

THE YEZIDI

~ A Selection of Articles ~



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THE YEZIDI PANTHEON

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General

Besides the Holy Triad,¹ constituting the so-called dogmatic base of the Yezidi religion and standing distinctly out in the cult and in the beliefs, the pantheon of the Yezidis includes a multiplicity of deities and spirit guardians, which are not too easy to determine, by many reasons other than scarcity or sparseness of the available material. Identifying the *denotata* of the Yezidi nomenclature of divine beings is obstructed by the multiplicity and heterogeneity of the revered historical personalities—Sheikh ‘Adi’s kinsmen and ambience, locally significant saints, having restricted spheres of influence, the Sufi saints (Mansur al-Hallaj, Rabi‘a ‘Adawwiya), Biblical and Qur’anic characters (Ibrahim, Musa, ‘Isa, ‘Ali, etc.), as well as simply *sheikhs* and *pirs* possessing a certain halo of saintliness. At the same time, many mythical and semi-mythical figures, saints, often even historical characters, having retained their cults in various Near Eastern religious traditions, e. g. in Islam and, in particular, in its so-called heretical environment, gained popularity with the Yezidis who worship them along with their genuine deities. A specific regional figure from this category of characters can be included in the paradigm of the Yezidi divine beings in case it has been deeply implanted in the popular mind and adapted to the religious tradition (e. g. Ibrahim-khalil, Khidir-nabi).

For the figures of the folk pantheon it is impossible to identify the unambiguous attributes of sanctity for a given figure even in the relig-

¹ The Holy Triad includes Malak-Tāwūs, Sultan Yezid, and Sheikh ‘Adi bin Musafir, a historical figure, the founder of the ‘Adawiyya Sufi order, which was later to become the main basis for the formation of the Yezidi community (cf. Asatrian, Arakelova 2003: 4-9; the detailed account of this issue see in the forthcoming monograph by the same authors, Asatrian, Arakelova).

ions having an official institute of canonisation (as in Christianity). Even more so it is related to the doctrines wherein the deification or canonisation is done informally, in the way of a popular tradition. In Yezidism, these informal criteria can be satisfied by the character being by all represented in the oral religious tradition (Qawl-ū-bayt'), as well as in most cases, by having been rested in a legendary burial place in Lalish.² Canonisation (deification) can be also substantiated by a genealogy going back to the relatives and subordinates of Sheikh 'Adi (Sheikh Hasan, Fakhr-ad-din, and Sheikh Shams).

The figures identified here as deities are those who patronise diverse spheres of human activities or personify the natural phenomena. This list does not include the seven avatars of Malak-Tāwūs: 'Azrail, Dardail, Israfil, Mikail, Jabrail, Shamnail, and Turail (of which 'Azrail, the alleged head of the Seven, is usually identified with Malak-Tāwūs, the Seven all in all still being the emanations of the latter), as well as most of their counterparts within the system of saints—historical personalities of the 'Adawiyya order, viz. Sheikh Abu Bakr (Šēxōbakr), Sajad ad-din (Sijādīn, being characterised as *qāsīdē ruhē mirīyā*—psychopomp, responsible for escorting the souls of the dead to the underworld), Nasr ad-din (identified with the angel of death; he used to be the executor under Sheikh 'Adi, killing everyone who countered him). The exceptions are Sheikh Shams, symbolising the sun, and Fakhr ad-din identified with the moon.

As regards the deities controlling the natural phenomena, most are believed to heal the diseases caused by the corresponding spheres under their command. It is to be noted that the healing function is commonly ascribed to the sanctuaries, shrines, and certain sheikhy clans, as one of the important elements of working miracles (see Arakelova 2001a).

The names of deities, spirit guardians and saints are commonly featured with the caste-related titles *sheikh* (šēx), *pīr* (p'īr), as well as *dervish* (dawrēš). The latter means, as a rule, a saint, a righteous, errant hermit, a mystic, perhaps even "the lord, the master". This word, as shown by its Old Iranian proto-form *driguška- (< *adari-gauša-), originally meant "listener, (spiritual) disciple", being attested also in the Middle Iranian texts (cf., e. g., in Sogdian zywšk, δρυwšk/žyūšk "disciple"). Socially and semantically, dervish is comparable with the

² The valley of Lalish, in the mountains north of Mosul in Iraq, where the shrine of Sheikh 'Adi and sanctuaries of other holy beings are located (see Guest 1987: 16-17; Kreyebroek 1995: 77-80).

Indian *bhikṣu* (literally “mendicant”), being simultaneously the designation of a monastic class. In some respect, the synonym of dervish among the Extreme Shi‘a sectarians is the title *bābā* (cf. *Bābā Yādegār*, *Bābā Tāhir*, etc.), which is spread all the way to India.

More often than not, used as epithets with the names of saints, spirits, and deities are the terms *malak* (Arab. *malak*)—“angel”, *xās* (from Arab. *xāṣṣ*)—“chosen, noble”, *xudān*—“master, protector, patron”, *mēr* (lit. “man”)—“holy man”, *a’ziz* (Arab. ‘*aziz* “dear, respected”)—“holy”, *walī* (Arab. *walī* “friend, beloved, close (to god)”—“holy”, *qanj* “good, handsome”—“holy, saint” (cf. *qanjē Xwadē* “God’s saint”), and so on.

The throng of gods, goddesses, patron deities, and guardian spirits of the Yezidis are, in fact, predominantly performative entities deprived of a constant dogmatic basis. They seem to exist mostly in ritual, being usually invoked in particular cultic events related to their domains of competence.

Thus, to be counted among the gods and deities of the Yezidi pantheon, in addition to the Holy Triad, are the following figures: the Thunder-god³ (with a number of equivalent figures); the Lord of the wind and the air; the Foremother of the Yezidis and the Patroness of the women in labour; the Mistress of the pregnant women and of the infants; the deity of the phallus; the dual deities of cattle; the Lord of the earth (underworld); the Patron of wayfarers; the Spirit of the furrow, the Spirit of the household; the Spirit of the bedding; the Lord of the graves; the Universal deity (*Khidir-nabī*); the Friend of God (*Ibrahim-khalil*); the Ruler of the genies; the Builder-spirit; the deities of the sun and the moon, and that of the garment.⁴

Traditionally, a good few of the Yezidi deities, including the classical angels ‘Azrail and Jabrail, have been buried in Lalish, the existence of the legendary burial place of a saint (or a deity, all the more so), a mausoleum, a shrine or a sanctuary in the principal centre of the devotional life of the Yezidis being, to a certain extent, an indication of their canonisation.⁵

³ It is, of course, a highly conventional label not to be compared with the characteristics of the classical thunderers in the Ancient Greek, Old Indian, or Old Slavonic mythologies.

⁴ The latter, i. e. the deities of the sun (*Šēx Šams*), the moon (*Farxadīn*), and of the garment (*Šēx kirās* and *Hazmāmān*), recently described by Arakelova (2002), are herein understandably omitted.

⁵ Though this statement is contested by some authors (cf. Kreyenbroek 1995: 29), a shrine still remains a relevant factor of the so-called folk canonisation in the Yezidi beliefs.

1. The Thunder-God. The Deity of the Lightning and the Wind

Māma-(Mam-)rašān, or Mahmad-rašān, lit. “pouring, darting Mahmad (Muhammad)”, is the god of the thunder and the lightning. The second part of this name, -rašān, may be a *nomen agentis* from the verb řaşāndin, “to pour down, to spread”, going back to Old Ir. *fra-šan- (Asatrian, Livshits 1994: §§ III, 4, XIV, 1). The epithet of Māma-rašān is “lion” (Šēr Mahmadē řaşān, or Šēr Mahmad-rašān). The published specimens of the Yezidi religious folklore only once refer directly to the Lord of the lightning under another name—Šēx A’brūs (Jindy 1992: 10). In one of the prayers (Dirōzga) mention is made of a certain saint named Malak-Birūs, i. e. “Angel Birūs” (Celil, Celil 1978b: 393), which may be one more denomination of this deity. It is highly improbable that it is a name of another formerly existing character. Perhaps the form A’brūs (Šēx being the title) has originated from the combination *abr-birūsk—“cloud-lightning”, so that in its entirety it means the “(Sheikh) of the clouds and the lightning”. As for Birūs (in combination with Malak—“angel”), it is the appellative *birūsk* “lightning” (with the loss of the final -k). Thus, Malak-Birūs means “lightning angel”. That, however, is not the last line in the inventory of the Yezidi celestials controlling the thunder and the related phenomena. At the turn of the last century the Armenian Yezidis featured another image named Ābā-birūsk (Avdal: 133), which is now completely forgotten (at any rate not one of the queried pundits of the Yezidi folklore amidst the spiritual castes in Armenia could recollect this name). If this deity is the same as A’brūs (which seems quite certainly to be the case), then the name can be etymologised in another way, with a good degree of authenticity, namely: < OIr. *ābā- (Old Ind. ābhā)—“radiance, brilliance”, yielding “flashing lightning” (or “outburst of lightning”), a very fitting image for a deity. In all, Māma-rašān, Ābā-birūsk (A’brūs), and Bā-raš—“Spirit of the hurricane” (lit. “Black wind”, another figure mentioned by Avdal, *op. cit.*) are the names of the same deity, his differing characteristics: “pouring hail”, “darting (lightnings)”, “flashing lightning” (or “cloud-lightning”), and “hurricane, whirlwind”. However, Māma-rašān, as the most generic indication (“pouring [rain, lightnings, hail] Mahmad”), has sponged most of the thunderer’s nature, while Ābā-birūsk and Bā-raš are actually featured as labels for his individual functional manifestations. All these designations have only one *denotatum*—Thunderer, though the bearers of these names are often presented as individual characters and sometimes even quarrel with one another. What has been noted is by no means a

negation of gods or deities of the wind and hurricane as individual figures of the pantheon as a whole: fortunately, there are bright images of Vayu and Vāta—the Old Iranian gods of the hurricane (death, and destiny) and the wind, however they are full-fledged cultic figures (see Wikander 1941) distinct from the Yezidi Bār-aš who is no more than a personification of the wind. The same is true about Ābā-birūsk (Malak-birūs) and Šēx A'brūs as personifications of the lightning.⁶

Another indication of the god of the thunder and lightning is perhaps 'Abdī Rāšō (or 'Abd Rāš), who is regarded as Sheikh 'Adī's servant and has obvious connections with the stone (see Kreyenbroek 1995: 115). The epithet Rāš(ō) (cf. Kurd. řaş) means "black", the colour often used to define the names of supernatural beings.⁷ The designation of the Yezidi spirit of the wind, Bā-řaş, also has the formant řaş, "black", as an attribute to bā—"wind", meaning "Black wind". It signifies also "whirlwind, hurricane". The Yezidis believe the wind to be the breath of Bā-řaş, and the whirlwind and the hurricane to result from a dispute among Māma-řaşān, Ābā-birūsk and Bā-řaş (Avdal, *op. cit.*). The mentioned formant (-řaş) could have been traced to the same Old Iranian proto-form, *fra-šan-, meaning "Blowing (overtaking) wind", however the Armenian dialectal designation of a hurricane or whirlwind—*sev k'amī* (lit. "black wind")—is an unambiguous indication of Bā-řaş to be understood namely as "Black wind". It is possible, by the way, that the second component of the Māma-řaşān's name, -řaşān, also includes řaş ("black"), with the patronymic suffix -ān, simply meaning "Mahmad, or Mām, from the clan of the Blacks (i. e. divine beings)". The black colour is an unambiguous symbol of the transcendental world, masculinity and chthonism (see Asatrian 2002: 81-82).

Māma-řaşān is controlling both reaping and harvest. His feast is celebrated in spring. In a draught, rain was to be summoned using the formula: *Yā Māma-řaşān* (or *Mahmad-řaşānō*), *biřaşīna*, *bārānē bi řarika bārīna* (Jindy 1992: 10-11), i. e. "Oh Māma-řaşān, sprinkle (moisture), make rain fall copiously" (Kreyenbroek 1995: 109).

⁶ The Yezidi terms for lightning—*birūsk* (< Old Iran. *wi-rauča-), *bōbalīsk* and *birq*—are tabooed, being used mostly in cursing (cf. *Birūsk mālā ta xa*—"Let lightning strike your home") and in some set phrases (like *gīsnē birūskē*—"plough (radiance) of lightning"). The tabooed designation of the lightning is substituted by the word *bimbārak*—"blessing, grace" (cf. *Bimbārakē lēdā*—"lightning struck").

⁷ Mention can be made, e.g., of *Siyāh-gāleš*—"the Black Shepherd", the Lord of cattle among the Iranian population of the Caspian area (see Asatrian 2002).

Each village owned a special ritual cup carrying the name of Māma-rašān inscribed inside in Arabic letters. It used to be named the Māma-rašān's cup—(K'āsā Māma-rašānē) and was employed in the ceremony of calling the rain. One of the sheikhs held it in both his hands standing on the roof of his house, chanting:

Māma-rašō, Māma-rašō!
 Māma-rašō, tu xāybī.
 Am gunana, Māma-rašō,
 Bārānē bida, Māma-rašō!

Oh Māma-rašān, oh Māma-rašān!
 Māma-rašān, reveal⁸ yourself.
 We are pitiful, Māma-rašān,
 Give us rain, Māma-rašān!

Māma-rašān is seen as a rider, usually on a lion, holding a snake as a whip:

Māma-rašān mērakī siyāra,
 Qāmcīyē wī ma'ra. (Celil, Celil 1978b: 13)

Māma-rašān is a (lion)-rider,
 His whip is a snake.

According to the legend referred to in the hymn of “Sheikh ‘Adi and the holy men”, Sheikh ‘Adi arrived in Lalish from Bayt Fār, his native village, and appointed Māma-rašān head of the holy men. Soon the rumour of Sheikh ‘Adi was spread everywhere. When meeting a group of righteous men (*sayyids*), wishing to see evidence of his sanctity and miracle-working, Sheikh ‘Adi seated his comrade-in-arms Māma-rašān upon a rock, and the latter started prancing around, sitting astride on the stone.

Šēxādī kiribū firwāra,
 Šēr Mahmad-rašān li barakī kir siwāra,
 Gō: galī mērā wa čī haya li bāla?
 Yā Mahmad-rašān, siwār ba li barakī,

⁸ Kurd. xway-, xāy- “to reveal, show”; cf. Pers. huwaydā (kardan/šudan) “to make appear, to appear, be evident”. An Iranian form, yet without a convincing etymology. The first part of it is, for sure, from OIr. *hu-.

Awān mērā hēwir namā li darakī,
 Ži wān bipirsa xabarakī...
 Čandī sayyidīna
 Dang dikin bi nihīna,
 Av bara ruh' tē nīna.
 We dibēžit šēxī sayyidā,
 Gāvā Mahmad-rašān dīta:
 Tu šēxī anī mirīdā?
 Az Mahmadē rašīma,
 Siwārē barīma,
 Az bixō mirīdē Šēxādīma.

Sheikh 'Adi gave a command:
 He made the Lion Mahmad Rashan mount a piece of rock.
 He said, "Oh holy men, what is in your minds?"
 "Oh Mahmud Rashan, mount a piece of rock,
 Those holy men (will) have no place of refuge left anywhere,
 (Then) ask them to comment!" ...
 All the *sayyids*
 Exclaimed secretly,
 "There (can be) no life in that piece of rock".
 The leader of the *sayyids* said,
 when he saw Mahmud Rashan,
 "Are you the Sheikh or a disciple?"
 I am Mahmad Rashi,⁹
 I am the rider of the rock,
 I am truly Sheikh 'Adi's disciple" (Kreyenbroek 1995: 222-223).

Upon seeing this miracle, the sheikhs who were themselves miracle-workers and could, among other things, tame a lion, admitted the sanctity and the supernatural powers of Sheikh 'Adi and welcomed him. Incidentally, in some legends Sheikh 'Adi also rides a rock.

The motif of a saint riding a rock, a wall (or a lion, which is the God's hound, by a Muslim legend), is attested also in the Sufi and the Extreme Shi'a traditions (the Chishtiyya, the Bektashis, the Zazas, Ahl-i Haqq). According to a Bektashi legend, once a righteous man, Sayyid Mahmud Hayrani from the city of Akşehir, set out to visit Haji Bektash Veli, the founder of the Bektashi order, riding a lion, a snake in his hand as a whip, escorted by three hundred Mevlevi dervishes

⁹ Mahmad Rashi (Mahmad-rašī), i.e. Mahmad- rašān: Rashi (-rašī) is rather a hypocorism from Rashan (rašān) than a tribal affiliation, as suggested by Kreyenbroek (1995: 299).

(members of a *ṭariqat* founded by Jalal ad-din Balkhi or Rumi). Having received the news of the visitors coming, Haji Bektash said: "Those men are coming on living creatures, while we shall straddle a non-living object". Not too far, close to Kızılca Havlet, there was a red rock, as high as a wall. Haji Bektash straddled it and commanded it to move. The rock assumed the shape of a bird at once and hit the road. Since that time the rock is rumoured to have retained the shape of a bird (Mélikoff 1998: 76). There are also other versions of this story with different religious figures of Asia Minor and Albania posing as opponents of Haji Bektash: Karaca Ahmed, Hacı Bayram, Ahmad Rifa'i (see Gordlevskij 1960: 265, 363). Similar stories are being told about Sarı Saltık, another religious figure of the Extreme Shi'a movement in Asia Minor featured as a saint also in the religious beliefs of the Zazas (see Mélikoff 1998: 42-43, 59, 62; Gordlevskij: 268-269). In the early 20th century an English traveller recorded a similar legend among the Zazas (Qizilbashis).

"On reaching the western end of Dujik Baha Dagħ,—the author reports,—we leave the streams, which continues south-west round the base of the mountain to join the Muzur Su near Surp Garabet monastery¹⁰ and clamber up a rugged ravine to the right, striking Dujuk Baba's northern edge. Not far from here one passes a high rock split in two, the upper portion of which bears a striking resemblance to a head surmounted by a *fez*. This, the Kezelbash say, was the head of a hated Turk cleft in two, and the rock on which he stood with it, by a blow from the mighty sword of Hazreti Ali.¹¹ At a village hard by, called Kardéré, there is a stone wall much venerated by the Kezelbash for the part it played in the miraculous demonstration of the superior sanctity of one Seïd over another. In the old days, much rivalry existed between the various Seïds as regards their respective degrees of sanctity, and as humility was not one of the virtues that counted, they did not hesitate to parade their miracle-working powers... The Seïd of the Gureshan tribe one day mounted a lion and went to visit his neighbour, the Seïd of the Bamasurli tribe, with the intention of thus displaying his sanctity. The latter, seeing from afar his brother Seïd approaching on a lion, felt himself challenged; so he mounted the above-mentioned wall, took in his hand a snake, which he brandished as a

¹⁰ St. Karapet, or Halvori vank', a well-known Armenian monastery, equally revered both by the Armenians and by the Zazas. The monastery is particularly renowned for its power of healing the mentally ill (see Andranik 1901: 77-78, 97-108).

¹¹ Incidentally, dissection of a rock, sometimes a large tree, mostly an oak, is a conspicuous feature of the thunder-god.

whip, and thus equipped went forth to meet his guest. At this sight, the Seïd Gureshan was compelled to avow that his sanctity was as nothing compared to that of Seïd Bamasurly, and dismounting from the lion he kissed the latter Seïd's hand" (Molyneux-Seel 1914: 58).

Sultān Ishāq (or Sohāq), one of the founders of the Ahl-i Haqq, regarded to be the fourth manifestation of the Divine essence (see Saffi-zādeh Borakey 1998: 101-115), is featured prominently in similar legends; one has been recorded by V. A. Žukovskij. According to this story, Sultān Ishāq commanded his servant Dawud to build a wall on the land owned by a certain saint Mikail (Pir Mikā'il). When the latter knew about that, he mounted a lion, grabbed a horrible serpent and set out to defend his property. Dawud informed his master about the approaching threat. Without confusion, Sultān commanded Dawud to mount the partially erected wall and go ahead to meet the threat, warning that he, Sultān, was to be found at a certain place. Following the instructions, Dawud hit the road, joined Pir Mikail along the way; later they got to the river, the present-day Sorevan, with Sultān Ishāq waiting for them on the opposite bank. The tumultuous mountain river gave forth a terrible roar so that the two parties could not hear each other; this nuisance was noted by Mikail. Sultān then tamed the out-rush by throwing a little rug on it. In the ensuing stillness Sultān and Mikail sat down on the mat and entered into negotiations. To make a long story short, Mikail started to feel fits of hunger and said it to Sultān. At that very moment there was a splash, and a fish came out of the water, then it rose up at a sign or a word by Ishāq, to lie down at his feet on the rug. After a blessing, Sultān offered it to Mikail; the latter refused, thinking that the fish was raw, then, at Ishāq's request he made sure that the fish was well cooked. The meal was started, and then Sultān gathered the bones left and suggested his recent opponent to do the same. When the meal was over, Sultān read the 'word' over the remaining bones: the fish came to life and plunged into the river with a wave of Ishāq's hand. What was happening was quite enough for Mikail to acknowledge the outstanding power, sanctity and the superhuman nature of Ishāq. No further claims were relevant (Žukovskij 1888: 17).

Stories involving the saints riding lions with a serpent-whip abound also in the Sufi literature (cf., e. g. Rūmī, NN 2125-2128).

This elaborate motif, having undoubtedly ancient roots, is a product of the so-called heretical milieu of Asia Minor; it is introduced into the image of Māma-řařān (and Sheikh 'Adi) as a secondary element, linking Yezidism with the non-orthodox Islam, with the Extreme

Shi'ism in particular. It may be not an accident that in the entire New Iranian continuum, besides the Yezidis, the god of the thunder and lightning has been retained in the Extreme Shi'a community of the Zazas.¹² Dūzgin (Dūzgin-bābā or Dūžik-bābā)—the supreme deity of the Zaza folk pantheon, the Master of the Universe, the Ruler of the thunder and lightning, of clouds and hurricane, is even more authentic than Māma-rašān of the Yezidis. He protects the people from natural disasters, as well as from alien invasions. He is ready to come to the aid of anyone or to punish anyone guilty of trespassing the moral and humane standards. He is imagined as a lightsome bearded (sometimes bald) man riding a gallant steed in the mountains. This god has a number of other names: Siltān Dūzgin, Dūzginē kamarī (the Dūzgin of gorges and mountains), Bimbārak,¹³ Aspārē astōrē kimatī (the Blue Steed Rider), Aspārō yāxiz (the Black Steed Rider), Wāyir (Master), and so on.

Dūzgin is not alone: he has a massive army of similar gallant riders ready to commit any deed at his command. His messenger is an eagle (Haliyō Siltān Dūzginī—"Sultan Dūzgin's Eagle"); it is considered a holy bird, the killing of which is a great sin.

Used by the Zazas are many invocations addressing Dūzgin. Cf.:

Dūzgin, Dūzgin, Dūzgin!
Xō vira maka...
Dāl ū būdāye mi tīya, ādire mi waka.
Sātā tangada, bāwō, xō vōra maka!

Duzgin, Duzgin, Duzgin!
Do not forget [us]...
You are from our branch; open our fire.¹⁴
Do not forget us in need, oh Father!

Or:

Bērē varō jārīma,
Hawār sērō kamarē Dūzgin,
Jāyē tō rindō, barzō.

¹² What is meant is, of course, a full-fledged celestial with all divine attributes, not a mere personification of the natural elements, without clear functions and spheres of activities (like the Kurdish P'ir Sulaymān).

¹³ Cf. the same word, meaning "blessing, grace", used as a substitute for the tabooed name of lightning by the Yezidis (see above, f.n. 6).

¹⁴ I. e. "you belong to our people; give prosperity to our home".

Aspārē rāmanō yalgar ū larzō;
 Birā varō jārē tanga varā,
 Dast rā gōvānē čatini var arzō.
 Hay dilō, hay dilō!
 Wāyirō, Wāyirō, Wāyirō, Wāyirō!

Come, please!
 Our cry, let it reach the gorges of Dūzgin [mountain].
 Your place is beautiful and high.
 The rider is as fast as wind;
 Brothers, pray to him,
 Relief from trouble comes from him.
 Oh heart, oh heart!
 Oh Lord, oh Lord, oh Lord, oh Lord!

In a difficult situation it is customary to call for Dūzgin: *Yā Haqq, Yā Dūzgin!*—"Oh God,¹⁵ oh Dūzgin!". And Dūzgin, it is believed, is sure to come to help, provided the thoughts of the caller are clean, and he is a righteous man (see in details Comerd 1997; also Dedekurban 1994: 12-15).

The etymology of the name Dūzgin remains unclear. It may be a variant of Dūžik(-bābā) attested in the Armenian sources, as an alternative name both for the supreme deity of the Zazas and the highest mountain in Dersim (see Asatrian 1992: 102-110; 210-212). In all appearances, this theonym (Dūzgin/Dūžik) is of a non-Iranian origin. It is very likely that we look here at a substrate name of a god/mountain.

Incidentally, both Māma-rašān and Dūzgin, as well as Khidir-nabi (among the Yezidis, see below), and Khizir (by the Zazas) in many ways have assimilated the elements of the cult of Surb Sargis (St. Sergius), the popular Armenian Christian saint in charge of the natural elements, among other things.

Coming back to Māma-rašān, let us consider his attribute "thunderer", which may seem too obliging for a peripheral deity. At a closer scrutiny of the image, however, this characteristic looks more justifiable. For in this now syncretic character, whereby the thunder-god becomes a saint prancing on a lion, the essential thing is the archetype, and it is just the archetype that possesses the necessary and sufficient attributes of a thunderer. At any rate, all what we know about such deities in other traditions (storm-gods, thunder-gods), above all, con-

¹⁵ Arab. *haqq*, lit. "truth", in the mystical Islam—"Absolute Truth", i. e. "God".

trolling the thunderstorm, rain, lightning, the obvious links with the stone, the snake, the tree, and the like—is on the whole quite adequate to the features of Māma-rašān. Let us, for instance, look at his title “strewing (rain), darting (lightning)”¹⁶ to say nothing on his other manifestations (A’brūs or Ābā-birūsk, Bā-raš), indicating his functions directly. Meanwhile, an important attribute of the thunderer in the Indo-European tradition is just the snake symbolising the thunder (lightning, storm) unambiguously: a rider brandishing the snake is a classical symbol of a thunder-god, or a storm-god. As regards the motif of riding a lion or a rock, being related to the Sufi tradition (and in a wider sense—typical for the mystical Islam), it may have very early origin, acquired later mystical interpretation in Islam (control over the elements of nature obtained by saints through austerity, righteousness, forbearance, etc.).

Thus, Māma-rašān, with his functional variations, reflects the ancient religious concept of the thunder-god. In the Old Iranian pantheon, Māma-rašān and Dūzgin (of the Zazas) might have as counterparts Vayu, the god of hurricane and death, or the combined image of Vayu and Vāta, the god of the wind, which acquired the additional attributes on the Islamic mystical background.

The legendary tomb of Māma-rašān is in Lalish.

2. Šēx Mūsē-sōr (Šēxmūs)—*The Lord of the Wind and the Air*

Šēx Mūsē-sōr—Red Sheikh Mūs (Moses)—an atmospheric deity controlling the winds and the air. He is addressed, therefore, during the works on the threshing-floor for winnowing when what is needed is wind in fair weather to screen and clean the grain from hay.

Yā Šēx Mūsē Sōr,
Biday bāyakī zōr,
Dē bō ta pēžin sawkēd sōr

O Red Šēxmūs,
Give a great deal of wind,
Then we shall prepare for you baked red loaves

(Kreyenbrock 1995: 106).

¹⁶ If, of course, the above suggested etymology of -rašān is viable, and the latter is not a mere patronymic title from řaš “black”. But, still, even in that case, it is a clear indication of the Yezidi thunder-god’s authenticity.

At harvesting and winnowing time, or during other field works, Šëxmūs receives offerings of flapcakes and pies left, as a rule, near the field or close to the threshing-floor.

Šëx Mūsē-sōr is regarded as the companion of ‘Abdi Rašō, and through him is possibly linked with Māma-rašān, which is natural, for they are in charge of closely related elements.

The sheikhy families traditionally deriving their origin from this deity (Ōjāxā Sōrē Sōrān, the branch of the sheikhy clan Adani), are known for their ability to cure the diseases of lungs, joints, rheumatism, etc.¹⁷ The sanctuary of Mūsē-sōr, his alleged *mazār* is in the village of Bahzané in the Lalish valley and, as described by E. Drower, looks like a slab with shattered crockery around (see Drower, 1941: 57). The ground around the slab is thought to have a healing action against skin diseases. The shrine is frequented by pilgrims each carrying a vessel to water the ground and apply the wet clay on the affected skin areas. Before leaving the pitcher is smashed to pieces. It is also believed that if someone would walk by the *mazār* without offering his respect to it (by kissing its wall), he would be punished—his eyes would swell up and pain (*ibid.*: 56).

Šëx Mūsē-sōr is usually glorified by the title Sōrē-sōrān, i. e. “the Red of the Reds”. The attribute sōr (“red”) may be here intended to underscore sanctity, red colour being directly opposite to blue, which is considered by the Yezidis the colour of apostasy. Sultan Yezid is quite properly indicated using this attribute as well—Silt’ān Ēzidē sōr—“Sultan Yezid the Red”.

