

THE RELIGION OF THE YEZIDIS

RELIGIOUS TEXTS OF THE YEZIDIS

TRANSLATION, INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

GIUSEPPE FURLANI

TRANSLATED FROM ITALIAN WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES,
AN APPENDIX AND AN INDEX

BY

JAMSHEDJI MANECKJI UNVALA,
PH.D. (HEIDELBERG).

BOMBAY 1940

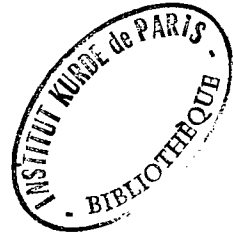
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PREFACE

During my visit to the editing firm of Nicola Zanichelli of Bologna in the summer of 1933, I bought a work in Italian entitled "Testi religiosi dei Yezidi" or Religious texts of the Yezidis — Bologna 1930, written by Prof. Giuseppe Furlani. As I found on its perusal that later Zoroastrianism had contributed not a little to the formation of the doctrine of the Yezidi religion and that some religious customs and beliefs of the Yezidis had a striking resemblance to those of the Zoroastrians of India and Iran, I decided to place the work before the Parsis in an English translation, following therein the example of my well-wisher and patron, the late Dr. Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi. The permission for the translation was kindly given by Prof. Furlani, who expressed his desire that it should be published in the journal of a learned society. I submitted, therefore, a manuscript copy of my translation to Mr. Behramgore Tahmuras Anklesaria, Joint Honorary Secretary of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, for publication in the Journal of the Institute, when I met him in Teheran in September 1934. But owing to unavoidable circumstances the translation could not be published in the Journal.

On December 12th, 1935, I read a paper in Gujarati on "The Yezidi sect of Kurdistān; a comparison of its religious customs and beliefs with those of the Zoroastrians of India and Īrān" in the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute under the auspices of the Rāhnumāe Mazdayasnān Sabhā. This paper with corrections and additions is embodied in the appendix.

In additional notes I have given extracts from an account of the Yezidis given by Dr. Mohaqqaqi and published in the Iran League Quarterly, vol. III, No. 4, June 1933, and from a note on the origin of the Kurds and their religion by Dr. Bletch Chirguh published in Publication de la Ligue National Kurde — Hoyboon, No. 6, Le Caire 1930. I have passed occasional remarks on certain assertions of these authors.

A student of Zoroastrianism should busy himself not only with Avesta and Pahlavi scriptures and their commentaries, but also with every source of information that throws direct or indirect light on the millenary history of Zoroastrianism. This work of Prof. Furlani, therefore, although it treats exclusively of the religion of the Yezidis and their scriptures is very useful in ascertaining the influence which later Zoroastrianism exercised on the mind of the founder of this sect as late as the twelfth century of the Christian era.

While placing this work before the Parsis I have the pleasant duty of acknowledging my deep indebtedness to the Trustees of Sir Ratan Tata for their prompt and generous support, without which it would have still remained unpublished, and for granting me all rights relating to its publication. My cordial thanks are due to Prof. Furlani for giving me the permission for this translation.

JAMSHEDJI MANECKJI UNVALA.

Navsari, 28th September 1940.

INTRODUCTION.

THE RELIGION OF THE YEZIDIS.

The Yezidis are a religious sect of Western Asia whose majority lives in the hills and mountains situated to the north-east of Mosul and in the Gebel Singār situated to the west of the city. This sect has also its adherents in the province of Damascus, in the environs of Aleppo, in Baghdad and in Tifis, and in the territories lying round this city. As it is generally held, although just as we shall see in what follows, erroneously, that they worship the Devil¹, they are called *Devil-worshippers*. They call themselves Ezidis². They are often called by the Iranians and the Turks *Şeytān-perest* and *Cyrāğ-söndür-en*³ respectively. The latter term means *extinguishers of lamps*, and refers to the orgies in which, according to some authors, the Yezidis plunge themselves during their feasts, during whose course they extinguish the lamps in order to be able to commit abominable acts more freely⁴. Another name by which they are mentioned is *Dawāsin*

1. R. C. Temple observes correctly in *The Yezidis or Devil-worshippers of Mosul*, *The Indian Antiquary*, LIV (1925), 94 - 98, p. 94, that generally speaking the term "worship of the Devil" or "of the devils" is inexact and wrong, invented particularly by the Europeans who have travelled in the East — imbibed with their notions of Christianity — for describing a phase of a religion, foreign to their mentality. It is considered to be the worship of the Devil, but it is in reality the worship rendered by primitive animists to supernatural spirits; the latter are called devils, particularly by Christian missionaries, in order to inspire disgust in the hearts of their new converts for the gods once worshipped by them. In fact, there is no question of the worship of the Devil, because the spirits worshipped in the majority of cases do not injure men. The observation of Temple is just. Still the case of the Yezidis is different. In fact, it can be said in a certain sense that they worship the Devil, as their God is the supreme angel, fallen from his seat, but afterwards re-installed by God in his original position. But he has nothing, absolutely nothing, of diabolic, and he is not different from God of the Jews, Christians or Mussulmans. Also F. Nau, *Recueil de textes et documents sur les Yezidis*, *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, XX (1915 - 1917), 142 - 200 and 225, 275, p. 144, admits that they are erroneously called "Devil-worshippers". I think that in view of the seriousness of science and the elementary respect of truth which every one should possess, we ought to cease to call them by this infamous name.

2. Th. Menzel, *Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der Jeziden*, in H. Grothe, *Meine Vorderasiens Expedition 1906 und 1907*, I, 1, Leipzig 1911, pp. LXXXIX - CXXI, p. 89.

3. Menzel, *loc. cit.*, 89.

4. The Syrian writer Barhebraeus speaks of the sect of the Barburians, issued from the religion of the Manichaeans in his *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, ed. Abbeloos et Lamy, I, Lovanii 1872, 219 - 222. When the Barburians were expelled from Irān, they went first

(singular *Dāsīn*), which is derived from the name of the religious province situated to the east of Mosul¹. The Syrians called them therefore *Dasnāyê*, which name is not to be confounded with *Day-şānāyê*, the name of the followers of Bardesanes of Edessa². The Arabs call them *Yazīdiyyah*, that is, *the Yezidic sect*; the word is an adjective of the feminine gender, derived from Yazīd, which is a very common name among the Islamised Arabs³. The latter name is given to them in as much as it is believed that their sect was founded by a certain Yazīd, whom some authors identify with the Omayyad Caliph Yazīd, son of Mu'āwiyah. But this is certainly wrong.

Their number is now much reduced, especially in consequence of the persecutions to which they were exposed in the nineteenth century and of the sanguinary repressions of their frequent revolts by the Ottoman authorities⁴. Their number attained in the preceding centuries certainly half a million. About fifty years ago they numbered 150,000 souls; but at present they seem to have been reduced to not more than 50,000 individuals. According to the statistics of 1912 the number of the Yezidis inhabiting the six Armenian provinces of Turkey was estimated at 37,000; according to the recent statistics of Mesopotamia ('Irāq) there are 21,000 followers of this sect⁵.

The whole community of the Yezidis is divided into five tribes or regions⁶: those of Russia, i.e. the Yezidis of Tiflis, of the district of

to Armenia and then to Syria. Barhebraeus relates that every year they celebrated a festival on a fixed day, during the course of which at night time, when men and women assembled themselves, they put out the lamps, and then every man took hold of a woman, in order to unite himself with her sexually, even if she was his own mother or sister. Then the Syrian author goes on describing other abominable and atrocious customs of this sect. It flourished during the epoch of Justinian, and it has therefore naturally nothing to do with the Yezidis.

1. S. Giamil, *Monte Singar, Storia di un popolo ignoto*, Roma 1900, 5-6; G. R. Driver, *The religion of the Kurds*, Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, II, 197-213, p. 208, note 5.

2. A. Mingana makes this strange confusion in *Devil-worshippers; their beliefs and their sacred books*, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1916, 505-526, p. 513, as he sees therein mysterious connections with Barhebraeus. But all this is fantastic.

3. For the name Yazīd, cf. G. Gabrieli, *Il nome proprio arabo-musulmano*, Roma 1915, 6.

4. For a description of the persecutions which the Yezidis had to undergo at the hands of the Turks, cf. J. Menant, *Les Yezidis. Épisodes de l'histoire des adorateurs du diable*, Paris 1892, 162-219.

5. The statistics quoted above are taken from Driver, *Studies in Kurdish history*, Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, II, 491-511, p. 495. Nau, *loc. cit.* 142, increases their number to 200,000 or 300,000. Menant, *loc. cit.* 47, makes it 50,000. A. N. Andrews, *The Encyclopaedia of Missions*, New York and London, 1904, s. under *Yezidis*, 798, estimates it at 200,000.

6. E. H. Browne in O. H. Parry, *Six months in a Syrian Monastery*, London 1895, 358.

Ērivān and of the district of Kars; those of Ḥalatiyyah; those of Aleppo; those of Mt. Singār; and those of Šeyhān, which is situated to the north-east of Mosul. This last province is its most important centre, because it is there that the central and national sanctuary of the sect is situated. It is the tomb of Šeyḥ 'Adī, their prophet and reformer of their religion, with the temple and other edifices, forming the goal of their annual pilgrimages. The political chief of the sect is called Mīr Ḥaġġ, i. e. *Prince of the pilgrimage*. He resides in Ba'īdrī in Šeyhān which is situated to the north of Mosul, at a distance of a few miles from Alqōš. The sanctuary of Šeyḥ 'Adī, also called in short Šeyḥ 'Adī, is situated to the north of Ba'īdrī, at the bottom of a narrow valley, three hours on horseback from the village.

The religion of the Yezidis is monotheistic; still it recognises a certain number of semi-divine or avowedly divine beings who are somewhat like intermediaries between supreme God and man, — a sort of angels or messengers of God — and who lend it a certain polytheistic character. It approaches by its general character rather Islām than all other great religions of Western Asia; still it has some practices in common with Christianity. It must have had originally closer affinity with the Iranian dualism; thus, for example, the worship of that being which is the Devil according to the beliefs of the Christians and the Mussulmans, but which is not that personage according to those of the Yezidis, is probably nothing else but the ancient worship of the principle of evil, peculiar to the dualism of Īrān. On the other hand, many other practices of the Yezidis are of frankly pagan origin; still it cannot be asserted that they worship the sun and the moon, as it was upheld by some¹. These practices present some affinities with a few ideas of the old Mussulman sect of the Ismaelits², as also with those of the sect of the Druses³. On the contrary, they do not seem to have had

1. Thus A. H. Layard asserts, *Nineveh and its remains: with an account of a visit to the Chaldaean Christians of Kurdistan, and the Yezidis, or devil-worshippers; an inquiry into the manners and arts of the ancient Assyrians*, I-II, London 1849, 289 and elsewhere. Nearly all authors who have treated the question of the Yezidis, especially Dussaud on p. 97, note 6 of his work quoted in the following note, have followed his opinion.

2. R. Dussaud, *Histoire et religion des Noçairīs*, Paris 1900, 45, note 1.

3. On the points of resemblance between the Yezidis and the Druses, especially as regards their doctrines, cf. Carnarvon, *Recollections of the Druses of the Lebanon and notes on their religion*, London 1860, 84-86: the same mixture of the Christian and Mussulman ceremonials, and the same respect for the sun and the fire; pork is prohibited, but wine is permitted; women are admitted to the priesthood among the Yezidis, and to the secret meetings of the Druses. Moreover, we have to add that among both these sects the Devil has the form of the peacock.

any relation with the paganism of the ancient Assyrians¹. The religion of the Yezidis partakes of the characteristic of other sects of the Near East, viz. Islamic, Christian and pagan sects; all these sects are eminently syncretic, with uncertain outlines, and full of contradictions; they never form a connected and closed system. They remind us frequently, by means of foolish combinations of ideas and by means of audacity of religious fancy, of the doctrines of the Gnostics which flourished in the bosom of the Christian church of the early centuries. The religious spirit lying at their basis is certainly the same.

