Comanche dancers concoct gaudy costumes that might include feathered war bonnets (something typical only of the nomad buffalo hunting Amerindians of the plains, including the Comanches and their allies, the Kiowas), fringed buckskin pants, breechcloths, beaded leather vests, feathered bustles, a variety of kilts, bone breast plates, and elaborate body-and-face paint. Each man carries a banner in his left hand and a rattle in his right. The women wear black manta-dresses or colorful cotton dresses with lace-trimmed shawls. They also wear headbands with three large feathers attached at either side and hold three feathers in each hand. The dancers file into the plaza in two lines, in which men and women alternate. To the accompaniment of several male drummers and singers, the women step lightly in place with slight pivots from side to side as the men repeatedly cross in front of them with larger, more exaggerated movements." (634)

HARVEST DANCE:

"The San Ildefonso harvest dance is usually held in early September because it is an agricultural dance offering thanks for the summer's bounty. It is performed by both men and women to the accompaniment of a drummer and male chorus. The women wear black manta-dresses, red woven sashes, and turquoise blue tablita headdresses. They carry evergreens in each hand, and most perform barefotted. The men wear kilts, shell bandoleers, rain sashes, and moccasins. They cover their chests, backs and lower legs with black paint and their waists and hands with white paint.

There are two basic sections to the choregraphy. First, a man carrying a large, feather-topped, woven banner leads the two lines of dancers counterclockwise around the entire dance area. Then, the two lines face each other and the dancers perform numerous changes of formation, always returning to their original places in the lines. After several hours of dancinig, the participants form a tight circle near the *kiva* while other villagers toss food to them in appreciation for the performance and for the harvest." (635)

HOOP DANCE:

"This showy, crowd-pleasing dance has no direct connection to the traditional Tewa ritual calendar, and its origins have been debated. Some Tewas say that it

was invented by a Taos family. The dance is performed by young men who have learned the acrobatics of keeping hoops whirling around their arms and legs as they execute quick footwork over, under, and through additional hoops. The action can be very exciting. Currently, several San Ildefonso boys perform the hoop dance at theatrical productions. They generally wear breechcloths and some type of feathered headdress (a Comanche or Kiowa influence?). Hoop dancers are accompanied by a drum, but no songs." (636)

NAVAJO DANCE:

"The Navajo dance is a playful burlesque of Navajo behavior as perceived and defined by the Tewa. The dancers wear clothing typical of the Navajos: for the women, velveteen shirts, silver concha belts, and long, gathered skirts; for the men, similar shirts and belts, loose trousers or denim jeans, and Western hats or scarves tied around their heads. Sometimes Tewa women perform the dance, taking both male and female roles. The dancers sing as they dance and are accompanied by a drummer, also clad in Navajo garb. Their movements are typical of other Tewa double-line dances, but sometimes an imitation of a specific Navajo dance is included." (637)

Note that Tomas Montoya recognizes in the customs of the Penitentes something so different from the Catholic Faith which he practices and which was taught to his ancestors by the Franciscan Friars, that he senses that these customs proceed from some non-Catholic source (though of course he could have had no idea what said source might be, having never heard of Shi'a Islam) as do certain Amerindian customs with which he is familiar (such as the *kiva* and the dances). His analogy, though far from exact, is insightful and indicates an acute intelligence and powers of observation, as do the rest of his commentaries. His commentaries, along with what we have said above concerning the dances typical of the Tewa of Pueblo San Ildefonso, native

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village of Tomas Montoya and his family, also make perfectly

clear that the idea of an Amerindian origin for the Penitente Rites is totally ludicrous: there is nothing in the joyful dances of the Tewa which bears even the remotest resemblance to the rites of the Penitentes. To the Amerindians, the customs of the *Penitentes* are a "white" or "Spanish" thing, totally foreign and incomprehensible to them. Tomas Montoya was correct in affirming that the rites of Penitentes do not and cannot proceed from the Catholic faith as taught by the Franciscan Friars, that the rites of the Penitentes must spring from some non-Catholic source, but not in anything connected with his own Tewa tradition, to which the Penitente Rites bear no resemblance whatever. Having never heard of Shi'a Islam, Tomas Montoya can have had no idea concerning the procedance of the rites of the Penitentes, so strange and incomprehensible to him.