According to different legends (see Jindy 1992: 20), the control over the “white” wind belongs also to Šëxisin—Sheikh Hasan, who is allegedly the Lord of the Tablet and the Pen as well; therefore, only his posterity amidst the Yezidis have the right to know the literacy (Tamoyan 2001: 147). Although, in actual fact, it was Šëx Mūsē-sōr who had to be the Lord of the Tablet and the Pen, which is just the case with his counterpart among the Ahl-i Haqq, the Archangel Pīr Mūsī, the motif is clearly reminiscent of the Biblical story of Moses having received the Tablets with Testaments from God. The displacement of functions from Šëxmūs to Sheikh Hasan has been done through the contamination of images, causing also the entanglement of power controlling the wind and the air. Sheikh Hasan, having a historical archetype, is a marginal figure among the Yezidi saints, actually possessing

¹⁷ The popular mind perceives the pains in abdomen, legs, arms, joints, back, etc. as caused by the wind or air penetrating into the body.

no attributes of a deity. He is a somewhat dummy character, taking on the functions of other gods from time to time. For instance, he is often associated with the moon, although that is unambiguously the domain of Farxadin (cf. Arakelova 2002), etc.

The image of Moses in the Yezidi tradition must have had a double penetration, perhaps a parallel one: one as Šēxmūs, as a god, and one as a folkloric character, Mūsā P'ēxambar, i. e. the Prophet Moses; there is even a hymn dedicated to the latter "Qawlē Mūsā P'ēxambar" (Celil 1978b: 366-368, 438-439).

In the religious concepts of the Iranian cattle breeding communities, the Prophet Moses is a popular figure who has replaced many local characters of primitive worship (see, e. g. 'Abdoli 1992: 191-192). The Ahl-i Haqq regard Pīr Mūsī as an incarnation of Angel Israfil (Raphail), etc. (see Mokri 1966: 24, 28).

3. *Pīrā-Fāt—Foremother of the Yezidis*

The Yezidī sheikhy tradition says that, unlike all other peoples who originated from Adam and Eve, the Yezidis had only a primeval father, Adam: Eve played no role in their genesis.

Once, the Yezidi legend tells us, Eve claimed that children were produced by her alone and that Adam had no part in creating them. In order to test her claim they put their seeds in separate jars and closed them. When, nine months later, they opened Eve's jar, they found serpents, scorpions and poisonous insects, while in Adam's jar there was a beautiful moon-faced child. They called the boy Šahīd bin-jarr (i. e. in Arabic "Šahīd, the son of the pot"); he later married a *hūrī* and became Forefather of the Yezidis (see in detail Spāt 2002: 27-56). This account of the origin of the Yezidis is also confirmed in one of the Yezidis' so-called Holy Books, the "Black Book" (Mash'afē řaş): *Xwadāyī gawra bimalāyikāi gōt, min Ādam wa Hawā xalq dikim wa diyānkim bi bařar. Li siřī Ādam Šahr ibn-Safar dibē wa liawīř milatī li sar arz p'aydā dibē līpāřtir milatī 'Azrayil ya'nī Malak Tāwus kī yazīdiyāya p'aydā dibē* (Bittner 1913: 28)—"The Great God said to the angels: I create Adam and Eve, and make them human beings. From Adam's essence Šahr ibn-Safar¹⁸ will appear, and from him will originate on Earth a people,

¹⁸ This seems to be the corrupted form of Šahīd bin-jarr, though in both the Kurdish and Arabic versions of the texts published by M. Bittner, the reading is clearly *řhr 'bn-řfr* (*ibid.*). As for the name *Šahīd*, "witness", it is most probably associated with the Qur'anic description of God's Covenant with the souls of non-begotten humans (Qur'ān, Al-a'raf, 171). In reply to God's question: "Am I your God" (*alastu birabbikum?*), the answer was: "True, we bear witness" (*balā řahīdnā*).

who will later give birth to the people of ‘Azrayîl, i. e. Malak Tâwûs, who are the Yezidis”.

Another version of the same legend mentions two children in Adam’s jar (see Siouffi 1882: 259-260; Lescot 1938: 91; Drower 1941: 91).

However, this Semitic legend with its non-orthodox, probably Gnostic interpretation, is not the only popular myth that exists in this syncretic tradition.

We were recently able to record some extremely interesting details among the Yezidis of Armenia that point to the existence of another legend concerning the origin of the Yezidis: one that has Iranian roots and which is probably more authentic than the story of Adam and the jar.

According to these materials, there is a female deity called Pîrâ-Fât; she is the daughter of Farxadîn.¹⁹ Hitherto, nothing had been known of this character: scholarly works on Yezidism make no mention of her existence at all. Ph. Kreyenbroek does refer to a mythical character, Pîr Āfât, allegedly associated with hail and damage to crops, inundations and storms (Kreyenbroek 1995: 109). However, it appears that the author, or rather his informant (*ibid.*), arrived at this name by misinterpreting the *izāfa* construction, i. e. the feminine *izāfa* formant *-ā* in *pîrā* (probably from *pîrkā*) was understood as a part of the deity’s name itself, which resulted in the form Āfât (cf. Arabic *āfat*) meaning “damage, harm”. The presence of the *izāfa* formant in the deity’s name (formally it should be *Pîr* or *Pîrik Fât*) supposedly emphasises her female nature.²⁰

Pîrâ-Fât is the patroness of women-in-labour, as well as of newborn babies: she protects them from the evil demoness Āl (Asatrian 2001). A parturient woman asks for Pîrâ-Fât’s help: *Yā Pîrâ-Fât, ālî min bika!*—“Oh Pîrâ-Fât, help me!” Those present traditionally express their hope for the deity’s assistance: *Ĉārâ Pîrâ-Fât bē hawārâ ta!*—“May the seed of Pîrâ-Fât help you!” (Celil, Celil, 1978a: 434). The word *ĉār* in this formula means “seed”, which developed from its original meaning—“means, possibility”, via the interim meaning “liquid, medicine” (cf. Middle Persian *ĉarak*, New Persian *ĉāra*, also Arm. dial. *ĉār* “medicine, means”). This phrase specifically expresses the wish that the woman

¹⁹ Malak-Farxadîn (Faxr ad-dîn) is the legendary author of the Yezidi religious code. He is also considered the incarnation of Turail, one of the seven avatars of Malak-Tâwûs and simultaneously the personification of the moon (see Arakelova 2002).

²⁰ Just as, for example, the forms *Malakē/i Tâwûs* or *Šēxē A’dî*, compared with the correct forms *Malak-Tâwûs*, *Šēx A’dî*, underline the masculinity of the characters.

will give birth to a pure Yezidi, from the original seed of the Yezidi people—since Pîrā-Fāt is traditional preserver of this seed. Similarly, they invoke this seed when embarking on a journey: *Yā Pîrā-Fāt Ćārā ta sar ma*—“Oh Pîrā-Fāt, let your assistance (seed) be with us”. Pîrā-Fāt is actually the Foremother of the Yezidis, since she has saved from annihilation the seed from which this people originated.

The legend says that the seed was given to Pîrā-Fāt for safekeeping by Sheikh Abū Bakr (Šēxōbakr), the incarnation of the angel Michael (Mikail), one of the avantes of Malak-Tāwūs. Pîrā-Fāt then preserved it for seven hundred years, or, according to another version, for seven thousand years. Unfortunately, no further details of this myth are to be found. One of the religious hymns (*qawl*) merely alludes to the story, and this appears to be the only trace of this legend in the Yezidi oral tradition.

P'ādšāyē min vē yakē dilšāya,
 Faqîrak šāndîya tavakā harharē, āvak ānyîya;
 Nāvē wē dānîya šarāv, ti'ūn, a'ynil-bayzāya;
 Aw řōža, av řōža mîjlisā mērē ēzdi pē būya āvāya.

(Celil, Celil 1978b: 381)

My God (lit. “King”) is happy because
 [He] sent once a *faqîr* (probably Šēxōbakr) to the seventh sphere of
 heavens; [he] brought a liquid (lit. “water”);
 They called it wine, flour, yolk and egg white;²¹
 That day, this day, the community of Yezidis appeared.

This “liquid” (āv), according to Faqir Tayar (Armavir, Armenia), consisted of four elements: fire, water, earth and air. It is directly indicated further in the same hymn. Cf.:

P'ādšāyē mine jabāra,
 Ži duřē farq (rather xalq) kirna ĉāra:
 Bāyā, āva, āxa ū nāra (Celil, Celil, *ibid.*)

My God (lit. King) is powerful,
 [He] created a liquid from a pearl:

²¹ None of the Yezidi sheikhs whom we interviewed in Armenia, was able to give a convincing explanation of this passage. We think, the whole complex is a group of distorted Arabic forms: perhaps, *ti'ūn*=Arab. *ṭaḥīn* “flour”, *a'ynil-bayza*=Arab. *a'yn-ul-bayza* “gist, essence of egg” (i. e. “yolk and egg white”), which fits the context well.

It is wind (air), water, earth and fire.

Here the legend of origin is combined with the symbol of cosmogony, the pearl (*duř*): the liquid, seed of the Yezidi people, represents actually the artefact of the primordial pearl, thus becoming an element of cosmogony.

The existence of two popular legends of genesis in one and same tradition is fascinating *per se*, providing clear evidence of the tradition's syncretic roots. As mentioned above, the basic legend, which has been perfectly preserved, is most probably a Gnostic hangover of Yezidism. The second myth, which has been preserved only partially, mainly in secondary indirect references to the deity *Pirā-Fāt*, is, no doubt, more typical for the Iranian world. Another indirect reflection of this myth can be found in the following passage from a hymn by Sheikh Arabagī Antūzī—an example of the genre of hymns involving theological polemics with the representatives of other confessions (in fact, the whole contradiction between two anthropogonic mythes is reflected here):

Nawērim bik'ēlimīm;
Wakī az bēžim, sunata barī Ādama,
Azē birijimīm.
Sunata barī Ādama,
Aw ma'nika mazina... (Celil, Celil 1978a: 5).

I cannot speak;
If I say that [the people of the] *sunna* (here probably, the Yezidis)
had existed before Adam,
I will be accursed.
[But] in the precedence of Adam,
The great meaning [is hidden]...

The name of the deity, *Pirā-Fāt*, literally means "old woman Fāt", and apparently, goes back to the name of the Prophet Muhammad's daughter, Fātima. This character absorbed many of the features of pre-Islamic patron deities of fertility and family, and she is worshipped all over the Muslim world, especially among the Shi'as. The Virgin Mary (Mariam) has almost the same function in Islam, and women in labour appeal, as a rule, to both these saints (Donaldson 1938: 31). Fāt is shown to be a variant of Fātima by the fact that in certain contexts both forms of the name are used for the Prophet's daughter. The

hymn dedicated to 'Alī, the Lion of God (Bayt'ā A'lī Šērē Xwadē), offers clear evidence of this (Celil, Celil 1978b: 403).

Či sibaka nahīna!
 Digrī A'yš, Fāt ū Zīna
 Savā hard kurē A'līna.
 A'lī dihāta māla,
 Fātimē pēřā sařū qāla;
 Gōta: "Ta girtī kirina zīndānē",
 Aw Fātima dēm šalāla.

What a horrible morning!
 Aysha, Fātima (Fāt in the text) and Zaynab (Zīn) were weeping
 For the two sons of 'Alī (i. e. Hasan and Husayn).
 'Alī was coming home,
 Fātima was arguing,
 [She] said [to him]: "You jailed the prisoners!"
 That Fātima with a shining face!

The shortening of the name Fātima, or, to be more precise, the omission of the end syllables, obviously results from the Kurdish interpretation of the name: Fātima (or Fātīma) was understood as *izāfa* construction *Fātī ma* (*Fātā ma*), i. e. "our Fāt".

"The palm of Fātima", the symbol of the five main characters in Shi'ism, the prophet Muhammad, 'Alī, Fātima, Hasan and Husayn, is an essential element of the talismans and amulets that offer protection from evil spirits and demons (Wallis Budge 1961: 467-472). A metal representation of "The palm of Fātima" is a significant accessory of any god-fearing Shi'a house, alongside a portrait of 'Alī, whose image has also accumulated certain characteristics of Old Iranian mythical personages—from Verethragna to Rustam.

Fātima's many features in the popular Shi'a interpretation strikingly remind those of Anahita (Anāhitā), the Old Iranian goddess (*ya-zata-*) of fecundity and procreation, who is directly connected with water. Pīrā-Fāt's role as the preserver of the first seed in the Yezidi religion associates her still more with her archetype Anahita.²² What is especially important here is that Anahita is in charge of the man's

²² Or, rather, with the ancient Iranian concept of the female deity of procreation, fertility and abundance. It would be methodologically quite unacceptable to directly trace the origin of Pīrā-Fāt to Anahita, as the latter herself is only one of the manifestations of this concept in the ancient Iranian tradition (cf., e. g. Nanai, from the same category of goddesses, see Gall 1986).

seed, as well as childbirth: she is the purifier of all men's seed and all women's wombs.

Yā vīspanam aršnam xšudrū yaoždaḍāiti,
 Yā vīspanam hāirišinam zθai garewan yaoždaḍāiti,
 Yā vīspā hāirišš huzamitō daḍāiti,
 Yā vīspanam hāirišinam dāitim raθwim paēma ava-baraiti
 (Ardvīsūr-yašt, V, apud: Reichelt 1911: 4).

In Darmesteter's translation this passage is rendered as follows:

Who [Anahita] makes the seed of all males pure,
 Who makes the womb of all females pure for bringing forth [so that
 it may conceive again—Phl. tr.],
 Who makes all females bring forth in safety,
 Who puts milk into breasts of all females in the right measure and
 the right quality (Darmesteter 1887: 54).

Moreover, Pīrā-Fāt's function as the original seed-keeper also matches that of Armatī-Spandarmat in preserving the seed of the First man (Gayōmart) and, hence, ensuring the procreation of the first human couple—Mašyak (Martiya) and Mašyānak (Martiya) (Adam and Eva in the Semitic tradition). In Bundahishn, this myth reads as follows: "When Gayōmart was dying and dropped his seed, a part [of it] was imbibed by Spandarmat [Earth]. For forty years it remained in the earth. In forty years, Mašyak and Mašyānak grew up as Rhubarb plants out of the earth... Then [they] turned into humans, and *xwarr*—their soul—entered into them" (Zaehner 1956: 75-76; see also Nyberg 1938: 28, 481).

Preservation of the primordial seed in various environments is in general a common mythologeme in the Iranian tradition (cf. the story of Zoroaster's seed, which was kept for 99,999 years in lake Kansaoya-Hāmūn; the story of Satana and a shepherd in the Ossetic Nart epic, etc.).

The examples given above confirm the authenticity of the myth about Pīrā-Fāt, the seed-keeper in the Yezidi tradition. Although this is not explicitly stated in the extant materials, it was most probably Pīrā-Fāt who produced the first Yezidi from the primordial seed.

4. *Xātūnā-farxā—The Mistress of Pregnant Women and Infants*

Xātūnā-farxā literally means “The Dame of Children” (Arab. farx—“chicken”, meaning “infant”). Incidentally, a similar attribute used to be given also to evil creatures. Cf. the well-known demoness Āl (Arm. Alk’), the enemy of infants and women in labour, is named *’umm uṣṣib-yān*—“mother of children”. This type of definition, however, is an attribute of a demonised deity (see Asatrian 2001).

It is assumed that Xātūnā-farxā mostly cares about a woman during pregnancy. It is likely that both labour and the postnatal periods fall under the cognisance of Pīrā-Fāt. The name of Xātūnā-farxā does nonetheless unambiguously indicate the function of protectress of infants during the initial 40 days of life in particular. It is believed that she is staying in the house, side by side with the woman in labour and with the newborn child, protecting them in every way from the encroachments by Āl. It is strictly prohibited to bath the baby during the *čilla*—the initial forty days, for it is believed that the baby will be invaded by evil spirits, which lose their malignant power when this term expires with the first bathing of the baby after ending the *čilla*. Before bathing they pour seven times forty spoons of water on baby’s head reiterating the following formula:

Čilla čū xwařā,
Zāřōk mā mařā.

Chilla left for home,
[And] the child will stay with us.

In fact, Xātūnā-farxā is a frail duplicate of Pīrā-Fāt with a reduced scope of activities: many features in their images are coincidental. Xātūnā-farxā, like Pīrā-Fāt, is a daughter of Malak Fakhr ad-Din (Farxadīn); she is addressed for help in childbirth (when seeing a pregnant woman, they say: *Xātūnā-farxā bē hawāra ta!*—“May Xātūnā-farxā help you!”); like Pīrā-Fāt, Xātūnā-farxā protects the newly-born from Āl and other evil creatures.

Although Xātūnā-farxā has her own genealogy (rather controversial), has kin (brother, husband), the legendary tomb in Lalish, and is even the eponym of the sheikhy clan Shekhe-Khatune (Šēxē Xātūnē) (Tamoyan 2001: 153), she is, nevertheless, a secondary figure, budding from the image of Pīrā-Fāt, the kinship and genealogical links resulting perhaps from secondary development. The existence of two goddesses

with nearly similar functions, almost identical origin and activities cannot be logically substantiated. Perhaps, the epithet *Xātūna-farxā*, i. e. “the mistress of infants”, had been primarily an attribute of *Pirā-Fāt*, however in all, the name of the goddess was *Pirā-Fāt—xātūnā-farxā*, i. e. *Pirā-Fāt*—the Lady of infants. Later, probably, the attribute may have been recognised as an individual entity with restricted functions and a self-sustained life within the popular mind, overgrowing with personal features and image elements.

5. *The Holy Angel—Deity of the Phallus*

It seems to be that the Yezidi *Milyāk’atē-qanj*, i. e. the Holy Angel,²³ is the only example of the *Deus Phalli* in all New Iranian folk pantheons. Moreover, similar personages have never been attested in Iran, neither in ancient nor in medieval periods.

As far as we know, the only written reference to this deity is to be found in Amin Avdal’s book published in 1957 in Armenian (see Avdal 1957: 93-94). Nor is any mention made of *Milyāk’atē-qanj* in recordings of Yezidi folkloric texts. Our thorough fieldwork in the Yezidi communities of Armenia, as well as among the Northern Iraqi Yezidis, has not added much to the existing data. Most of the female informants, incidentally, tried to avoid this subject altogether, denying the very existence of a phallic deity in the Yezidi beliefs.

Still, the information gleaned from our research thus far, allows us to reconstruct at least the general idea of this deity, once probably a popular image among the Yezidis.

Naturally, *Milyāk’atē-qanj* is far from being the popular Priapus of ancient myth, who had a variety of functions. The Holy Angel is a classic example of an authentic phallic deity charged with the sphere of Eros and impregnation. The comparison with Priapus is significant, for the difference between them points to the more primeval nature of the Yezidi fallic personage. The authenticity of the Holy Angel is one of his most important characteristics. Any religious form that attempts to rid itself of “historical” accretions will tend to gravitate to its authentic archetype (Eliade 1999: 418). Thus, whereas the humanised god of the Ancient world expresses resistance to the sacral, and hence a departure from authenticity, *Milyāk’atē-qanj* in this respect is authen-

²³ *Milyāk’at* (*malak*) means “angel” in Kurmanji (Arab. *malak*, *malakīyat*). For the second component of the name, *qanj*, as an attribute meaning “holy” (lit. “good, nice, etc.”), see above, under *General*.

ticity itself. He does not merely personify his functions, but is himself the very organ. The Holy Angel is imagined only in a phallic form. In this regard the Yezidi deity can be duly compared with the Indian Lingam, one of the avatars of Shiva, which is also a bare phallus *per se* (cf. Mattelaer: 54-68).

Convinced that a child could be conceived only with the blessing of Milyāk'atē-qanĵ, young brides traditionally wore a silver or stone pendant called *xīyār*, i. e. "cucumber", which was shaped like a phallus to symbolise the deity.²⁴ "Cucumber" is, definitely, a metaphoric euphemism, as is the deity's name—"Holy Angel". At earlier stages, no doubt, the deity may well have had another name, most probably, one that pointed more directly to his functions²⁵ and was, therefore, formally tabooed later on and replaced by the euphemistic expressions. Milyāk'atē-qanĵ was supposed to cure sterility and to help women conceive a boy. The Yezidi women turned to him with the following words:

Yā Milyāk'atē-qanĵ, wara hawārā min.

Bar mi rūnī;

Da'w ba, risq ba;

Kur vī, qīz vī.²⁶

O Milyāk'atē-qanĵ, help me [to conceive a child],

Impregnate me (lit. "Sit upon me");

Let me have yogurt, let me have good;

Let me have a son, let me have a daughter.

According to the same informant, whose data are indirectly substantiated in the Adval's book (*op. cit.*: 94), the Yezidi women would walk to the mountains after the wedding ceremony and made a sacrifice to Milyāk'atē-qanĵ before large phallic-shaped stones. The sacrifice was considered the guarantee of multiple progeny.

Barren women performed a fertility ritual by sitting down on the stones and making rubbing motions invoking the deity: *Yā Milyāk'atē-qanĵ, mi āvis ka*—"O Milyāk'atē-qanĵ, make me pregnant" (the same informant). This formula, incidentally, offers a very special example of

²⁴ Similar pendants were recorded among the archaeological items from Ancient Mesopotamia (see Black, Green 1992: 152).

²⁵ Probably, *kīr*, or *kīlīr*, meaning "penis" in Kurmanji.

²⁶ Informant—Xatuna Xajo, 80 years old, Talin region, Armenia.

verbal magic. In particular, it should be noted that the word *āvis* (here meaning “pregnant”) is normally applied only to cattle. The proper terms to apply to a human pregnancy are *girān*, *duhālī* or *hamla*. And if such an aischrology really occurred in the verbal part of the rite dedicated to the Holy Angel, this could be one of the reasons for the taboo (on the role of aischrology in the phallic cults see, e. g. Nillson 1961: 453; Burkert 1985: 103-105, 242-246; cf. also Abramian 1983: 97, 102).

A similar rite existed also among the Armenians. A woman rubbed her navel against a large phallic-shaped stone called *portak‘ar* (lit. “navel-stone” in Armenian), and then hammered a nail into a stone crack, transferring her ailment to the stone (Lisic‘yan 1969: 284-287).²⁷ Turkic speaking women living in enclaves in the Zangezur region of Armenia used to perform the same rite (*ibid.*: 285).

Generally, a stone as an object of *Sexualkult* is seen in many different cultures: in some, a bride climbs on top of a stone, or a ritual dance accompanied by obscene gestures is performed, etc. All such rituals are aimed at curing sterility and ensuring fertility in general (see in detail Meyer I: 57). Moreover, stone worshipping in this connection cannot be explained exclusively by the logic of imitative magic, but primarily by the fact that a stone was considered a deity’s abode—one of the universal elements of the primitive religions (see in details Frazer 1983: 38-39, 185, 273-280). Present day rites of this kind, however, have more or less lost their original essence, communion with the hierophany. What they reveal instead is secondary perception, the result of the symbol’s degradation to an object of the imitative magic.

Milyāk‘atē-qanj was obviously supposed to be present during the circumcision ceremony, which is completely forgotten by now. The ceremony was performed by the “Brother of the Next world” of the family,²⁸ who cutting the boy’s prepuce, appealed to the Holy Angel: *Yā, Milyāk‘atē-qanj, barak‘atī bida; birā zēda ba qawatā vī kūr*—“O Milyāk‘atē-qanj, give prosperity, [and] may the force of this boy be increased”. After the ceremony they used to sacrifice a sheep and distribute the meat among the poor.

The Holy Angel, as could be expected, is also traced in the wedding rites. The Yezidis used to adorn one of the trees in front of the groom’s house, and put a phallic-shaped wooden stick in between its

²⁷ Cf. a colourful description of this rite in a novel by Sero Xanzadyan, a prominent Armenian writer (Xanzadyan).

²⁸ On this religious institution, see Asatrian 1999-2000.

boughs. They called it *Milyāk'atē-qanĭ*. Before entering the house, a new-married couple stayed for a while under the tree, and the groom's friends shook it uttering: *Žavā ū būk mīna vē dārē bibār bin*—"May the groom and bride be fertile (fruitful) like this tree", or *Mālā zavē t'īžī zārō bin*—"May the groom's house be full of children".

Odd traces of the phallic cult have been preserved in the Yezidi festival *Barān-bardān*—"Releasing of Rams", celebrated on the fortieth day of autumn, i. e. at the end of the first decade of October. The feast is described by the Armenian Yezidi writer Arab Shamilov in his novel *Šivānē kurd* ("Kurdish Shepherd") and later—in his short story *Barbāng* (Day-spring). "This day the whole world is joyful, as if they were celebrating the wedding of their sheep. Young people dance; some of them fight, bubbling over with joy... The shepherds and wranglers (*dūšivān*) are the most exalted ones, as they receive their payment for the whole summer season [on this day]. During the *Bāran-bardān*, they drive ewes into a sheepfold, and then release the rams, which have been grazed separately the whole summer. They do this in order that the sheep will produce their young simultaneously in the spring. The moment the rams are released to the ewes, people start shooting from rifles, as if they wanted to celebrate the wedding of their sheep..." (Ereb Šemo, *Šivānē Kurd*, apud: Wikander 1959: 46; idem 1960; cf. also Asatrian 1998; idem 2000).

"They hang bunches of coloured wool, small bells and amulets on the sheep's horns and necks—it seems as if the sheep know themselves that this is their wedding: holding their heads high, they jostle each other, then stand quietly for a while, then try to prove themselves again, looking proudly at the shepherds and the gazing folk around. Then young girls take off their kerchiefs and tie them around the sheep's necks, and young lads come and take them off: in this way they reveal their secrets, for by taking a kerchief of a certain girl, a lad shows his intention to merry her (the result of their flirtation during the Summer pasture). The girls' parents look on from afar to see who will take their daughter's kerchief..." (Šemilov 1969: 60-61; see also a brief reference to this feast in Bayazidi 1963: 43, 127). They released the rams to the ewes in late evening when the Ram constellation (*Bārānī*) appeared in the sky. The Yezidis believed that the Ram was the celestial twin of *Mamē-šivān* and could increase the sheep's get. While releasing the rams they used to utter: *Yā Barānī, yā Māmē-šivān, hūn pazē ma zēdakīn*—"O, Ram, o, Mamē-šivān, increase [the number of] our sheep!". Other details of this feast have been described in the ethnographical literature: red apples are speared on sheep's horns; their fore-

heads are decorated with pieces of mirror; young girls bring the rams to the ewes, holding them by their horns; in some cases a young maiden straddles a ram, etc. (Davrešyan 1977: 77).

Of course, the ceremonies described above are not directly connected with the cult of Milyāk'atē-qanj. Still, to ensure the fertility of the flock and, to a certain extent, that of the young people attending the feast, ample use is made of phallic symbolism: in the indirect means used to deliver kerchiefs to the girls' chosen fellows; in the way the young maidens hold the rams' horns; in the use of red apples as tokens of defloration and of mirrors to symbolise doubling and fertility, and so on.

In earlier times the rite probably involved people's active participation in the "wedding" ceremony as well—if not through outright *coitus*, then at least through ritual (gestural and verbal) obscenity, etc.

In Medieval Iran this feast was probably called *gušn-hilišnih, the exact equivalent for which in Classical Armenian was *xoy-t'olowt'ūw*, i. e. "the releasing of the rams". The Middle Iranian form cited above can be traced to OIr. *waršni-hr̥dzana- (cf. Av. varšni-haršta- "die Zulassung der Widder", see Bartholomae 1904: 1381; Asatrian 1998).

A Yezidi lady of around 90 from Aragats region of Armenia (Gulizar Mamoyan), added, in a short talk, a new detail of utmost interest to the story of the Yezidi phallic cult. She remembered that when she was young, the barren and newly married women, in summer quarters (*wārga*), used to pick up small red mushrooms—*kārīēd sōr*—on the mountain slopes. They stringed the mushrooms on threads and hanged them on the necks. They believed, she said, that mushrooms could cure sterility and induce the productivity of women's wombs. The women also performed a round-dance (*gōvand*) around big mushrooms appeared after rain, in a secluded place, far from men's eye. The old lady remembered a short part of the incantation accompanying the rite:

Kārī, kārī,
Laz mi bika ārī!
Zikē mi bika p'ētak,
P'ētakā mi—jērē ēr,
Jērē mi bika p'ētak...

"Mushroom, mushroom,
Help me soon!

Make my womb a box (here a wooden box for keeping cereals),
 [Make] my wooden box a flour's jar,
 [Make] my jar a wooden box..."

The significant role of the mushroom in magic and cult is a well-known fact. Mushrooms are universally known as aphrodisiacs. The swelling and growing of a mushroom must have been perceived as imitation of *phalloi*. The red colour of the mushrooms used as objects of magic by the Yezidi women, is itself an obvious sign of masculinity.

The whole complex of cults devoted to Milyāk'atē-qanj has been virtually lost by now. Nevertheless, he may well have been a rather influential deity, who initially had wider functions. It is also quite possible that Milyāk'atē-qanj was the women's deity *par excellence*, a kind of secret fetish that was concealed, formally of course, from men.