But that which distinguishes the Yezidis from other religions and sects is the worship of a being, called by them Melek Tā'ūs, i.e. *King* or better *Angel Peacock*, who corresponds to the Devil in Christianity and Islām. In their doctrine, on the contrary, he is supreme among the angels, who, after his fall and repentance, has been re-installed by God in his original and pre-eminent position. Melek Tā'ūs is a *good* God; he is, in a certain sense, their real God, the active and efficient God, whereas the supreme God is inactive and does not care for the world. He is their Christ. It is, therefore, thoroughly wrong to assert that they worship the Devil, the source of all evil. They are even so far away from such a worship that they have not got at all the Devil in their religion²; they deny downright the existence of evil,

1. W. Fr. Ainsworth has strongly supported the Assyrian origin of the sect, cf. *The Assyrian origin of the Izedis or Yezides, the so-called "Devil worshippers"*, Transactions of the Ethnological Society, I (1861), 11 - 14. Moreover, he was the first to visit their national sanctuary. Their somatic characters are wholly Assyrian, 18. But this is not quite correct. There are *two* types, distinguishable among the modern Yezidis, one identical with that marked as the Assyrian type and which we know well from bas-reliefs of the Assyrians, and the other which has absolutely nothing of the Assyrian or of the Semitic type in general. Cf. for this question the photograph of Mir Sa'īd Bey and that of his wife, — of a purely Assyrian type —, on the one hand, and that of Ḥasan Faqīr, guardian of the national temple, reproduced by E. S. Stevens, *By Tigris and Euphrates*, London 1923, on p. 209. Again, the two Yezidis photographed by Lady Dorothy Mills, *Beyond the Bosphorus*, London 1926, facing p. 198, have no Assyrian somatic character whatsoever. It is not enough to be very hairy in order to be descendants of the Assyrians, as H. Ch. Luke seems to believe, *Mosul and its minorities*, London 1925, 125. The latter adds further that also the Assyrians dedicated bulls to the sun. But they did not sacrifice them only to the sun, but to all gods. All these pseudo-ethnological disquisitions are out of place, because the term Assyrian is rather vague. Still there is one element in the religion of the Yezidis which is truly Assyrian; it is the festival of the New Year. We shall see it further below, where we speak about it at length. Nor is it worth while to cite in order to corroborate the Assyrian origin, the supposed worship of birds by the Assyrians, as also Mingana now does, *loc. cit.* 517 - 518, following therein Layard, because the Assyrians had never worshipped birds of any species whatsoever. Cf. on Mesopotamian zoolatry what I have said in my *La religione babilonense e assira*, I, Bologna 1928, 859 - 861.

2. Thus Nau asserts justly, *loc. cit.* 144. Therefore they have not got verily even hell.

which, they say, is nothing else but the complex of those events and accidents which are unpleasant to man. Moreover, just as Melek Tā'ūs corresponds to Jesus Christ in the Christian religion, so also Šeyh 'Adi corresponds to Moḥammad, the prophet of Islām, and becomes plainly a god¹, precisely as Moḥammad acquires quasi-divine qualities and prerogatives in the belief of some Moḥammedan sects. Then as their worship of King Peacock is based on an Islamic legend, according to which the peacock helped the devil Iblīs in seducing Eve, and according to the Druses it was the peacock himself who led Eve to commit the sin in paradise², it must necessarily be admitted that the sect of the Yezidis presents several points of affinity with Islām, the more so as their prophet Šeyh 'Adi is identified by them with the famous Islamic Šūfi of the same name, and as some of their saints bear the names of celebrated Mussulman saints and learned men. But they recognise in Moḥammad only a prophet, side by side with all other messengers of God, among whom 'Īsa, i. e. Jesus Christ, is also reckoned³. We are not in a position to say with certainty, whether these abundant Mussulman traits are borrowed by the sect only from the Islamic surrounding in which it lived, or whether from the very beginning it has been a Mussulman sect, detached from the trunk of the *ġamā'ah*. Still the former supposition is rather more probable.

It is asserted by some Islamic authors that the Yezidis had been once a Mussulman sect. Aš-Šahrastānī says, for example, that they are the followers of a certain Yazid ibn Unaysah, and that they had separated themselves from the trunk of Islām as early as in the first century. Yazid taught that God had sent an apostle from amongst the Persians, and that he had revealed to him all at once a book which had been already written in heaven. The prophet had therefore left the religion of Moḥammad in order to follow that of the Sabaeans. But Yazid associated himself with those who considered Moḥammad as such a prophet, although he did not accept his

1. In fact the Angel Peacock, Yazid and 'Adi are one and the unique God, Father Anastās, *al-Yazīdiyyah*, al-Mašriq, II, 32 - 37, 151 - 156, 309 - 314, 395 - 399, 547 - 553, 651 - 655, 731 - 736, 830 - 832, p. 151.

2. Silvestre de Sacy, *Exposé de la religion des Druzes*, II, Paris 1838, 131 and note 4.

3. The Yezidis recognise 124,000 prophets, of whom the first in chronological order is Adam. They pretend to worship also Jesus Christ, whom they call the "Light of God", and at least the Yezidis of Armenia pretend also to worship the Armenian fathers of the Church and Saint Sergius, whom they identify with their national saint Ejdür Nābi, and in whose honour they observe fast for four days every year. But their first saint is 'Adi, the national prophet, who is at the same time the incarnation of the Divinity. Cf. *Dirr*, *loc. cit.* 568.

religion¹. These words of aš-Šahrastānī are either nothing else but a sort of refashioning of the real history of the origin of the Yezidis, or they are utterly wrong, with the exception of the circumstance of the revelation of the sacred book all at once, the revelation which is in fact mentioned in the *Ġilwah*, which is one of the sacred books of the Yezidis. As a whole, therefore, all that aš-Šahrastānī says, is not to be believed.

Different opinions are expressed on the origin of the name Yezidi. Some want to derive it from the name of the city of Yazd in Irān², whereas others connect it with the Persian word *yazdān* "God"³. This latter derivation is certainly admissible and has also a certain degree of probability. Still there is another derivation which has not been taken into consideration upto now and which presents a great probability of being exact. The Yezidis who speak Kurdish, a language with a vocabulary full of Persian words, call themselves, as we have said above, *Ezidis* or *Izidis*. Now, there are in the religion of Irān a class of semi-divine beings who are called by the same name. The *Yazatas* of the Avesta and the *Izeds* in Modern Persian, i. e. the beings "worthy of worship", are the angels of the Iranian celestial hierarchy, who transmit to men the will of God and execute it. They are the ministers of the Most High, the faithful executors of his commands and messages. They are divided into celestial and terrestrial spirits. The chief of the former ones is Ādar, the Fire, conceived to be the Son of Ahura Mazdā. He is the nearest ally of man in his fight against demons and sorcerers; the head of the terrestrial *Izeds* is Zarathuštra. These latter spirits are the protecting genii of the sun, the moon, the stars, and the fire. They are the angels subordinated to the heptade of the archangels of Ahura, i. e. of the Amesā Spentas,

1. *Kitāb al-milal wan-nihal*, ed. Cureton, I, 101. The passage is translated by Isya Joseph, *Yezidi texts*, American Journal of Semitic languages and literatures, XXV (1909), 111 - 156 and 218 - 254, and by Mingana, *loc. cit.* 514.

2. Thus Portoukalian, quoted by Menant, *loc. cit.* 52.

3. They themselves say that they are called Yezidis, because they are the worshippers of Yazdān, which is the Iranian name of God. G. P. Badger, *The Nestorians and their rituals*, I, London 1852, 112, says, on the contrary, that the Persian word is *Yezd* and means "God". Browne also is for *Yazdān*, *loc. cit.* 361, and also Driver, *Religion*, 200; but the latter admits that the derivation is not wholly satisfactory. Isolated rests the assertion of A. Guérinot, *Les Yezidis*, Revue du Monde Musulman, V, 581 - 630, p. 594, that they call God *ayezd*, a name corrupted from Persian *izēd*. By way of curiosity we quote further the opinion of Mariti, *Memorie istoriche del popolo degli Assassini e dei vecchi della montagna*, Livorno 1807, 41, who thinks that the name Yezidi is derived from Jesuit and means "disciple of Jesus".

the "immortal holy ones", the first of whom is Vohu Manō, "good thought" whose sacred bird is the cock¹.

The analogies which we find between these Iranian doctrines and the religion of the Yezidis are several and of great importance. We have already observed that the angels, *melek*, worshipped by the Yezidis have quasi-divine prerogatives. They are seven in number as in the religion of Īrān. The Yezidis worship also other angelic beings who are below the grade of these seven. It will not be a mere hazard that such beings are called *Ized* precisely in the religion of Īrān. The name corresponds perfectly to the name that the Yezidis give themselves in Kurdish, *Ezidi* or *Izidi*. This sect would therefore be, if the derivation is correct, that of the "worshippers of angels". This agrees exactly with the reality of facts, because a characteristic of their religion is precisely that of offering quasi-divine worship to angels, especially to the seven who are identified by them with as many celebrated doctors of Islām, like Šams ad-dīn, Fahr ad-dīn, and others. Moreover, there is no doubt that they show great veneration for fire. Further, the name of the reformer of their religion, 'Adī, presents great analogy with that of Ādar, head of the celestial *Izeds*, whence there would be no reason to exclude the possibility that 'Adī is none other than a popular explanation of the ancient name Ādar, the spirit of fire. But this is not enough. The Yezidis have a much developed and important demonology; they speak of great battles of the souls of the dead against the demons². Ādar is, as we have already pointed out, the nearest ally of men against malicious demons and sorcerers. The terrestrial *Izeds* are, moreover, the protecting genii of the sun, the moon, the stars, and the fire, and there is not the least doubt that the Yezidis, on their part, show for the sun, the moon and the fire at least great reverence, although it is not proved that they worship them directly. Another analogy between the two religions lies in the fact that Vohu Manō "Good Thought", the first of the "Immortal Holy Ones", has for its sacred symbol the cock, precisely as Melek Tā'ūs, the first in the divine hierarchy after the supreme God, is represented in the shape of a bird which must be a peacock, but which resembles sometimes in reality a cock.

What are exactly the connections of religious ideas of Īrān with those of the Yezidis, which we have pointed out just now, we are not in

1. V. Henry, *Le Parsisme*, Paris 1905, treats of the Yazatas on pp. 46-61; A. V. W. Jackson, *Die iranische Religion*, in *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, II, Strassburg 1896-1904, 612-708, pp. 640-641; R. Pettazzoni, *La religione di Zarathustra*, *Storia delle Religioni*, I, Bologna 1920, 57-58 and 134-135,

2. Giamil, *Monte Singar*, 56.

a position to establish. It seems to us at any rate difficult to deny them absolutely, and we are therefore inclined to assert that in the religious beliefs of the Yezidis the Iranian element has not played a small part, and that it is rather the basis, the fundamental substructure on which their doctrine developed itself later, approaching much nearer to Islām and partly also nearer to Christianity¹.

We know nothing or nearly nothing of the origin of the sect and its primitive beliefs. *Yezidi* or *Ezidi* and *Izidi* is, as we have said above, the name by which the Yezidis call themselves in Kurdish which is their common language. The inhabitants of Mt. Singār know certainly a little Arabic, but those living to the east of Mosul in Kurdistān, know no other language but Kurdish. The latter is an Aryan dialect, related to Persian, from which it has borrowed many words; among these Persian words there are also many derived from the Arabic and Turkish languages. Although a few expressions recur in the religious terminology of the Yezidis, which seem to have been derived directly from Arabic, without having passed through Persian, and although some peculiarities of their legends are not explained except by the Arabic language², it is very probable that the Yezidis

1. To what extent Iranism exercised its influence on the religion of the Yezidis there is no accord among scholars. Isya Joseph, for example, admits this influence in *Devil-worship. The sacred books and traditions of the Yezidiz*, Boston 1919, 109, admits only a limited resemblance in a few aspects between the Yezidi and the Iranian religion. Some Iranian elements penetrated into it through the fact that a few Persians also joined the sect. Driver, *Studies*, 510, rejects the origin of the worship of the Angel Peacock from the ancient worship of the Devil in Māzandarān, above all for the best reason that in the Angel Peacock there is no trace of the worship of the Devil, and secondly as, according to him, the Iranian origin of this religion is not at all proved. Still, it does not seem to me doubtful that there are in it some most important Iranian elements. Jackson, *Persia past and present*, New York 1906, 12-13, points out the following Iranian traits: dualistic elements; worship of the elements; belief in a primitive father who lived before Adam and did not fall into sin. But the Yezidis cannot be connected with the *daeva-yasna*, anathematised in the Avesta, 12. As regards the worship of the elements, it is to be observed that Jackson appertains to the batch of those scholars who hold that Šeyḥ Šams is the sun and Šeyḥ Sinn the moon, or rather directly Babylonian Sin. Cf. the article *Yezidis* written by the same author in the *New International Encyclopaedia*, XX, New York 1910, p. 725. According to M. Freiherr von Oppenheim, *Vom Mittelmeer zum persischen Golf*, II, Berlin 1900, 149, the fundamental thought of Yezidism is Zoroastrian. W. B. Heard, *Notes on the Yezidis*, *Journal of the R. Anthropological Institute*, XLI (1911), 200-219, note 201, points out, on the contrary, traces of Shamanism, peculiar to the Altaic tribes. In fact the ceremonies which are performed during the funeral have a specially Shamanistic character, cf. Giamil, *Monte Singar*, in the chapter on funeral ceremonies, 50-57, particularly 51.

2. Nearly all names of their saints, sub-gods, etc. Their hymns and prayers are also in Arabic.

spoke originally Arabic, and that they had migrated, if not all, a good number of them, from Syria and Babylonia, just as one of their traditions also makes an allusion to this¹. The name *Yazīdiyyah* is certainly derived from the name *Yazīd* which is common among the Arabs; and in fact one of the divinities of the Yezidis is precisely called *Yazīd*. But it is certain that they began to speak among themselves of God *Yazīd* only in order to explain the name *Yazīdiyyah*: God *Yazīd* owes his existence only to this name. He is surely not a primitive divine figure, from whose name they have derived their own actual name. They narrate also that *Yazīd* was the founder of the sect; some identify him with the second Omayyad Caliph *Yazīd*, son of *Mu'āwiyah*, who reigned in Damascus from 60 to 64 A.H.