Obviously, to Tomas Montoya, a Tewa Amerindian, the rites of the *Penitentes* were a "white" or "Spanish" thing, incomprehensible to him. No doubt there were many other "white" or "Spanish" things which Tomas Montoya and other Amerindians found not only strange but incomprehensible. Conversely, the Spanish believed that no white man could understand the Amerindian mind. The Spanish told many strange tales concerning the Pueblos or *Anasazi*, believing that the people of some Amerindian pueblos worshipped rattlesnakes, that in secret caves the people of some Amerindian pueblos had a secret fire which was never allowed to go out, that the people of some Amerindian

pueblos kept a gigantic snake in a secret cave in the mountains which they worshipped and to which they sacrificed children. Obviously, as was indicated above, the Pueblos or Anasazi believed strange and incredible things concerning the Spanish. Note: the word *Pueblo*, when capitalized, refers to the Amerindians of the Southwest who lived in permanent towns or "pueblos", but when not capitalized simply means "town".

In the *kivas* of the Amerindians Pueblo or Anasazi, which no white man ever entered, occurred ceremonies of which the whites had no inkling nor comprehension, while, in the *moradas* of the Penitentes, which no Amerindian ever entered, and which the Amerindians avoided, occurred ceremonies of which the Amerindians had no inkling nor comprehension.

As we said in Chapter 4, the music of the Spanish is based on *heptatonic* or seven tone modes, some Celtic, some Persian, some borrowed from the modes used in liturgical chant, which means that they are ultimately of Hindu origin.

On the other hand, the music of the Amerindians is based on *pentatonic* or five-tone modes. In other words, the music of the Spanish and the music of the Amerindians were and are mutually impermeable.

The cuisine of the Amerindians known as "Pueblos" or "Anasazi" is based on maize, beans and squash, known in Spanish translation as *las tres hermanas*, i.e., "the three sisters", occasionally varied with wild game, nuts and wild berries. The "Pueblos" or "Anasazi" desired nothing more.

From Spain the Spanish brought various staple cereal grains, cheese, beef, mutton and goat meat, as well as condiments, vegetables and fruits - including those extravagantly delicious Spanish melons which were brought from Persia during the Muslim Period - as well as the tomatoes and chili peppers native to Mexico. To the Spanish, the diet of the "Pueblos" or "Anasazi", though tasty and wholesome, was monotonous and lacking variety. To the Pubelos or Anasazi, many items of the more varied Spanish diet were strange to their palates, for which they never acquired a taste.

In effect, *Hispanismo*, "Spanishness" and *Indianismo* are so radically different as to be virtually incompatible and mutually impermeable. Mutual influences between the two were few and very superficial. Only the Catholic Faith provided the common ground for the two peoples who shared the harshly beautiful land of northern New Mexico.

One of the things which the Amerindians borrowed from the Spanish was and is working in silver. One of the motifs which the Amerindian silversmiths borrowed from the Spanish was something that they called "squash blossom". In reality, this motif does not represent a squash at all, but rather a pomegranate, a fruit which the Amerindians never saw. Thus, the Amerindian silversmiths borrowed a motif from the Spanish, but completely misunderstood what it was supposed to represent. There is something profoundly symbolic here.

The Penitentes did indeed have a conflict with

Amerindians, though of a culture and a language totally different from those of the Amerindians of Pueblo San Ildefonso. The Apaches are nomad hunter-gatherers, and speak an Athabascan language, unrelated to either the Tano or Tanoan languages or the Uto-Aztecan languages.

In an area west of Santa Fe, after a man had already been tied to a cross, a Penitente procession was attacked by Apaches. Being unarmed except for their whips of yucca fibre, the Penitentes had no choice but to flee to the village from which they had come. Armed and reinforced, the Penitentes came to rescue their comrade whom they had left tied to a cross, but found him so shot full of arrows that he resembled a porcupine. The man had played the part of Jesus, but had become a true martyr, a 19th century Spanish-New Mexican St. Sebastian. (638)

The Iranian writer Roy Mottahedeh has noted the close parallels between the Holy Week celebrations of the Penitentes of New Mexico and the Ashura celebrations of the Shi'as of Iran. He Says:

"Flagellation survives in Spain and in many parts of the Hispanic world. It survives, in fact, in the United States in New Mexico, where, in spite of a century of horrified disapproval of Protestants and non-Hispanic Catholics, the Brotherhoods of Penitentes commemorate the Passion of Jesus by flagellation, by the carrying of heavy wooden crosses, and many other forms of discipline, physical and spiritual. The resemblance of the form of Penitente religiosity to (Iranian) Shiah practices extends to tableaux from the life of Jesus and even to the drama of a simulated crucifixion.