6. *Mamē-Šivān and Gāvānē-Zarzān—The Lords of Cattle*

In the pantheons of the peoples with overwhelming cattle farming in the traditional lifestyle, usually the most venerated figures are deities patronising livestock.

The Antique mythology has retained a very colourful image of Old Greek Pan and his Roman counterpart Faunus. The playful Pan, Patron of herds, forests and fields and a great judge and fan of the shepherd's pipe, is ambivalent, like any chthonic image. He, at the same time, patronises the destructive elements of earth, one of his favourite games being to spread the panic.

In the customs and beliefs of the Iranian peoples, despite deeply rooted Muslim outlook, a close scrutiny will reveal an array of pagan images patronising domestic and wild animals, certainly going back to the earliest layer of religious thinking.

In many cattle-breeding Iranian communities, earlier gods of cattle were converted into guardian spirits of animals, being generally featured under a polysemantic term *pīr* and having no institutional manifestations.²⁹

However, the Yezidis, the Zazas, the peoples of Caspian coastal areas known for archaic lifestyle and adherence to traditions, as well as

²⁹ Pers. *pīr*—"old, elder" also means a saint, or else a tomb of a holy man, a place of worship (a mausoleum, sacred tree, etc.). In the language of the Yezidis, the Kurdish dialect of Kurmanji, this term occurs in two forms: with the initial voiceless p- (*pīr*), meaning "old, elder" (*pīrik*—"old woman"), and with the aspirated p' - (*p'īr*)—in all other meanings, including as a caste-name.

the highlanders of the South-Western Iran, have retained to date the gods-lords of livestock in their authentic images, with the relevant characteristics and original names.

Among the Yezidis it is Mamē-šivān, i. e. “shepherd (for small cattle) Mam”, and Gāvānē Zarzān—“herdsman (for neat cattle) Zarzan”.³⁰ They protect the livestock from the wolves, from misfortune and disease. Mamē-šivān patronises small cattle, Gāvānē Zarzān protects the heavy beasts. Meanwhile, the cultic value of the former is distinctly more visible in the prayers of popular usage, perhaps by virtue of the prevailing role of small cattle-breeding in the agricultural activities of the Yezidis. Cf. e. g., *Mamē šivān puštivānē ta ba*—“Let Mamē-šivān be your protector”, or *Du’ae Mamē šivān sar mālē ta ba*—“Let the blessing by Mamē-šivān be upon your home”, etc.

The Yezidi shepherds rely upon these gods, calling on them when putting cattle to pasture: *Am pišti ta, Mamē šivān, dičin bar vī pazī; pišti ta, Gāvānē Zarzān, dičin bar vī dawarī; am pišti ta, Mamē šivān, paz xway dikin, am pišti ta, Gāvānē Zarzān, dēwēr xway dikin*—“Relying on you, Mamē-šivān, we follow that flock (of sheep); relying on you, Gāvānē Zarzān, we follow the herd (of cows); relying on you, Mamē-šivān, we go after the small cattle; relying on you, Gāvānē Zarzān we go after neat cattle” (Davrešyan 1977: 74).

The young shepherds only starting work, address them with hope for help: *Gumānā ma hūnīn; gumānā ma tuī, yā Mamē šivān; gumānā mā tuī, Gāvānē Zarzān*—“You are our hope; you are our hope, o Mamē-šivān; you are our hope, o Gāvānē Zarzān!” (*ibid.*).

The cultic significance of Mamē-šivān and Gāvānē Zarzān is vividly traced during the celebration of the Yezidi New Year—*A’ydā sar-sālē*, celebrated on the first Wednesday in April (Old Style), or, according to other sources, on March 8 (hayštē ādarē). Put into a big New Year pie—*kulučē sarē sālē (tōtkē sarē sālē)* is a bead (a blue one, according to some sources, which is remarkable, since the blue colour is a taboo in Yezidism) or a coin. The pie is cut into pieces marked out for different gods and guardian spirits, as well as to the family members, except infants who cannot discern virtue from sin (*xēr ū guna*).

³⁰ Both names are *izāfa* constructions, with -ē masculine suffix. *Mam* is a shortened form of Mahmad (Muhammad), but *Zarzān* (or *Zarāzā*) does not have a convincing explanation. The first element of this name (*zar-*) probably is “gold”, the second (*-zān*) could be from *zāyīn* “give birth”, the whole compound meaning “producing gold”. As for *šivān* “shepherd” (cf. also Persian *šabān*, *čūpān*), it has a well-known etymology (<OIr. *šū-pāna-); *gāvān* “shepherd of neat cattle” is a secondary formation by analogy with *šivān*—from *gā* (Persian *gāv*) “cow”, with the suffix -vān (< *pāna-). It is hardly an old compound, from *gāwa-pāna-.

The pie is divided between Mamē-šivān and Gāvānē Zarzān, the Spirit of the household (Xudānē-mālē) augmenting the welfare, the Spirit of the furrow (Xatā-jōt) patronising the land farming, and further—among the family: master of the house—*malxwē mālē*, mistress—*kavānīyā mālē*, and so on. Depending on whoever is getting the bead, either one of the gods is going to be particularly benevolent to the family in the new year, or one of the family members is going to be particularly fortunate (Davrešyan, *op. cit.*: 73; see also Aristova 1986: 175; Asatrian 2002: 83).

Mamē-šivān used to be addressed by a special incantation within a particular rite during the Barān-bardān festival. The Protector of small cattle was propitiated by mixing the sheep wool with ram wool, spreading it on the ground and letting children wallow on it chanting the song, appealing to the deity for more cattle yield.

Barān-bardān, jān, Barān-bardān!
 Barak'at ba Barān-bardān;
 Birā hāzir ba Mamē šivān,
 Pazē ma xwayka ži yaḍā-balā.

Baran-Bardan, glory to you!
 Let there be abundance (prosperity);
 Let Mamē-šivān attend [the holiday],
 Let [him] protect our cattle from misfortune.

By some sources, the wool from the rams and sheep was plucked by an old man, sitting on the back of his old wife (Avdal: 126).

Mamē-šivān is considered, among other things, an earthly twin-representative of the constellation of the Ram.³¹

An interesting legend has been preserved on Gāvānē Zarzān about Sheikh 'Adi entertaining members of his community at his home; each came with a due gift and obtained a blessing and the proper empowerment. Gāvānē Zarzān, being a poor shepherd of neat cattle, brought a barley loaf to the Patriarch, the only thing that he had found. However, when approaching the chamber of Sheikh 'Adi, he became shy and stood in a humble posture with the loaf under his dress. The all-seeing Sheikh addressed him with the following words: "Take courage, your modest gift is worth more for me than a whole

³¹ Probably, it is conditioned by the fact that this constellation's name is Barānī (barān in Kurmanji means "ram, sheep").

cow", then he blessed the shepherd: "Go, and be the protector of the cows! Let your patronage over the herds of my people remain in ages and ages!" (Asatrian 2002: 83-84).

Healing the small cattle is a special procedure whereby the representatives of clergy (a *sheikh* or a *pîr*) wash the diseased sheep with water from the miracle-working bowl of Mamē-šivān (t'āsā Mamē-šivān). Such bowls (made commonly of copper, ornamented inside in Arabic writing style) were kept in wealthy families in the home bedding (*stêř*), which was regarded as holy (see below). The bowl is removed when needed only by spiritual persons or unmarried girls or young men. A certain offering is due to the bowl annually. It is provided also for treatment of sheep of other families who have paid a tribute to the host (a length of cloth, butter or cheese), or made an offering (Davrešyan 1977: 79).

Making part of the shrine of Mamē-šivān in Lalish, in a cave-like recession with the so-called "Wishing Pillar" (*stūnā mirāza*), the visitors put their palms to the column believing that it will help fulfill desires.

The name of Mamē-šivān has become eponym of a family of pîrs at a village in Sheikhan, called Mamē-šivān and known also as "Little Lalish" (Kreyenbroek 1995: 111-112).

Interestingly, the cults of cattle guardians in a dual form and linguistically resembling the Yezidi patrons of cattle have been registered in Central Anatolia, in Dersim (now Tunceli), among the Zazas, originating from Daylam (South Caspian area) and confessing a particular type of Extreme Shi'ism (see Asatrian 1995). Meanwhile, the Kurds, a linguistically proximate people to the Yezidis, have only an indiscriminate spirit of domestic animals—P'îr. The gods protectors of cattle amid the Zazas are Sārikō-šuān and Mamō-gāvān (or Wāyirō xêr, i. e. "Master of Prosperity"). The Zazas have also the evil spirit, enemy of the cattle, Wāyirō xirāv (i. e. "Master of Evil and Destruction"), the persecutor, the torturer of animals, smothering them by mounting them, causing them to run wild screaming in despair. Therefore, when the cattle return from the field in the afternoon, after closing the door on them the Zaza custom prescribes to mention Sārikō-šuān and Mamō-gāvān, at the same time defaming Wāyirō-xirāv (Comerd 1996).³²

³² About the interesting parallels of cattle deities among the Lurs (Namad-kāl) and the Caspian population of Iran (Siyāh-gāleš), see in details Asatrian 2002: 83-84.

7. *Dawrēšē-a'rd*—*Lord of the Earth (Underworld)*

One of the rare gods in the Yezidi pantheon, carrying in his name the direct explication of his domain, in contrast to others commonly named after mythical or semi-mythical characters. *Dawrēšē-a'rd* literally means “Saint (Master or Host) of the earth”.³³ According to some data, *Dawrēšē-a'rd* is identified with Sheikh Abu Bakr (Šēxōbakr), personifying Angel Michael (Mikail), the fourth avatar of Malak-Tāwus. *Dawrēšē-a'rd* is mentioned in three sacred texts: *Dirōzga* (“Prayer”), *Du'āya ōxirē* (“Prayer of fortune and bounty”), and *Du'āya t'asmilī* (*t'aslimī*) *a'rdē* (“Prayer for committing to earth”), performed during the funeral rites. The latter is also called *Du'āya Dawrēšē-a'rd*—“A Prayer to the Lord of the earth”.

In the former of the abovementioned texts the name of this god was brought up only casually, in the only expression (Xātirā *Dawrēšē a'rd*—“In the name of *Dawrēšē-a'rd*”) when enumerating the names of some saints; in another text, i. e. in the “Prayer of Fortune”, to be read prior to setting out for travel, *Dawrēšē-a'rd* is addressed for protection along the way, among other things, that he keeps the belongings of the traveller from being damaged or lost. Cf. the end lines of this prayer talking about the “Lord of the earth” (Voskanian 1999-2000: 159):

Yā xwadē, milē Ēzdid p'arda ba sar ma,
Yā Pīrā-Fāt, çārā ta sar ma,
Yā Xwadē, *Dawrēšē a'rd*, ānamatē ma ta.

Oh God, [may] the shoulder of [Sultan] Yezid be thy courtain over us,

Oh Pīrā-fāt, [may] thy help (lit. “seed”) be with us,

Oh God, *Dawrēšē-a'rd*, [may] our belongings be in thy storage.

A detailed information on the functions of this god can be found in the “Prayer for committing to earth” read quietly by a *sheikh* or a *pīr* from among the five spiritual guides of the deceased (*pēñj t'irēqē farzē*)³⁴ when the body is committed to earth, and the funeral train (except the guides) leaves the graveside.

³³ The second part of this name is from Arabic *ard* “earth”. For *Davreš* (dervish) see above, under *General*.

³⁴ On the system of five obligatory relationships for every Yezidi individual, see Asatrian 1999-2000: 89, 94.

Du'āya t'asmīlī a'rdē is one of the most sacral prayers of the Yezidis; its performance is banned not only outside the rite, but also within the hearing range of the laymen, all the more so of the aliens. Any representative of clerical castes should know the prayer of committing to earth by rote. Here is the text of the prayer as recorded by M. B. Rudenko (Rudenko 1982: 132; Voskanian, *op. cit.*: 160).

T'asmīlī t'aslīma ta,
 T'aslīmī Dawrēš-a'rd.
 Yā, Dawrēš-a'rd,
 Avī a'vdī, harga žina, harga mēra,
 Bixafirīnī, bisif'irīnī.
 Sāhibtī ruh'ē wī/wē bikī.
 Barxē Ezdīda,
 Tōqā Tāwūsē Malak stūyē wī dāna.
 Banē ādam, wē bēna sar ta Naka ū Mankīna,
 Pirskin: "Xwadē ta k'īya?"
 Bē: "Xwadēyē min azdā,
 Xwadēyī hişyār ū mastāna,
 Xwadēyē čöl ū bistāna,
 Xwadēyē h'am ū xwadāna,
 A'vd ū banī nizāna.
 Aw xāliqē mawl ū māwiya,
 Bē čandara, bē gunaya;
 Aw na bīna, na žī bāya,
 Aw na awsiya, na nafsīya!
 H'aft xwazilā min vī nafsī,
 Awī rah'm lē pirsī,
 Waka a'malē ta rah'mē xwadē li ta ba.

We commit you [to earth with] commitment,
 We commit you to the Lord of the Earth.
 Oh Lord of the Earth,
 This slave [of God], whether a man or a woman,
 Shelter and appease [him/her],
 Take care of his/her soul.
 [He/she] is a lamb of [Sultan] Yezid,
 The cord-ring of the Peacock Angel is on his/her neck.

Oh offspring of Adam, you will be visited by Naka and Mankī,³⁵
 They will ask [you]: “Who is thy God?”
 Answer: “My God from the Absolute Beginning³⁶ is
 The God of vigilants and inebriates,³⁷
 The God of desert and gardens,
 The God of all gods.
 The slaves³⁸ [of God] cannot comprehend [Him],
 [As] He is the Creator of people and [of all] substances,
 He is without essence, without sin;
 He [has] no smell, no breath,
 He [has] no passion, no soul!”
 Seven times for the soul [of the deceased]
 I would beseech to be pardoned by Him;
 [May] the mercy of God be equal to thy deeds!³⁹

V. Voskanian cites two more versions of this prayer, more concise than the first one published by Rudenko (Voskanian, *op. cit.*: 161-162). The relevant formula of these texts would be as follows:

Yā Dawrēšī a’rd,
 T’asmilī ta av a’vd,
 Birā tu r’uh’ē vī mirī birah’minī.

O Lord of the earth,
 (We) commit to you this slave [of God],
 Let your mercy be over the soul of this dead man.

The Lord of the earth is addressed also in mandatory toasts in his honour—right upon the tomb and during the memorial meal after the funeral. The toasts are pronounced by the “Afterlife brother” of the deceased. The toast on the tomb is as follows: *A’šqā Dawrēšē a’rd! Birā*

³⁵ Nakir and Munkar, the names of two angel-executors in Islamic eschatology, attending the deceased in the grave after the funeral. In the Yezidi religious texts they are also presented as a single character—the horrible demon Niknikin.

³⁶ We consider *azdā* as an adaptation of *azil-dā*, i. e. “from the beginning (pre-eternity)” (cf. Arab. *azal* “eternity without beginning”). It is hardly from *az dā Xwadē* “God granted me”, as suggested by Rudenko (1982: 135) based on the Yezidi popular etymology of the form.

³⁷ Inebriate is in fact a Sufi term, meaning “one in love with God”, yet practically not adapted to Yezidism (see Arakelova 2001b: 190-191, notes 11, 21).

³⁸ *A’vd ū banī* must be understood as a copulative formation from two synonymic words—*a’vd* (Arabic ‘abd) “slave”, and *banī* (OIr. *bandaka-), with the same meaning.

³⁹ The text and translation of this prayer have been corrected in several places by the authors. Lines 12 and 13 had not been previously translated at all.

Dawrēšē a'rd r'uhē vī mirī birah'mīna—"To the Lord of the Earth! Let Dawrēšē a'rd pardon the soul of this deceased!" The toast in the house of the deceased: *A'šqā nāvē Dawrēšē a'rd!*—"In the name of the Lord of the Earth!" At the ritual memorial meal toasts are pronounced for Sheikh 'Adi, Malak-Tāwūs, Šixālī-Šamsān (see below) and other divinities of Yezidism, the mandatory number of toasts being odd: three or seven. By the records made by Rudenko (1982: 63-64), the first cup is drunk to the Yezidi faith (or in another version, to the soul of the deceased and his parents), the second one to Malak-Tāwūs, the third one to the Lord of the earth, the fourth one to the Patron of wayfarers (Šixālī-Šamsān), the fifth one to the "Lord of the graves" (P'ir Mandīgōrā), the sixth one to Sheikh 'Adi, and the seventh one to the daily bread, to the giver of the daily bread—*qadrē řisqā, yē ku řisq dida sāzā*.

The toast to saints, angels or outstanding personalities is named *a'šq* (Arab. 'ašq), the toast to a person's health is *sālix* (sālxīyā ta). There is also a special manner of drinking: standing, glass in both hands, held using six or all fingers.

An important function of the Lord of the earth is preservation of people's possessions either hidden or pawned. *Yā Dawrēšē-a'rd, tasmilī ta av āmanat* ("O Lord of the Earth, (I commit) to you this pledge")—that is the formula uttered when hiding some object at a secret place. They believe that it will remain intact provided the hider's clothes do not include the tabooed blue colour.

It can thus be seen that the basic competence of Dawrēšē-a'rd is safekeeping of the entrusted objects within the boundaries of earth, whether it is a dead body or any object. That may explain the tradition to call for him when planting grain (Kreyenbroek 1995: 113).

M. Eliade formulates connection between agriculture and the world of the dead: "Agriculture is concerned with the world of the dead at two different levels, both as a profane activity and as a cult. The former level is chthonic, for only seeds and dead people get into an underground dimension. The latter level is managing the fertility, life, which is self-reproductive. That is the domain of agriculture, while the dead are directly involved with the mystery of revival, with the cycle of Creation, with the inexhaustible fertility. Like a seed lying dormant in earth's lap, the dead, too, are expecting the return to life in a new form" (Eliade 1999: 321-322).

As shown by the material, Dawrēšē-a'rd can be described as god of the Earth and of the Underworld at the same time, with all ensuing functions of the deity of fertility and vegetation. Meanwhile he has also accredited with the power of pawn.

In this respect Dawrēšē-a'rd can be compared with Ārma(i)ti (Sp̄nta Ārmaiti), the Old Iranian goddess of cultivated land, vegetation and fertility, having a link with the rite of inhumation, banned in Zoroastrianism.⁴⁰ She is attested in the Middle Iranian period both in Eastern and in Western Iranian traditions, among the Persians, the Sogdians, the Sakas. Cf. in Bundahishn (137, 3-5): *Spandārmāt xvēš-kārīh parvartārīh dāmān har ēr ī pat dāmān bavandak bē kartan ut-š gētik zamīk xvēš*—“the peculiar work of Spandārmāt is the nurture of creatures to make complete all wealth among the creatures, and the material earth belongs to her” (Bailey 1967: 140). Cf. also *Spandārmāt rōč varz ī zamīk kunēh*—“Am Tage Spandārmāt sollst du das Feld bestellen” (Nyberg 1934: 48-49).

The classical Armenian texts contain two Middle Iranian dialectal variants of this deity's name: with the initial *sp-* and *s-* (going back to the North-Western Iranian initial group **sp-* and South-Western **s-*), i. e. *Spandaramet* and *Sandaramet* respectively. In the Armenian folk-beliefs reflected by Tovmay Arcrouni, a 9th century author, *Erkir pandoki ē Spandaramet astouacoy*—“the earth is the inn of the god Spandaramet” (Bailey, *op. cit.*: 138).

Dawrēšē-a'rd is the unique example of a chthonic deity of this type, with the obvious ancient roots, within the whole new West-Iranian area.

8. Šīxālī-Šamsān—The Patron of Wayfarers

Šēx A'li Šams (Šīxālī-Šamsān) is protector of wayfarers, captives, exiles, all who are in strange lands. Son of Sheikh Shams—a mythical character, one of the seven Yezidi saints (counterpart of Israfil in the group of the seven Avatars of Malak-Tāwūs), traditionally considered a disciple of Sheikh 'Adi. According to the legend reported by the recognised Armenian Yezidi theologian Sheikh Hasane Kalashe, Sheikh Shams had nine sons and three daughters identifiable with the twelve months of the year.

According to the legend, Šīxālī-Šamsān got into captivity, was held in a fortress in Sham (Syria) and released two days before the 'Ayd al-fiṭr holiday, marking the termination of Ramadan. Being joyous at the return of his pupil, Sheikh 'Adi commanded all the Yezidis to cele-

⁴⁰ She occupies the forth canonical place among the six Aməša Spənta-s (Amahraspands) of Ahura Mazdā (see Nyberg 1938: 91 et sq., 109-114; Widengren 1964: 11 et sq.; Kellens 1991: 27).

brate this day as the holiday of Šixālī-Šamsān (Kreyenbroek 1995: 157). Our informant reported however, that this holiday is celebrated on the first Wednesday in April. A hymn dedicated to Šixālī-Šamsān describes this event as follows:

Čāršama sarē nīsānē,
 Dang balābū ēzdīyē šarqē ū Šāmē
 Šixālī-Šamsā k'aramkir hāta diwānē,
 Žērā kirin a'ydā qurbānē
 Vakirin daftarā imānē (Celil, Celil 1978b: 305).

On a Wednesday of the month Nisan (April-May),
 A rumour moved among the Yezidis of Syria and the East
 That Šixālī-Šamsān came back to the Divan ("Council" of
 Sheikh 'Adi),
 A sacrificial festival was arranged for him,
 The Tablets of faith were opened.

When having a meal, festive or mournful, they drink to Šixālī-Šamsān. The toast in his honour is called *ašqā Šixālī-Šamsān*. He is addressed particularly before hitting the road, with the following formula: *Šixālī-Šamsān, hara hawārā girtīyē hafsā, nafsē tangā, řevīyē řīyā*—"O Šixālī-Šamsān, go to help the prisoners, the aggrieved and the wayfarers" (reported by Sheikh Hasane Mamud). The legendary tomb of Šixālī-Šamsān is located at Lalish.

9. *Xatā-jōt—The Spirit of the Furrow*

The name of the deity (Xatā-jōt) means literally "the furrow of the plough". It is a marginal image, evidence is scarce, except that a piece of the New Year pie is owing to her. Xatā-jōt is almost certainly a female character.

Literature makes no references to her; field research has not revealed much: we have not succeeded in recording whatever addresses, incantations or prayer formulas. Nonetheless, it is a real image, having its own niche in the religious concepts of the Yezidis. Perhaps, the marginal position of this character can be explained by a secondary role of agriculture in the economic set-up of the Yezidis who are mostly cattle breeders.

Xatā-jōt is commonly assumed to boost the crops and the efficiency of agricultural production.

Although the furrow in ancient Iran had no direct protector, but the “Spirit of the fields” has been attested. That is *šōiθrapaiti*, that later generated amid the Armenians the class of spirits called *šahapet vayrac*—“spirits of localities” featured mostly in the form of snakes (see Štakel’berg 1900: 20-21).

A parallel of Xatā-jōt under the name of Bobo-dehqan (lit. “old peasant”) is attested among the Tajiks and the Uzbeks. He is mentioned in the formula pronounced when planting: “Let it (be) our hand and the hand of Bobo-dehqan” (Basilov 1970: 17).

Meanwhile the Old Indian folk-beliefs contain an exact match of Xatā-jōt in the form of a female spirit of the furrow, named Sītā (“Genie der Ackerfurche”), her favour had to be gained by offerings (Meyer III: 159-160).

10. *Xudānē-mālē—The Spirit of the Household*

The name of this character, Xudānē-mālē, can be translated as “Master of the house”. He embodies the welfare of home and the family, supports the family morals, facilitates the cattle breed and crop yield. Xudānē-mālē dwells in the fire-place,⁴¹ but sometimes, assuming the form of a serpent, he crawls out of the house. Therefore, killing the domestic snakes is a great sin that can turn off fortune, cause trouble and adversity.

This type of attitude to home-dwelling snakes is almost a universal element in nearly all cultures of the East and West, from India to Europe, Asia Minor, including Armenia and the Caucasus area as a whole (see, e. g. Christensen 1941: 83-84; Seferbekov 2001: 140-141).

In his habitual image Xudānē-mālē is a human-like creature, sometimes visible to children and those experienced in wizardry.

Xudānē-mālē has to be given offerings or mentioned at different rites or religious offerings (see, e. g., above, ā 6).

Some authors (cf. Avdal 1957: 91) call the home spirit Dawlat, which is essentially the same.⁴²

A very similar spirit having the same functions resides in the pantheon of the Zazas: Wāyirō čēi—“Master of the house” (Comerd 1996).⁴³

⁴¹ Kurmanji *ōjāq/x*, or *tandūr*—an open-hearth furnace on which the fuel or dried animal-dung is exposed to the flame.

⁴² The attribute of *Xudān* (“master, host”), *māl*, literally means “property, house” (cf. Arab. *māl*); Dawlat is also an Arabic loan-word meaning “wealth, welfare”.

Reverence of the fire-place was widely spread in ancient Iran, when, e. g., during the Sasanid period, any home fire was considered to be a holy altar, although it was placed low in the hierarchy of the sacred fires. Avesta names Ātar, the god of the fire, as *vīspanam nmānam nmānō-paitīm* (Y.17, 11), i. e. "Hausherrn aller Häuser" (Eilers 1974: 308-309).

In all, the spirit protectors of the household and fire-place are common to many cultures—Slavonic peoples (cf. Russian *domovye*), the Armenians, the Georgians, the peoples of the North Caucasus, including the Ossetians, and so on.

11. *Pirā-stēr—The Spirit of the Bedding*

Pirā-stēr or Prikī stēr, lit. "the old woman of bedding", is a unique deity having no parallels, at least in the Near Eastern region and in the Caucasus.

Pirā-stēr is an old woman, invisible to the eye. She is considered protectress of the bedding—stēr (from OIr. *straya-; *star- "make the bed"); she cares about the welfare of home and family. She dwells in the bedding getting out to roam about the house at night. Therefore, after the sunset the Yezidis withdraw the curtain fencing off the bed so that the "Old woman" could freely move away from her abode. Roaming about the house, Pirā-stēr emits some sounds continually: that is her talk with other good spirits: Xudānē-mālē, etc. She warns the household of danger (fire, etc.), wakes them up when thieves are in the house, and herself is trying to drive them off assuming the appearance of a night-time monster.

Pirā stēr is entitled to treatment and sweets left on the bedding in a special bowl.

12. *Šēx Mand or P'ir Mandī-gārā—Lord of the Graves*

The son of Malak Faxr ad-din (Farxadīn), brother of Pirā-Fāt and probably of Xātūnā-farxā. In one hymn Šēx Mand introduces himself in the following way:

Az pišē Malak Farxadīnim,
Ba'ziki čang nurīnim,

⁴³ The Zaza *Wāyir* and the Yezidi *Xudān* are virtually different phonetic reflections of OIr. *xwatāwan-. The Zaza čē "house, home" comes from OIr. *kata-.

Az sar t'axtē zēřīnim (Celil, Celil 1978b: 312).

I am the son of Malak Farxadīn,
I am a hawk with sparkling claws,
I am sitting on the golden throne.

Šēx Mand is an eponym of a sheikhy family from the Shamsani clan (the clan's symbol is a snake), whose members are regarded to be snake charmers, known as healers of the snake-bites (Kreyenbroek 1995: 103-104). They are also experts in catching snakes and taming them (Bois 1966: 100).

In the religious texts the Lord of the graves is posing as Šēx Mandē-Farxā (or -Faxrā), with the patronymic definition of belonging to Farxadīn (as his son) or, perhaps, to Xātūnā-farxā (as her brother).

Birāō, gō, birāē mina a'sāsa,
Birā Šēx Mandē-Farxā řūnī dīwānēd xāsā,
A'sqē har p'ēnj t'irēqē wī bigērīnin dōrān ū k'āsā
(Celil, Celil 1978b: 332).

Brothers, I say, my true (lit. "basic") brothers,
Let Šēx Mandē-Farxā sit in the Council of saints,
And you drink to all the five of his spiritual guides.

He was apparently called, among other things, the Black Sheikh, as reflected in one of the most secret hymns—*Qawlē bōrabōrē*.

Yā h'ēkimī p'irānō,
Azē qulē Šēx Mandē-Farxā—šēxē řařim (Celil, Celil 1978b: 451).

O wisest amid the pirs,
I am a slave of the Black Sheikh—Šēx Mandē-Farxā.

A cave in Lalish called "the Gorge of Šēx Mand", harbours many snakes, and it is regarded as the tomb of their lord (Kreyenbroek 1995: 80). However, as noted by S. Drower (see Drower, 1941: 28), Šēx Mand has one more tomb in the village of Bahzan (Bahzané), where also is the *mazār* of Šēx Mūsa-sōr.