They relate that *Yazīd*, son of *Mu'āwiyah*, restored the religion and gave his name to the sect. *Yazīd* did nothing but restore that primitive religion, which *Šahīd ibn Ğarrah*, son of Adam, had established and transmitted to his father Adam, and consequently to humanity. This *Šahīd* was procreated without intercourse with any woman whomsoever. He became the head of their family from whom they are descended. *Yazīd* abandoned *Islām*, the faith of his ancestors, in order to embrace the religion which was named after him. The new religion was spread in the whole of Syria upto the moment when *Šeyḥ 'Adī* appeared on the scene. The latter received one day a divine revelation which told him to go to a Christian convent and occupy it. When *'Adī* presented himself in the convent, the two monks who were the only persons to dwell in the cloister refused to give it over to him. *Šeyḥ 'Adī* did not wish to seize the convent from them by force, and therefore he went away and took refuge in a cave situated in its environs. But after some time the monks repented and gave up their rights on the convent in his favour. Then they requested him to communicate to them a spark of his power. Satisfied with their repentance *'Adī* said: "I give to you this grotto for your habitation, and I confer on this ground the power of healing all diseases of the mouth. Whoever will rub his mouth with the dust of this place, invoking at the same time your names, will instantly obtain the cure". Thereupon *'Adī* went to take possession of his convent².

They relate further of *Yazīd*, son of *Mu'āwiyah*, that he was originally *Melek Ṭā'ūs*. He chose to guide on earth in human shape the people on the path of salvation, and then after his victory over

1. Menzel, *loc. cit.* 193.

2. N. Siouffi, *Notices sur la secte des Yézidis*, *Journal Asiatique*, VII e S., t. XX (1882), 252 - 268, pp. 260 - 268.

Ḥasan and Ḥuseyn, he lived for three hundred years in Damascus. It appears from this that the Yezidis have a very vague idea of the real character of Yazid ibn Mu'āwiyah. Their ignorance on this subject is really great. They say that after a lapse of time that same Yazid came down on earth by means of metempsychosis with the name and in the shape of 'Adī in order to revive the faith of his people; he took possession of the temple of the Christians at Lālīš, and dwelt in it for some time. He devoted himself wholly to the propaganda of the faith. He will come down on the earth again several times by means of metempsychosis¹.

Šeyḥ 'Adī is their prophet; he is their great saint, worshipped almost as God, and often plainly qualified as their God. They regard his tomb which is in the temple, situated to the north-east of Mosul, as their national sanctuary.

But Šeyḥ 'Adī has nothing whatsoever to do with the religion of the Yezidis, which he did not found at all, probably not even indirectly, neither reformed nor restored it².

One of their traditions says that 'Adī ibn Musāfir, native of the district of Ba'albek (Ba'labakku) in Syria, retired to the mountain Hekkār near Mosul in consequence of a revelation which he received. He is therefore called *al-Hekkārī*. During one of his pilgrimages to Mecca the Angel Peacock appeared to him and revealed to him ethical and cultural precepts which he was enjoined to teach his disciples. Having returned to Mosul, the saint began to introduce new doctrines and new precepts among the Yezidis, not without encountering violent resistance from the population which lived in indolence, and in a

1. Menzel, *loc. cit.* 141-143: translation of Muṣṭafā Nūrī Pāšā, *'Abde-i Iblīs yahūd tāyfe-i bājiya-i Yezidiyye-ye bir nazār*, Mosul 1323 (= *The worshippers of the Devil or a glance on the rebellious sect of the Yezidis*).

2. On the contrary, Joseph, *Devil-worship*, admits freely that the Yezidis encountered at a given moment 'Adī and accepted him as their master, 129. R. Frank, *Scheich 'Adī, der grosse Heilige der Jezidits*, Berlin 1911, 102 and seq., holds that among the followers of 'Adī there must have been also numerous Yezidis; in the course of time the order called 'Adawiyah, formed around the saint, must have been slowly transformed into the Yezidi sect. I reject absolutely this thesis, because it seems to me inconceivable that a Sufic and mystical order, as was that of the saint, could have become degenerated in such a manner as to become the Yezidi sect. Frank lays too much weight on the remarks of Islamic writers, which are, on the contrary, deductions based on some partial facts or doubtful knowledge of some facts. It cannot, therefore, be held that the Yezidis were at a certain time a branch of Sufism, as Aḥmad Taymūr asserts, *al-Yezidiyyah wa-manāṣa'u nahlatihim*, al-Qāhira 1347, 45.

condition of profound religious decadence. He prohibited marriages among nearest relatives, regulated the functions and the hierarchy of the servants of the cult, introduced baptism of children, prohibited homicides, thefts, and perjuries. He introduced the custom of choosing a female *companion of the faith* for eternity¹. His authority increased more and more, especially owing to numerous miracles which he performed. The great festival celebrated by the Yezidis every year in the month of ʾĪlūl in his honour reminds us even now of the complete success of his reforms. The prophet died in 558 A. H. and was buried in the hermitage in which he lived, i. e. in Mt. Lālīs, which is nowadays the centre of the religious life of the sect. According to the tradition of the Yezidis, 'Adī died without leaving descendants. He had four brothers: Abū Bekr, 'Abd al-Qādir, Ismā'il, and 'Abd al-Azīz².

Not all that the Yezidis relate about their saint and prophet is pure legend, but there are in it several historical traits. They refer to the Mussulman saint and *ṣūfī* 'Adī ibn Musāfir who was born in the village of Bayt Fār, dependant on Ba'albek in Syria. He was a very pious and saintly man who followed in the footsteps of some celebrated *ṣeyḥs* of his time, like 'Abd al-Qādir al-Gilānī, 'Abd al-Qādir aš-Šahrazūri and Abū al-Wafā' al-Ḥulwānī. Then he retired to the mountain situated to the north-east of Mosul, where he constructed for himself a *zāwiyah* and lived there upto the end of the year 555 or 557 A. H. He was the author of several works on religious and theological subjects. He gathered around himself a great number of disciples who formed the religious order called *'Adawiyyah* after the name of the master. The principal work of 'Adī is the book which bears the title *I'tiqād ahl as-sunnah*, i. e. "Doctrine of the orthodox people", in which he deals with the fundamental doctrines of Islām, principally with theology, with the faith, and also with the ultimate things. Another work is entitled *Book in which the education of the soul is treated*. Its contents speak of the qualities which a good man ought to try to acquire and of those which he ought to abhor. Then we have another work which is still preserved called *Admonitions to the Caliph*, which is a sort of a pedagogical treatise written for a prince. Finally, there is another book of 'Adī called *Admonitions to the Disciple Ṣeyḥ*

1. According to Dirr, *loc. cit.* 569, 'Adī fixed besides religious rules of the sect also the tithe which was paid for the benefit of the temple and the clergy.

2. N. Siouffi, *Notice sur le cheikh 'Adī et la secte des Yezidis*, *Journal Asiatique*, VIII e S. t. V, 78-99, 83-85; Joseph, *Yezidi texts*, 118-119.

Qā'id, and to other disciples, besides several poems¹. The Yezidis assert that the poem attributed by them to Šeyḥ 'Adī, viz. his panegyric, goes back to the reformer of their religion himself. Still, it is certain that the latter poem, at least in its present form cannot be attributed to the Mussulman saint; but it may perhaps stand in certain connection with some of his poems, as there is no doubt that we find in it here and there a faint echo of the thoughts expressed by the Islamic saint in his poetic compositions². However the concordances are perhaps none other than casual; they are explained by the fact that they appertain to the circle of characteristic ideas of Islām.

If we compare the doctrines of 'Adī ibn Musāfir, as they are deduced from his work, and as they would be also of his order of 'Adawiyyah, with those of our sect, we see at once, I think, that the Yezidis cannot have borrowed their religious ideas from the mysticism of the saint of Lāliš. It would be utterly out of question that some conventicle of his confraternity could be in course of time so degenerated as to become the modern sect of the Yezidis. The relation between 'Adī ibn Musāfir and the Yezidis must have been therefore purely casual and accidental. The Yezidis had occupied probably the house or the convent which was inhabited once by the saint and his disciples and which had become, in consequence, after his death a celebrated place of pilgrimage; they had made it their national sanctuary, although they were perhaps totally ignorant of what were precisely his doctrines and those of his disciples. They must have dwelt very likely once in its environs, and must have heard the reports of the great fame of the master and of the devotion shown towards him by his followers. His order must not have continued to exist for a long time after his death, but it must have become extinct. Some tribes or families of the Yezidis must have precisely at that moment occupied his hermitage in the mountain and must have continued to render him that adoration which his own disciples had rendered. Thus 'Adī became a saint of the Yezidis, even their greatest saint, because his tomb was the biggest in the whole territory inhabited by the sect. In company with other saints worshipped by the Yezidis, he became the central pivot on which they embroidered pious legends and especially the history of his mission and reform, following in broad lines what they heard related by the Mussulmans about their prophet Moḥammad, because what the Yezidis relate about their saint and prophet is modelled on the figure

1. On the bibliography, writings, and doctrines of 'Adī, cf. Frank, *op. cit.* Further, comp. also C. Huart in the *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, s. v., I, 144.

2. Frank, *loc. cit.* 39.

of Moḥammad. Thus 'Adī became their prophet and nearly their God.

As regards Šeyḥ 'Adī, we cannot but allude here to what the Syrian writer and historian Barhebraeus relates about him¹, although it cannot be here evidently the question of the same personage. Šeyḥ 'Adī of Barhebraeus must have certainly been the head of a tribe or a small potentate, as his sons had made wars, and seem to have exercised a certain political influence in countries inhabited by them. Barhebraeus relates that Tugar Hifā, general of the Sultan of Iconium, was sent in the year 1568 of the Greeks (i. e. in the year 1256 - 57 of the Christian era) to raise an army in Militene. He sent for two Kurdish chiefs from the East, one of whom Šarīf ad-dīn Muḥammad by name was the son of Šeyḥ 'Adī. He gave in marriage Ḥiṣn Zayd to the latter. Shortly afterwards the son of Šeyḥ 'Adī, who had oppressed the country fell into the hands of the enemies and was put to death. In another passage of his *Syriac Chronicle*² the same Barhebraeus relates that a war broke out between the two brothers, the sons of Šeyḥ 'Adī, whom the Kurds of the country of Mosul regarded as a prophet³. One of the brothers fled to Syria, and the other also left the country and fled to Egypt. To admit that Šeyḥ 'Adī ibn Musāfir, the mystic and saint, had got sons, while the Islamic authors deny it expressly, seems to me in contradiction to all that we know positively on the nature and character of this saint. And hence it is more probable that Barhebraeus had mixed up *two* 'Adīs, the saint regarded by the Kurds as a prophet and the head of a tribe⁴, whose sons do not seem to have been the quintessence of virtue.

F. Nau has recently published a work, supposed to have been redacted in the year 1452 by a certain Rīmīšō', a Nestorian monk, in the Syriac language, which contains the history of the convent of Yōḥannān and Īšō'-Sabran, when that monastery was occupied by force and by fraud by Šeyḥ 'Adī. The work is revealed at once at the first examination to be a most vulgar compilation, written with the view of throwing the maximum of discredit on the Yezidis. Already in the title the author reveals clearly what confusion he has made of men and persons who had nothing to do with one another. We read there that

1. In the *Syriac Chronicle*, in the edition of Bedjan, 497 - 498. The passage is translated by Nau in *Recueil*, 154.

2. Edition quot. 532, translated by Nau, *loc. cit.* 155.

3. Here lies, I think, the error of Barhebraeus in having thus identified in this point the two Šeyḥ 'Adīs.

4. Still it is strange that two of his sons are called exactly Fahr ad-din and Samā' ad-din, like the two great saints or angels of the Yezidis.

his history relates how 'Adī, son of Musāfir, son of Aḥmad, of the dynasty of the Omayyads, and of the family of Yazīd, son of Mu'āwiyah, seized and took possession of the convent which afterwards became the national sanctuary of the sect. 'Adī is said to have been the son of the tenders of cattle of the convent. He was a Kurd of the tribe of the Tayrahits, and had learned the Syriac and Arabic languages in the convent. There lived at that time the tribe of the Yezidians, his relatives, who inhabited Zūzān. They followed the parents of 'Adī in their wanderings in the mountains of Zūzān. They were regarded as servants of that great house. 'Adī was therefore the son of the emir of the Yezidis. When the superior of the convent went to Jerusalem, the administration of the convent was in the hands of 'Adī. As the sons of 'Adī became a nuisance to the convent, its superior took away the administration from the hands of 'Adī, and left him only the pasturage of cattle. Thereupon, 'Adī began to do wrong to the convent, committed acts of arrogance to the detriment of the monks during the absence of the superior in Jerusalem, and finally he attacked the monastery, ransacked it suddenly, and killed all the monks, with the exception of only one who was lying ill in bed. After three weeks had passed, 'Adī took up his abode in the monastery with his whole family, and made himself its absolute proprietor. When the superior returned from Jerusalem, 'Adī menaced him with death, if he dared to protest against the misdeed perpetrated by him. The superior went to Persia in order to seek the help of the head of the religion of the Mongols. After the end of the war, which darkened those years, an order was given to Amīr Tūmān, grandson of Čingiz Ḥān, to produce 'Adī before the religious chief in order to see what justifications he had to give for his brutal conduct towards the monks. 'Adī was declared guilty and was executed in November 1201 (or better in 1223). But the superior of the monastery could not regain possession of his convent, as the Great Ḥān made him wait in Persia, on account of the agitations and wars which infested the country at that time¹.