The resemblance in psychological content is even more striking: both the (Iranian) Shiah and the New Mexican Penitentes are using violation of physical
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self-integrity as a means to enter an altered state of

awareness in which ordinary restraints of prudence are removed and the penitente loses not only his sense of self-protection but also his sense of separateness. By sharing his "discipline" the penitente has broken the boundary between himself and his fellow penitentes and even - to some extent - between himself and the spiritual model he seeks to imitate; as the Penitentes say, the "Brothers of Blood" become "Brothers of Light". At bottom, both are forms of folk mysticism".(639)

The last paragraph "hits the nail on the head". What the Penitentes of New Mexico really represent is Shi'ite religiosity expressed in Christian terms. As we have noted several times, said religiosity is incomprehensible to Catholics, whether white or Amerindian, who are not Spanish-New Mexicans, but the Iranian Shi'ite Roy Mottahedeh understands it at once. Note also that Penitente religiosity suddenly appeared full-blown at the moment in which the Church in New Mexico was passing through a very difficult period, and returned to clandestinity or semi-clandestinity when an energetic group of French and Spanish priests under Bishop Lamy restored the Church in New Mexico. This indicates a long history and a long experience of clandestinity and *taqiyya* or dissimulation. In Muslim Spain the Shi'ites usually had to practice at least a semi-clandestinity, as in Persia and other Middle Eastern countries under dynasties of Turkish origin. Under the kings of Castile, the Church suppressed any attempts to use the more extreme practices of Ashura in the Holy Week celebrations, except, perhaps, in some very remote and inaccessible places, but in the clandestinity something survived. With the passage of so many generations

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between 1492 (the year that the last Nazirid king surrendered

Granada to Fernando of Aragon and Isabel of Castile) and 1828 Imam Hussein was forgotten and Jesus Christ took his place, but this change was purely nominal, the religiosity itself remaining the same, appearing openly in 1828 for reasons given above.

It is interesting to note that among the first white settlers in what is now USA were included a large percentage of Moriscos from Granada who have left an indelible mark on one of the states of the Union. The above is interesting because it has clear implications in reference to the religious life and thought of the Moriscos. It also indicates that the number of Shi'as in Muslim Spain, concretely in the Nazirid Kingdom of Granada, was much larger than is generally supposed.

While this has little relavance to the question of Shi'ism in Muslim Spain, here is something which conveys the devoutly Catholic atmosphere of Spanish New Mexico. It is one of those things which people who do not believe in miracles have a very difficult time explaining.

As part of Pope Pius IX's campaign to restore the Church in New Mexico after the disastrous period of Mexican rule, the nuns of the Sisters of Loretto were ordered to leave Western Kentucky and go to New Mexico to aid Bishop Lamy.

In 1873 was begun an academy in Gothic style patterned after Sainte Chapelle in Paris at the request of Bishop Lamy. However, when the academy was finished, the Sisters of Loretto discovered that a grave error had been made; there was no way to get from the

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chapel to the choir loft, and a conventional stairway would take

up too much space in the chapel.

The Sisters of Loretto decided to make a novena to St. Joseph, a carpenter by trade and husband of the Virgin Mary and earthly father of Jesus. On the last day of the novena a gray haired man with a donkey and a tool chest came to the academy. He asked for the Sister Superior and wished to know if he could be of assistance in building a stairway.

The work took some six to eight months. The Sisters present at the time recalled that the old carpenter used on a saw, a T square and a hammer, and recalled seeing tubs of water filled with soaking wood. When the Sister Superior looked for the old man to pay him for his work, he had disappeared. The lumber yard in Santa Fe had no record of any wood being bought for the project.

The stairway is spiral, consisting of 33 steps and two complete turns of 360 degrees, with no center support. Wooden pegs rather than nails were used throughout. Architects and builders have come from far away to marvel at the beauty and ingenuity of the stairway's construction. The curved stringers seem to have been put together with great precision, the wood being spliced in seven places on the inside and nine places on the outside, each piece forming part of a perfect curve. The wood is of a hard variety not native to New Mexico. Where and how it was obtained is a mystery.

After 120 years of daily use the staircase seems as solid as the day it was built. Many notice a certain springiness when they

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climb the steps.

Who was the old man who built the staircase? How did he accomplish it with nothing but a saw, T square and hammer? Where and how did he obtain the exotic wood? St. Joseph was a carpenter who used a saw, T square and hammer ... (640)

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