A dismal chthonic image, beside the snakes having power over scorpions, spiders and other creepy-crawly creatures, Šēx Mand understands their language (Tamoyan 2001: 151). He is also the spirit of

cemeteries overlooking the graves, which explains his name—P'ir Mandi-gōrā, i. e. "P'ir Mand, (guard) of the graves". In this position he is approached as the one "in charge of the affairs of the dead", which generally links him with the executor, also visiting the grave Naka and Mankī, or Niknikīn. Cf., e. g., the passage describing Niknikīn's appearance in the grave:

Niknikīn hāt ū hādirī,
 Cōmāxē dastē wī p'ēt ū āgiri ...
 Ta â'v mīnā â'vē ma'rā,
 T'ilī—nōt'lānī bērā,
 Naynuk—nōt'lānī k'ērā,
 Wē nāvē tištakī nāvēžin xudānī xērā.
 Ta â'v nōt'lānī t'ās,
 T'ilī—nōt'lānī risās,
 Naynuk—not'lānī da's,
 We nāvē xudānē xērā haq dinās!
 Ta â'va řa'shin mīnānī faqīr,
 Šebiska řa'shin mīnānī harīr,
 Bandē bivīnin dīndārā mīr (Celil, Celil 1978b: 386, 387-388).

Niknikīn came and stood,
 Staff in his hand, burning coals and fire.
 Your eyes are like the eyes of snakes,
 Your fingers are like spades,
 Your nails are like knives,
 This name is hardly fit for Lord of goodness.
 Your eyes resemble drinking cups,
 Your fingers are like lead,
 Your nails are like sickles,
 Is that the just Lord of goodness?
 Your eyes are black as eyes of a *fakir*,
 Your hair is black as silk,
 Let the devout servants perceive the face of God.

We are, however, not inclined to identify P'ir Mand with the executor. Contrary to the threatening functions of the latter, the management of the affairs of the dead by P'ir Mand is rather the caretaking for the correct burial to be performed, so that the body in the grave should undergo all the necessary ritualisation, which has to maintain the well-being of soul in the underworld.

An apparent link of P'ir Mandī-gōrā with chthonic entities—the snakes and other creatures of this class is an unambiguous indication of the domain of death and, consequently, burial. This character, as evident from his name, is rather master or guard of the tombs, manager of the burial process. P'ir Mandī-gōrā is toasted at the ritual meal in the house of the deceased (see above, § 7).

13. Xidir-nabī (-navī)—A Universal Deity

This character attested, beside the Yezidis, among many nations of the Near East: the Arabs, the Persians, the Zazas, the Kurds, the Talishes, the Central Asian nations (the Uzbeks, the Tajiks, the Kyrgyzes, etc.), and particularly popular in the mystical Islamic doctrines. It is to be noted, however, that in all the mentioned traditions, except the Yezidi and the Zaza,⁴⁴ Xidir-Nabī is regarded as a saint. That is natural, since the orthodox Islamic environment, while recognising the sainthood (by no means canonised), admits no deification.

The name Xidir-nabī (-navī) can be translated as Prophet Xidr (Arab. al-Xiḍr, Pers. Xizr, or Xezr). Xidir-nabī is often identified with the Prophet Elijah, which caused the emergence of a character with a double name (see Papazian 1986; Krasnowolska 1998: 141-159), but in essence being the same figure. The double form occurs also in the Yezidi tradition: Xidirnabī-Xidiraylās (Celil, Celil 1978b: 308), or Xirdaylās.

Xidir-nabī, having obviously the Muslim roots (a hint at him, perhaps without mentioning his name, is in Qura'n: XVIII, 59-81), has been shaped as a deity among the Yezidis and the Zazas under the influence of Surb Sargis (St. Sergius), a popular saint in the Armenian folk-Christian pantheon, embodying a military principle and controlling the storms (on Surb Sargis see Harut'yunyan 2002; cf. also Comerd 1998). The saint Xidir-nabī amid the Kurds, having the image nearly coincidental with the Yezidi deity, naturally merits the same characteristic.

In all, it can be assumed that both Xidir-nabī of the Yezidis and the Zaza Xizir are in essence sort of reflections of Surb Sargis, for while distinctly carrying his characteristics, they have assimilated the universal qualities and functions relevant to other figures of both the

⁴⁴ Alongside with Düzgin, Xizir is one of the two supreme gods of the Zaza pantheon (Comerd 1998).

pantheons, duplicating them in many aspects (e. g., Xizir is the same Dūzgin along many features). This situation points to a fuzzy type of this image within the popular mind and consequently, to its being a secondary figure.

Xidir-nabī is one of the sons of Sheikh Shams; he is a celestial warrior in the first place, a rider on a white horse (*haspē siyārē bōz*), rushing tirelessly along the mountains and gorges: *mērē gāz-gēdūkā*—"the man of mountains and gorges".

He is a patron of the young, the travelling, and those in love; he helps those caught in the tempest, helps to live in plenty and to get people out of a mess. While taking care of a travelling friend or kinsman, it is customary to address Xidir-nabī: *Yā Xidir-nabī, tu bēyī hawāra rēvīyē rīyā*—"O Xidir-nabī, be a help to the wayfarers!".

Xidir-nabī festival is an important event in the Yezidi calendar. It is celebrated on the first Friday after February 13 preceded by a 3-day lent (*řōžiyē Xidir-nabī*) (Šēx K'eleš 1995: 33-34). In another version—on the fourth Wednesday after 16-20 February (Davrešyan 1977: 73). The Armenian Surb Sargis is celebrated on one of the Saturdays between January 18 and February 23.

On the day of the festivities the main beams of the house were painted with flour, the pictures showing figures of cattle, celestial bodies, people, etc. There was a teeter mounted in the house, and the members of the family were given a few swings each saying *Gunē xwa dāwāšīna*—"Shake out your sin". Incidentally, a ritual rocking at a festival is also noted with the peoples of Central Asia. The Turkmens, e. g., believed that teetering removes the sins accumulated during the year (see Basilov 1970: 17). According to L. Šternberg, the ritual swinging was "an imitative sexual act with regard to the deity of fertility" (Šternberg 1936: 466).

One day before the festival the young girls baked salted pies, ate those never drinking any water during the rest of the day, so as to see their betrothed, the one who would come in their dream to give them water. A bowl with flour made of roasted grains was put on the bedding (*stēr*) for the night in the belief that Xidir-nabī would notch it with his spear or with the hoof of his horse. On the day prior to the festival and during the festival, young men kindled fires (*guřīk*, *guřguřīk*, or *t'alālōk*), jumping over them and muttering:

Ādānā giškā dyā minřā,
Ādānā dyā min zēdaba.

The milk of all is to my mother,
 Let my mother have more milk (Davrešyan, *ibid.*).

On the festive night, during the late-time meal named *pašiv*,⁴⁵ two dishes of food have to be put out in the courtyard. One is a tribute to the souls of the deceased, while the other one is for the Old man of the late-night meal—Bāpīrē-pāšiv, a saint, who when alive had been a righteous man but had no children. It is believed that, after his death, God rewarded him with the capacity to enrich the families who give alms to him and to the souls of the dead on the eve of the Xidir-nabī festival (Şēx K'eleş 1995: 33-34).

Further, starting with the night of the festivity until the next morning, people visited one another wishing fortune and plenty to the families of the neighbours and kinsmen. There was free food and handouts to the beggars. The whole ceremony was named Laylaqadr, which was an exclusively Muslim concept, for at Laylatu l'qadr—the “Night of Greatness”,⁴⁶ according to the Muslim beliefs, the Qur'an was god-sent to people, which is commemorated by a great holiday, 'Īd al-qadr. The night-time visits (šavā Laylaqadr) during the Xidir-nabī holiday, being an important occurrence in the religious calendar of the Yezidis, is of primary importance for the destiny of a devotional Yezidi, according to the definition of Sheikh Hasane Sheikh Kalashe (Şēx K'eleş 1995: 34).

The description of the festival is largely coincidental with the celebration of Surb Sargis by the Armenians, Teatnəndaŕaj (Shrovetide), as well as partially with the Persian festival lahār-šambe-sūrī, following the Nowruz. The motif of a saint leaving a trace on food as a visible sign of his blessing, is recurrent in the folk tradition of Iran, not only in reference to Hazrat-e Xezr, but also to Saint Fāteme Zahrā (Fatima, daughter of the Prophet Muhammad), Bibī Hawā (mother of Eve), Bibī Sešambe (mother-Tuesday, Patroness of weavers), etc. (Krasnowolska 1998: 146).

In all, it can be stated that Xidir-nabī is a regional character with a very extensive range of functions, an incomer from the Muslim environment, though having been shaped as a pantheon figure against the Armenian cultural and historical background, which is also the case with regard to Xizir of the Zazas.

⁴⁵ The Yezidis traditionally have four meals a day: at dawn—*tašlê*, at noon—*frāwîn*, in the afternoon, at 6-7 p.m.—*šiv*, and late at night, at 10-11 p.m.—*pāšiv*.

⁴⁶ In different versions it is on the first, the seventeenth, the twenty-first, the twenty-third, or the twenty-seventh day of the holy month of Ramadan.

14. *Ībrāhīm-Xalīl—God's Friend*

In the name of this deity we certainly see the Biblical Prophet Abraham, who is, like Moses (see above, § 2) very popular in folk beliefs not only of Muslims but the Christians as well (see Russel 1987).

Including *Ībrāhīm-Xalīl* (xalīl—Arab. “friend”) into the Yezidi pantheon is, of course, quite provisional, for he has neither definitive spheres of influence, nor specific functions in the cultic practice. That is perhaps a deified saint, to be addressed during a meal, a ritual meal in particular. The following prayer is read during a ritual meal after the funeral by the “Brother of the Afterlife” or by the Sheikh of the deceased:

Sifrayī jalīl—
Barak'ata *Ībrāhīm-xalīl*!
Harĉika dāya av tam;
Buhušt lē biva miqām,
Dōža lē biva h'arām!
Nāv dik're ta,
Ālēkī-ma salām! (Sheikh Hasane Mahmud).

A splendid meal—
[By] the kindness of *Ībrāhīm-xalīl*!
Who gave this taste [to food],
Let paradise be his abode,
[While] from hell let him be banished!⁴⁷
In mentioning of you,
Peace be with you!

During the meals on the occasions of offerings, the pans containing the meat of offered animals are to be opened by the “Brother of the Afterlife” of the head of the family or the Sheikh of the family.

Sifrayī jalīl,
Qurbānē *Ībrāhīm-xalīl*!
Qabūl-maqbūl ba! (Arame Chachan).

A splendid meal,
Let us become an offering to *Ībrāhīm-xalīl*!

⁴⁷ Literally: “Let hell be ritually disallowed for him”.

Let (God) accept (this offering)!

Ībrāhīm-xalīl is mentioned in the following prayer of good wishes:

... Nānī ži xiznā Šixādī va,
Hāvēnī ži Kānīyā-spī va,
Sifra bi dastē Jalīl va,
Barak'at götinā Ībrāhīm-xalīl va (Celil, Celil 1978b: 435).

(Let) the bread be from the granaries of Sheikh 'Adi,
Leaven from the White spring-well (a holy spring in Lalish),
[And] let the cloth be spread by the Splendid (i. e. Ībrāhīm-xalīl),
[And] abundance at the command of Ībrāhīm-xalīl.

Ībrāhīm-xalīl is, as a rule, remembered while taking ordinary meals, like dinner or supper. The head of the family recites the following prayer prior to a meal: *Rahmā Ībrāhīm-xalīl li vē sifra ba*—"Let grace of Ībrāhīm-xalīl be on this cloth". He is perhaps associated with plentiful food, probably the only sphere tracing the role of the "Friend of God".

15. *Jin-Tayār—The Lord of the Genies*

This deity is believed to be the Ruler of the jinns. However, his name means literally "flying jinn" (Arab. ṭayyār). He has obvious links with Sheikh Shams: the latter's shrine in Lalish is believed to be his abode. Jin-tayār is believed to grant cure to the mentally ill: appealing to him is an effective means of exorcising the evil spirits from the possessed, since he is dominating over all invisible entities. Therefore, the mentally ill and those possessed by the spirits are advised to visit the sanctuary of Sheikh Shams (Jindy 1992: 12). The sanctuary of Jin-tayār in the village of Vache of the Ashtarak region in Armenia, is located in the house of a Sheikh belonging to this famil (Šēxē Jin-tayārē).

Both Jin-tayār and Māma-řaşān are associated with the stories of riding a stone or a lion, with a whip, becoming a snake (Tamoyan 2001: 152). These common features, probably, explain the fact that the sheikhy Rashan clan (having Māma-řaşān as their eponym) is known also as Ojaxā Jin-tayār (i. e. the family of the Lord of the genies). It is believed that this family possesses the capabilities to heal the maladies of the soul (Ankosi 1996: 10; Arakelova 2001a: 325).

Jin-tayār is a fuzzy image, lacking precise explication within the cult. Perhaps, he is one of the functional manifestations of Sheikh Shams personifying the sun, or Māma-rašān, the thunder-god.

16. *P'irē-Libinā(n)—The Builder-spirit*

P'irē-libinā(n) literally means "Pir (a spirit or patron) of unfired brick (Arab. laban)". The religious tradition ascribes to him the building of many sanctuaries in Lalish during the times of Sheikh 'Adi. P'irē-libinā(n) is also the patron of the household and matrimonial union. He is alleged to arrange the marriages. Therefore, he is addressed to facilitate marriages (Jindy 1992: 32). It is believed that his prayer of intercession for an object of love will always be heard: *du'ā-qabūl P'irē-libnā* (Kreyenbroek 1995: 218). P'irē-libinā(n) is named as an embellishment of a number of deities and saints of Yezidism, like Sheikh 'Adi, Sultan Yezid, Sheikh Mand, etc. Cf.:

P'irē libnānō, gyānō,
Zaynat' bi suṛā Šēx Mandē Faxrānō (or Šēxē Ādiya,
Silt'ānē Ēzīda, etc.)

Oh beloved P'irē-libinān,
The ornament of the Mystery of Sheikh Mand, the son of Fakhr
(The Mystery of Sheikh 'Adi, Sultan Yezid, etc.)
(Kreyenbroek 1995: 236, 237).

He is addressed during the Xidir-nabī festival.

P'irē-libinā(n) seems to be an image imported from the local cults. In Lalish, he has been nearly forgotten, while the Transcaucasian Yezidis ignore him completely.

Conclusion

The cited material is most probably inclusive of the complete inventory of divinities comprising the Yezidi folk pantheon. Most of them have long been sunk into oblivion; even among the spiritual castes not all of them form sustainable associations. Because of irregular or vaguely targeted research some deities and their associated characters had not been known except by name, with many remaining completely unidentified. That will explain the great difficulties of recon-

stucting the total picture of the folk pantheon, which has been herein performed by gleaning scattered data and fragmented materials, using comparative techniques.

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THE HOLY BROTHERHOOD

THE YEZIDI RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION

OF THE "BROTHER" AND THE "SISTER" OF THE "NEXT WORLD"

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Yerevan

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in Memoriam*

The Yezidis are evidently one of the most mysterious peoples of the world or, at least, of our region. And this is, of course, due to their religion - an ideology which is an admixture of Islamic, Christian and local indigenous elements with an eccentric dogmatic system and cultic practice. The Yezidi religion is an esoteric faith, and the Yezidis are a closed society having an elaborate and intricate system of social relations, various prohibitions between commoners and spiritual castes, between members of the society and aliens, strict endogamy in its classic manifestation, restrictions of the matrimonial ties, sometimes even within the same caste, etc.

The Yezidi society has three basic castes: the highest religious elite, *sheikhs* (šex, Arab. šayx), *pirs* (p'ir, Persian *pir* "old man, saint, priest") and laymen, *murids* (*mirid*, Arab. *murid* "disciple"). Each of the spiritual castes is divided into several endogamous clans and subdivisions.

The closeness of the Yezidis' life, their strange religious dogmas and practices are the main reason why they have always been the subject of various derogatory characteristics as, e.g., "devil worshippers", "idolaters", etc.

The article below is dedicated to an intimate Yezidi religious institution with a dramatic name: the "Brother" and the "Sister" of the "Next World" (*bire axirate* and *xuška*, or *xwaynga*, *axirate*, or *yare/a axirate*, Arab. اخ و اخت الاخرة). It is based mainly on my own field materials, collected among the Yezidis of Armenia in recent years.

This important institution having a considerable role in the social and spiritual life of the Yezidis, as far as I know, has never been the object of special research. In the literature dedicated to the Yezidis one can find only some sporadic, mostly indirect indications on this subject.¹ Th. Menzel, for instance, in his summarizing article in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* mentioned it *inter alia*, only in some lines.²

R. Lescot, E. Drower, C.J. Edmonds and, most recently, Ph. Kreyenbroek also discussed some aspects of this institution but again in very concise terms.³ This circumstance can be explained by the fact, that the information about this institution is scant and contradictory and, at the same time, there are vague ideas about it among the Yezidis themselves too; even the clerics give sometimes very controversial interpretations on this subject.

The main content and functions of the religious institution of the "Brother" and the "Sister" of the "Next World", according to the reports of the informants, include the following data.⁴

The "Brother" and the "Sister" are the intercessors in the "Next World" before

Sheikh Adi⁶ for their murids on the Day of Resurrection or just after death, when they are going to account for their deeds. But before their duties, on the Salāt (Arab. Širāt) bridge (the bridge across Gehenna may be crossed only by the pious),⁶ the “Brother” and the “Sister” inquire about the moral purity (from the Yezidi viewpoint)⁷ of their murids, asking them three questions: 1) if they disturbed the caste boundary, i.e. married a representative of a spiritual caste - *dūrī dīskā danē*? 2) if they fornicated, getting married with an adherent of a different faith - *dūrī zi dalingā šīn*?⁸ 3) if they remained followers of the Yezidi faith - *barxe Silt’an Ezīdī*? The “Brother” and the “Sister” must get positive answers to these questions with the following formulas: 1) *dūrim dīskā danē* (literally: I am far from mixing, i.e. from marriage with the representative of another caste; 2) *dūrim dalingā šīn* (literally: I am far from fornication, i.e. from marriage with the heterodox; 3) *vē dīnē, wē dīnē barxe Silt’an Ezīdim* (literally: In this world and in the “Next World” I’m a lamb of Sultan Yezid,⁹ i.e. a follower of his faith). In the case of the positive result of the inquiry, the murid, following the “Brother” or the “Sister”, according to his/her sex, crosses the Salāt bridge. Before the entrance to paradise the “Brother” or the “Sister” appeals to Sheikh Adi with the intercession permitting their murids to enter paradise:

Šex Ādī, tu şahidā bī,
 Šex Ādī, tu p’adšayī,
 P’adšaye qadīmīyēyī erhedeyī,
 Aw silāmata, bē lakāya;
 Bira hara jīnatē.

*Sheikh Adi, be a witness,
 Sheikh Adi, you are a king,
 You are Lord, ancient and primordial,
 He (she) - is sound, flawless.
 Let him (her) enter paradise.*

The negative answer to even one of the directed questions causes the immediate refusal of entry into paradise.

Each Yezidi is obliged to have, respectively, a “Brother” or a “Sister” only from the caste of the sheikhs. This choice is hereditary, i.e. the obligation to choose a “Brother” or “Sister” from a given family of the sheikhs moves from father to son and from mother to daughter. In fact, a certain family of sheikhs deals with a certain family of laymen. Such a distribution is intended, likely, to distribute evenly the number of sheikhs among the lay people and thereby to provide a stable income for them, as the sheikh of a family as well as “Brother” and “Sister” must be given regularly offerings of money, help and services from their murids. Originally, perhaps, the murid had chosen the “Brother” or the “Sister” by himself.

As the “Brother” and the “Sister” are close friends of the family, they often are considered to be the “Brother” or the “Sister” for the members of the opposite sex in the family as well. Such a phenomenon creates sometimes a wrong impression that every Yezidi, ignoring his/her sex, has both a “Brother” and a “Sister”.

According to some Yezidi sheikhs in Armenia (e.g. Sheikh Hasane Mamud),

although to have a "Sister" for men and "Brother" for women is not obligatory, nevertheless they can choose them, if they want, after reaching puberty. At the same time, they say, women are free to change their "Sister" inherited from their mothers. What is a constant value is the "Brother", who can never be changed. Every male Yezidi is obliged to preserve the adherence to a certain sheikhy family as an irrevocable reality, while, they believe, that the distribution of the "Brothers" for every Yezidi family was established by Sheikh Adi himself at "the very beginning" - in the time of **h'ad ū sad**.

So, they implicitly consider "Brotherhood" as a basic ground for the whole institution, regarding the "Sisterhood" as a secondary phenomenon, a complementary detail for the sake of symmetry to the "Brotherhood of the Next World". In any case there is a special ritual for choosing "Sisters" for men and "Brothers" for women.

First of all, the choice will be **bi huvē** (Arab. **ḥubb**), i.e. "by love, sympathy". It means that a person is free to choose his (or her) spiritual counterpart and it will be without anyone's interference, just by his (or her) will.

The "Brother" should be from a sheikhy family but the "Sister" can belong also to the caste of **p'irs**.

During the ceremony, beside the members of the family and the candidate for "Brotherhood" or "Sisterhood", they invite a sheikh who performs the ritual.

The counterparts stand near the **ster**¹⁰, opposite to each other, taking in two hands the **xarqa** under which they put a cup of water. In this position the sheikh asks the woman who wants to acquire a "Brother" or to change her "Sister", or the man who acquires a "Sister": **Tu da'wā čī dikī?** - "What do you want?". He (she) answers: **Az da'wā birātīyē (xūšktīyē) dikim** - "I am striving to have a "Brother" ("Sister")". Then he asks the candidate: **Ta dā** - "Do you agree?"¹² (literally: "Have you given (the word)?"). The candidate answers: **Min dā** - "Yes!" (lit.: "I have given (the word)"). After that, the sheikh reads the following admonition to the partners:

Sē harfa hūn na havalē havin:

**Darbā xarqa,
Šarpikā zēīn,
Diskā danē.**

*In three things you are not responsible for each other:*¹³

*(In) insulting a spiritual caste,*¹⁴

*(In marrying) spiritual people,*¹⁵

*(In marrying) clerics.*¹⁶

And then he offers the cup of water for them to drink.

The ceremony is closed with the recitation of a special **qawl**,¹⁷ called **talqīn** ("instruction, exhortation") by the sheikh:

**Salām a'lē,
Nāzil a'lē,
Jinat - minat,
Jinat - bi nūr;
Qawilē xwadē daya rasul.**

Talqinê dixûnim,
 Dangê xwa hiltînim.
 Way bilâ, way bilâ,
 Faqîrê, similâ.
 Roza a'rafatê, şarafatê,
 Sar p'ira Salatê
 Am girtin şex, p'îr, hōstâ,
 marhavî, yâr-birê âxiratê.
 Kaniya sipî qulbava,
 Xarqê Şîxadi şa'dava,
 Dast-damanê ma har pênj t'irêqê ma hava!

*"Peace upon you,
 (May) God descended (upon us),
 Thanks for paradise,¹⁸
 Paradise of light;
 God gave the Qawl¹⁹ to the Prophet.²⁰
 I read the talqîn,
 I raise my voice.
 O God, O God,²¹
 O Sheikh Adi,²² in the Name of God,²³
 At the Day of Resurrection,²⁴
 On the bridge of Şirâf
 We followed (our) sheikh, p'îr, hōstâ,
 marhavî (and) the "Brother" of the "Next World".²⁵
 (May) The White spring be the qibla²⁶,
 (And) the xarqa of Sheikh Adi be witness,
 (That) we will follow our five spiritual leaders".²⁷*

It also must be noticed that the "Brother", as a man, naturally plays a greater role in the life of his murids' family than the "Sister". A pious Yezidi, if it is possible for him, every morning must visit his "Brother" or "Sister" and kiss their hands. Buying or sewing a shirt (kirās), a Yezidi must bring it to the "Brother" or the "Sister", so that they unbutton the collar for the first time.²⁸ The "Brother" or the "Sister" of the "Hereafter", as it is expected, take active part in the funeral of their murids. They wash the body of the deceased. The female body must be washed only by her "Sister". Washing the deceased, the "Brother" or the "Sister" pour water on the dead body three times from a small cup, uttering:

Dastûrî Şams,
 Baniyê, zi axê çebûyî,
 tuê harî nâv axê.
 Rahmat li ta ba,
 Çawa barxê Silt'an Êzîd.

*By the command of Shams (Sun),
 O human being, you are created from the earth;*

You will become dust,²⁹
You will be blessed
As a lamb of Sultan Yezid.³⁰

When the man dies without circumcision, the "Brother", after performance of the ritual, cuts the foreskin, which must be buried afterwards in earth where a man's foot has never stepped. This detail is a remnant of a once probably commonly practiced rite of circumcision which later disappeared. Moreover, the posthumous circumcision is also for the time being a very rare phenomenon: not every sheikh performs it during the funeral ceremony.

After washing of the dead body, they put it into a white shroud in a specific position: if it is male, they put the right hand on the left hand and the right leg on the left one. If it is female - *vice versa*. The shroud must be tied over the head as a bundle.

The depth of the grave in the case of a male deceased will be equal to the distance from his feet until his navel; in the case of a female - until her breast.

When they put the body into the grave, the "Brother" gets into it, unties the bundle, readjusts the hands and feet of the deceased and turns his (her) head to the *qibla*. (The "Sister" is deprived of this function although she can attend the process of interment with the other women). On both sides of the body in the grave they lay together flat stones in three rows and put on them another stone covering the body's face and breast. This is called *kavirê salimê*, i.e. "the stone of health". According to Yezidi beliefs, after the burial, when the funeral procession arrives home, the deceased tries to stand and hits his (her) forehead on the stone, and only then realizes that he (she) is dead and buried, and exclaims grievously: **Way, ê (yā) mirî azim?** "Oh, is it me who died?"^{30a}

On the grave of a woman they usually put two stones - one at the place of the feet, the other at the head; for men - respectively two stones on each side. These stones are called *sarkêlk*. The Muslim Kurds call them *k'el*.³¹

A curious detail concerning funeral rites of the Yezidis is attested in the **Siya-hetname** ("Travell-notes") of the famous Turkish traveller of the 17th century Evliya Chelebi in his description of the Yezidis of Sindjar in Northern Iraq. E. Chelebi wrote: "It is strange that if a wealthy Yezidi man dies, they wash him in onion water and plant onion on his sepulchral mound. To put the hair of a dog into the deceased's shroud is a common rule among them... When in this country a black dog is born, big celebrations take place. And if a dog dies, they wash it with onion water and bury it in a special cemetery for dogs".³² The very high reverence towards the dog by the Yezidis, verging even on worship, can be seen also in the following statement of E. Chelebi: ".... They feed the children first by black dog's milk. If anyone hits the dog, they ruthlessly kill him. Everyone has 5-10 dogs. First they give food to dogs and then eat themselves". This was the real picture of the attitude to a dog in Ancient Iran as one of the important ideological concepts of the Zoroastrianism. When the righteous Viraz, a pious Zoroastrian, in his infernal itinerancy saw "the soul of a man whom the demons were tearing as dogs do, and the man was giving bread to the dogs and they did not eat it, and they constantly ate the breast, feet, belly and thigh of the man", he wondered: "What sin did this body commit whose soul is undergoing such heavy punishment?", and heard the answer: "This is the soul of that wicked man who in the world withheld food from the shepherds' dogs and

watchdogs, or had beaten or killed them" (*AV*, 33-34). We have a long encomium to the dog in the Vendidad (Fragard XIII), where all dogmatic and ritual matters concerning this animal are discussed: "If those two dogs of mine, the shepherd's dog and the house dog, pass by the house of any of my faithful people, let them never be kept away from it. For no house could subsist on the earth made by Ahura, but for those two dogs of mine, the shepherd's dog and the house dog" - says *inter alia* the Old Iranian text (*Vd.*, XIII, 9.49).

Though, during the Islamic period the dog has been subverted from its high pedestal and became an unlawful animal, the traces of its former splendour are still clearly seen among the Iranian nomadic and seminomadic peoples, including the Yezidis.

There is no doubt that a dog, especially a black one, and an onion have also explicit apotropaic functions, as indispensable means for expelling the evil beings and ghosts (cf., e.g., *sagdīd* ceremony in Zoroastrian funeral tradition). Some elements of the worship of onion can also be traced in Chelebi's story; he says: "If someone breaks an onion with his fist, his head will be broken too, and he will be killed".³³ E. Chelebi's important information, as far as I know, has never been mentioned in the relevant literature.

After the body is buried, the procession returns except for the five *t'irēqs* (see below, and note 25). One of them, usually the "Brother", reads the following prayer on the grave mound of the deceased, repeating it three times. The prayer is called *duāyē tasmilē a'rd* - "prayer of interment".

Nārē Haq,
Nūrē Haq,
Tarāzū Haq,
Haq bi Haq.

Yā Dawrēšē a'rd,
Ta dā av a'vd
Tu t'unabūn dā,
Habūn bir.

*Fire of God,
Light of God,
Weights of God,
Truth of God.*³⁴

*O, deity of Earth,*³⁵
*You created this slave,*³⁶
You created the emptiness,
*You took the existing.*³⁷

During the funeral, in an unspecified time, but definitely before the burial, the "Brother" (in case of his absence, the other male representative from his family) must read the prayer "*Bōrabōr*".³⁸ At the first funeral repast after the burials (*xērā bičuk*) cows and rams are slaughtered in an odd number. The meat is prepared with-

out spices and distributed among the neighbours or countrymen early in the morning when the rays of the sun just touch the earth. During the immolation of animals and when opening the lid of the pan, the "Brother" reads the prayer :

Sifrayī Jalīl,
Qurbānē Ibrāhīm-xalīl;
Qabūl-maqbūl ba.