This would be a summary of the narrative of the good Syrian monk, who has tried, by means of some historical facts and with what Barhebraeus has said about the sons of Šeyḥ 'Adī to concoct a very pious legend and to show that 'Adī was in fact not such a saintly and pious Mussulman, as the Islamic writers regard him, and as he is also considered to be by the Yezidis, but a traitor and a thief, executed like a vulgar criminal. As we have already said, this cannot be treated but as the worst legend, compiled with the idea of throwing

1. Nau, *loc. cit.* 172-242.

discredit on the Yezidis. The principal source of the monk Rāmišō, was Barhebraeus¹.

The Syriac writer Theodor bar Kōnay relates a nice little story on the origin of the Yezidis, — if we admit that he treats of the Yezidis in question, which is very uncertain, because the doctrines of the sect as they are exposed by the Syriac writer do not agree with those of our Yezidis, — and explains how it happened that they have such syncretic beliefs². The Yezidis are said to have had a certain chief named Papā who had a slave named Bāṭṭāy. The latter was lazy and indolent. In order to escape from slavery he fled to the Jews, then he went to the Manichaeans, and finally passed over to the religion of the Magi. Then he changed his name and called himself Yazdān, which means *he comes from gods*. He took over from the Jews the prohibition of eating pork, from the Pentateuch the name of God, and from the Christians the sign of the cross. Thus was made the history of religions in the ninth century in Mesopotamia and Īrān³!

As regards the name *T'ā'ūs* some believed, in their ignorance of several significant Mussulman legends in this connection, that it must be supposed that behind this name there stands that of an ancient divinity of Western Asia, viz. that of the ancient Babylonian-Assyrian god *Tamūz*, and *Tamūzā* in Aramaic⁴. The transition from the name *Tamūz* to that of *Tā'ūs* could in fact have taken place undoubtedly, but only in the circle of the Kurdish language, because in the Assyrian

1. I shall return to this argument and some other points of the religion of the Yezidis in my article which will be published in the *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* under the title *Sulla religione dei Yezidi*.

2. *Liber Scholiorum*, II, ed. Addai Scher, CSCO. LXVI, Parisii 1912, 343. The passage is quoted by Mingana, *loc. cit.* 514 - 515, in the French version of Pognon.

3. It is really strange that Mingana has not perceived the character of the passage and that on p. 515 he observes that it is important and should be studied deeply. Moreover, it is nearly certain that either it does not treat of the Yezidis, or that the passage is posterior to Theodor bar Kōnay, who lived between the eighth and the ninth century: A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, Bonn, 1922, 218 - 219.

4. For the etymologies proposed by Ainsworth, cf. this author, *loc. cit.* 26. Lidzbarski was the first to propose the etymology of *Tamūz*, *Ein Exposé der Jesiden*, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, LI, 592 - 604. Then his etymology was accepted by some, and rejected by others. Among the more recent authors who defended it are Mingana, *loc. cit.* 515 - 516, and especially Driver, *Studies*, 510, where he says that the derivation is intrinsically probable, and *Melek Taus*, *The Times* of the 5th September 1924, p. 6, col. 4, where he adds that *Melek* is *Adonis*, and rejects the derivation of H. T. F. Duckworth in the same paper of the 1st September, p. 6, col. 4, who says that the name is Persian *taos* (sic!) "peacock". But Frank, *loc. cit.* 5, note 1, and Joseph, *Yezidi texts*, 250, rejects it.

the forms *Du'uzu*, *Dūzu*, and such like are known, whereas in Arabic¹ and Aramaic they are wholly unknown. Philology cannot and has nothing to object to this explanation of the name, just as it cannot oppose its interpretation as an explanation or popular distortion of the Greek word θεός². But other considerations forbid us to think of Tamūz and θεός.

The religion of the Yezidis has nothing to do with the god Tamūz and with the special rites of his worship among the Babylonians and Assyrians, and among the Aramaeans. On the contrary, the name Ṭā'ūs itself and the identification of this god with Iblis, i. e. with the Devil of the Mussulmans, shows clearly that whoever wishes to examine carefully the origin of the Yezidic doctrine must direct his researches in quite another direction.

The best comment, so to say, and the clearest and obvious explanation of the adoration of the once fallen angel, Iblis, in the shape of a peacock is given by a Mussulman legend which seems to have had a certain diffusion specially among some sects intermediate between Mohammedanism, Christianity, and Judaism. It is here the question of the Druses, of the Taḥtağis of Asia Minor³, and of the Mandaeanes. It may be that other sects also have the same legend. Still, I have not succeeded, at least upto now, in finding a notice about them.

The Mussulman legend was based on those mythical and legendary tales which grew sturdily around the Biblical tale of the seduction of Eve by the Devil, who persuaded her to eat the fruit forbidden by God. The Jews had already sought to explain

1. The passage of *Fihrist*, 322, 27 seq., quoted by Lidzbarski, *loc. cit.* 598, note 1, proves nothing. Arabic *Tūz* is a simple graphical error.

2. This etymology has been proposed by Nau, *loc. cit.* 157, note 1.

3. On this sect, cf. F. von Luschan, *Die Tachtadschy und andere Ueberreste der alten Bevölkerung Lykiens*, *Archiv für Anthropologie*, XIX, 31 - 53; and also Fr. Babinger, cf. *Takhtadji* in the *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 658 - 659. This sect inhabits the western part of Asia Minor. It is of Shiite tendencies and is clearly separated from the surrounding population by its anthropological type as well as its religious beliefs. Its members are for the most part cultivators, breeders of cattle, and woodmen. They are verily ignorant of their origin, still they have most probably immigrated into the Anatolian peninsula from Īrān at about the close of the fifteenth or at the beginning of the sixteenth century. They professed then the doctrine of the sect of the Šafawids. They are therefore an offshoot of the latter sect. They drink wine, eat pork, and celebrate ceremonies which resemble the Christian baptism and eucharist; in this they offer some points of comparison with the Yezidis; their women are not veiled. They receive Persians and Christians kindly and give preference to Shiite names 'Alī and Ismā'īl.

some points which were less explicit in the narrative of the Old Testament better with new tales. It is said on this subject in the Jewish legends that Satan, the greatest of the angels in heaven, had twelve wings instead of six like all other angels inferior to him in rank. There are some legends on the fall of Satan which are very similar to those narrated in the Koran. The serpent who appeared before Eve had hands and feet, and it stood erect. He spoke directly to Eve, without any intermediary. A Jewish legend which reflects a more recent stage than that mentioned just now relates that Satan, who wished to take his revenge on Adam and Eve, gained for his cause the serpent. We see therefore that the serpent and Satan are not the same individual. Still the serpent was intractable, and was not willing to lend his help in the plans of Satan, as he feared the wrath of God. But Satan succeeded in dissipating his scruples, and said: "Thou shalt have nothing to do but to become my instrument (or vase); I shall speak through thy mouth, with which thou shalt succeed in seducing man". Thereupon the serpent suspended itself on the wall surrounding paradise, and dangled down from it into paradise. Thus he began to talk to Eve. Satan then assumed the shape of an angel, leaned out beyond the wall, and began to chant seraphic hymns of praise. The conversation between Satan and Eve took place through the mouth of the serpent¹.

The legend that Satan was the real seducer, but made use of the serpent as his instrument, represents the passage from the older and literal interpretation of the sacred texts to the allegorical and freer interpretation which identifies Satan with the serpent. In the Targum of Job, XXVIII, 7, it is said of Sammā'el, i. e. of the fallen angel, that he flies in the air like a bird². The Devil resembles therefore a bird. According to the Jewish legend the prohibited fruit was either the fig or the grape, or the apple of paradise, or wheat, or the nut. Sometimes the tree is said to have been a palm-tree³. The identification with wheat is based on the pun on the words *ḥittāh* "wheat" and *ḥattā'ah* "sin".

Muḥammad welcomed in the Koran some traits of the Rabbinical legend. He speaks in two different passages of the fall of the supreme angel and of the seduction of Eve by Iblis.

1. L. Ginzberg, *The legends of the Jews*, I, Philadelphia 1909, 62 - 64, 72, 82, 95. The rabbinical legends have felt partly the influence of the Islamic ones. Cf. Ginzberg, *loc. cit.* V, 84, note 84.

2. The passage of Job says: *No bird of prey knows the path, and the eye of the vulture did not look there.*

3. Ginzberg, *loc. cit.* V, 97, note 70. For Islamic traditions in this matter, cf. al-Tabari, *Tafsir*, I, 178 and seq.

In the second *sūrah* Allāh narrates to Muḥammad the creation of Adam and Eve, and then proceeds to say in verse 32: "And when we said to the angels: 'Bow down before Adam', they bowed down, except Iblis who refused and became arrogant and ungrateful". Then Allāh proceeds to relate how He placed the first couple in paradise and prohibited them to approach a certain tree. But aš-Šayṭān, says the text further, 34, "made them slip out from it (paradise), and made them come out from where they were".

It is clear from this that Iblis sinned through excessive pride, when he refused to worship the creature of God.

The narrative is lengthier and more in details in the seventh *sūrah*. More stress is laid there on the act of pride committed by Iblis in not worshipping Adam:

9. And we brought you together on the earth, and in it we prepared for you nourishment. How small is your gratitude! 10. We created you, then we formed you, then we told the angels, "Worship Adam". They worshipped (him), with the exception of Iblis; he was not among the worshippers. 11. Said (Allāh): "What held thee back that thou didst not worship (him), when I commanded thee to do so." He said: "I am better than he. Thou hast created me from fire, and thou hast created him from the clod of earth". 12. Said (Allāh): "Get down from it [paradise], because it is not convenient for thee that thou becomest insubordinate in it. Get out therefore. Thou art verily among the wicked". 13. Said he: "Wait for me upto the day on which they will be resurrected from the dead". 14. Said Allāh: "Thou shalt verily be among the expected ones". 15. "Because thou hast deceived me, I shall hamper for them thy strait path. 16. Then I shall see them from before and from behind them, to their left and to their right, and thou shalt not find the majority of them thankful". 17. Said (Allāh): "Get away from here, cursed and expelled. He who will follow thee from amongst them, I shall allot certainly Ġahannam to you altogether". [Then Allāh made Adam and Eve reside in paradise, but prohibited them to approach a tree.] 19. Aš-Šayṭān whispered to them in order to make to them evident that which was hidden of their shames and said: "Hast not your Master forbidden you this tree, in order that you do not become two angels or be amongst those who live always?" 20. And he assured them: "I am certainly for you one of the good counsellors". 21. He gained them. But when they had tasted (the fruit) of the tree, the shames became evident to them and they began to put over themselves leaves of

paradise. [Allāh then reproved Adam and Eve for the error committed (by them) and drove them out of paradise.]

It follows therefore from the narrative of the Koran that Iblis sinned through arrogance and pride. This was his most conspicuous quality, so to say, when he was still the greatest of the angels. The sin committed by the supreme archangel is an act of arrogance: he did not wish to worship Adam, the creature of God. We can therefore say that the Devil must be precisely the quintessence of pride.

The Mussulmans did not remain satisfied with this Koranic narrative of sin, but they embroidered on it several new traits and legendary episodes. They thought that Iblis must have had some accomplices or intermediaries in his act of seducing the first woman to commit sin. An Islamic legend relates that when Iblis wished to enter paradise in order to seduce Eve to eat (the forbidden fruit), he saw that his way was barred by the porter Riḍwān, who guarded it well. Then he thought of addressing himself to various animals who were already in paradise, and begged them to let him enter furtively in the sacred enclosure. But they refused. Then Iblis addressed himself to the peacock and sought to persuade him to make him enter paradise unknown, by means of the communication of the three mysterious words, which should preserve him from maladies, from old age, and from death. But the peacock also refused to do so through fear of Riḍwān. Still the serpent, the rused and cunning king of animals, accepted to be sent by the devil. It opened its mouth, took Iblis between its teeth, and carried him into the garden. There the latter assumed the shape of an angel and carried out his work of seduction. After Adam and Eve had committed the sin, God hurled the first couple, the seducer, and his accomplices and intermediaries on the earth. The serpent fell on Ispahān, the peacock on Kabul, Satan on Bilbays, Eve on 'Arafāt, and Adam on the island of Sarandib (Ceylon)¹.