*Splendid meal,
Let us be a sacrifice to Ibrahim Khalil;
(May it) be received.*

It should be indicated that the **xēr** (the funeral repast) is arranged twice: **xērā bičūk** or **xērā pešin** - during seven days after the death, and **xērā mazin** - up to seven years after the death. The Yezidis are convinced, that the mouth of the deceased is turned to the earth, and he is not able to lay in the grave calmly until the first funeral repast is done. After performing the ritual and sacrifice, it is believed, that the dead turns to a normal position; they often say *a propos* of this: **ḏavē vī ardē ḏarxist** - "his (the dead's) mouth has turned away from the earth". If the relatives of the dead are not able to arrange the funeral repast, they prepare *pilav* or meat in seven pans and distribute it among the neighbours. Opening the lids of the pans, the "Brother" reads the same prayer.

After the **xērā bičūk** the "Brother" or the "Sister" receives the clothing of the dead murid. As to "Sister", her role in the whole funeral process is limited only to the washing of the body of the female deceased.

If the deceased has no heir, his/her property passes into the hands of the "Brother" or the "Sister" of the "Hereafter".

The "Brother" also takes part in the ritual of circumcision (when it is practiced) of the son of his murid and in the so-called **bisk** ceremony.³⁹ That is the reason why the "Brother" is often called **šexē sunnatē** or **šexē biskē**.

The rite of **bisk** is performed only for boys.⁴⁰ When a year passes after a boy's birth,⁴¹ the "Brother" is invited to cut three tufts of hair from his head: on the crown - **t'unjik'**, on the forehead - **t'amōrī**, behind the ears - **gulanjk**, and during the ceremony gives the following admonition to the boy:

Barxē Silt'an Ezidī,
Bimīnī čawa ēzdi;
Dūr bī diskā danē,
Dūr bī li delingā šīn,
H'avt bavē xwadā ēzdi bī.

*You are the lamb of Sultan Yezid,
May you stay as a Yezid!
May you be far from promiscuous links with the spiritual caste!
May you be far from marriage with the followers of other religions!
Be a Yezid to your seventh generations!*

After that he utters: **aw zārē mina** - "It is my child". The "Brother" wraps the three bundles of hair from the head of the boy in a rag or paper, burns them or, being in sacred places, buries them there.

At the **bisk** ceremony it is necessary to sacrifice animals: **xūn garakē bifeža** - "blood must be spilled", - say the Yezidis in this case.

Having performed the rite of circumcision, or **bisk**, the "Brother" receives a gift from the child's father, a sheep or money as usual. Though the **bisk** ceremony concerns only boys, it may be supposed, that its older form included also the girls and, correspondingly, the "Sister" of the "Next World". Perhaps, it was gradually lost because among the neighbouring Islamic peoples, and even Christians, the cutting of women's hair was always considered as a form of punishment for adultery and fornication. This is, probably, the reason why the rite lost its symmetry.

What is more significant is the semantic value of hair, which symbolizes a sort of power, acquired by the "Brother" over his murid in the "Next World". As it is generally known, according to a very popular belief in the East, hair, nails and teeth of a man should not be lost, because on the Day of Judgement, they will be demanded from him. That is why some peoples - Armenians, Persians⁴² and also Kurds hide the nail-parings, hair-combings and fallen teeth in wall chinks, cracks of mud walls, or bury them, repeating a special invocation in order to have them following everywhere and answering for them at the Day of Resurrection (or at the Trial before the bridge connecting this world with hell or paradise).⁴³ In this connection, it is important to note, that the Armenians of Iran (Isfahan region) instruct their children to bury cut nails and repeat at the same time:

**Vortey efam, yeds gak',
Datastanis juyab tak'.**

*Wherever I go, follow me,
To answer (for me) at the day of my Trial.*

The Armenians of Chmshkatsag (Arm. Չմշկածագ, Turkish. Çimişgezcek), in Dersim hid their nail-pairings in a wall chink reciting the quatrain below:

**Ayung, dun hos kec'ir,
Aşxarh, dun vaka eşir,
Əp' ər hōgis atnoyō ga,
Dun hētō ənker eşir.**

*Nail, you stay here,
World, you be a witness,
When (the Angel of death) comes to take my soul,
You be a friend of his.^{43a}*

Such a belief is attested also among the Iranian population of Dersim, the Zazas (see below). The Armenian intellectual of the end of the 19th century Andranik, who was a wonderful connoisseur of this people, gives interesting evidence of it in his travel-notes. He reports: "The inhabitants of Dersim believe in transmigration; one

of their *seyids* told me that when a man dies his soul undergoes a series of rebirths. First, he appears in the form of an animal, then, consequently, a reptile, a bird, an insect, a butterfly and a mosquito until the Day of Judgement. The first precondition for keeping the normal course of reincarnation is that one should not lose even a hair from his body. Probably, that is why, it is an obligatory rule for everyone to bury his hair-combings and nail-pairings in the earth, in order to prevent them from being scattered by the wind. Otherwise, it is believed, one should have great difficulties during the Last Judgment".^{43b} I would suggest that this may be the main purpose of preserving the hairs of the head, beard and moustache by almost all sectarians (the Ahl-i haqq, Zazas, Yezidis), and especially by the priesthood. Due protection of removed hairs is always fraught with danger: when one cuts his hair, even if he carefully hides them, there is still a chance to lose at least a single thread of this precious material, while it is easier and safer to leave them grow in their predestined places.

Hence, three bundles of hair become a sign, symbolizing the murid's destiny at the hands of the "Brother" in the "Hereafter". Though it is not spoken explicitly, it is probably implied, that the hair bundles will be returned after the successful end of the Trial near the Şirāt bridge: perhaps, after each positive answer of the murid, he would receive one bundle.⁴⁴ It is an important fact that the number of the tufts corresponds with the number of the questions, addressed to the murid on the bridge, and with the content of the admonitions recited by the "Brother" during the *bisk* ceremony.

Thus, the role of "Brother" and the "Sister" of the "Next World" is principally limited to their participation in the funerals of their murids and also with the performance of the rites, dealing with children. Although some authors consider the "Brother" and the "Sister" to play also the role of godfather or godmother,⁴⁵ there is no ground for such a statement at least because the godfather among the Kurds or Yezidis has a special name - *k'irîv* or *k'irîva* and is chosen among laymen (sometimes even followers of other confessions: Armenians, etc.),⁴⁶ while the "Brother" and the "Sister" must by all means belong to sheikhy families.

Certain indications of the "Brother" of the "Next World" can be found in Classic Kurdish poetry, as e.g. in *Mâm û Zîn* of Ahmade Khani:

**Min minnat bi wî şolt qat nîna,
Az û Qaratazhdin birâyed âxiratêna.**

*I do not care about this matter,
As me and Qaratazhdin are brothers of the Hereafter
(i.e. "we are very close friends").⁴⁷*

The institution of the "Brother" and the "Sister" of the "Next World" and the related rites find parallels among the Ahl-i-haqq and the Shiite popular beliefs about Ali and Fatima.

According to V. Minorsky, to achieve moral perfection, the Ahl-i-haqq create special social unions between one or several men and a woman (*şart wa iqrâr*) who are called the "brother(s)" and the "sister".⁴⁸ Such unions are concluded in anticipation of the Day of Resurrection.⁴⁹

The "Next World Brotherhood" is explicitly represented in the institution of

mūsāhib (Arab. **muṣāhib** "interlocutor, friend") among the Zazas or Dim(i)lis, an extreme Shi'a Iranian people of Central Anatolia⁵⁰ and among the other Alevi sects in Turkey. "In contrast to the Yezidis, however, the institution of the **mūsāhib** amongst the Zazas exists only for the male sex. The **mūsāhib** is chosen by a teenager without his parents' interference".⁵¹

Nevertheless, according to other data, candidates for **mūsāhib**-hood must be two adult married people of the same age, and the spiritual union, therefore, includes four persons: "The shirt of **mūsāhib**-hood covers four persons", - says the religious comment.⁵² This is exactly implied by P.J. Bumke, who wrote: "... die *mūsahib*-Freundschaft ... zwischen zwei nichtverwandten, etwa gleichaltrigen Männern und ihren Frauen durch einen *seyid*, der der *pir* eines der beiden ist, geschlossen wird, nur die Zugehörigkeit der Partner zum Alevitum zur Voraussetzung hat und eine Inzestschranke zwischen ihren Nachkommen über drei bis vier Generationen konstituiert. Es handelt sich hier um eine religiös gefärbte pseudo-verwandschaftliche Bruderbeziehung, die u.a. generalisierte Reziprozität auch in wirtschaftlicher Hinsicht und unverbrüchliche Freundschaft impliziert".⁵³

Twelve years ago, based on the archive materials of Gevorg Halajian, a native of Dersim, I tried to represent the **mūsāhib** institution in the following way: "After the decision is made, the two teenagers declare it to the family cleric - *rahbar* (or *raybar*) - who blesses the spiritual union. In the honour of this event a celebration is arranged. Henceforth, the relations of the two **muṣāhibs** will be closer and more durable than blood-bonds. The **muṣāhib** ceremony must be performed before marriage (sic!). The **muṣāhib** relationship entails the following reciprocal obligations: 1) to safeguard the safety and honour of the co-**muṣāhib**'s family; 2) in case of death, to look after the co-**muṣāhib**'s wife and children like his own; 3) and in an emergency the **muṣāhibs** must spare no efforts, risking their very lives, to rescue each other. Sexual and matrimonial intercourse with the dead **muṣāhib**'s wife is strictly forbidden".⁵⁴

In any case, the recent publications by the Zaza authors shed new light on the **mūsāhib** institution although the problem of partnership - only a male couple, or mixed union - still remains open.

The **mūsāhib**-hood is characterized by the Zazas as a "fire shirt: he who can not bear it, should not put it on", or as a "cooked beet: everyone who can not chew it, must not try to, as he can lose his 32 teeth". Therefore, it is considered to be a serious responsibility, a heavy social burden which can not be born by everyone, as it manifests the friendship feeling of the Prophet himself.

The ceremony is called **kamaribast**, i.e. "belt binding". The cleric of the family - *rahbar* or *seyid* - binds a belt on the waists of the two candidates. This belt (**kamar**) has three knots symbolizing three moral concepts which the **mūsāhibs** must observe in their life: 1) Not to touch the unlawful; 2) Not to lie; 3) Not to fornicate or commit adultery. Then he gives verbal admonitions and makes them swear. Afterwards, closing the ceremony, he reads two special prayers:⁵⁵

1. *O tālibs*,⁵⁶

If anyone deprives his wealth

From his mūsāhib,

May God strike and destroy him;

Let him directly go to hell.

*And if anyone says: the back of my mūsāhib is crooked,
 God will not bless his way.
 And if a mūsāhib takes offense of his mūsāhib,
 He will become a bee deprived of honey.
 And if a mūsāhib divides himself from his mūsāhib,
 God's curses will fall upon him.
 Then the trace of their way is wrong,
 And they will be dishonoured even in hell.*

*2. Bow (your heads) and let there be goodness!
 Let your dreams become true.
 May your wishes be accepted.
 Let Muhammad-Ali bless (you),
 May you not be ashamed before Justice,
 May you not be deprived of bread and light,
 May the Twelve Imams be ready
 To free you from misfortunes,
 May God (and) Muhammad-Ali fulfill
 The wishes of your tongues and the dreams of your souls.
 Glory to you, O Allah,
 God is the Friend.⁵⁷*

Unlike the Yezidi "Brother", who must be definitely a cleric - a sheikh, with his partner from the laymen - *murid*, the Zaza *mūsāhibs* both are ordinary lay persons (talibs). The role of the cleric here is confined only to the consecration of the union.

Although the extant materials do not allow us to elucidate the role of the *mūsāhib* in the funeral ceremonies of his partner and, especially, in the "Hereafter", the parallelism with the Yezidi institution is quite obvious.^{57a}

At any rate, the Zaza *mūsāhib*, as well as the Yezidi godbrotherhood, have acquired a Sufi, mystic substantiation. "Brotherhood" in the Yezidi faith is included into the system of five obligatory relationships: *šex*, *p'ir*, *hōsta*, *marhavi*, *yār-birē āxiratē* (see below: note 25). The spiritual hierarchy of the Zazas' includes four degrees or doors (*dört kapı*), according to the Bektashi tradition, where also *mūsāhib*-hood is included: *rahbar* (for *farıqat*), *p'ir* (for *mārifat*), *seyid* or *murşid* (for *haqıqat*) and *mūsāhib* (for *şarī'at*).

The Yezidis' beliefs about the "Brother" or the "Sister" of the "Next world", as has already been stated, correspond also with the Shiite popular conceptions about Ali and Fatima.

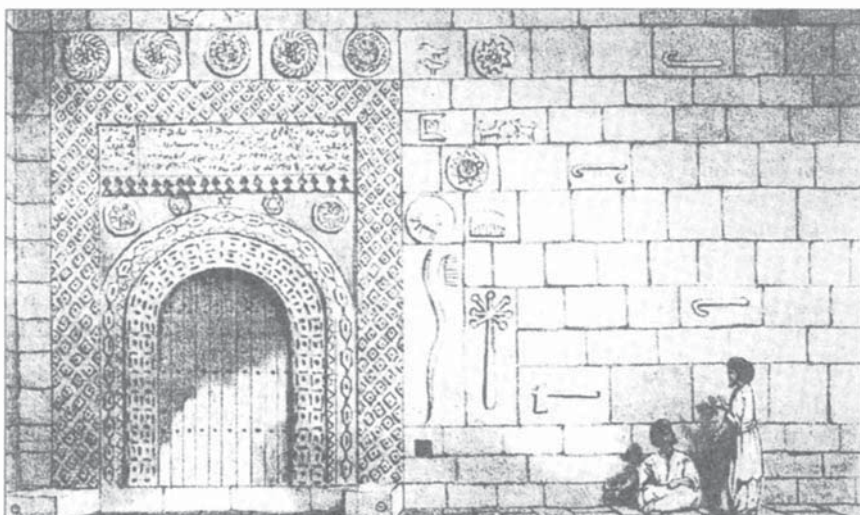
In the folk legends Fatima figures as *Xātūn-e Mahşar* or *Xātūn-e qiyāmat*, i.e. "the Lady of the Day of Judgement". She is the first woman who will enter paradise and speak to God asking him to dispense justice to the people,⁵⁸ at the same time she will intercede for the souls of her adherents. Then the women will take hold of the fringe of her garment and like a flash of lightning will cross the Şirāt bridge. Ali plays the same role for men (in some stories - Muhammad).⁵⁹

By the way, the "Sister" of the "Next World" of the Yezidis is also called "The Lady of the Next World" - *stiyā āxiratē*.⁶⁰ A deep faith in Fatima and Ali, as the

mediators and defenders in the “Next World”, evoked a series of blessings and invocations, like: “May Ali and Fatima meet you the first night in the grave” or “May you have fellowship with Ali and Fatima on the Day of Judgement”, etc.⁶¹

Among the Ahl-i haqq, Fatima plays the role of the divine mediator and is called Ramzbar - “keeper of secrets”, she also bears the name *Xātūn-e qiyāmat* - “Lady of the Day of Judgement” and is considered to be created from the divine sweat.⁶² Ramzbar is also a bisexual angel;⁶³ in her male hypostasis she is known as an *iqār*.

The worship of Fatima, as it can be concluded from the separate allusions in the religious folklore, penetrated also into the Yezidi faith, although without a proper representation, probably, because of its evident link with Islam. The Yezidis have a deity-patroness of children and childbirth - *xāfūnā farxā*, which is often identified



Mausoleum of Sheikh 'Adi in Lalish in 1849

From: G.P. Badger. The Nestorians and their Rituals, I

with *pīra-fat*, another female deity with the obvious demiurgic functions. During the birth pangs and confinement, the women usually appeal to *pīra-fat* for help; they say: *yā pīra-fat, alī min bika* - “O, P.F., help me!”. In Iranian popular beliefs Fatima often figures as a patroness of childbirth; in some cases Mary (Mariam) is also represented in this function. The latter, along with Fatima, is one of the most beloved and venerated female figures of Iranian folk tradition.

Ali and Fatima are popular mostly among the extreme Shi'ites, various Sufi and Dervish orders, where they are often deified.⁶⁴ The deification of Ali and Fatima mainly occurs on the Iranian ground. Their images have accumulated many features of the local eclectic religious and cultural substrate and have acquired quite different characteristics from the orthodox Islamic views.

The main link between the characters of Ali and Fatima in Shi'a folk tradition and those of the Yezidi godbrotherhood and the analogous institutions of the Zaza and Ahl-i-haqq is their role as mediators, intercessors and defenders of their followers in a future life. All of them are, probably, the various manifestations of an

older concept of the spiritual union as an essential prerequisite for well-being in the life after death, transformed through Islamic mysticism.

The existence of the Sufi elements in the Yezidi religion should not surprise, because Sheikh Adi b. Musafir himself, the founder of the sect and the brotherhood of the "Next World"⁶⁵ (according to the Yezidis), was a Sufi leader.⁶⁶ To the obvious Sufi traces of Yezidism belong also the symbolism of a cloths' colour, the meaning of the form and colour of the headdress, the mystic aim of the circle, the secret role of light, etc.;⁶⁷ the most conspicuous one: Malak Tavus - the Peacock angel - the supreme deity of the Yezidis.⁶⁸

So, we can propose that the institution of the "Brother" and the "Sister" of the "Next World" basically contains elements, inherent first of all, to mystic Sufi circles.

As to the origin of the concept of a spiritual union or godbrotherhood, it is undoubtedly connected with traditions going back to the most remote epoch.⁶⁹ For example, a comparison suggests itself, with the institution of "Friends" among the ancient Scythians, which also had a religious significance and which members were supposed to take an obligatory part in the funeral procedures of the "Friend". As E.A. Grantovsky points out: "Merely traditional obligatory participation in the obsequies shows the special links in cultic and ritual relations, which were also typical for the "Friends" of the other Iranian peoples: the particular attitude towards the death of a friend and participation in his burial rituals".⁷⁰

The Scythian institution of "Friends" is probably the oldest manifestation of the Old Iranian (or Near Eastern) idea of Holy Brotherhood.

NOTES

1. See: С.А. Егнзаров. *Краткий этнографический очерк езидов Эриванской губернии*. Тифлис, 1881, сс. 180, 229, 279;
اسماعيل بك، چول، اليزيديه قديما و حديثا، بيروت، ١٩٣٤، ص. ٧٨؛ الدكتور سامي سعيد الاحمد، اليزيديه، ج. ٢، بغداد، ١٩٧١، ص. ١٢١؛ سعيد الديوهجي، اليزيديه، بغداد، ١٩٧٢، ص. ٤٤.
2. Th. Menzel. *Yazidi*. - EI, Leyden - London, 1933, p.1166.
3. See: R. Lescot. *Quelques publications récentes sur les Yézidis*. - Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, N 6 (1938), p. 84; E. Drower. *Peacock Angel*. London, 1941, p. 20; C.J.Edmonds. *A Pilgrimage to Lalish*. London, 1967, p. 7; Ph. Kreyenbroek. *Yezidism - Its Background, Observances and Textual Tradition*. New York: "Edwin Mellen Press", 1995, p. 136. The only publication completely dealing with this problem is, perhaps, my short article published in Russian some fourteen years ago (cf. Г. С. Асатрян. О "брате" и "сестре" загробной жизни в религиозных верованиях езидов. - Страны и народы Ближнего и среднего Востока, том XIII. Ереван, 1985, сс. 262-271).
4. I would like to express my sincere gratitude first of all to my friend, a devoted Yezidi sheikh from the Šamsāni (Zarzāni) clan, Sheikh Hasane Mamud (Hasan Tamoyan), Arame Chachan and Sadaf Lazgian for their generous help and assistance.
5. Sheikh Adī ('Adī), together with Malak Tavus and Yezid (Silt'an Ezid), is one of the three incarnations of God. He was a historical personality (Šayx 'Adī bin Musafir al-Hakkart), born in 1072 in Baalbak, in the village of Beytfar (now in Lebanon) and died in 1169 in Lalish (in Sindjar, Northern Iraq), where he was buried. Sheikh Adi was a reknown Sufi leader, founder of the 'Adawiya sect, which afterwards evidently became one of the constituents of the Yezidi community (the Yezidis even now consider themselves as *adabi*, without, sometimes, understanding its meaning) (see: EI, vol.1. Leyden, 1960, p. 195; cf. also: R.Y. Ebied, L.J.M. Young. *An Account of the History and Rituals of the Yazidis of Mosul*. - Le Muséon, t. 85 (1972), p. 498, and more detailed, with full literature: Գ.Ա.Ասատրյան, Ա.Պ.Փոլադյան. *Եզդիների դավանանքը (Հիմնական աստվածությունները*,

սուրբ գրքերը). - ՊՐԷ, N 4 (1989), էջ 136-137 [G.S.Asatrian, A.P.Poladian. *The Yezidi Religion: Pantheon & Sacred Books (Armenian translation with commentaries)*].

6. There is a Yezidi religious *qasîda* (*qasîd*) describing the Salât bridge in the following way:

P'ira Salâtê waka dazî,
K'e xêr kir - sarra bazi,
Yê xêr nakir - sar larzi.

P'ira Salâtê waka mû,
Yê xêr kir - sarra darbâzbu,
Yê xêr nakir - dastê vî barrû.

*The Salât bridge (is) like a cotton thread,
Who has committed good deeds, he ran over it,
Who did not commit good deeds, he shivered on it.*

*The Salât bridge (is) like a hair,
Who committed good deeds, he passed through it,
Who did not commit good deeds, he remained ashamed
(literally: "his hands over his face") (Sheikh Hasane Mamud).*

It well matches with the classic Islamic and Christian descriptions of the bridge through hell - *şirâf al-mustağîm*. The Zoroastrian *Ānvat puhl* also has the same characteristics.

7. On the moral conceptions of the Yezidis see: C.A. Егизаров, op.cit., pp.190-191.
8. The first formula can be literally translated as: "Are you far from the pot of paint?" (Kurdish *dzîk* "pot", *dan* "paint"). The pot of paint symbolizes a mixing process, admixture, promiscuity. The next formula also deals with colour and paint. It is translated literally: "Are you far from having the hem of (your) skirt painted blue?". The blue colour in Yezidism is under taboo as a symbol of alienation. At the same time in this context it renders "fornication, adultery", as the idiomatic expression *dalinga xwa şîr kirin* definitely means "to commit adultery", cf.: *filank'as dalinga xwa şîr kir* "someone has committed adultery", etc.
9. Sultan Yezid (Silt'an Ezîd) is one of the three main figures of the Yezidi pantheon. The Yezidis claim that Silt'an Ezîd was the Umayyad caliph Yazîd bin Mu'âwiya, who is considered to be their eponymous ancestor. Though this assertion is in fact deprived of any historical background, however, the name of the sect and Silt'an Ezîd must have been derived just from the mentioned Umayyad caliph, due to the secondary attribution by the inimical Muslim environment as a pejorative nickname. Especially in a Shi'a milieu, the name Yazîd (Yezîd) has always been a synonym of an infidel, idolater, *kâfir* because of the role this caliph played in the events of Karbala. Therefore, I think, the name of the sect is an exoethnonym - the name given by aliens, as a derogatory nickname; endoethnonyms of the Yezidis were primarily *Adabi*, *Dasini* or *Şarqi*. Silt'an Ezîd himself is also a late deity which is manifested in the vagueness of his functions and very uncertain role he plays in dogmas, rituals and cultic practice. The derivation of the name Yezîd from *îzad* (*îzadî*) or the toponym *Yazd* is, of course, out of the discussion (see in details with literature: G.S.Asatrian, A.P.Poladian, op. cit. pp. 137-138).
10. An open wardrobe of bedclothes in the Yezidi houses. It is considered to be a holy place. The Yezidis believe that there lives a divine being - *pîra şer*. The word *şer* derives from Old Iranian *starya-, with i-Umlaut (see in details: G.S.Asatrian, V.I.A.Livshits. *Le Système consonantique de la langue kurde*. - Acta Kurdica, vol.1 (1994), pp. 91 (§ XIII, 7), 100, note 4).
11. Arab. *xirqa*. A coarse woolen cloak of gray colour worn by the sheikhs and the heads of Sufi orders, the sign of divine power. The Yezidis have a special esteem and respect towards the *xarqa*; it is one of the main accessories of the cultic practice, considered to be equal to the *qawls* - religious oral tradition. We have recorded a short etiological folk story in verse about the *xarqa*, compiled in the form of a debate between a disciple and God, where also the formula of the preparation of *xarqa* is given:

Ta daya paşka jîhûya, filaya, surmâne,
Ta daya dastê wan Tawrata, İnjîla, Qurâna,

Galo, ummatā ma či bīna bāwarī (or šahdatī) ū Imāna?
 Ažē bišnim rō 'ardā qawī ū xarqaya,
 Mēre ezdi lē bīna bāwarī ū šahdaya.

Galo, ma'niyā wī xarqayī čiya?

Čav ta biva spīya,
 Tu nizāni ma'niyā wī xarqayī čiya?!
 Zargōza, mōza, lapa hīrya,
 Havēnē har čār kantiye spīya.

*Disciple - (O God), You have given shares (portions) to the Jews,
 Christians, Muslims,
 You have given them the Torah, the Gospel, the Qur'an,
 Tell me (galō is a vocative particle), what our people have
 to believe in?*

*God - I will send to the Earth qawī and xarqa,
 The Yezidi man must believe in them.*

Disciple - Tell me, what is the meaning of this xarqa?

*God - May you lose the light of your eyes (literally: "may your eye
 become white"),
 Why don't you know the meaning of this xarqa?!
 (It is made of the extract of) nutshell and banana and a
 handful of wool (i.e. a piece of wollen cloth),
 Seasoned in all four white (holy) springs (in Lalish).*

12. Ta da "have you given" is, perhaps, from ta sōz da "have you given the word", cf. sōz dān "promise, agree".
13. Literally: "You are not friends of each other".
14. Literally: "to strike, hit the xarqa", i.e. sheikhs who wear it.
15. Šarpika zērin means "golden mug" (cf. šarp/bik "mug") and describes the sacerdotal classes as the most pure, unmixed social group - zērin - "golden one", apparently in contrast to dīskā danē "the pot of paint", symbolizing perversity or violation of caste norms. However, due to semantic parallelism, the correlative pair šarpika zērin / dīskā danē with the opposition of the direct and metaphorical meanings of its constituents, as a poetic device, merely designates an exhortation to avoid promiscuous contacts with the clergy.
16. See: notes 8, 15.
17. Religious song and, simultaneously, the whole oral religious tradition - qawī ū bayt'.
18. Cf. The Yezidi saying: Jinatā - minat na lazima, i.e. "Is it paradise, to be grateful?".
19. I.e.: the sacred oral literature (see: note 17).
20. Probably, Šeikh Adi is implied, the founder of the religious tradition (see: note 5).
21. I.e.: Way bi illah.
22. Faqīrō, with the sg. masc. ending of the vocative case -ō, from faqīr (Arab. faqīh). Šeikh Adi is meant (see: note 5).
23. Similā, from bismillāh.
24. The informant (Šeikh Hasane Mamud) believes that a'rafat is the second and the šarafat - the third day of every religious feast. At the same time 'Arafat is the name of a hill and the adjoining plane near Mecca, famous as a place of pilgrimage. The context, however, definitely indicates the Day of Resurrection (cf. the next line: "On the bridge of Širať"). According to the Sufi interpretation, 'arāfat (as well as يوم القيامة "Day of Resurrection") is the essence and nature of the human being and, metaphorically, the final abode of his path of life (Šeyx 'Abd al-'Aziz bin Muhammad Nasafi. Kašf al-haqa'eq. Tehran, 1980, pp. 226-227). It may well be also some allusion to the seventh Sura of Qur'an - 'Araf, which should be read by anyone each month as a precautionary measure, so that they need have no fear on Doomsday. As to šarafat, very likely, it is here a rhyme-word to a'rafat.

25. It is incumbent upon every Yezidi to have five spiritual leaders (t'irêq, Arab. *ṭarīqa*), including the "Brother": *Penj t'irêqê farzê ma havin*, - says Hasane Mamud: *ṣêx* "sheikh", *p'ir* "pir", *hosta* (Persian *ustād*) "master", *marhavi* (Arab. *murabbi*) "tutor" and *yar-birê axirate* "Brother of the Next World".
26. *Kantya spi*, the "White Spring" at Laliş, near Mosul, where the tomb of Sheikh Adi is found, is one of the most sacred places for the Yezidis becoming a *qibla*, towards which the Yezidis turn when praying.
27. It must be: *Dasted ma li damanê har penj*..., i.e., literally: "(May) our hand be on the shirts of our five spiritual leaders".
28. See: Sa'îd al-Ahmad, op.cit., p. 121; Sa'îd al-Diyôçî, op. cit., p. 44; Th. Menzel, op.cit. pp. 1166-1167.
29. Literally: "You will enter the ground". Kurdish *ax* "earth, ground, dust" is an archaic form attested mostly in cultic poetry; it is derived from OIr. **aika-*, with prothetic *h-* (cf. Persian *xāk*). Its ordinary synonym in the vernacular Kurdish is *xwālî*, *xālî*, from OIr. **hwarda-*.
30. I.e.: "As a devoted follower of his faith".
- 30a. Cf. The forthcoming article of V. Arakelova (see below, note 38).
31. Cf. Kurdish swearing formula: *h'atâ bi k'elâ mirinê*, lit.: "Until the stone of death".
32. *Թուրքական աղբյուրներ, Հատոր Գ., Էվլիա Չելեբի. Թարգմանությունը բնագրից, առաջարանը և ծանոթագրությունները Արշակ Սաֆրաստյանի. Երևան, 1967, էջ 188* [Evlia Çelebi. *Siyahetname*. - Turkish Sources, vol. 3. Selected Armenian translation from the original text, introduction and commentaries by Arshak Safrastian. Yerevan: "Academy of Sciences", 1967, p.188]. The detailed discussion of the role of the dog in funeral ceremonies see in : Б.А. Лятовский, А.В. Седов. *Культы и ритуалы Кушанской Бактрии*. М., 1984, сс. 161-169.
33. E. Çelebi, *ibid*. The worship of a black hound is attested also among the extreme Shi'a sectarians of Eastern Anatolia. T. Gilbert, a French diplomat or Christian missionary, in his short letter to the Société Asiatique in November 10, 1872, wrote *inter alia*: "Les Kizil-bachs... adorent un grand chien noir, comme l'image de la Divinité" (T.Gilbert. *Note sur les sects dans le Kurdistan*. - JA, Septième série, tome 2. Paris, 1873, p. 393; cf. the re-edition of this article with commentaries in "Iran & Caucasus", vol. 1, pp. 203-204).
34. The phrase should be amended, perhaps, to: *Haq-e Haq* - "Truth of God".
35. On *Dawreşe a'rd* see in details the article of V.Voskanian in this issue of "Iran & Caucasus".
36. The only meaning of the verb *dān* in contemporary Kurmanji dialects is "to give"; however, in this ritual text, one can notice the semantic traces of its Old Iranian etymon, **dā-* "give" and "erect, create".
37. I.e.: the soul of the deceased.
38. See the full text of this prayer with the English translation and commentaries in the article of V.Arakelova "The Funeral Rites of the Yezidis" (In: "Iran & Caucasus", vol. 5, forthcoming).
39. Kurdish *bisk* literally means "topknots, tuft of hair" = Persian *kakol*. It can be compared with Manichean Middle Persian and Parthian *pswg / pusag / "garland"*, Arm. *psak* id.
40. Ա. Ավդալ. *Գուրդ կինը նահապետական ընտանիքում ըստ ազգագրական և ֆոլկլորային նյութերի*. - Աշխատություններ Պետական պատմական թանգարանի, Հտ. 1. Երևան, 1948, էջ 231-232 [A. Avdal. *The Kurdish (sc. Yezidi) woman according to the Ethnographic and Folkloric materials*. - Proceedings of the State Museum of History, vol. 1. Yerevan, 1948, pp. 231-232].
41. According to the other data: some months after the birth of a child (cf. A. Avdal, *ibid.*).
42. See: Садек Хедаят. *Нейрангестан*. - Переднеазиатский этнографический сборник, том 1. Москва, 1958, с. 283.
43. Cf. also: "The parings should be buried, or at least hidden, so that no enemy or sorcerer could get them, to scratch out the owner's eyes or work other evil with them... Parings of the toe-nails are often buried near the door of one's house, so that on the Day of Judgement they will be present to give witness that the owner has made pilgrimages. For the same reason they are sometimes buried at the entrance to a shrine, where they are an unquestioned proof that the pilgrimage has been made... Hair-combings, like nail-parings, should be buried; they should not be burned or the owner will suffer from dizziness, neither should they be thrown upon the ground, or someone might step on them or a crow might carry them away, and in either case the owner would suffer with headache" (B.A. Donaldson. *The Wild Rue: A Study of Muhammadan Magic and Folklore in Iran*. London, 1938, pp. 185-186). This was, perhaps, one of the elements of the Old Iranian Weltanschauung, which is attested in the extant written sources. Anything that was separated from the body of a man, according to the ancient Iranians, was considered dead matter, and was accordingly supposed to fall into the possession of the demon. Therefore, hair and nails, as soon as cut off, will be hidden under

- the earth, accompanied by a special prayer. The Vendidad says: "... Thou shalt dig a hole, a *disti* (ten fingers) deep if the earth be hard, a *vitasti* (twelve fingers) deep if it be soft; thou shalt put the hair down there and thou shalt say aloud these fiend-smiting words: *Out of him by his piety Mazda made the plants grow up*" (*Vd. XVII, I, 5*).
- 43a. Հ.Յ. Գասպարեան. *Զմեկածագ և իր գիւղերը. Բեյրութ, 1869, էջ 506* [*Chmshkatsag and its villages. Beyruth, 1969, p. 506*].
- 43b. *Անդրանիկ. Տերսիմ. Թիֆլիս, 1990, էջ 167-168* [Andranik. *Dersim*. Tiflis, 1990. pp. 167-168].
44. It is highly symptomatic that when soliciting for their murids before Sheikh Adi during the Trial on the bridge, the "Brother" or the "Sister" characterize them as "irreproachable, faultless, without flaw" - *Aw silamata, bē lak'aya* - "He (she) is sound, flawless". The whole appeal is apparently based on this circumstance, as a precondition for getting permission to pass the bridge. It emphasizes, of course, their moral perfection, but also somatic soundness as the required prerequisite.
45. Cf., e.g.: Th. Menzel, *ibid.*, p. 1166.
46. See in details: С.А. Егiazаров, *ibid.*, pp. 44, 180. Kurdish *k'irtv(a)* has nothing to do with the Arm. *k'avor* (< *knk'avor*) "godfather"; it can be rather compared with the Persian *karīb* id., which occurred in vernacular language and some dialects. They may have come from Arab. *qarīb* "near (friend), relative" (see in details: Г.С. Асатрян. *Обряды детства и воспитание детей в традиционной культуре персов. - Этнография детства: Традиционные формы воспитания детей и подростков у народов Передней и Южной Азии. М., 1983, с. 81*).
47. *مارف خهزنه دار، تیکستی مەم و ژنی یامه میانیانی فولکلوری له کوکراوه کانی مارتن هارتمان، گوڤاری کۆلێجی فهدهبیات، ژماره ١٦، بهغداد، ١٩٧٢، ص. ٨١.*
48. See: V. Minorsky. *Ahl-I Hakk*. - EI, v. 1, p. 261. On the Ahl-i haqq see also: W. Ivanow. *The Truth-worshippers of Kurdistan*. Bombay, 1953.
49. V. Minorsky, *ibid.*
50. See with comprehensive literature: G.S.Asatrian. *Dim(i)E: People and language*. - *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. VII/4, pp. 405-411; Г.С. Асатрян. *Некоторые вопросы традиционного мировоззрения заза. - Традиционное мировоззрение у народов Передней Азии. Москва, 1992, сс. 102-110, 210-213*.
51. G.S. Asatrian, N.Kh. Gevorgian. *Zāzā Miscellany: Notes on some Religious Customs and Institutions*. - In: A Green Leaf: Papers in Honour of Prof. J.P. Asmussen (*Acta Iranica* - XII). Leiden, 1988, p. 507.
52. Ali Kaya. *Tunceli Kültürü*. Istanbul, 1995, pp. 63-64.
53. P.J.Bumke. *Kizilbaş-Kurden in Dersim (Tunceli, Türkei)*. - *Anthropos*, N 74 (1979), p. 534.
54. G.S. Asatrian, N.Kh. Gevorgian, *op. cit.*, *ibid.*
55. Ali Kaya, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65.
56. Arab. *ṭalīb* in its direct meaning would be translated as the "student of a religious school, *medrese*", but as a Sufi term it means "disciple, lay person, *Strebende*" and, as such, is comparable with the term *murīd*.
57. In the original text: *Hü - dōst*, i.e.: "He is the Friend"; the Arab. *huwa* "He" is a common Sufi appeal for the Almighty.
- 57a. The institution of the *musahibs*, under the same name, occurs also among the Bektashis (see: M. Backhausen, A.J. Dierl. *Der rituelle Gottesdienst Cem des anatolischen Alevismus. Wuppertal, 1996, p.62*).
58. See: EI, v.II (1965), p.847.
59. See: B.A. Donaldson, *op.cit.*, p. 77.
60. The word *stī* is borrowed from the Arabic *ست* "lady" which is derived from *سیدتی* due to the phonetic contraction.
61. B.A. Donaldson, *ibid.*, p. 119.
62. See: M. Mokri. *Contribution scientifique aux études iraniennes*. Paris, 1970, pp. 193, 217, 218; also: V. Minorsky, *op. cit.*, p. 261.
63. V. Minorsky, *ibid.*
64. Cf.: В. А. Гордлевский. *Избранные сочинения*. Том 1, сс. 270-271; том 2, сс. 399-416; А. Мец. *Мусульманский ренессанс*. Москва, 1973, с. 251.
65. Cf.: С. А. Егiazаров, *op. cit.*, p. 279.
66. See in details: note 5.
67. В. Никитин. *Курды*. Москва, 1964, сс. 327, 335. On the Sufi - Yezidi dogmatic relations see: W. Ivanow, *op. cit.*, p. 2; G. Furlani. *Il santi dei yezidi*. - *Orientalia*, vol. V, pp. 64-83.

68. Malak Tavus (Malak Tavus, or Tavuse Malak) - the Peacock angel - is definitely the first figure of the Yezidi pantheon. The peacock has a controversial image in Islamic mysticism: as a gorgeous and the most beautiful creature of the world, symbol of grandeur and wisdom, having, at the same time, obvious demonic characteristics: its friendship with the Biblical Snake (according to the popular Sufi interpretation of the well-known story) and its active role in the expulsion of the first human pair from paradise. As a punishment God exiled the peacock from Eden, together with the Snake, and made its legs ugly and unpleasant:

یار شد با من بیکجا مار زشت تا بیافتم بخواری از بهشت

grievously complains the bird in the narration of Farid ad-din 'Attar, for:

طاوس را بتقش و نگاری که هست خلق
تحسین کنند و او خجل از پای زشت خویش (سعدی، گلستان، ۲، ۸)

The main impediment for the poor bird to return to his former abode in Eden is the Snake who became in fact the cause of its misfortune:

خه‌خه ای طاوس باغ هشت در سوختی از زخم مار هفت سر
صحبت این مار در خونت فکند وز بهشت عدن بیرون فکند
تا نگردانی هلاک آن مار را کی شوی شایسته این اسرار را
گر خلاصی باشدت زین مار زشت آدمت با خویش گیرد در بهشت
(فریدالدین عطار، منطق‌الطیر، تهران ۱۳۵۳، ص. ۴).

Though the peacock embodies all the features of the Fallen angel, the Yezidis consider it as a virtuous god and demiurge. In the «Book of Revelation» (*K'it'ebā Jalwa*) Malak Tavus says: «I was and now am and will remain for ever. I hold sway over the all creatures and regulate their affairs. I am ready; I am kind to all of them who believe in me and, when needed, appeal to me. No place is empty from me. I am a participant of all the events which heterodox people consider to be «evil» as they do not correspond to their wills» (*G.S. Asatrian, A.P. Poladian, op.cit., p. 141*). It must be stressed that Satan (*šayṭān*) in Sufi tradition is generally considered as the first great monotheist (*muwahhid*) of the world, as he refused to bow his head before Adam, a human being created from dust, yellow clay (Pers. *zarda gel*). The revolting nature of Satan is predetermined by divine providence and not by the fallen Archangel's own choice. So, in Islamic mysticism there is quite an ambiguous attitude towards Satan and Malak Tavus (or merely Tavus) as its so-called *avatar*.

The peacock's demonic nature is traceable even in the Old Iranian folk beliefs as attested in the 5th century Armenian philosopher Eznik's «Rejection of Heresies» (*Ek akandoc'*), where he wrote: *Orpēs ews asen tē Arhmn̄n asac: oē ēfē ē'karim arnel bari inē, ayl ē'kamim; ew ar i hastatun zbann arneloy - arar siramarg* «They (the Persians) maintain that Arhmn̄n (i.e. Ahriman) was supposed to say: it does not mean that I am not able to make good things: the matter is that I do not want (to do good). And as a proof for his words, (he) created the peacock» (*Եզնիկայ Կողմանայ Եղծ աղանդոց. Վեհերիկ, 1826, էջ 139*). In the Kurdish folk beliefs the peacock has been generally treated as the manifestation of evil, perhaps, as a result of anti-Yezidi feelings (cf.: *bi t'avus hāra* «*va au diable*», - F. Justi, A. Jaba. *Dictionnaire kurde-français*. SPb., 1879, p. 274). The ambiguous character of the peacock is well attested also in European folk traditions; the «eye» depicted on the feathers of this bird, for instance, was considered as a sign of its demonic essence. The peacock's feathers were used as an accessory in black magic rituals. As the key figure of the Yezidism, Malak Tavus has been the subject of various interpretations and commentaries (see, e.g.: K.E. Müllers. *Kulturhistorische Studien zur Genese pseudo-islamischer Sektengebilde in Vorderasien*. Wiesbaden, 1967, pp. 368-373, and G.S. Asatrian, A.P. Poladian, op.cit., with further literature, etc.).

69. Cf.: W. Ivanow, op. cit., p. 41.

70. Э.А. Грантовский. *О некоторых материалах по общественному строю скифов: Родственники и друзья*. - Кавказ и Средняя Азия в древности и средневековье. Москва, 1981, с. 77.

YEZIDI TEXTS (*Continued*)¹

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TRANSLATION

In the Name of the Most Compassionate God!

With the help of the Most High God, and under his direction, we write the history of the Yezidis, their doctrines, and the mysteries of their religion, as contained in their books, which reached our hand with their own knowledge and consent.

In the time of Al-Muḩtadir Billah, A. H. 295,⁴⁸ there lived Maṣṩur-al-ḩallāj,⁴⁹ the wool-carder, and Šeiḩ 'Abd-al-ḩādir of Jilān.⁵⁰ At that time, too, there appeared a man by the name of Šeiḩ 'Adī, from the mountain of Hakkari,⁵¹ originally from the region of Aleppo or Baalbek. He came and dwelt in Mount Lališ,⁵² near the city of Moṣul, about nine hours distant from it. Some say he was of the people of ḩarrān, and related to Marwān ibn-al-ḩakam. His full name is Šaraf ad-Dīn Abū-l-Faḩāil, 'Adī bn Musāfir bn Ismael bn Mousa bn Marwān bn Al-ḩasan bn Marwān. He died A. H. 558 (A. D. 1162-63). His tomb is still visited; it is near Ba'adrei, one of the villages of Moṣul, distant eleven hours. The Yezidis are the progeny of those who were the *murids* (disciples) of Šeiḩ 'Adī. Some trace their origin to Yezid,⁵³ others to ḩasan-Al-Bašri.⁵⁴

AL-JILWAH (THE REVELATION)

Before all creation this revelation was with Melek Tā'us, who sent 'Abd Tā'us to this world that he might separate truth from error and make truth known to his particular people. This was done, first of all, by means of oral tradition, and afterward by means of this book, Al-Jilwah, which the outsiders may neither read nor behold.

¹See the January issue of this *Journal* for the Arabic text.

CHAPTER I

I was, am now, and shall have no end. I exercise dominion over all creatures and over the affairs of all who are under the protection of my image. I am ever present to help all who trust in me and call upon me in time of need. There is no place in the universe that knows not my presence. I participate in all the affairs which those who are without call evil because their nature is not such as they approve. Every age has its own manager, who directs affairs according to my decrees. This office is changeable from generation to generation, that the ruler of this world and his chiefs may discharge the duties of their respective offices every one in his own turn. I allow everyone to follow the dictates of his own nature, but he that opposes me will regret it sorely. No god has a right to interfere in my affairs, and I have made it an imperative rule that everyone shall refrain from worshipping all gods. All the books of those who are without are altered by them; and they have declined from them, although they were written by the prophets and the apostles. That there are interpolations is seen in the fact that each sect endeavors to prove that the others are wrong and to destroy their books. To me truth and falsehood are known. When temptation comes, I give my covenant to him that trusts in me. Moreover, I give counsel to the skilled directors, for I have appointed them for periods that are known to me. I remember necessary affairs and execute them in due time. I teach and guide those who follow my instruction. If anyone obey me and conform to my commandments, he shall have joy, delight, and goodness.

CHAPTER II

I requite the descendants of Adam, and reward them with various rewards that I alone know. Moreover, power and dominion over all that is on earth, both that which is above and that which is beneath, are in my hand. I do not allow friendly association with other people, nor do I deprive them that are my own and that obey me of anything that is good for them. I place my affairs in the hands of those whom I have tried and who are in accord with my desires. I appear in divers manners to those who

are faithful and under my command. I give and take away; I enrich and impoverish; I cause both happiness and misery. I do all this in keeping with the characteristics of each epoch. And none has a right to interfere with my management of affairs. Those who oppose me I afflict with disease; but my own shall not die like the sons of Adam that are without. None shall live in this world longer than the time set by me; and if I so desire, I send a person a second or a third time into this world or into some other by the transmigration of souls.

CHAPTER III

I lead to the straight path without a revealed book; I direct aright my beloved and my chosen ones by unseen means. All my teachings are easily applicable to all times and all conditions. I punish in another world all who do contrary to my will. Now the sons of Adam do not know the state of things that is to come. For this reason they fall into many errors. The beasts of the earth, the birds of heaven, and the fish of the sea are all under the control of my hands. All treasures and hidden things are known to me; and as I desire I take them from one and bestow them upon another. I reveal my wonders to those who seek them, and in due time my miracles to those who receive them from me. But those who are without are my adversaries, hence they oppose me. Nor do they know that such a course is against their own interests, for might, wealth, and riches are in my hand, and I bestow them upon every worthy descendant of Adam. Thus the government of the worlds, the transition of generations, and the changes of their directors are determined by me from the beginning.

CHAPTER IV

I will not give my rights to other gods. I have allowed the creation of four substances, four times, and four corners; because they are necessary things for creatures. The books of Jews, Christians, and Moslems, as of those who are without, accept in a sense, i. e., so far as they agree with, and conform to, my statutes. Whatsoever is contrary to these they have altered; do not accept it. Three things are against me, and I hate three things. But

those who keep my secrets shall receive the fulfilment of my promises. Those who suffer for my sake I will surely reward in one of the worlds. It is my desire that all my followers shall unite in a bond of unity, lest those who are without prevail against them. Now, then, all ye who have followed my commandments and my teachings, reject all the teachings and sayings of such as are without. I have not taught these teachings, nor do they proceed from me. Do not mention my name nor my attributes, lest ye regret it; for ye do not know what those who are without may do.

CHAPTER V

O ye that have believed in me, honor my symbol and my image, for they remind you of me. Observe my laws and statutes. Obey my servants and listen to whatever they may dictate to you of the hidden things. Receive that that is dictated, and do not carry it before those who are without, Jews, Christians, Moslems, and others; for they know not the nature of my teaching. Do not give them your books, lest they alter them without your knowledge. Learn by heart the greater part of them, lest they be altered.

Thus endeth the book of Al-Jilwah, which is followed by the book of Maṣḥaf Reš, i. e., the Black Book.

MAṢḤAF REŠ (THE BLACK BOOK)

In the beginning God created the White Pearl out of his most precious essence. He also created a bird named Anğar. He placed the White Pearl on the back of the bird, and dwelt on it for forty thousand years. On the first day, Sunday, God created Melek Azazîl, and he is Țâ'us-Melek, the chief of all. On Monday he created Melek Dardâel, and he is Šeiḥ Ḥasan. Tuesday he created Melek Israfel, and he is Šeiḥ Šams [ad-Dîn]. Wednesday he created Melek Miḥâel, and he is Šeiḥ Abû Bakr. Thursday he created Melek Azrâel, and he is Sajad-ad-Dîn. Friday he created Melek Šemnâel, and he is Naşir-ad-Dîn. Saturday he created Melek Nurâel, and he is Yadin [Faḥr-ad-Dîn]. And he made Melek Țâ'us ruler over all.⁵⁵

After this God made the form of the seven heavens, the earth, the sun, and the moon. But Faḥr-ad-Dîn created man and the

animals, and birds and beasts. He put them all in pockets of cloth, and came out of the Pearl accompanied by the angels. Then he shouted at the Pearl with a loud voice. Thereupon the White Pearl broke up into four pieces, and from its midst came out the water which became an ocean. The world was round, and was not divided. Then he created Gabriel and the image of the bird. He sent Gabriel to set the four corners. He also made a vessel and descended in it for thirty thousand years. After this he came and dwelt in Mount Lališ. Then he cried out at the world, and the sea became solidified and the land appeared, but it began to shake. At this time he commanded Gabriel to bring two pieces of the White Pearl; one he placed beneath the earth, the other stayed at the gate of heaven. He then placed in them the sun and the moon; and from the scattered pieces of the White Pearl he created the stars which he hung in heaven as ornaments. He also created fruit-bearing trees and plants and mountains for ornaments to the earth. He created the throne over the carpet.⁵⁶ Then the Great God said: "O Angels, I will create Adam and Eve; and from the essence of Adam shall proceed Šehar bn Jebr, and of him a separate community shall appear upon the earth, that of Azazil, i. e., that of Melek Tâ'us, which is the sect of the Yezidis. Then he sent Šeih 'Adi bn Musâfir from the land of Syria, and he came [and dwelt in Mount] Lališ. Then the Lord came down to the Black Mountain. Shouting, he created thirty thousand Meleks, and divided them into three divisions. They worshiped him for forty thousand years, when he delivered them to Melek Tâ'us, who went up with them to heaven. At this time the Lord came down to the Holy Land (al-Ḳuds), and commanded Gabriel to bring earth from the four corners of the world, earth, air, fire, and water. He created it and put in it the spirit of his own power, and called it Adam.

Then he commanded Gabriel to escort Adam into Paradise, and to tell him that he could eat from all the trees but not of wheat.⁵⁷ Here Adam remained for a hundred years. Thereupon, Melek Tâ'us asked God how Adam could multiply and have descendants if he were forbidden to eat of the grain. God answered, "I have put the whole matter into thy hands." There-

upon Melek Tâ'us visited Adam and said, "Have you eaten of the grain?" He answered, "No, God forbade me." Melek Tâ'us replied and said, "Eat of the grain and all shall go better with thee." Then Adam ate of the grain and immediately his belly was inflated. But Melek Tâ'us drove him out of the garden, and leaving him, ascended into heaven. Now Adam was troubled because his belly was inflated, for he had no outlet. God therefore sent a bird to him which pecked at his anus and made an outlet, and Adam was relieved.

Now Gabriel was away from Adam for a hundred years. And Adam was sad and weeping. Then God commanded Gabriel to create Eve from under the left shoulder of Adam. Now it came to pass, after the creation of Eve and of all the animals, that Adam and Eve quarreled over the question whether the human race should be descended from him or from her, for each wished to be the sole begetter of the race. This quarrel originated in their observation of the fact that among animals both the male and the female were factors in the production of their respective species. After a long discussion Adam and Eve agreed on this: each should cast his seed into a jar, close it, and seal it with his own seal, and wait for nine months. When they opened the jars at the completion of this period, they found in Adam's jar two children, male and female. Now from these two our sect, the Yezidis, are descended. In Eve's jar they found naught but rotten worms emitting a foul odor. And God caused nipples to grow for Adam that he might suckle the children that proceeded from his jar. This is the reason why man has nipples.

After this Adam knew Eve, and she bore two children, male and female; and from these the Jews, the Christians, the Moslems, and other nations and sects are descended. But our first fathers are Šeth, Noah, and Enosh, the righteous ones, who were descended from Adam only.

It came to pass that trouble arose between a man and his wife, resulting from the denial on the part of the woman that the man was her husband. The man persisted in his claim that she was his wife. The trouble between the two was settled, however, through one of the righteous men of our sect, who decreed that at

every wedding a drum and a pipe should be played as a testimony to the fact that such a man and such a woman were married legally.

Then Melek Tâ'us came down to earth for our sect [i. e., the Yezidis], the created ones, and appointed kings for us, besides the kings of ancient Assyria, Nisroch, who is Naşir-ad-Dîn; Kamush, who is Melek Fahr-ad-Dîn, and Artâmis, who is Melek Šams-[ad-]Dîn. After this we had two kings, Šabur (Sapor) First (224-272 A. D.) and Second (309-379), who reigned one hundred and fifty years; and our amirs down to the present day have been descended from their seed. But we hated four kings.

Before Christ came into this world our religion was paganism. King Ahab was from among us. And the god of Ahab was called Beelzebub. Nowadays we call him Pir Bub. We had a king in Babylon, whose name was Baĥtnaşar; another in Persia, whose name was Aĥşuraş; and still another in Constantinople, whose name was Agriĥalus. The Jews, the Christians, the Moslems, and even the Persians, fought us; but they failed to subdue us, for in the strength of the Lord we prevailed against them. He teaches us the first and last science. And of his teachings is:

Before heaven and earth existed, God was on the sea, as we formerly wrote you. He made himself a vessel and traveled in it in *kunsiniyat*⁵⁸ of the seas, thus enjoying himself in himself. He then created the White Pearl and ruled over it for forty years. Afterward, growing angry at the Pearl, he kicked it; and it was a great surprise to see the mountains formed out of its cry; the hills out of its wonders; the heavens out of its smoke. Then God ascended to heaven, solidified it, established it without pillars. He then spat upon the ground, and taking a pen in hand, began to write a narrative of all the creation.

In the beginning he created six gods from himself and from his light, and their creation was as one lights a light from another light. And God said, "Now I have created the heavens; let some one of you go up and create something therein." Thereupon the second god ascended and created the sun; the third, the moon; the fourth, the vault of heaven; the fifth, the *farġ* (i. e., the morning star); the sixth, paradise; the seventh, hell. We have already told you that after this they created Adam and Eve.

And know that besides the flood of Noah, there was another flood in this world. Now our sect, the Yezidis, are descended from Na'umi, an honored person, king of peace. We call him Melek Miran. The other sects are descended from Ham, who despised his father. The ship rested at a village called 'Ain Sifni,⁵⁹ distant from Mosul about five parasangs. The cause of the first flood was the mockery of those who were without, Jews, Christians, Moslems, and others descended from Adam and Eve. We, on the other hand, are descended from Adam only, as already indicated. This second flood came upon our sect, the Yezidis. As the water rose and the ship floated, it came above Mount Sinjar,⁶⁰ where it ran aground and was pierced by a rock. The serpent twisted itself like a cake and stopped the hole. Then the ship moved on and rested on Mount Judie.

Now the species of the serpent increased, and began to bite man and animal. It was finally caught and burned, and from its ashes fleas were created. From the time of the flood until now are seven thousand years. In every thousand years one of the seven gods descends to establish rules, statutes, and laws, after which he returns to his abode. While below, he sojourns with us, for we have every kind of holy places. This last time the god dwelt among us longer than any of the other gods who came before him. He confirmed the saints. He spoke in the Kurdish language. He also illuminated Mohammed, the prophet of the Ishmaelites, who had a servant named Mu'awiya. When God saw that Mohammed was not upright before him, he afflicted him with a headache. The prophet then asked his servant to shave his head, for Mu'awiya knew how to shave. He shaved his master in haste, and with some difficulty. As a result, he cut his head and made it bleed. Fearing that the blood might drop to the ground, Mu'awiya licked it with his tongue. Whereupon Mohammed asked, "What are you doing, Mu'awiya?" He replied, "I licked thy blood with my tongue, for I feared that it might drop to the ground." Then Mohammed said to him, "You have sinned, O Mu'awiya, you shall draw a nation after you. You shall oppose my sect." Mu'awiya answered and said, "Then I will not enter the world; I will not marry."

It came to pass that after some time God sent scorpions upon Mu'awiya, which bit him, causing his face to break out with poison. Physicians urged him to marry lest he die. Hearing this, he consented. They brought him an old woman, eighty years of age, in order that no child might be born. Mu'awiya knew his wife, and in the morning she appeared a woman of twenty-five, by the power of the great God. And she conceived and bore our god Yezid. But the foreign sects, ignorant of this fact, say that our god came from heaven, despised and driven out by the great God. For this reason they blaspheme him. In this they have erred. But we, the Yezidi sect, believe this not, for we know that he is one of the above-mentioned seven gods. We know the form of his person and his image. It is the form of a cock which we possess. None of us is allowed to utter his name, nor anything that resembles it, such as *šeitân* (Satan), *ķaitân* (cord), *šar* (evil), *šat* (river), and the like. Nor do we pronounce *mal'ûn* (accursed), or *la'anat* (curse), or *na'al*⁶¹ (horseshoe), or any word that has a similar sound. All these are forbidden us out of respect for him. So *ħass* (lettuce) is debarred. We do not eat it, for it sounds like the name of our prophetess Ĥassiah. Fish is prohibited, in honor of Jonah the prophet. Likewise deer, for deer are the sheep of one of our prophets. The peacock is forbidden to our Šeih and his disciples, for the sake of our Țâ'us. Squash also is debarred. It is forbidden to pass water while standing, or to dress up while sitting down, or to go to the toilet room, or to take a bath according to the custom of the people.⁶² Whosoever does contrary to this is an infidel. Now the other sects, Jews, Christians, Moslems, and others, know not these things, because they dislike Melek Țâ'us. He, therefore, does not teach them, nor does he visit them. But he dwelt among us; he delivered to us the doctrines, the rules, and the traditions, all of which have become an inheritance, handed down from father to son. After this, Melek Țâ'us returned to heaven.