We have therefore in this legend a clear distinction between 1) the seducer who was the Devil, called in the Koran *Šayṭān* and Iblis, but never the serpent, *ḥayyah*, 2) the serpent whose activity was

1. For the different legends see principally at-Ta'labi, *Kitāb qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. Cairo, 21-22, where two versions are given, one shorter and the other longer, fundamentally identical with the first. But the latter adds that Iblis had first to wait for three hundred years before he saw the serpent coming out of paradise. Moreover, cf. Abulfedae, *Historia anteislamica*, ed. H. O. Fleischer, Lipsiae, 1831, p. 12. Ibn al-Aṭīr, *Kitāb al-kāmil fi-t-ta'rīḥ*, ed. Tornberg, I, 24, also relates the legend with more details. The passage of Abū'l-Fidā' is quoted by Maracci, *Refutatio Alcorani*, II, Patavii 1698, 22. Cf. further T. P. Hughes, *A dictionary of Islam*, London 1885, 569, under *Serpent*. On Iblis and on legends concerning him, see the article of Wensinck in the *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*.

limited in taking Iblis to paradise, and 3) the peacock who played the part of an intermediary between the serpent and Iblis.

But the part which has been assigned to the peacock cannot be wholly original. An older form of the legend must be that which is preserved by the Druses, a Mussulman sect of Western Asia, (and naturally by the Yezidis) which presents a few points of contact with some aspects of the religion of the Yezidis. The Druses relate that *at-T'ā'ūs*, the peacock, which had, properly speaking, the name *T'āyūh*, in company with the serpent, seduced Enoch and his wife Šarh¹. In the legend of the Druses the seducer is in reality the peacock, assisted, it seems, by the serpent. That the Druses have been led from such considerations to assume the seduction of Adam and Eve to be the work of the peacock, can be easily conceived, if it is taken into consideration that the ugly and repugnant serpent could not *alone* have made dame Eve commit the sin. The seducer must have been handsome to look at, and thus in a position to make a very favourable impression on Eve. On the other hand, Iblis sinned through pride, and what animal better than the peacock could have been the symbol and representation of arrogance? It is for this reason that the Druses see in the peacock the real seducer of Eve who led her into sin. When in the above mentioned Mussulman legend the part of the peacock is only secondary, and when it is not clear why precisely the peacock played the intermediary between Iblis and Eve, but when on the other hand it is easily explained why among the Druses the peacock has been retained as the real seducer, then we can hold that also the Islamic legend in its older stage recognised in the peacock the real seducer. However, the fact must be pointed out that according to the Druses the peacock was the seducer, and therefore Iblis the evil one.

This is also the doctrine of the Yezidis. The Peacock was precisely the Angel who made the first couple eat the grape² or Adam wheat.

The identification of the peacock-seducer with Iblis is the point of departure for understanding why the Yezidis have represented

1. Silvestre de Sacy, *loc. cit.* 131 and note 4. The merit of Joseph lies in having drawn the attention of students to the Mussulman legend of the peacock. The further development and comparisons and deductions made in the text are mine. Joseph did not know the legend of the Druses and that of the Mandaeans.

2. The Yezidis relate that the fallen angel after the sin of the first man concealed himself from God in the shape of a peacock among the lettuce, praying it to keep him concealed. But the lettuce did not succeed in keeping concealed also his long and large tail of which he was very proud. God saw him and punished him. The peacock therefore cursed the lettuce, and thence it is now prohibited to the Yezidis. Mills, *Beyond*, 209.

their God, Melek Ṭā'ūs, in the shape of a peacock. It is thus easy to understand that the fallen angel is represented by the peacock. He is therefore called *Ṭā'ūs*, i. e. "peacock". But also the first part of the name is easily explained. Melek is the Kurdish-Persian pronunciation of the Arabic words *mālik* "king" and *malāk* (*mal'ak*) "angel". The Yezidis give the title of Melek, besides giving it to their God peacock, also to other subordinate gods, who have properly speaking the rank of angels. Sometimes they exalt these to the rank of divinities, at others they lower them to the rank of angels and saints. In their theology, which is always oscillating and inconstant, and continually varying, the term can have therefore these two significations, and it depends on each single case which of the two should be adopted; and this cannot be fixed, but from the context in which the term occurs, Melek Ṭā'ūs could therefore mean only "Angel Peacock". But it is certain that it means also "King Peacock", and thus this signification could have been the original one. In the Koran, XLIII, 77, the guardian of hell is he who presides tortures, therefore probably the Devil, is called Mālik, "king". Even in the name Melek Ṭā'ūs the first word should therefore be translated, at least in its oldest acceptance, by "king". It seems that in what precedes we have sufficiently explained the name which is given to the characteristic God in the religion of the Yezidis.

The worship of that being, who is for the Christians and the Mussulmans the Devil, in the shape of the peacock by the sect of the Yezidis is thus based on the Islamic and Drusic legends quoted by us. It does not go back therefore to the worship by the ancient Assyrians of some symbol of the divinity in the shape of a bird or directly of birds in more recent periods of the religious history of Western Asia. Even in this trait, so characteristic of their faith, the Yezidis lean themselves on Islām.

Thereby also the assertion of some authors is refuted in a most conclusive manner that Ṭā'ūs is a so-called popular etymology of the name of the Babylonian god Tamūz, Aramaic Tamūzā respectively¹.

The identification of the Devil with the peacock, which the Yezidis make, is not a little elucidated by the seventy-fifth treatise of the

1. The ceremonies of the Yezidi during funerals or the festival of the New Year have naturally no connection whatsoever with the funeral which it was customary to perform for the death of Tamūz, because in the Yezidic ceremonies there is nothing typically Tamūzic. I do not see how Temple can assert it in R. H. W. Epsom, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, London 1928, 175.

Book of John of the Mandaeans¹. This fragment contains a lament by the fallen angel or Devil, called expressly Peacock *T'awsā*, therefore conceived, just as also the Yezidis believe, in the resemblance of a peacock. Still, side by side with some traits of the fallen angel who sinned through his pride the Mandaean Peacock has not a few traits of Cain². He has a brother named Hibīl, i. e. Abel, submissive and obedient to his father, whereas he himself was a rebellious son. In the figure of the Mandaean Peacock the traits of the fallen angel and those of Cain have run together. The last part of the above-mentioned treatise, which narrates the result of the interview of the Peacock with his father, is haplessly rather obscure. The father seems to make a new agreement with the Peacock and to reconcile himself with him, because the Peacock becomes calm and begins to extol the father. Do these words mean that the father pardons the Peacock and reinstates him in his high grade in the hierarchy of the Great Ones, i. e. of the angels? If this were the right interpretation of the few lines, the doctrine of the Yezidis, which teaches that God has pardoned Satan, and has reinstated him in his primitive position of the first and supreme among angels, would be greatly elucidated from our Mandaean treatise.

In what connection with the Yezidic doctrine of the peacock does this part of the Mandaean doctrine really stand? Have the Yezidis perhaps learnt it from the Mandaeans, or has the contrary happened, or have both drawn from a common source? I believe that it is rather suitable to adhere to this last possibility as the most probable one. Both these sects have received the Islamic legend, which was known to the orthodoxy, of the more or less complete identification of the Devil with the peacock. The Yezidis have made it the fulcrum and the basis of their religion.

From what we have explained, (and this has not been noticed by any body upto now,) it follows undoubtedly that the double name Devil-Peacock is derived by the Yezidis from an Islamic legend. This is therefore the source of the name *Tā'ūs* and of what concerns this god. The derivation is thus obvious and clear, so that it is not necessary to waste more words. Hence the derivation of the name *Tā'ūs*, through a supposed popular etymology, from the name of the Babylonian and Aramaic God *Tamūz* and *Tamūzā* respectively, is to be wholly abandoned.

Still as a certain author has thought it possible to find even in relatively ancient times some traces of the ancient worship of this god in the

1. M. Lidzbarski, *Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer*, Giessen 1915, 270 - 273, in the Mandaic text and 240 - 241 in the German translation.

2. It is really strange that Lidzbarski is not at all judicious about this obvious comparison and does not even mention it in the notes to the text. But Lidzbarski has not noticed also several other matters in the religious texts of the Mandaeans.

territories at present inhabited by the Yezidis and in the adjoining countries¹, we ought to tarry a little longer in the examination of these arguments in order to show their complete lack of foundation.

It has been asserted that according to the Syrian writer Yohānnān bar Penkāyē, in the eighth century A. D., in the Sassanian empire some sects worshipped the God Tamūz. But the text of Yohānnān has not yet been published, and therefore we are not in a position to examine it and determine its real meaning and what the Syriac writer intended to say².

Further, it is said that Theodor bar Kōnay asserts clearly in a passage of his work *Kthabhā d. Eskōlyōn* that the worship of Tamūz was spread not only in the valley of the Tigris, but also in the territory of Bēt 'Arbāyē, which corresponds to the region lying around Mt. Singār. But if we examine closely what the Syriac author has to say about Tamūz³, we find that he gives there only a summary, perhaps second or third hand, of some Greek mythographer on the myth of Tammūz-Adonis. The narrative of Theodor does not at all prove that in his time this pagan god was known in the valley of the Tigris and in the adjoining territories and that Mt. Singār was also a centre of this so-called occult religion, as Mingana assumes with a certain levity.

Moreover, it is added in support of the quasi actual survival of the worship of this Babylonian God that the name Tamūzā was borne by the Christians in Sassanian Persia, and that even upto our days the Christians of Kurdistān call themselves sometimes by this name⁴. It does not seem to me that from these facts it can be deduced that the worship of this god was maintained upto the time of the Sassanians or even upto our times. It would be in fact very strange that the Christians had borne the name of a *pagan* God, who could not have been wholly unknown especially to the priests, even if we admit the habitual gross ignorance of the Syriac priests as it is mentioned in the Old Testament. If therefore the Christian priests, even a patriarch of Seleucia of the fourth century, bore the name Tamūzā, it means that this name must have had another origin. The name Tamūzā, borne by the Christians is derived naturally from the name of the month of Tamūz⁵,

1. I allude to the futile attempt of Mingana, *loc. cit.* 516-517.

2. We hope that Mingana will publish the text as soon as possible.

3. Mingana, *loc. cit.* 516-517, where the passage is published in extenso in the French version of Pognon.

4. Mingana, *loc. cit.* 516.

5. It is not a curious fact at all that a person bears the name of a month! But I do not know any other example among the Syrians. E. W. Brooks, s. v. *Names (Syriac)*, ERE, IX, 175-177, does not mention it. A Palestinian doctor of the fourth century was called,

which corresponds with our July. Therefore there is no survival of the worship of the God Tamūz and that of his name, which the Yezidis might have then corrupted to Tā'ūs!

* * *

The myths and legends which the Yezidis relate about their God or their Gods are many and various; and not a few of them are contradictory, as this sect has got no ecclesiastical organisation rigid enough to regulate the substance of the faith. All their legends go back to those of the Christians and the Mussulmans, but they approach in their form rather Mussulman legends. In general, they are presented in much degenerated and corrupt versions, if they are compared with those of the Mussulmans. They show among the followers of the sect great ignorance, sometimes directly absolute unconsciousness of their religious signification.

In the beginning, the world was an ocean in whose midst there was a tree created by the divine power. God dwelt on the tree in the shape of a bird. In a region far away from that of the tree there was a rose-bush, full of flowers, in one of which Şeyh Sinn had taken up his position. God had created the latter through himself and had given him existence¹.

Then God created by his own splendour the Archangel Gabriel, also in the shape of a bird and placed him on the tree by his side. Then he turned towards him and asked "Who am I and who art thou?" Gabriel replied "Thou art thou and I am I". The haughty reply of the angel meant that each of them both had his own importance and his own proper value, and that he, Gabriel, could consider himself equal to God. Hearing this reply of the angel, God became angry, and drove him away from the tree, giving him a stroke of the beak. After flying for several centuries the angel returned on the advice of Şeyh Sinn to God, and when the latter put to him the above mentioned question, he replied to him as the Şeyh had taught him. Thenceforth Gabriel remained with God. Thus the Archangel sinned against God, according to the Yezidis, through pride, as he wished to be his equal, but afterwards he perceived his

as my friend U. Cassuto informs me, Yehūdah bar Tammūzah, Jerusalemitan Talmūd, *Megillah*, IV, 75, d. Still there are Arabo-Moslem proper names of persons, derived from the denominations of the names of the lunar year, cf. Gabrieli, *loc. cit.* 34. Tā'ūs is the name of a person among the Arabs, as for example Tā'ūs ibn Kaysān and Tā'ūs al-Yamani, in al-Mas'ūdi, *Prairies d'or*, ed. Barbier de Meynard, V, 462 and I, 166. This name is not quoted by Gabrieli, *loc. cit.* 30 - 33, where we have a catalogue of Arabic names of persons, derived from the animal world. Cf. also R. Strothmann, *Die Zwölfer-Schi'a*, Leipzig 1926, 88, as regards the name Raḍī ad-dīn at-Tā'ūsī.

1. Siouffi, *Notice* (1869), 252 - 253.

fault and recognised the right and the supremacy which God had over him. He entered therefore into the grace of the Creator precisely in consequence of his penitence and reoccupied his old primitive position. Satan does not therefore exist at all for the Yezidis and thus the evil also does not exist¹.

One day Adam saw in paradise the plant of wheat and asked the angel who accompanied him the name of the plant. The angel said to him: "It is the tree of wheat. Do not eat its grains, as it will do thee harm". But Adam did not listen to the words of the angel and ate its grains. In consequence, his belly was swollen. God became troubled by this disobedience of Adam, chastised him and drove him out of paradise.