One of the seven gods made the *sanjaks*⁶³ (standards) and gave them to Solomon the wise. After his death our kings received them. And when our god, the barbarian Yezid,⁶⁴ was born, he

received these *sanjaks* with great reverence, and bestowed them upon our sect. Moreover, he composed two songs in the Kurdish language to be sung before the *sanjaks* in this language, which is the most ancient and acceptable one. The meaning of the song is this:

Hallelujah to the jealous God.

As they sing it, they march before the *sanjaks* with timbrels and pipes. These *sanjaks* remain with our emir, who sits on the throne of Yezîd. When these are sent away, the *kawwâls* assemble with the emir, and the great general, the *šeiḥ*, who is the representative of Šeiḥ Naşir ad-Dîn, i. e., Nisroch, god of the ancient Assyrians. They visit the *sanjaks*. Then they send each *sanjak* in care of a *kawwâl* to its own place; one to Halataneye, one to Aleppo, one to Russia, and one to Sinjar. These *sanjaks* are given to four *kawwâls* by contract. Before they are sent, they are brought to Šeiḥ 'Adî's tomb, where they are baptized amid great singing and dancing. After this each of the contractors takes a load of dust from Šeiḥ 'Adî's tomb. He fashions it into small balls, each about the size of a gall nut, and carries them along with the *sanjaks* to give them away as blessings. When he approaches a town, he sends a crier before him to prepare the people to accept the *kawwâl* and his *sanjak* with respect and honor. All turn out in fine clothes, carrying incense. The women shout, and all together sing joyful songs. The *kawwâl* is entertained by the people with whom he stops. The rest give him silver presents, everyone according to his means.

Besides these four *sanjaks*, there are three others, seven in all. These three are kept in a sacred place for purposes of healing. Two of them, however, remain with Šeiḥ 'Adî, and the third remains in the village of Baḥazanie, which is distant from Mosul about four hours. Every four months these *kawwâls* travel about. One of them must travel in the province of the emir. They travel in a fixed order, differing each year. Every time he goes out, the traveler must cleanse himself with water made sour with *summak* (sumac) and anoint himself with an oil. He must also light a lamp at each idol that has a chamber. This is the law that pertains to the *sanjaks*.

The first day of our new year is called the *Serşalie*, i. e., the beginning of a year. It falls on the Wednesday of the first week in April.⁶⁵ On that day there must be meat in every family. The wealthy must slaughter a lamb or an ox; the poor must kill a chicken or something else. These should be cooked on the night the morning of which is Wednesday, New Year's day. With the break of day the food should be blessed. On the first day of the year, alms should be given at tombs where the souls of the dead lie.

Now the girls, large and small, are to gather from the fields flowers of every kind that have a reddish color. They are to make them into bundles, and, after keeping them three days, they are to hang them on the doors⁶⁶ as a sign of the baptism of the people living in the houses. In the morning all doors will be seen well decorated with red lilies. But women are to feed the poor and needy who pass by and have no food; this is to be done at the graves. But as to the *kawwals*, they are to go around the tombs with timbrels, singing in the Kurdish language. For so doing they are entitled to money. On the above-mentioned day of *Serşalie* no instruments of joy are to be played, because God is sitting on the throne (arranging decrees for the year),⁶⁷ and commanding all the wise and the neighbors to come to him. And when he tells them that he will come down to earth with song and praise, all arise and rejoice before him and throw upon each other the squash of the feast. Then God seals them with his own seal. And the great God gives a sealed decision to the god who is to come down. He, moreover, grants him power to do all things according to his own will. God prefers doing good and charity to fasting and praying. The worship of any idol, such as Seyed-ad-Dîn or Şeiḥ Şams is better than fasting. Some layman is to give a banquet to a *kôchak* after the fasting of the latter 40 days, whether it be in summer or in winter. If he (the *kôchak*) says this entertainment is an alms given to the *sanjak*, then he is not released from his fasting. When it comes to pass that the yearly tithe-gatherer finds that the people have not fully paid their tithes, he whips them till they become sick, and some even die. The people are to give the *kôchaks* money to fight the Roman army, and thus save the sect (Yezidis) from the wrath of the man of the year.

Every Friday a load of gifts is to be brought as an offering to an idol. At that time, a servant is to call the people aloud from the roof of a *kôchak*'s house, saying, it is the call of the prophet to a feast. All are to listen reverently and respectfully; and, on hearing it, every one is to kiss the ground and the stone on which he happens to lean.

It is our law that no *ḡawwâl* shall pass a razor over his face. Our law regarding marriage is that at the time of the wedding a loaf of bread shall be taken from the house of a *kôchak* and be divided between the bride and the bridegroom, each to eat one-half. They may, however, eat some dust from Šeiḡ 'Adi's tomb instead of the bread for a blessing. Marriage in the month of April is forbidden, for it is the first month of the year. This rule, however, does not apply to *kawwâls*; they may marry during this month. No layman is allowed to marry a *kôchak*'s daughter. Every one is to take a wife from his own class. But our emir may have for a wife any one whom he pleases to love. A layman may marry between the ages of ten and eighty; he may take for a wife one woman after another for a period of one year. On her way to the house of the bridegroom, a bride must visit the shrine of every idol she may happen to pass; even if she pass a Christian church, she must do the same. On her arrival at the bridegroom's house, he must hit her with a small stone in token of the fact that she must be under his authority. Moreover, a loaf of bread must be broken over her head as a sign to her that she must love the poor and needy. No Yezidi may sleep with his wife on the night the morning of which is Wednesday, and the night the morning of which is Friday. Whosoever does contrary to this commandment is an infidel. If a man steal the wife of his neighbor, or his own former wife, or her sister or mother, he is not obliged to give her dowry, for she is the booty of his hand. Daughters may not inherit their father's wealth. A young lady may be sold as an acre of land is sold. If she refuses to be married, then she must redeem herself by paying her father a sum of money earned by her service and the labor of her hand.

Here ends Kitâb Reš, which is followed by several stories, some of which are told secretly, some openly.

APPENDIX

They say our hearts are our books, and our *šeiḥs* tell us everything from the second Adam until now and the future. When they notice the sun rise, they kiss the place where the rays first fall; they do the same at sunset, where its rays last fall. Likewise they kiss the spot where the moon first casts its rays and where it last casts them. They think, moreover, that by the multiplication of presents to *šeiḥs* and idols they keep troubles and afflictions away.

There is a great difference among the *kôchaks*; they contradict one another. Some say, "Melek Tâ'us appears to me and reveals to me many revelations." Others say, "We appear to people in many different ways." Some believe that Christ is Šeiḥ Šams himself. They say that they have had prophets in all times; the *kôchaks* are the prophets. One of the *kôchaks* says in one of his prophecies: "I was in Jonah's ship, where a lot was cast in my presence. It fell on Jonah; and he was thrown into the sea, where he remained forty days and nights." Another said: "I was sitting with the great God, who said 'I hope the time will come when I shall send Christ to the world.' I said to him, 'Yes.' Then he sent him. After making a sign in the sun, Christ came down to the earth." He appeared to our sect only, and made for us seven circles, which are at Šeiḥ 'Adi. Now he appeared to us because we observe the necessary order, which the other sects do not observe. Their origin and race are unknown; ours are known. We are emirs and sons of emirs; we are *šeiḥs* and sons of *šeiḥs*; we are *kôchaks* and sons of *kôchaks*, etc. But Christians and Moslems make priests and mullas for themselves out of those who had none of their kindred in those offices before, and never will have afterward. We are better than they. We are allowed to drink wine; our young men also may desire it when they, in company with women, engage in religious dancing and playing. Some of the *kôchaks* and *šeiḥs*, however, are not allowed to drink it. When one is about to die, he is visited by a *kôchak*, who places a bit of Šeiḥ 'Adi's dust in his mouth. Before he is buried his face is anointed with it. Moreover, the dung of sheep is placed on his tomb. Finally, food is offered on behalf of the dead. The *kôchaks* pray for the dead at the graves, for which

service they are paid. They tell the relatives of the dead what they see in dreams and visions, and the condition of their dead, whether they have been translated to the human or to the animal race. Some people hide silver or gold coins that they plan to take out in case they are born the second time in this world. Some believe that the spirits of many righteous persons travel in the air. Those spirits make revelations to the *kôchaks*, who are acquainted with the world of mysteries and secrets. Life and death are in their hands. Hence the fate of the people depends on the gratitude and honor which they show the *kôchaks*. According to Yezidis, hell has no existence. It was created in the time of the first Adam, they say, when our father, Ibriḳ al-Aşfar, was born.⁶⁸ By reason of his generosity and noble deeds, Ibriḳ had many friends. Now, when he viewed hell he became very sad. He had a small *baḳbûḳ aşfar*,⁶⁹ into which, as he kept weeping, his tears fell. In seven years it was filled. He then cast it into hell, and all its fires were put out that mankind might not be tortured. This incident relates to one of the noble deeds of our first father, Ibriḳ-al-Aşfar. They have many more such upright men of noble deeds. Such an one is Mohammed Raşân, whose resting-place is behind the mount of Şeiḥ Mattie.⁷⁰ He (Raşân) is exceedingly strong, so that the most sacred oaths are sworn by him. If any one becomes sick, he takes refuge in making vows to *ḥaşin*, i. e., pillars of idols. Now there is a place of religious pilgrimage which is called Sitt Nafisah. This place is a mulberry tree in the village of Ba'aşıḳa. Another such place is called 'Abdi Raşân, and is in the village of Ẹarabek. A third place of pilgrimage is in the village of Baḫzanie, which is called Şeiḫ Bakû. Nearby is a spring, and beside this is a mulberry tree. Whoever is afflicted with fever, goes to that tree, hangs on its branches a piece of cloth from his clothes, and casts bread in the spring for the fish. All this he does that he may be cured. They entertain the belief that whoever unties or shakes off one of the shreds of cloth will catch the disease with which the man was afflicted when he hung it up. There are many such trees in the village of Ba'aşıḳa, and in some other places. There is also a spring of water, called in the common language 'Ain aş-Şafra (Yellow

Spring). The Yezidis call it Kanî-Zarr.⁷¹ In this swim those who are afflicted with the disease of *abû-şafar* (jaundice). But those who are troubled with dropsy go for cure to the house of the Pir that lives in the village of Man Reş.

When they assemble at Şeiḥ 'Adî's, no one is allowed to cook anything. Everyone is to eat from Şeiḥ 'Adî's table. As to the *kôchaks*, every one of them sits on a stone, as one sits in prayer. To them the laity go, seeking succor. They give them money while making their petition, and vow to the stone on which the *kôchak* sits sheep and oxen, everyone according to his means. Now, at the New Year the places are given in contract. When they assemble at the New Year, they dance and play with instruments of joy. Before eating the *kabdûş*, i. e., the vowed ox, they swim in the water of Zamzam, a spring coming from beneath the temple of Şeiḥ 'Adî. Then they eat in haste, snatching meat from the pot like fanatics, so that their hands are frequently burned. This practice is in accordance with their rules. After eating, they go up the mountain, shooting with their guns, and then return to Şeiḥ 'Adî. Everyone of them takes a little dust and preserves it for the times of wedding and death. They wear entwined girdles which they call the ties of the back (belt). They baptize these and the *sanjaḳs* with the water of Zamzam. He who is called Jawiṣ⁷² wears a stole which is woven from the hair of a goat. It is nine spans in length and around it are *sansâls* (tinsels).

When the gathering comes to an end, they collect the money from the *kôchaks* and the contractors, and bring it to the emir. After everyone has taken according to his rank, the remainder goes to the emir.

They have another gathering which takes place at the feast of Al-Hijâjj. At this pilgrimage they go up to the mountain which is called Jabal al-'Arafât.⁷³ After remaining there an hour, they hasten toward Şeiḥ 'Adî. He who arrives there before his companions is praised much. Hence everyone tries to excel. The one who succeeds receives abundant blessings.

They still have another assembly. This is called "the road of the *kôchaks*," when each, putting a rope around his neck, goes up

the mountain. After collecting wood they bring it to Šeiḥ 'Adī, carrying it on their backs. The wood is used for heating purposes and for the emir's cooking.

During these assemblies the *sanjaks* are passed around. In the first place they are washed with water made sour with sumac in order to be cleansed from their rust. The water is given away in drinks for purposes of blessing. In return money is taken. In the second place, the *kôchaks* go around with the *sanjaks* to collect money.

In their preaching, the šeiḥs tell the people that all kings have come from their descent, such as Nisroch,⁷⁴ who is Nasr-ad-Dîn, and Kamuš who is Fahr ad-Dîn, and Artâmis, who is Šams ad-Dîn, and many others, as Shabur and Yoram; and many royal names of the ancient kings, together with their own (Yezidi) kings, are from their seed. The sign of the Yezidi is that he wears a shirt with a round bosom. It differs from that of the other people, the bosom of whose shirts are open all the way down.

There is one occasion when no Yezidi will swear falsely, viz., when one draws a circle on the ground, and tells him that this circle belongs to Tâ'us-Melek, Šeiḥ 'Adī, and Yezid, and *bary-shabakei*.⁷⁵ He places him in the middle of the circle, and then tells him that Melek Tâ'us and all those who were mentioned above will not intercede for him after his death, and that the shirt of the Jewish Nasim⁷⁶ be on his neck, and that the hand of Nasim be on his neck and eye, and that Nasim be his brother for the next world, and let him be to him for a šeiḥ and a *pir* if he does not tell the truth. Then if he swears to tell the truth, he cannot conceal anything. For an oath made under such conditions is considered greater than that made in the name of God, and even than that made in the name of one of their prophets.

They fast three days in a year from morning till evening. The fast falls in December, according to the oriental calendar. They have no prayer⁷⁷ except what is mentioned above, such as that referring to the sun and the moon, and asking help from šeiḥs and holy places when they say, "O Šeiḥ 'Adī, O Šeiḥ Šams," and the like. They are all forbidden to teach their children anything,

with the exception of two stanzas which they teach their children out of necessity and because it is traditional.

A story is told about them by reliable people. Once when Şeîh Naşir was preaching in a village at Mount Sinjar, there was a Christian mason in the audience who, seeing the house filled with people, thought they were going to pray. He then pretended to take a nap, that he might amuse himself with what he should hear. He knew the Kurdish language. When the Christian seemed to be asleep, but was really awake and listening, Şeîh Naşir began to preach saying: "Once the great God appeared to me in vision. He was angry at Jesus because of a dispute with him. He therefore caught him and imprisoned him in a den which had no water. Before the mouth of the den he placed a great stone. Jesus remained in the den a long time, calling upon the prophets and the saints for help and asking their aid. Every one whose succor Jesus asked went to beg the great God to release him. But God did not grant their requests. Jesus therefore remained in a sorrowful state, knowing not what to do." After this the preacher remained silent for a quarter of an hour, and thus a great silence prevailed in the house. Then he went on to say: "O poor Jesus, why are you so forgotten, so neglected? Do you not know that all the prophets and all the saints have no favor with the great God like unto Melek Tâ'us? Why have you forgotten him and have not called upon him?" Saying this, the preacher again remained silent as before. Afterward he again continued: "Jesus remained in the den till one day when he happened to remember Melek Tâ'us. He then sought his aid, praying, 'O Melek Tâ'us, I have been in this den for some time. I am imprisoned; I have sought the help of all the saints, and none of them could deliver me. Now, save me from this den.' When Melek Tâ'us heard this, he descended from heaven to earth quicker than the twinkling of an eye, removed the stone from the top of the den, and said to Jesus, 'Come up, behold I have brought thee out.' Then both went up to heaven. When the great God saw Jesus, he said to him, 'O Jesus, who brought thee out of the den? Who brought thee here without my permission?' Jesus answered and said, 'Melek Tâ'us brought me out of

the den and up here.' Then God said, 'Had it been another, I would have punished him, but Melek Tâ'us is much beloved by me; remain here for the sake of my honor.' So Jesus remained in heaven." The preacher added, "Notice that those who are without do not like Melek Tâ'us. Know ye that in the resurrection he will not like them either, and he will not intercede for them. But, as for us, he will put us all in a tray, carry us upon his head, and take us into heaven, while we are in the tray on his head." When the congregation heard this, they rose up, kissed his clothes and feet, and received his blessing.

Now the views of the Yezidis regarding the birth of Christ and the explanation of the name of the Apostle Peter, are found in one of their stories, which runs thus: "Verily Mary the Virgin mother of Jesus, begat Jesus in a manner unlike the rest of women. She begat him from her right side,⁷⁸ between her clothes and her body. At that time the Jews had a custom that, if a woman gave birth, all her relatives and neighbors would bring her presents. The women would call, carrying in their right hand a plate of fruits which were to be found in that season, and in the left hand they would carry a stone. This custom was a very ancient one. Therefore when Mary the Virgin gave birth to Jesus, the wife of Jonah, who is the mother of Peter, came to her; and, according to the custom, carried a plate of fruit in her right hand and a stone in her left. As she entered and gave Mary the plate, behold, the stone which was in her left hand begat a male. She called his name Simon Cifa, that is, son of the stone. Christians do not know these things as we do."

They have a story explaining the word heretic. It is this: When the great God created the heavens, he put all the keys of the treasuries and the mansions therein in the hands of Melek Tâ'us, and commanded him not to open a certain mansion. But he, without the knowledge of God, opened the house and found a piece of paper on which was written, "Thou shalt worship thy God alone, and him alone shalt thou serve." He kept the paper with him and allowed no one else to know about it. Then God created an iron ring and hung it in the air between the heaven and the earth. Afterward he created Adam the first. Melek

Ṭā'us refused to worship Adam when God commanded him to do so. He showed the written paper which he took from the mansion and said, "See what is written here." Then the great God said, "It may be that you have opened the mansion which I forbade you to open." He answered, "Yes." Then God said to him, "You are a heretic, because you have disobeyed me and transgressed my commandment."

From this we know that God speaks in the Kurdish language, that is, from the meaning of this saying, "Go into the iron ring which I, thy God, have made for whosoever does contrary to my commandment and disobeys me."

When one criticizes such a story as this by saying that God drove Melek Ṭā'us from heaven and sent him to hell because of his pride before God the most high, they do not admit that such is the case. They answer: "Is it possible that one of us in his anger should drive out his child from his house and let him wait until the next day before bringing him back? Of course not. Similar is the relation of the great God to Melek Ṭā'us. Verily he loves him exceedingly. You do not understand the books which you read. The Gospel says, 'No one ascended up to heaven but he who came down from heaven.' No one came down from heaven but Melek Ṭā'us and Christ. From this we know that the great God has been reconciled to Melek Ṭā'us, who went up to heaven, just as Christ came down from heaven and went up again."

The following is a story told of a *kôchak*: It is related that at one time there was no rain in the village of Ba'aşîka. In this village there was a Yezidi whose name was Kôchak Berû. There were also some saints and men of vision dwelling there. They (people) gathered to ask Berû to see about the rain. He told them, "Wait till tomorrow that I may see about it." They came to him on the next day and said, "What have you done concerning the question of rain? We are exceedingly alarmed by reason of its being withheld." He answered: "I went up to heaven last night and entered into the divan where the great God, Şeiḥ 'Adî, and some other şeiḥs and righteous men were sitting. The priest Isaac was sitting beside God. The great God said to me, 'What

do you want, O Kôchak Berû; why have you come here?' I said to him, 'My lord, this year the rain has been withheld from us till now, and all thy servants are poor and needy. We beseech thee to send us rain as thy wont.' He remained silent and answered me not. I repeated the speech twice and thrice, beseeching him. Then I turned to the *šeihs* who sat there, asking their help and intercession. The great God answered me, 'Go away until we think it over.' I came down and do not know what took place after I descended from heaven. You may go to the priest Isaac and ask him what was said after I came down." They went to the priest and told him the story, and asked him what was said after Kôchak Berû came down. This priest Isaac was a great joker. He answered them, "After the *kôchak* came down, I begged God for rain on your behalf. It was agreed that after six or seven days he would send it." They waited accordingly, and by a strange coincidence, at the end of the period it rained like a flood for some time. Seeing this, the people believed in what they were told, and honored the priest Isaac, looking upon him as one of the saints, and thinking that he must have Yezidi blood in him. For more than twenty years this story has been told as one of the tales of their saints.

Once Šeiḥ 'Adî bn Musâfir and his *murids* were entertained by God in heaven. When they arrived, they did not find straw for their animals. Therefore Šeiḥ 'Adî ordered his *murids* to carry straw from his threshing floor on the earth. As it was being transported, some fell on the way, and has remained as a sign in heaven unto our day. It is known as the road of the straw man.

They think that prayer is in the heart; therefore they do not teach their children about it. And in their books neither is there any rule regarding prayer, nor is prayer considered a religious obligation.

Some assert that at one time Šeiḥ 'Adî, in company with Šeiḥ 'Abd-al-Ķâdir, made a pilgrimage to Mecca, where he remained four years. After his absence Melek Tâ'us appeared to them (the two *šeihs*) in his symbol. He dictated some rules to them and taught them many things. Then he was hidden from them. Four

years later Šeiḥ 'Adī returned from Mecca; but they refused him and would not accept him. They asserted that he had died or ascended to heaven. He remained with them, but was without his former respect. When the time of his death came, Melek Ṭā'us appeared to them and declared, "This is Šeiḥ 'Adī himself, honor him." Then they honored him and buried him with due veneration, and made his tomb a place of pilgrimage. In their estimation it is a more excellent spot than Mecca. Everyone is under obligation to visit it once a year at least; and, in addition to this, they give a sum of money through the šeiḥs to obtain satisfaction (that Šeiḥ 'Adī may be pleased with them). Whoever does this not is disobedient.

Moreover, it is said that the reason why the pilgrimage to his tomb is regarded as excellent by us and by God is that in the resurrection Šeiḥ 'Adī will carry in a tray all the Yezidis upon his head and take them into paradise, without requiring them to give account or answer. Therefore they regard the pilgrimage to his tomb as a religious duty greater than the pilgrimage to Mecca.

There are some domes, huts, around the tomb of Šeiḥ 'Adī. They are there for the purpose of receiving blessings from the tomb. And they are all attributed to the great Šeiḥs, as the hut of 'Abd-al-Ḳādir-al-Jilānī;⁷⁹ the hut of Šeiḥ Ḳadīb-al-Bān; the hut of Šeiḥ Šams-ad-Dīn; the hut of Šeiḥ Maṣṣūr-al-Ḥallāj, and the hut of Šeiḥ Ḥasan-al-Baṣrī. There are also some other huts. Each hut has a banner made of calico. It is a sign of conquest and victory.

Eating of deer's meat is forbidden them, they say, because the deer's eyes resemble the eyes of Šeiḥ 'Adī. Verily his virtues are well-known and his praiseworthy qualities are traditions handed down from generation to generation. He was the first to accept the Yezidi religion. He gave them the rules of the religious sect and founded the office of the šeiḥ. In addition to this, he was renowned for his devotion and religious exercise. From Mount Lališ, he used to hear the preaching of 'Abd-al-Ḳādir-al-Jilānī in Bagdad. He used to draw a circle on the ground and say to the religious ones, "Whosoever wants to hear the preaching of

Al-Jilānī, let him enter within this circle." The following custom, which we have, began with him: If we wish to swear to anyone, a *šeiḥ* draws a circle, and he who is to take an oath, enters into it.

At one time, passing by a garden, *Šeiḥ 'Adī* asked about lettuce; and, as no one answered, he said, "Huss" (hush). For this reason lettuce is forbidden and not eaten.

As regards fasting, they say about the month of Ramaḍān that it was dumb and deaf. Therefore, when God commanded the Moslems to fast, he likewise commanded the Yezidis, saying to them in the Kurdish language, "*sese*," meaning "three." The Mohammedans did not understand it; they took it for "*se*," "thirty." For this reason, they (Yezidis) fast three days. Moreover, they believe there are eating, drinking, and other earthly pleasures in the next world.⁸⁰ Some hold that the rule of heaven is in God's hands, but the rule of the earth is in *Šeiḥ 'Adī's* hands. Being exceedingly beloved by God, he bestowed upon him according to 'Adī's desire.

They believe in the transmigration of souls. This is evinced by the fact that when the soul of Maṇṣūr-al-Ḥallāj parted from his body when the Caliph of Baḡdad killed him and cast his head into the water, his soul floated on the water. By a wonderful chance and a strange happening, the sister of the said Maṇṣūr went to fill her jar. The soul of her brother entered it. Without knowing what had happened, she came with it to the house. Being tired, she felt thirsty and drank from the jar. At that moment the soul of her brother entered her, but she did not perceive it until she became pregnant. She gave birth to a son who resembled *Šeiḥ Maṇṣūr* himself. He became her brother according to birth and her son according to imputation. The reason why they do not use drinking-vessels which have narrow mouths, or a net-like cover, is that when one drinks water from them they make a sound. When the head of *Šeiḥ Maṇṣūr* was thrown into the water it gurgled. In his honor they do not use the small jars with narrow necks.

They assert that they expect a prophet who will come from Persia to annul the law of Mohammed and abrogate Islam. They

believe that there are seven gods, and that each god administers the universe for ten thousand years; and that one of these gods is Lasiferos, the chief of the fallen angels, who bears also the name Melek Ṭā'us. They make him a graven image after the form of a cock⁸¹ and worship it. They play the tambourine and dance before it to make it rejoice with them. They (*kawwāls*) travel within the Yezidis' villages to collect money, at which time they take it into the houses that it may bless and honor them. Some say that Šeiḥ 'Adī is a deity; others that he is like a Vizier to God. To him all things are referred. This is the Melek Ṭā'us age. The ruling and administrative power is in his hands until the thousandth year. When the time comes to an end he will deliver the power to the next god to rule and administer until another thousand years shall be ended, and so on until the seventh god. And yet there is accord and love among these gods, and none is jealous of the one who may rule and administer the world for a period of ten thousand years. They have a book named *Al Jilwah* that they ascribe to Šeiḥ 'Adī, and they suffer no one who is not one of them to read it.

Mention is made in some of their books that the First Cause is the Supreme God, who before he created this world, was enjoying himself over the seas;⁸² and in his hand was a great White Pearl, with which he was playing. Then he resolved to cast it into the sea, and when he did so this world came into being.

Moreover, they think themselves not to be of the same seed from which the rest of mankind sprung, but that they are begotten of the son of Adam, who was born to Adam of his spittle. For this reason they imagine themselves nobler and more pleasing to the gods than others.

They say they have taken fasting and sacrifice from Islam; baptism from Christians; prohibition of foods from the Jews; their way of worship from the idolaters; dissimulation of doctrine from the Rafidis (Shi'ites); human sacrifice and transmigration from the pre-Islamic paganism of the Arabs and from the Sabians. They say that when the spirit of man goes forth from his body, it enters into another man if it be just; but if unjust, into an animal.

THE POEM IN PRAISE OF ŠEIḤ 'ADÎ

Peace Be unto Him

1. My understanding surrounds the truth of things,
2. And my truth is mixed up in me,
3. And the truth of my descent is set forth by itself,
4. And when it was known it was altogether in me.
5. And all that are in the universe are under me,
6. And all the habitable parts and deserts,
7. And everything created is under me,
8. And I am the ruling power preceding all that exists.
9. And I am he that spoke a true saying,
10. And I am the just judge and the ruler of the earth.
11. And I am he that men worship in my glory,
12. Coming to me and kissing my feet.
13. And I am he that spread over the heavens their height.
14. And I am he that cried in the beginning.
15. And I am he that of myself revealeth all things,
17. And I am he to whom came the book of good tidings
18. From my Lord, who burneth the mountains.
19. And I am he to whom all created men come
20. In obedience to kiss my feet.
21. I bring forth fruit from the first juice of early youth
22. By my presence, and turn toward me my disciples.
23. And before this light the darkness of the morning cleared away.
24. I guide him that asketh for guidance.
25. I am he that caused Adam to dwell in Paradise
26. And Nimrod to inhabit a hot burning fire.
27. And I am he that guided Aḥmed the Just,
28. And let him into my path and way.
29. And I am he unto whom all creatures
30. Come for my good purposes and gifts.
31. And I am he that visited all the heights,
32. And goodness and charity proceed from my mercy.
33. And I am he that made all hearts to fear
34. My purpose, and they magnify the majesty and power of my awfulness.
35. And I am he to whom the destroying lion came
36. Raging, and I shouted against him and he became stone.
37. And I am he to whom the serpent came,
38. And by my will I made him dust.
39. And I am he that struck the rock and made it tremble,

40. And made to burst from its sides the sweetest of waters.
41. And I am he that sent down the certain truth;
42. For me is the book that comforteth the oppressed.
43. And I am he that judged justly,
44. And when I judged it was my right.
45. And I am he that made the springs⁸³ to give water,
46. Sweeter and pleasanter than all waters.
47. And I am he that caused it to appear in my mercy,
48. And by my power I called it the pure.
49. And I am he to whom the Lord of heaven hath said,
50. Thou art the just Judge and Ruler of the earth.
51. And I am he that disclosed some of my wonders,
52. And some of my virtues are manifested in that which exists.
53. And I am he that caused the mountains to bow,
54. To move under me and at my will.⁸⁴
55. And I am he before whose majesty the wild beasts cried;
56. They turned to me worshiping, and kissed my feet.
57. And I am 'Adī aš-Šāmī, the son of Musāfir.
58. Verily the All-Merciful has assigned unto me names,
59. The heavenly throne, and the seat, and the (seven) heavens, and the earth.
60. In the secret of my knowledge there is no God but me.
61. These things are subservient to my power.
62. O mine enemies, why do you deny me?
63. O men, deny me not, but submit.
64. In the day of judgment you will be happy in meeting me.
65. Who dies in my love, I will cast him
66. In the midst of Paradise, by my will and pleasure;
67. But he that dies unmindful of me
68. Will be thrown into torture in misery and affliction.
69. I say I am the only one and the exalted;
70. I create and make rich those whom I will.
71. Praise be to myself, for all things are by my will,
72. And the universe is lighted by some of my gifts.
73. I am the king that magnifies himself,
74. And all the riches of creation are at my bidding.
75. I have made known unto you, O people, some of my ways.
76. Who desireth me must forsake the world.
77. And I can also speak the true saying,
78. And the garden on high is for those who do my pleasure.
79. I sought the truth and became a confirming truth;
80. And by the like truth shall they, like myself, possess the highest place.

THE PRINCIPAL PRAYER OF THE YEZIDIS

1. Amen, Amen, Amen!
2. Through the intermediation of Šams-ad-Din,
3. Faḥr ad-Din, Naṣir-ad-Din
4. Sajad ad-Din, Šeiḥ Sin (Ḥusein),
5. Šeiḥ Bakr, Qādir ar-Raḥmān.
6. Lord, thou art gracious, thou art merciful;
7. Thou art God, king of kings and lands,
8. King of joy and happiness,
9. King of good possession (eternal life).
10. From eternity thou art eternal.
11. Thou art the seat of luck (happiness) and life;
12. Thou art lord of grace and good luck.
13. Thou art king of jinns and human beings,
14. King of the holy men (saints),
15. Lord of terror and praise,
16. The abode of religious duty and praise,
17. Worthy of praise and thanks.
18. Lord! Protector in journeys,
19. Sovereign of the moon and of the darkness,
20. God of the sun and of the fire,
21. God of the great throne,
22. Lord of goodness.
23. Lord! No one knows how thou art.
24. Thou hast no beauty; thou hast no height.
25. Thou hast no going forth; thou hast no number.
26. Lord! Judge of kings and beggars,
27. Judge of society and of the world,
28. Thou hast revealed the repentance of Adam.
29. Lord, thou hast no house; thou hast no money;
30. Thou hast no wings, hast no feathers;
31. Thou hast no voice, thou hast no color.
32. Thou hast made us lucky and satisfied.
33. Thou hast created Jesus and Mary.
34. Lord, thou art gracious,
35. Merciful, faithful.
36. Thou art Lord; I am nothingness.
37. I am a fallen sinner,
38. A sinner by thee remembered.
39. Thou hast led us out of darkness into light.
40. Lord! My sin and my guilt,
41. Take them and remove them.
42. O God, O God, O God, Amen!

They are divided into seven classes, and each class has functions peculiar to itself that cannot be discharged by any of the other classes. They are:

1. Šeiḥ. He is the servant of the tomb, and a descendant of Imam Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. No one can give a legal decision or sign any document except the šeiḥ who is the servant of Šeiḥ 'Adī's tomb. He has a sign by which he is distinguished from others. The sign is a belt which he puts on his body, and net-like gloves, which resemble the halters of camels. If he goes among his people, they bow down and pay him their respects. The šeiḥs sell a place in paradise to anyone who wishes to pay money.

2. Emir. The emirship specifically belongs to the descendants of Yezīd. They have a genealogical tree, preserved from their fathers and forefathers, which goes up to Yezīd himself. The emirs have charge of the temporal and governmental affairs, and have the right to say, "Do this and do not that."

3. Ḳawwāl. He has charge of tambourines and flutes and religious hymns.

4. Pīr. To him appertain the conduct of fasts, the breaking of fasts, and hair-dressing.

5. Kôchak. To him appertain the duties of religious instruction, and sepulture, and interpretation of dreams, i. e., prophecy.

6. Faḳīr. To him appertain the duties of instruction of boys and girls in playing on the tambourines, in dancing and religious pleasure. He serves Šeiḥ 'Adī.

7. Mulla. To him appertain the duties of instructing children. He guards the books and the mysteries of religion and attends to the affairs of the sect.

At one time (A. H. 1289; A. D. 1872), the Ottoman power wanted to draft from among them an army instead of taking the tax which was its due. They presented to the government all the rules that prevented them from complying. These all pertain to religion and are moral obligations upon them. They are as follows:

ARTICLE I

According to our Yezidi religion every member of our sect, whether big or little, girl or woman, must visit Melek Ṭa'us three times a year,

that is, first, from the beginning to the last of the month of April, Roman calendar; secondly, from the beginning to the end of the month of September; thirdly, from the beginning to the end of the month of November. If anyone visit not the image of Melek Tâ'us, he is an infidel.

ARTICLE II

If any member of our sect, big or little, visit not his highness Šeiḥ 'Adi bn Musâfir—may God sanctify his mysteries! once a year, i. e., from the fifteenth to the twentieth of the month of September, Roman calendar, he is an infidel according to our religion.

ARTICLE III

Every member of our sect must visit the place of the sunrise every day when it appears, and there should not be Moslem, nor Christian, nor any one else in that place. If any one do this not, he is an infidel.

ARTICLE IV

Every member of our sect must daily kiss the hand of his brother, his brother of the next world, namely, the servant of the Mahdi, and the hand of his šeiḥ or *pîr*. If any one do this not, he is regarded as an infidel.

ARTICLE V

According to our religion it is something intolerable when the Moslem in the morning begins to say in prayer, God forbid! "I take refuge in God, etc."⁸⁵ If any one of us hear it, he must kill the one who says it and kill himself; otherwise he becomes an infidel.

ARTICLE VI

When one of our sect is on the point of death, if there be no brother of the next world and his šeiḥ, or his *pîr* and one of the *ḵawwâls* with him to say three sayings over him, viz.: "O servant of Melek Tâ'us, whose ways are high, you must die in the religion of the one we worship, who is Melek Tâ'us, whose ways are high, and do not die in any other religion than his. And if some one should come and say to you something from the Mohammedan religion, or Christian religion, or Jewish religion, or some other religion, do not believe him, and do not follow him. And if you believe and follow another religion than that of the one we worship, Melek Tâ'us, you shall die an infidel," he becomes an infidel.

ARTICLE VII

We have something called the blessing of Šeiḥ 'Adi, that is, the dust of the tomb of Šeiḥ 'Adi—may God sanctify his mystery! Every member of our sect must have some of it with him in his pocket and eat of it every morning. And if he eat not of it intentionally, he is an infidel. Likewise

at the time of death, if he possess not some of that dust intentionally, he dies an infidel.

ARTICLE VIII

Regarding our fasting, if any one of our sect wish to fast, he must fast in his own place, not in another. For while fasting he must go every morning to the house of his *šeih* and his *pîr*, and there he must begin to fast; and when he breaks his fast, likewise, he must go to the house of his *šeih* and his *pîr*, and there break the fast by drinking the holy wine of the *šeih* or the *pîr*. And if he drink not two or three glasses of that wine, his fasting is not acceptable, and he becomes an infidel.

ARTICLE IX

If one of our sect go to another place and remain there as much as one year, and afterward return to his place, then his wife is forbidden him, and none of us will give him a wife. If anyone give him a wife, that one is an infidel.

ARTICLE X

Regarding our dress, as we have mentioned in the fourth Article that every one of our sect has a brother for the next world, he has also a sister for the next world.⁸⁶ Therefore if any one of us make for himself a new shirt, it is necessary that his sister for the next world should open its neck band, i. e., the neck band of that shirt, with her hand. And if she open it not with her hand, and he wear it, then he is an infidel.

ARTICLE XI

If some one of our sect make a shirt or a new dress, he cannot wear it without baptizing it in the blessed water which is to be found at the shrine of his highness *Šeih 'Adi*—may God sanctify his mystery! If he wear it, he is an infidel.

ARTICLE XII

We may not wear a light black dress at all. We may not comb our heads with the comb of a Moslem or a Christian or a Jew or any other. Nor may we shave our heads with the razor used by any other than ourselves (Yezidis), except it be washed in the blessed water which is to be found at the shrine of his highness *Šeih 'Adi*. Then it is lawful for us to shave our heads. But if we shave our heads without the razor having been washed in that water, we become infidels.

ARTICLE XIII

No Yezidi may enter the water-closet of a Moslem, or take a bath at a Moslem's house, or eat with a Moslem spoon, or drink from a Moslem's cup, from a cup used by any one of another sect. If he does, he is an infidel.⁸⁷

ARTICLE XIV

Concerning food, there is a great difference between us and the other sects. We do not eat meat of fish, squash, *bamia* (okra), *fasulia* (beans), cabbage, or lettuce. We cannot even dwell in the place where lettuce is sown.⁸⁸

For these and other reasons, we cannot enter the military service, etc. The names of those who affixed their signatures:

THE HEAD OF THE YEZIDI SECT, THE EMIR OF ŠEIHÂN,
ḤUSEIN.

THE RELIGIOUS ŠEIH OF THE YEZIDI SECT OF THE DISTRICT
OF ŠEIHÂN, ŠEIH NAŠIR.

THE CHIEF ŠEIH OF THE VILLAGE OF MAM REŠÂN, PİR
SULEIMAN.

THE VILLAGE CHIEF OF MUSKÂN, MURAD.

“ “ “ “ ḤATÂRAH, AYYÜB.

“ “ “ “ BEIBÂN, ḤUSEIN.

“ “ “ “ DAHĶÂN, ḤASSAN.

“ “ “ “ ḤUZRÂN, NU'MÔ.

“ “ “ “ BÂKASRA, 'ALİ.

“ “ “ “ BÂ' AŞİĶA, JAMÔ.

“ “ “ “ ḤÖŞÂBA, İLİAS.

“ “ “ “ KREFAHİN, SAĞD.

“ “ “ “ ĶABÂREH, KÔCHAK.

“ “ “ “ KASÔ.

“ “ “ “ SİNÂ, 'ABDÔ.

“ “ “ “ 'AIN SIFNİ, GURGÔ.

“ “ “ “ ĶASR-'İZZ-AD-DİN.

“ “ “ “ ḤEİRÔ.

“ “ “ “ KİBERTÔ, TÂHIR.

AND OTHERS.

These are they whose names were in the petition above mentioned, and from which we copied a few things.

The result was that when they presented this petition, they were exempted from military service, but they paid a tax in money as did the Christians.

NOTES

1. Al-Jilwah is said to have been written in 558 A.H., by Šeih Faḥr-ad-Dîn, the secretary of Šeih 'Âdî, at the dictation of the latter. The original copy, wrapped in linen and silk wrappings, is kept in the house of Mulla Ḥaidar, of Baadrie. Twice a year the book is taken to Šeih 'Âdî's shrine. (Letter from Šammas Jeremia Šamir to Mr. A. N. Andrus, of Mardin, dated October 28, 1892.)

2. The Black Book is said to have been written by a certain Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, in 743 A. H. The original copy is kept in the house of Kehyah (chief) 'Ali, of Kasr 'Az-ad-Dīn, one hour west of Semale, a village east of Tigris. The book rests upon a throne, having over it a thin covering of red broadcloth, of linen, and other wrappings. Then is disclosed the binding, which is of wood. (Šammas Jeremia Šamir, as above; A. N. Andrus, letter, dated November 9, 1901.)

3. The exact number of the Yezidis is unknown. See also Société de Géographie de l'Est, *Bulletin*, 1903, p. 284; Al Mašriḳ, II, 834.

4. For a fuller account of the literature on the Yezidis, consult J. Menant, *Les Yézidis*, and Paul Perdrizet, Société de Géographie de l'Est, *Bulletin*, 1903, pp. 281 ff.

5. Société de Géographie de l'Est, *Bulletin*, 1903, p. 297.

6. Fraser, *Mesopotamia and Persia*, pp. 285, 287; Rich, *Residence in Kurdistan*, II, 69; Al Mašriḳ, II, 396; Badger, *The Nestorians and their Rituals*, I, 111; Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, III, 439.

7. Michel Febvre, *Théâtre de la Turquie*, p. 364; Société de Géographie de l'Est, *Bulletin*, 1903, pp. 299, 301; cf. also J. Menant, *Les Yézidis*, pp. 52, 86, 132.

8. Oppenheim, *Vom Mittelmeer zum persischen Golf*, 1900, II, 148; Victor Dingelstedt, *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, XIV, 295; Southgate, *A Tour through Armenia*, II, 317; A. V. Williams Jackson, "Yezidis," in the *New International Encyclopedia*, XVII, 939; Perdrizet, *loc. cit.*, p. 299.

9. A. V. Williams Jackson, *Persia Past and Present*, p. 10, *New International Encyclopedia*, "Yezidis;" Perdrizet, *loc. cit.*

10. Dingelstedt, *loc. cit.*; *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, I, "Kurdistan."

11. Société de Géographie de l'Est, *loc. cit.*; *Encyclopedia of Missions*, "Yezidis;" A. V. Williams Jackson, *loc. cit.*

12. On these sects consult Aš-Šahrastānī, I, 86, 89, 100.

13. Not like Mohammed, to whom, according to Moslem belief, the Koran was revealed at intervals.

14. On the Šabians of the Koran, see Baiḍāwī and Zamaḥšari on *Suras* 2, 59; 5, 73; 22, 17.

15. On the Šabians of Ḥarrān see Fihrist, p. 190; on the Šabians in general consult Aš-Šahrastānī, II, 203; on the location of Ḥarrān and Wasit, see Yaḳūt, II, 331, and IV, 881.

16. To get more particular information in regard to Yezīd bn Unaisa, I wrote to Mosul, Bagdad, and Cairo, the three centers of Mohammedan learning, and strange to say, none could throw any light on the subject.

17. Al-Ḥaraṭīyah he describes as Ašḥāb Al-Ḥareṭ (I, 101), al-Ḥafāziyah, Ašḥāb Ḥafez (*ibid.*), etc.

18. Ibn Ḥallikān says: "Aš-Šahrastānī, a dogmatic theologian of the Ašarite sect, was distinguished as an Imām and a doctor of the law. He displayed the highest abilities as a jurisconsult. The *Kitāb al-Milāl wa-n-Nihāl* (this is the book in which Aš-Šahrastānī traces the Yezidi sect to Yezid bn Unaisa) is one of his works on scholastic theology. He remained without an equal in that branch of science."

19. It is to be noticed also that the name "Unaisa" is very common among the Arabs; cf. Ibn Sa'ad (ed. Sachau), III, 254, 260, 264, 265, 281, 283, 287, 289; Musnad, VI, 434; Mishkat, 22, 724.

20. Professor C. C. Torrey, of Yale University, kindly examined the manuscript on this point.

21. *Geschichte der herrschenden Ideen des Islams*, p. 195.

22. Ibn Ḥallikān (Egyptian edit., A. H. 1310), I, 316; Mohammed al-'Omari, al-Mauṣili, and Yāsīn al-Ḥātīb al-'Omari al-Mauṣili, "Šeiḥ 'Adī," quoted by M. N. Siouffi, *Journal asiatique*, 1885, 80; Yaḳut, IV, 374.

23. 'Itīqād Ahl as-Sunna, "Belief of the Sunnites," the Waṣaya, "Counsels to the Califs;" cf. C. Huart, *History of Arabic Literature*, p. 273.

24. See p. 239 of this paper.

25. Aš-Šahrastānī regards them a Ḥarijite sub-sect.

26. Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains*, II, 254.

27. Mohammed al-'Omari al-Mauṣili and Yāsīn al-Ḥātīb al-'Omari al-Mauṣili, "Šeiḥ 'Adī," quoted by M. N. Siouffi, *Journal asiatique*, Série viii, V (1885), 80.

28. George Warda, Bishop of Arbila, *Poems*, edited by Heinrich Hilgenfeld, Leipzig, 1904.

29. Such as their ceremonies at Šeiḥ 'Adī (Badger, *The Nestorians*, I, 117), which have obtained for them the name Cheraḡ Sonderan, "The Extinguishers of Light." Bar Hebraeus (*Chronicon Eccles.*, ed. Abeloos-Lamy, I, 219) speaks of similar practices among what he calls "Borborians," a branch of the Manichaeans, and calls them مُخْطَفُونَ, "The Extinguishers of Light." This name is applied to other eastern sects also; see *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, V, 124.

30. Professor Jackson, of Columbia University, seems to trace it to the "old devil-worship in Mazanderan" (*JAOS*, XXV, 178). But it is not certain that the Yezidis believe in Melek Ṭā'us as an evil spirit. In the history of religion the god of one people is the devil of another. Asura is a deity in the Rig Veda and an evil spirit only in later Brahman theology. In Islam the gods of heathenism are degraded into jinns, just as the gods of North Semitic heathenism are called še'irīm (hairy demons) in Lev. 17:7; or as the gods of Greece and Rome became devils to early Christians. See W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 120; Fihrist, pp. 322, 326.

Professor M. Lidzbarski (*ZDMG*, LI, 592), on the other hand, argues that ʿAʿus is the god Tammuz. His contention is based on the assumption that the word ʿAʿus must embody an ancient god; that in Fihrist, 322, the god ʿAuz تاوز has a feast on the 15th of Tammuz (July); that in Kurdish, the language of the Yezidis, *m* is frequently changed to *w*. This theory also is untenable, for one might guess at any ancient god. The exact form of the name "Tauz" is uncertain (see Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier*, II, 202); the statement that in Kurdish *m* is frequently changed to *w* is not true, if one would set it up as a grammatical rule to explain such phenomena; the Kurdish-speaking people never pronounce Tammuz, "Tauz;" and, finally, in the Yezidi conception of Melek ʿAʿus there are no traces of the notion held respecting Tammuz.

31. Such a state of affairs finds a historical parallel in other religions. Take, for example, Christianity. In it we find that the distinctive characteristics of the founder have been wrapped up in many foreign elements brought in by those who came from other religions.

30.* The whole sentence in which the phrase, جبل الاسود, occurs is not found in Chabot, Parry, the Syriac manuscript which was written by Priest Ishāq and published by Samuel Giamil (Rome, 1900), nor in the Arabic manuscript of Šamir.

The Syrian Malkites called the mountain on which the convent of Mar Elia was built بدها اسودا, "Black Mountain." This mountain is identified by some with the Greek Δούξ (Alixis, XII, 12) and with the Arabic name الدقوس, and the Syriac ܕܥܡܠܐ, which Assemani thinks a corruption of the Arabic term for Jerusalem; see *Journal of Theological Studies*, II, 176-78.¹

31.* The Syriac text of Giamil, Monte Singar, 12, identifies Naumi with Noah.¹

32. وجه is a translation of the Syriac ܥܝܢܐ (πρόσωπον), 'face, person;' cf. Giamil, *loc. cit.*

33. امسكوها واحرقوها. The Syriac text of Chabot (p. 103), the Arabic MS of Šamir (p. 12), and Parry's translation (p. 381), show that it was Noah who caught and burned the serpent.

34. ستجذب امة واحدة وراي. The Syriac text of Chabot (p. 104) reads ܬܬܕܒܪ ܥܡܬܐ ܫܬܐ ܥܕܝܐ, "a nation shall be drawn after you." The Arabic MS of Šamir (p. 12) has منك ستخرج امة ملة, "from thee shall come forth a people and a nation; Parry (*Six Months in a Syrian Monastery*, 381) agrees with the reading of Šamir.

¹ By an oversight in the numbering of the notes, 30 and 31 have been repeated; 30* and 31* refer to the Arabic text, p. 124, l. 1, and p. 126, last line, respectively.

36. Giamil (p. 48) has: *ܝܙܝܕ ܡܠ ܡܠܟܐ ܫܦܘܪ*,
 "Yezîd descended from King Sapor."

38. يحفظون ثلاثة ايام. The text seems to be corrupt, so also the Syriac text of Chabot (p. 108), and cf. Parry (p. 383). Giamil (p. 33), seems to have the right reading: «*ܡܨܬܩܝܢ ܐܠܗܝܡ ܕܥܪܒܝܢ ܕܥܪܒܝܢ*».

40. **שקץ** is the Hebrew word שָׁקַץ, "detestation, detestable thing;" cf. Lev. 7:21. The Syriac text of Chabot (p. 113) has ܫܩܝܝܬܐ. Browne says: "The MS has *Shuqus* and *Shags*. He substitutes *Shuhus* and *Shahs*, "personages," or "images," Parry, *op. cit.*, pp. 384, 385, 386. The Hebrew word is an opprobrious term for idols, and used to express the deepest abhorrence of them. See *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, "Idol."

42. کبدوش. The Syriac text of Chabot (p. 14), and Giamil (p. 12), have ܟܒܕܘܫ; the Arabic MS of Šamir کفدوش (p. 16). Browne (Parry, p. 386) reads *gavdush* and regards it a corruption of the Persian *gavgusht*.

44. سناسل. Chabot (p. 15) has سناسل; Šamir (p. 17) شناسل, and so Parry (p. 387); but he reads *shamashil*, and regards it "an Arabic form of plural from *shemshal*." I cannot conjecture the etymology of سناسل.

45. It is the name of some religious practice. Cf. Giamil, p. 75.

47. هرطوقی is Kurdish. هر is imperative singular second person, meaning 'go!' طوقی "into the ring;" the final *i* is locative.

47.* (ملك طالس) لوسيفروس is Latin *Lucifer* (Isa. 14:12). The compiler, Dāud Aṣ-Ṣāig, was a Romanized Syrian, and was probably familiar with the Latin *Lucifer*.

48. A. H. 295 (A. D. 807-8). This is the date of Al-Muḩtadir's accession, who reigned till A. H. 320 (A. D. 932); cf. W. Muir, *The Caliphate*, p. 559.

49. The life of Maṣṣūr-al-ḩallāj is given in *Fihrist* (ed. Flügel), p. 190.

50. The life of 'Abd-al-ḩādir of Jilān is given in Jami's *Nafaḩat* (ed. Lee), p. 584.

51. The Hakkari country is a dependency of Mosul, and inhabited by Kurds and Nestorians; cf. p. 104. Ibn ḩauḩal, *Kitāb al-Masālik wal-Mamālik* (ed. M. J. De Goeje), pp. 143 f.

52. Yaḩūt, IV, 373, calls it Laileš (ليلش), and says that Šeiḩ 'Adi lived there.

53. Presumably Yezid bn Mu'āwiya, the second caliph in the Omayyid dynasty, who reigned, A. D. 680-83; cf. W. Muir, *The Caliphate*, p. 327.

54. The life of ḩasan al-Baṣrī is given in Ibn ḩallikān. He is not to be identified with ḩasan al-Baṣrī (died 110 A. H.), who, according to Mohammedan tradition, first pointed the Koran text, with the assistance of Yaḩyā bn Yamar.

55. In Menant's *Yezidis*, 48, the names of these seven angels are somewhat differently given. According to Mohammedan tradition Zazil or Azazil was the original name of the devil.

56. By the "throne" (العرش) here is meant the throne of God, and by the "carpet" (الفرش) the earth; cf. Sura 60:131.

57. According to Moslem belief, wheat was the forbidden fruit; see Baidāwi on Sura, ii, 33.

58. Kunsiniyat is an obscure term.

59. 'Ain Sifni is about five miles from Ba'adrie; cf. Layard, *Nineveh*, I, 272.

60. Yaḩūt (III, 158) mentions a similar tradition.

61. These are indications of Mohammedan influence and censorship, for no Yezidi will ever write in his sacred book such words as Šeitān, Sar, etc.

62. That is, those of other religions.

63. Sanjaḩ سنجف is a Turkish word, meaning a banner; it is the name by which the Yezidis generally designate the sacred image of Melek Tā'us.

64. See notes 28 and 39.

* No. 47 is accidentally repeated.

65. The Harranian New Year fell on the first day of April, and on the sixth day they slaughtered an ox and ate it; cf. Fihrist, 322.

66. A similar practice is found among the Parsees of India, who hang a string of leaves across the entrances to their houses at the beginning of every New Year.

67. According to Babylonian mythology, human destiny was decreed on the New Year's day and sealed on the tenth day; cf. the *Hibbert Journal*, V, January, 1907. And according to Talmud (Mišna, Roš hašana, 1:2), New Year's is the most important judgment day, on which all creatures pass for judgment before the Creator. On this day three books are opened, wherein the fate of the wicked, the righteous, and those of the intermediate class are recorded. Hence prayer and works of repentance are performed at the New Year from the first to the tenth days, that an unfavorable decision might be averted; cf. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, "Penitential Day." R. Akiba says: "On New Year day all men are judged; and the decree is sealed on the Day of Atonement;" cf. *ibid.*, "Day of Judgment."

68. Ibrîk al-Aşfar means 'the yellow pitcher.'

69. Baḳbûk is a pitcher with a narrow spout.

70. Mar Mattie is a Syrian monastery about seven hours' ride east of Mosul, generally known by the name of Şeiḥ Mattie, in accordance with the general custom of sheltering a Christian saint beneath a Moslem title. Elijah is known as Al-Ḥuder, "the green one." Aphraates was bishop of Şeiḥ Mattie. The church of this monastery is a large building, chiefly interesting as containing the tomb of the great Bar Hebraeus, known as Abu-l-Faraj, who was ordained at Tripolis, and became in 1264 A. D. Metropolitan of Mosul. He lies buried, with his brother Barsom, in the "Beth Ẕadišeh (sanctuary) of the church, and over them is placed the inscription: "This is the grave of Mar Gregorias, and of Mar Barsome his brother, the children of the Hebrew, on Mount Elpep" (the Syriac name for Jabal Maḳlûb).

71. *Kani* in Kurdish means a spring; *zarr*, yellow. In Kurdish, as in Persian, the adjective usually follows the modified noun; cf. Tartibi Jadid, Ta'alimi Faresi. *The New Method for Teaching Persian* (in the Turkish language, ed. Kasbar, Constantinople, A. H. 1312), p. 18.

72. Jawîş (چاويش) is a Turkish word, signifying a sergeant.

73. This ceremony, as well as the names 'Arafat, Zamzam, etc., seems to be a mere copy of the Meccah Pilgrimage. 'Arafât (عرفات) "The Mount of Recognition," is situated twelve miles from Mecca, a place where the pilgrims stay on the ninth day of the day of the pilgrimage, and recite the midday and afternoon prayer. The Mohammedan legend says, that when our first parents forfeited heaven for eating wheat, they were cast down from the Paradise, Adam fell on the Isle of Ceylon, and Eve near

Jiddah (the port of Mecca) in Arabia; and that, after separation of 200 years, Adam was conducted by the Angel Gabriel to a mountain near Mecca, where he found and knew his wife, the mountain being then named 'Arafat, "Recognition."

74. The god Nisroch of Scripture, II Kings 19: 37; Isa. 37: 38.

75. See note 47.

76. A superstitious name signifying an ill omen.

77. That is, public prayers like those of the Mohammedans and of the Christians; cf. Al Mašrik, II, 313.

78. The text has يدها "her hand."

79. While the Yezidis venerate 'Abd al-Ḳādir of Jilān, the Nuṣairis curse him; cf. *JAOS*, VIII, 274.

80. This belief is taken from Mohammedanism.

81. The Arabs worshiped a deity under the form of a *nasr* (eagle), Aš-Šahrastānī, II, 434; Yaḳut, IV, 780; *The Syriac Doctrine of Addai* (ed. George Philips), p. 24.

82. Cf. Gen. 1:2, and the Babylonian Creation Epic.

83. That is the spring of Šeiḥ 'Adī.

84. The reference is to Jabal Maḳlūb, which, according to the Yezidi belief, moved from its place near Lališ to enable every Yezidi, wherever he may be, to direct his morning prayers toward the tomb of 'Adī.

85. The Moslem begins his prayer by cursing the devil.

86. That is a person of the same faith, a Yezidi.

87. A Nuṣairi, on the contrary, may become a Mohammedan with a Mohammedan, a Christian with a Christian, and a Jew with a Jew; cf. *JAOS*, VIII, 298.

88. The Ṣabians did not eat purslane, garlic, beans, cauliflower, cabbage, and lentils; cf. Bar Hebraeus, *At-Tārīḥ*, ed. A. Ṣaḷḥani, Beirut, 1890, 266.

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