One day a dispute arose between Adam and Eve on the possession of their sons. Eve held that they belonged to her, as they had received their life from her. Adam held the contrary opinion, and in order to prove the legitimacy of his assertions he took two jars, one of which he consigned to Eve. Both of them deposited their sperms, in their respective jars, which they thereupon buried in a heap of dung, where they left them for nine months. When the fixed time had elapsed Eve opened her jar and found in it nothing but black worms and insects. Then she opened that of her husband, even before he came, and found in it a male child as beautiful as a diamond. Adam called the new-born son Šahīd ibn Ğarrah. When he wished to give him a wife, he prayed to the Archangel Gabriel to communicate to God his desire to give a wife to his son. God sent him one of the *hūr*s of paradise whom the son of Adam married. From this couple of the privileged beings the Yezidis are descended².

The Yezidis relate that 'Adī had four brothers: Abū Bekr, 'Abd al-Qādir, Ismā'il, and 'Abd al-'Azīz. But as this last one was a bachelor and had not yet got descendants, 'Adī created for him a son from whom is descended the first category of the spiritual chiefs of the Yezidis. The second category of the *Šeyḥ*s is descended from other four brothers: Šams ad-dīn, Fahr ad-dīn, Nāšir ad-dīn, and Saġġād ad-dīn. The third category is that of *Šeyḥ* Sinn, who, as he did not take a wife, created from himself a son, who was named Šarāf ad-dīn. In order to honour the successors of 'Adī the Yezidis give them the honorific title of *Šeyḥ*³.

Every one of the four categories mentioned above cannot contract marriages in their own family in order to preserve the purity of the descentance and of the race.

1. Siouffi, *loc. cit.* 253 - 254.

2. Siouffi, *loc. cit.* 259 - 260.

3. Siouffi, *Notice* (1885), 83 - 84.

II

THE SECT AND THE CULT.

The chief of the princely family of the Yezidis is its oldest and most powerful member. He occupies the throne which was once of Yazîd and unites in himself the supreme political and spiritual power of the sect. The chief bears the title of *Mîr Haqq* or *Amîr al-Haqq*, i. e. "prince of the pilgrimage". The authority exercised by the Amîr over his subjects is simply unlimited. He represents them before the authorities of the state in whose territory the Yezidis reside. His person is sacred, and everything that stands in connection with him becomes an object of veneration for the Yezidis. His clothing cannot be washed but by a *koçâq*, the water from its washing cannot be poured into the common sewer, and no piece of laundry can be washed together with that of the prince.

The spiritual or religious chief of the sect is Şeyh Nâşir who resides in a village situated to the north-east of Mosul. The Yezidis regard him as infallible in everything which concerns the faith¹.

Three other grades come, in the religious hierachy of the Yezidis, after that of the Amîr; they are those of the *Şeyh*, the *pîr* and the *faqîr*.

The *şeyhs* are divided into five families who assert that they are descended frõm the five holy personages mentioned above. These five personages were, in fact, of divine nature and therefore they could not marry; they were constrained to create male children for themselves whom they afterwards adopted. By marriage of these sons all families of the *şeyhs* are descended, who therefore recognise as the head of their ancestry none else but the Divinity. The administration of a certain number of Yezidi families is entrusted to every one of these *şeyhs*. The latter constitute a sort of dioceses. The duty of the *şeyhs* is to incite their parishioners to do good and to avoid evil. Moreover, they seek to dissuade them chiefly from having intercourse with the wife or the daughter of any of their spiritual chiefs, or with a person who is a stranger to his sect. These acts are considered by the Yezidis as the greatest crimes, which they can commit².

The grade of the *pîrs* is the sacerdotal grade next to that of the *şeyh*. The word *pîr* is Persian and means "elder, senior", and it is nearly an equivalent of *şeyh* in Arabic. The relations of the *pîrs* to the *şeyhs* are the same as those of the priests to the bishops in the Christian church. The hierarchical organisation of the Yezidis reflects

1. Siouffi, *Notice* (1883), 263-267.

2. Siouffi, *Notice* (1885), 87-89; Nau, *Recueil*, 236-237; Anastās, *loc. cit.* 547-552, on the spiritual hierarchy in general.

without doubt, in a certain sense, that of the Christian church. They appertain to distinct families whose ancestors were divine personages. Their prerogatives and functions are similar to those of the *šeyhs*¹.

The order of the *faqīrs* corresponds to that of the Christian monks. The word *faqīr* means in Arabic "poor, ascetic". Strangers to the sect call them also by the Turkish word *qarabāš*, meaning "black heads", as they wear black coloured skull-caps. They put on clothes made of black wool, with the exception of trousers which are of white cotton. The bed on which they repose themselves must also be only of wool, and it can have all colours except blue, which the Yezidis detest. All faithful ones honour them greatly, and even the supreme hierarchies of the sect receive them with great esteem and honour. This respect is inspired by the sacred character of these religious men, and also by the mantle which they wear, and which is the mantle of 'Adi himself. The entrance into the order is effected by means of an initiation given by one of the *faqīrs*. The *faqīr* who is to be ordained must pass forty days segregated from the world, and must during this period observe a fast from morning till evening. He must not see anybody except his own father or the *faqīr* who has the duty of bringing him his food. During the days of his segregation he wears only one coat, a pair of trousers of white material, and a cord of black wool. He wears the latter on his neck. It falls down on his chest like a necklace. This cord reminds him that he must avoid all sorts of sins and vices. When the period of solitude ends, the *faqīr* gives a banquet to all people of his land. Thereupon he receives from the hands of a *faqīr* the mantle of the order in presence of a spiritual father or a god-father who is selected from the descendants of Šeyh Sinn. He who ordains him addresses to him on this occasion several admonitions and recommendations, concerning the purity of the clothing and of morals, as for example, to avoid lie, and not only false testimony but also false oaths, not to steal, not to fornicate, not to throw lascivious glance on the wife of another, and others of a similar character. The *faqīr* must never sit on his mantle, as it is sacred; he cannot have his head shaved, but by one of his confrères. If he dies, his dead body cannot be handled by any one else but by a *faqīr*. After having bathed his corpse, his comrades clothe it with another mantle, not with that in which he died, and then wind it in a shroud of black wool; thereupon they carry him from his dwelling to the tomb, where they recite, alone, the usual funeral prayers².

The order of the *faqīrs* is governed by a chief who is the superior

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1. Siouffi, *Notice* (1885), 90; Nau, *Recueil*, 238.
 2. Siouffi, *loc. cit.* 90-94; Nau, *Recueil*, 238.

general of the order. He is called *kāk*, i. e. "master; instructor". He observes celibacy. He dwells in a *mazār*, situated near Aleppo, which is considered to be the place where Yazīd, son of Mu'āwiyah, dwelt for some time. The proceeds of a special *sanḡaq*, which is assigned to him and which is said to be that of Yazīd, are his revenue. This *sanḡaq* which is the emblem of the Peacock is exposed every year to the faithful for worship. The *kāk* carries it with himself during his annual tour, going to the one or to the other province, inhabited by the Yezidis. During the great religious festival celebrated at Seyh 'Adī, the head of this order has the precedence over every chief of the Yezidis, not excepting the *seyhs* and even the Amīr¹.

The *qawwāls* are the singers, whose chief function is that of carrying the sacred emblems of the Peacock in different regions and localities inhabited by the followers of the sect. The word *qawwāl* means in Arabic "eloquent" or "he who knows how to speak well". When the *qawwāls* exhibit these emblems for veneration, they chant songs with the accompaniment of the sounds of flutes and tambourines. The *qawwāls* take a big part in festivals and solemn religious ceremonies, where they sing and play on musical instruments. They do not really appertain to the spiritual hierarchy, but they enjoy nevertheless great respect, because they are considered as the servants of 'Adī and of his emblems².

The *šawīšes* are lower in grade than the *qawwāls*. They are four or five in number. They render services in the national temple. They do not marry. They clothe themselves always in white. They cannot be removed from their office and their resources consist in alms offered by pilgrims³.

The *kočāqs* are in great number which reaches sometimes even upto three hundred. They offer their services whenever there is some construction to be undertaken in the national sanctuary or whenever a big quantity of wood is needed for the kitchen of the temple. They receive no remuneration in money or in other commodity, but the consciousness of having done their duty in honour of 'Adī must suffice them. During the period of service a *kočāq* must never part with the cord which is given to him for his work and which he carries, even while taking rest, wound round his neck and his waist⁴.

The Yezidis have also a religious order of women, called *faḡrayah*. They live in celibacy and perform various services in the national

1. Siouffi, *loc. cit.* 93 - 94.

2. Siouffi, *loc. cit.* 94 - 95; Nau, *loc. cit.* 237; Giamil, *Monte Singar*, 25, note 2.

3. Siouffi, *loc. cit.* 95.

4. Siouffi, *loc. cit.* 95 - 96; Nau, *loc. cit.* 238; Giamil, *Monte Singar*, *passim*.

temple. Their superior is called *kabana*¹.

At Šeyh 'Adī there is nobody else but one sacristan, called *farrāš*. His chief function is to kindle numerous lamps of the temple and of the small neighbouring sanctuaries. Two hours before sunset he takes a bundle of wicks and a vase of sesame oil and lights all the lamps one by one. The sight of numerous trembling tiny flames on the walls and between the branches of trees is most beautiful. But soon, after about half an hour, the *farrāš* puts them out again, and everything is plunged in darkness. The kindling of lights takes place every evening. During the great festival the sacristan places before the assembled pilgrims an oil-lamp, over whose flame they stretch out their hands and then pass them over their face: thus they inhale, as it were, the fire of Seylī 'Adī².

The Yezidis strictly observe various interdictions. They refuse to give to their God Angel Peacock all those names which the Mussulmans and Christians give to the Devil. Therefore they never pronounce the words *Šaytān* or *mal'ūn* or others similar in sound or meaning, not even those which have in reality nothing whatsoever to do with Satan, but which still remind them, although very faintly, his name, e. g. *šatt* "river". They also avoid the name George, because it was this saint who killed the dragon. They abhor the celestial or blue colour. It is prohibited to them to partake of certain aliments³.

They represent the Angel Peacock in the shape of a peacock. They have images of their god which they carry every year on a tour through districts inhabited by them, and to which they pay great veneration. The images made of metal are and must be seven or eight in number. They are kept in safe custody in a chapel of the palace of the Amīr, where several lamps burn day and night in their honour. The images are called *sanġaq*, plural *sanāġiq*, which means in Turkish "banner", or "standard". The *qawwāls* have the prerogative of carrying the standard, which they do on horseback. These standards consist of a candelabrum with a broad basis and many lamps around its base; the image of the Peacock, which resembles often rather that of a cock, is placed above it. When the emblem arrives in a village, it is preceded by two *pīrs* who balance censers. The people bow before it in adoration, murmur some sentences and dip their hands in the smoke of the censers, with which they thereupon perfume their faces and arms. When the image is carried into a house, it is placed on a table. They place beside it a pitcher of brass full of water, from

1. Siouffi, *loc. cit.* 97-98.

2. Siouffi, *loc. cit.* 98; Giamil, *Monte Singar*, 86; Layard, *Nineveh*, I, 290-298.

3. Cf. below, Memorandum of the Yezidis, § 14 and the note on this article.

which the sick and the afflicted drink. At a signal the whole assembly stands up, everybody approaches the *sanjaq*, bows down and puts his pecuniary contribution in a plate. Returning to his seat, everybody beats his chest¹.

The Yezidis have a great respect for the Christians and for their religion. The sign of the cross is a good charm. Christ was, according to them, a great angel who assumed the shape of man. He did not die on the cross, but mounted in heaven in order to reappear at the end of times together with Mahdī. The Yezidis go for their marriages to Christian churches, kiss the hands of priests, and receive the communion, taking great care that not a single drop of the consecrated wine falls on the floor or on the beard.

How deep has been the influence of Christianity on some Yezidi tribes is evident from several practices in vogue in the village of Hältār, situated in the vicinity of Diyār-Bekr. The inhabitants of this village have a morning prayer, and celebrate a sort of Eucharist: during the meal the priest takes a cup of wine and to the man who asks him: "What is this?", he answers: "It is the cup of Jesus; Jesus reposes here". After having drunk some wine from it, the priest sends round the cup among the convives who sip from it a very small quantity.

The Yezidis baptise their children in the source of Zemzem which flows in the national sanctuary, reciting the formula: *Yazīd is verily the Sultan. Thou hast become a sheep of Yazīd, (who is) the chief of the sect of*

1. Giamil, *Monte Singar*, 23-24, the *sanjaq* were originally in possession of King Solomon. On the ceremonies which take place on the occasion of the visit of the standards, cf. the same author, 25-33. The Yezidis have, according to their description given by Nūrī, also other idols and sacred objects which they worship: the rod of Moses (of bronze), a serpent and a ram (also of bronze), a bird (perhaps a black-bird or a nightingale), a belt, a rosary, a comb, a stick, and a drinking glass; Menzel, *loc. cit.* 186-187. J. W. Crowfoot, *A Yezidi rite*, *Man*, I, 145-146, refers to a curious ceremony with the standard in the form of a peacock. The peacock is said to have a small hole in the middle of the back, which is covered by a lid. The bird was filled up, just as an Armenian who was once present at the scene has narrated, with the holy water, which was poured through this hole, while all those who were present chanted in Kurdish. The officiating priest approached the bird, kissed first the basis and then other parts of the standard, until he came to the beak which had a hole as usual. The priest placed on it his lips and drank a drop of water. All others who were present did the same. Crowfoot would see in this ceremony a sort of sacrament. A Yezidi standard is now preserved in the British Museum. Its photograph is on the frontispiece of the book of Epsom quoted above. But this is different in form from the standards reproduced in nearly all books, which deal directly or only casually with the Yezidis. That of the British Museum is of steel, and comes from a small Yezidi temple near Diārbekir (Diyār-Bekr). Usually the *sanjaqs* have the shape more of a cock than that of a peacock, undoubtedly due to the inability of the artists, if the manufacturers of Yezidi idols can be so called.

Yazīd. The custom of rubbing the face, the mouth, and the side of the moribund with the dust or the earth of Šeyḥ 'Adī is undoubtedly an imitation of the extreme unction of the Christians. It is probable that whole tribes of the Nestorians and other Christians have been converted to Yezidism¹.

Their principal and national sanctuary, their Ka'bah so to say, is situated fourteen hours from Mosul, in a long valley which spreads out from the east to the west. The sanctuary is at the extreme limit of the valley, where the mountains rapidly rise from three sides. The temple consists of three courts, besides the principal building, the first of which court serves for the ablutions of the faithful. The principal edifice which measures twenty-four metres by nine metres and a half is divided by a row of seven pillars into two nearly equal naves. The southern one has on the outside six deep niches with fissures for letting the light in. The entrance to the naves is from the court. Three doors lead from this to the Holy of Holies and to two other secondary buildings. One of these which extends itself in the same direction as the principal building, is divided by means of pillars into two naves. The Holy of Holies which leans with its northern side on the rock is square in shape, and measures on every side six metres eighty. The Holy of Holies gives access to three buildings, rather long, which serve as magazines².

Near the door of the entrance to the principal building there is in the pavement a basin of water, whose sides measure two metres thirty by one metre eighty. The water which flows into it is derived from a stream which flows to the extremity of the valley. There are two tombs in the nave to the left of the person who enters. The tomb of Šeyḥ 'Adī is in the Holy of Holies, not very far from the door. This building is, with the exception of the tomb, almost empty and without ornaments. The tomb is nearly in complete darkness, and only a very faint light enters through two loop-holes of the spire which covers it, and which is the principal spire of the sanctuary. There is no altar in this building, but only the tomb which is covered with a red cloth, and a bench which serves probably during the ceremonies for placing on it the sacred furniture, and especially the idol in the

1. On the connections between Christianity and Yezidism see especially Nau, *loc. cit.* 166-167.

2. The best work on the national temple of the Yezidis and at the same time the unique one written by a competent person is that of W. Bachmann, *Kirchen und Moscheen in Armenien und Kurdistan*, Wiss. Veröff. der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, XXV, Leipzig 1918, 9-15 and Pl. 14-16, whereas what other authors, who have had the occasion to visit the temple, have written is not wholly exempt from doubt about its exactitude. The plans of the temple were published by various authors before Bachmann.

shape of a peacock. A fountain flows in the building adjoining the Holy of Holies. It abounds in water, which is different from that which flows into the basin of water of the principal nave. The latter is called Zemzem. It was made to flow, according to what the Yezidis assert, by Šeyḥ 'Adī. The *façade* of the temple has nothing but a door and two small loopholes. To the right of the entrance-door there is a great serpent, cut out in stone and painted in black colour in order to make it come out better. Its height reaches that of a man. On several stones of the *façade* various figures of unknown significations are carved, which the Yezidis attribute to the caprice of stone-cutters who restored the temple or to the mania of recording the names of those faithful ones who contributed money for its reconstruction. But it is difficult to understand why precisely, rings, poniards, hands, crooked sticks, and animals are carved. There is a slab framed in the *façade* with an Arabic inscription which goes back to the year 1115 of the Moḥammedan era. It seems that there are also several Syriac inscriptions¹.

In the centre of the inner court there is a small deposit of balls of the argil taken from the tomb of the saint, which serve as sacred relics against maladies and evil spirits. The exterior court is surrounded by low buildings with adjoining rooms similar to those of the *bazār* of an oriental city.

The sanctuary is almost wholly concealed under the branches of big mulberry trees and a bower of these throw their shade on the court in front of the temple. It is permitted to walk in the sanctuary, in the *ḥaram* of Šeyḥ 'Adī, only without shoes; no wild animals can be killed in it and no plant can be uprooted; the water which flows there cannot be polluted.

Those who have visited the sanctuary are not all unanimous in seeing in it an old church or a Christian cloister². It is of course true that the *façade* has been constructed in the form which it has to-day hardly in the eighteenth century; the temple was destroyed several times. But whoever examines it attentively and compares

1. G. L. Bell, *Amurath to Amurath*, London 1911, 279; W. A. Wigram and E. T. A. Wigram, *The cradle of mankind*², London 1922, 102; Luke, *loc. cit.* 134. There is an Arabic inscription in the court on the niche over the throne of stone of Nāṣir. It says on one side: *Sultan Yazid, May Mercy of God be on him!*, on the other (side); *Šeyḥ 'Adī, May Mercy of God be on him!* Another inscription is over the door of one of the rooms in the court: *This is the epitaph of Ḥāyī ibn Ismā'īl. The benediction is inscribed on his door. Therefore enter in peace! Amen. In the year 1195*, Badger, *The Nestorians*, I, 106.

2. Bell, *loc. cit.* 279, and Wigrams, *loc. cit.* 94, note * deny that there had been a church on its site, whereas Bachmann, *loc. cit.* and Luke, *loc. cit.* 136, assert it with good arguments.

it with Christian churches of Kurdistān must come necessarily to the conclusion that it is an old Nestorian church; probably built on the foundation of a very ancient pagan sanctuary, in which most probably the stream which rises in the rectangular building, contiguous with the Holy of Holies, was worshipped. It is the question of that type of old Nestorian churches which are common in Kurdistān and which are either cut out entirely in the live rock with only the *façade* free and constructed in a walling of stones, or at least leaning on one side on the rock. The church of Duri is, for example, of this type¹.

Not far from the principal sanctuary is the sanctuary of Šeyḥ Šams ad-dīn. It is somewhat smaller, but it is surmounted by a tall spire. On the floor from which the spire rises the Yazidis are accustomed to promenade white oxen which are destined for sacrifice. It is not known what this building contains, probably the tomb of Šeyḥ Šams ad-dīn. Invocations to the Šeyḥ are inscribed on a slab of stone near the door, and several votive slabs are framed in the wall. The interior is lit by several tiny lamps. White oxen are sacrificed and dedicated to Šeyḥ Šams ad-dīn. They are slaughtered only on great festivals, and their meat is distributed among the poor. It is said that the small temple is constructed in such a way as to make the rays of the sun fall in it as far as possible at their full length, especially at sun-rise and at midday. Some believe that it can be asserted that the building was an ancient temple of the sun. But this is less probable².

In the valley there are many other small buildings, often with a tree surrounded by a low roughly constructed wall. They appertain to some districts or to some Yezidi tribes. Pilgrims reside and sleep in them during the festivals and the pilgrimage. Different parts of the valley are called by the names of the tribes, or after the countries of the tribes who camp there. Handkerchiefs, strips of cloth, and rags of various colours hang from branches of trees. There is a fountain, surrounded by stone-slabs, at the head of a row of trees which lead to the tomb of the national saint. These slabs are regarded as sacred and only the most competent persons are permitted to sit on them during great festivals. Great care is taken for maintaining the water which is drawn and drunk by pilgrims

1. Bachmann, *loc. cit.* 16-17 and Pl. 15 and 16.

2. Browne, *loc. cit.* 369; Layard, *Nineveh*, I, 288. The error in asserting that the temple is a temple of the sun is due to the belief that Šams ad-dīn is the sun. But this is erroneous. Šams ad-dīn is one of the many Arabo-Mussulman *laqabs* whose second component is ad-dīn, which means "(of) the religion", cf. Gabrieli, *loc. cit.* 151 - 154.

pure. All sacred buildings of the Yezidis are white, as they are coated with lime¹.

It is clear from what we have explained that the national sanctuary of the Yezidis does not differ in its general outlines from the ordinary Islamic sanctuaries of Western Asia, especially those in which a tomb of a saint is preserved, to which pilgrims from every part of districts lying far and near come every year.

For the festival of the pilgrimage to Şeyh 'Adî inhabitants of every village assemble and march in a procession, preceded by musicians playing on tambourines and flutes. They divert themselves with feint battles accompanied with abundant volleys of fusilade and general cries. When they see the spire of the sanctuary they fire their muskets as a sign of joy. Processions of the faithful come from various directions during the course of the whole day, and all, before going to their quarters, devotedly kiss the hand of their religious chiefs and greet the priests, assembled near the sanctuary. All wash and purify themselves physically and religiously before entering the sacred valley. Every tribe sacrifices a sheep, while all members of the tribe, stand around it ready to tear up the parts of the carcass. The meat is distributed among the poor².

There are two different kinds of ceremonies: public ones which can be attended not only by the Yezidis, but also by followers of other religions, and which are celebrated in the court of the sanctuary, and the private ones which take place in the interior of the temple. The latter can be attended only by various grades of the sacerdotal hierarchy, and to which those who do not appertain to the sect are not at all admitted. It is not exactly known in what the latter ceremonies consist. Only this much is certain that in its course, among other ceremonies, the presentation of the image of Melek Tâ'ûs to the priests takes place³.

We know, on the contrary, the particulars of those ceremonies

1. They paint it afresh every two years. Giamil gives a long list of small sanctuaries and chapels, *Monte Singar*, 34 - 36. The Yezidis call the small sanctuaries *şaqş*, which might be the Arabic word *şahş* "person". But it is more probable that it is Hebrew *şāqāş* "a detestable thing; an idol". Cf. Joseph, *Yezidi texts*, 251, note 40. Further, it should not be forgotten that in Babylonian *şaqşu* means "monstrous, bad, malign", see C. Bezold, *Babylonisch-assyrisches Glossar*, Heidelberg 1926, 284. Is it possible that this Babylonian word has been preserved intact among the Yezidis throughout the centuries? For a Babylonian trait in their doctrine, cf. pp. 38 - 39.

2. A very good description of the festival has been given by Layard, *Nineveh*, I, 279 - 295.

3. An act of common devotion among the Yezidis is to make a circuit of the court and to kiss the threshold of the door, as well as some stones of the wall. Moreover, they prostrate themselves before certain niches, Wigram, *loc. cit.*, 96.

which are celebrated in the open in their details. When the night of the first day approaches, the pilgrims whose number is already considerable, kindle lights and carry them to and fro through the valley. Thousands of lights are reflected with really a magic effect in the waters and in the stream of the valley, while from the mouths of the pilgrims begins to rise slowly a solemn song, melancholy and majestic, pathetic and sweet, sung by men and women, mixed in different voices harmoniously with tender notes of many flutes, interrupted at fixed intervals by sudden clatter of cymbals and tambourines. In the meantime the priests sit in the inner court, wholly illuminated by lights and lamps which throw a fine light on the white walls and the green foliage of trees. The *šeyhs* sit on one side, on the other about thirty *qawwāls* squat on the stones of the court and play on tambourines and flutes. The *faqirs* and also the women of religious orders, all dressed in white, stand around them. Other persons are not admitted in the inner court. The slow and solemn song lasts for about an hour. One of its parts is called the *Song of Melek 'Isà*, i. e. Angel Jesus, and is sung in Arabic by the *šeyhs*, the *qawwāls*, and the women. The tambourines interrupt from time to time the song of the priests, and make their own sound heard all the more frequently. Then the song becomes more troubled and confused, the tambourines are beaten with greater energy, the flutes produce torrents of sounds, the voices, rising more and more in pitch, become lacerating, whereas the women raise their cries, and the musicians throw up in the air their instruments in a state of paroxysm and exultation, and contort themselves in various ways, and finally fall exhausted on the ground. Everything ends with a frightening cry; it is midnight. When the noise ceases, single groups take up their former attitudes and walk through the valley, or sit under trees. The festival ends hardly at dawn¹.

For another ceremony the priests assemble one hour after sun-set in the inner court, where an iron lamp with four flames is placed in the centre, which a *faqir* fills every now and then with accompaniment of invocations on *Šeyh 'Adī*. The *qawwāls* stand along the wall on one side of the court, and chant a low song, while some play flutes and others beat tambourines. Now the *šeyhs* and the chiefs walk in pairs in a procession. The first is the *pīš-namāz* or rather *guide of the prayer*, who wears on his head a high black cap, and a long mantle with horizontal black and dark red stripes on his shoulders, then come two old *šeyhs*, followed by the spiritual and political chiefs of the Yezidis, and last of all by other chiefs and *šeyhs*. All wear white mantles. They walk around slowly, stopping from time to time, and then again walk-

1. I have followed the description of Layard, quoted above.

ing, while they chant prayers in honour of God. The *qawwāls* accompany the song with flutes and beat tambourines at intervals. The *faqīrs* dance around the lamp in the interior of the circle formed by the procession, balancing their arms according to the oriental custom of dance. Hymns to Melek 'Īsā and to Šeyḥ 'Adī are also chanted. Then everything finishes with a scene of excitement like that described above. When the prayers are ended, those who take part in the sacred procession kiss the right post of the door of the temple, that on which the serpent is carved. Thereupon the Mīr Haḡḡ mounts the step of the door and receives the homage of the priests, who touch his hand and carry it to their lips. Then all kiss one another¹.

In the morning of the second day of the pilgrimage, a little after sun-rise, the *šeyḥs* and the *qawwāls* recite a short prayer in the court. Others make their prayers over the tomb and frequently kiss the door of the temple and other places furnished with special sanctity. Then the priests raise the cloth spread over the tomb of the saint, and followed by the *qawwāls* who play on tambourines and flutes, turn round with the cloth in the outer court. The assembled people kiss the border of the cloth and make a small offering of money. After having replaced the cloth on the tomb, the priests and chiefs take their seats all around in the inner court. The *kočāqs*, thereupon, bring from the kitchen of the sanctuary plates of steaming *harīṣah* which all eat. They keep on inviting them in a loud voice to enjoy the hospitality of Šeyḥ 'Adī, by taking part in the sacred banquet. Finally, money is collected for the maintenance of the sanctuary².

The prayers and hymns of the Yezidis are recited only in order to praise and exalt God. Some of them celebrate several Yezidi martyrs fallen under the blows of the Turks³.

During their ceremonies the Yezidis sacrifice sheep, whose meat is distributed among the poor. It does not seem that their sacrifices are different in character and signification from those sacrifices celebrated on various occasions among the Mussulmans and the still half pagan tribes of the desert and the steppe. They sacrifice white oxen to Šeyḥ Šams ad-dīn. It is for this reason that some have inferred that this saint was verily the sun. But nothing proves it and nothing renders it even probable. During the great festival the sacrifice of a sheep is

1. Layard, *Discoveries in the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon*, London 1853, 81 - 83.

2. The *harīṣah* is a dish prepared with meat, pounded grains, and water, cooked in an oven for one whole night, Giamil, *loc. cit.* 65.

3. Layard, *Discoveries*, 92.

also performed for Melek 'Īsā and that of seven sheep for Melek Tā'ūs¹.

The greatest festival of the Yezidis is that of the New Year, called *sarṣāl* or *sarṣali*. This festival falls on the first Wednesday of the month of Nīsān, and in case it falls on the first Friday which is sacred for the Mussulmans, it is transported to the following Wednesday. Every family must buy meat on Wednesday-eve, or if it has not got it, must kill lambs or hens. The meat is blessed on the dawn of Wednesday in order to give it as offering to the dead. The Yezidis assemble for a banquet in the afternoon, and lunch together. On the dawn of Wednesday all girls go to the plains and to the mountains in order to collect flowers like anemones and roses which they place above the doors of their houses. They offer food to the dead in the morning, as we have already seen, by placing it over their tombs. Then the *qawwāls* turn in pairs around the tombs playing on cymbals and tambourines. He who plays on cymbals recites funeral songs in the Kurdish language. Then they take away the food from tombs, after the dead have tasted it, and give it away in the streets to the poor and to travellers. In villages, too poor to pay the *qawwāls*, the *ṣeyḥs* bless the tombs of the dead and eat the food deposited there as offering. The commemoration of the dead is thus terminated².

The explanation which the Yezidis give of this festival, viz. (the festival of thanksgiving) for what God accomplishes at this time, is curious, because the character which the festival of the New Year, the Zagmuk, had among the Babylonians and Assyrians is clearly reflected in it. There is not the slightest doubt that the Yezidi doctrine concerning the festival goes back to the corresponding Mesopotamian doctrine. It is really extraordinary that it has been maintained so pure during several centuries. This doctrine of the Yezidis is rather suitable to throw new light on the Babylonian festival and on the theological doctrines connected with it.

They assert that on the New Year's day God sits on His throne and orders that all present chiefs and families should assemble around him together with fortune-tellers and others, who all pray to Him and worship Him. Then God gives in lease the earth and all that is on it to one of them and writes a document confirming this, signed by Himself and by all those present as witnesses. After having consigned the legal document, God permits everybody to return to his affairs, and dismisses him on whom He has conferred the earth saying:

1. Mills, *loc. cit.* 208.

2. Giamil, *loc. cit.* 37 - 40.

"I have given to thee the earth for one year with everything that is on it; govern it as it pleases thee". Then the tenant throws his glance on the four corners of the earth and sees that men are poor in virtue and good works, and says that God is not pleased with prayers and fasts, just as the Christians, the Jews, and the Ismaelites are wont to practise praying and reading, but He is pleased rather with virtue and good works. It is therefore that the Yezidis rely more upon virtue and good works than upon fasts and prayers. When the tenant of that year sees the penury of virtue and good works among men, he threatens them many times with punishments of plague, famine, and earthquake. If they do not make penance, he allows the legions of death to go and fight against the human species.

The offerings which the faithful ones make to prophets and angels are connected also with this Yezidic festival. The latter are always present when God gives the earth in lease by his gesture described above; they can intercede before Him, so that He does not give it next year to some one who can harm the faithful ones¹.

Not a few elements of the festival are Babylonian and Assyrian². God gives to a sub-god the administration of the world in lease for one year, because he does not occupy himself with the direct administration and government of the earth, just as on the New Year's day the king of Assyria gave the administration of provinces to his governors. The document of the investiture, which is signed by all those who are present, reminds us of the palaeomesopotamian juridic documents, signed by those who were present, and who were, in consequence, witnesses of the act. The sub-god or administering angel has the supreme power for that year, and therefore he can punish men with different evils, among which are enumerated the activities of the legions of death, or the demons, as the Babylonians might have said. According to them, the gods can let the demons loose and incite them to throw themselves on men in order to bring on them torments and pains. The observation that their prophets can deviate the evil from the heads of the Yezidis reflects the circumstances which might have arisen many times at the court of the Assyrian king, when the inhabitants of provinces worked in such a manner that the administration of the provinces did not fall in the hands of hostile persons.

1. The most detailed and perhaps the most exact description of the festival of the New Year is that adopted in the text published by Giamil, *loc. cit.* 37-44. The relations which this festival has with the palaeomesopotamian one have been pointed out by G. Brockelmann, *Das Neujahrsfest der Jezîdis*, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, LV, 388-390.

2. But we have also some vague resemblance to what happens, according to the Islamic doctrine, on the *laylat al-qadr*, viz. the divine decrees for the year are executed by angels.

Either the festival *sarşāl* of the Yezidis is a reminiscence of what the king of Assyria did on the New Year's day for distributing the administration of the provinces among governors, or it is a reminiscence of what, just as the Assyrians and the Babylonians maintained, their national gods did on that day, this much is certain that we have here to deal with a very ancient conception which corresponds exactly, even in particulars with what was practised and believed in Ancient Mesopotamia; this fact makes us regard its origin from very ancient times as demonstrated. In this point the Yezidis depend undoubtedly on the Assyrians. On the contrary, neither it is at all demonstrated nor it is at all probable that they depend on them also for some other traits of their religion. We have already had the occasion to point out that the worship of birds was not practised in ancient Mesopotamia during the Babylonian and Assyrian times, and that the worship of the peacock cannot therefore be derived from that presumed worship practised by the Assyrians and Babylonians¹. Moreover, the interpretation of those who see in the peacock a symbol of the sun or a species of the cosmic cock is also to be rejected².

III

THE SACRED BOOKS.

The first rank in the religious scriptures of the Yezidis is held by two small books, one of which is called *Kitāb al-ġilwāh* or "Book of the revelation", and the other written in the Kurdish language *Maşhaf-i rāš*, i.e. "Black book". While even Badger and Layard, and also later writers, were not at all aware of the existence of these books, and all that they were able to know of the sacred literature of the sect was limited to some hymns and prayers, these two short books were very recently published in Kurdish and Arabic redactions, as supposed works of the secretary of Şeyh 'Adi, and of Ḥasan al-Bağrî, respectively. The first book should go back to 1162 or 1163 and the other to 1342 or 1343 A. D.

An English version, made from the Arabic text, was published by E.

1. But the peacock was known in Babylonia and Assyria, cf. B. Laufer, *Der Pfau in Babylonien*, *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, XVI (1913), 359 - 540, and also B. Meissner, *Haben die Babylonier den Pfau gekannt?*, *OLZ*, XVI, 292 - 293. It is mentioned also in the Talmud, L. Lewysohn, *Die Zoologie des Talmuds*, Frankfurt a. M. 1858, 189 - 190. On the peacock in antiquity in general, see O. Keller, *Die antike Tierwelt*, II, Leipzig 1913, 148 - 154. The worship of the cock in ancient Western Asia is not unusual. For the sacred cocks of Hierapolis and Iconium, see H. Gressmann, *Der heilige Hahn zu Hierapolis in Syrien*, *Marti Festschrift*, 88 - 95, pp. 91 - 92, and on their use in modern Palestine for calling rain, 92 - 93.

2. M. Horten asserts it, *Die Philosophie des Islam*, Leipzig 1924, who speaks briefly of the Yezidis on pp. 126 - 127.

H. Browne in the book of O. H. Parry, *Six months in a Syrian monastery*, London 1895. The same Arabic text was published by Isya Joseph in the article entitled *Yezidi texts*, inserted in the American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature, XXV, 111 - 156 and 218 - 254, pp. 118 - 133, accompanied by an English translation and several notes. The Kurdish text of the two books, in a facsimile of the original, was published together with a French translation of two Arabic texts, by Father Anastās in the *Anthropos*, VI (1911): *La découverte récente des deux livres sacrés des Yézidis*, 1-39. Finally, a scientific edition of the Kurdish as well as of the Arabic recension was prepared by M. Bittner for the Denkschriften of the Academy of Sciences of Vienna: *Die heiligen Bücher der Jeziden oder Teufelsanbeter (kurdish und arabisch)*, Denkschriften, LV, IV, 1913, and *Nachtrag*, Denkschriften, LV, V, 1913. A French version of the two books was published by Nau in the *Recueil de textes et de documents sur les Yézidis*, *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, XX, 156 - 162.

The text edited by Bittner is that published by Anastās. The language of the Kurdish text is a good, old Kurdish dialect which presents direct affinity with the language of the Kurdish tribe of the Mukrîs. It is no more spoken, not even by the Yezidis themselves, and therefore the text of the two books presents a great interest also for a philologist studying the dialects of Kurdistan.

These texts are written in a quite particular alphabet, which was until their discovery entirely unknown, but which seems to have been in use for writing some Kurdish dialects of the region. The texts were copied by a faithless Yezidi for Father Anastās. Nowadays the writing is to be considered as cryptic. The inventor of this alphabet has taken as model the Arabo-Persian alphabet. It follows from various peculiarities of the orthography of words beyond doubt that the text was written first with Arabo-Persian characters, and that only later on it was transliterated into this new cryptic writing. As we have already said, the language is a Kurdish dialect, but it does not correspond with any of the known dialects, which have been rendered accessible from the end of the eighteenth century upto date. We have undoubtedly to deal with an old mediaeval dialect, which has left no trace whatsoever behind it in our times. Arabic words are very frequent in it. This circumstance, and the fact that certain allusions, especially that to the Yezidic prophetess Hâssiyah and to the lettuce, are not understood but by referring them to an Arabic text, makes it nearly certain to believe that the Kurdish text is derived from an Arabic original, i. e. it is a translation from Arabic. These two books must have therefore been originally written in Arabic. Still it follows from a comparison

of the Arabic text now preserved with the Kurdish one that the latter could not have been derived from the Arabic text, which we possess at present. We must therefore conclude that the Kurdish version was made from an Arabic text a little different from that published by several above-mentioned authors. We are therefore quiet justified in publishing in the following pages our version of the *Arabic* text, and not that of the Kurdish one, with occasional annotations of the more serious divergences of the Kurdish version, as this also represents an old Arabic text.

The Arabic text is not written in pure literary Arabic, but in a language which represents a contamination of the literary Arabic with forms and modes of speech and dialectical or vulgar constructions. Still for the most part this corruption of the text should be considered due to the ignorance of the copyists¹.

Some writers have contested the authenticity of these writings and have asserted that they were composed only in the last century. They advanced in their favour arguments of various values, among others also some of linguistic character². The word "authenticity" can have *different meanings and can comport very disparate opinions on the provenance of a text. In the present case, we are of opinion that on the one hand the circumstance that the Kurdish dialect in which the two books are redacted is an old dialect, — the forms preserved in it go back to the middle ages; they can be explained only by comparing them with other related forms of the modern Kurdish dialects, — and that on the other hand, the consideration that no native or an oriental would be in a position to write a text in this dialect, for whose comprehension an intensive study of European orientalist books are necessary, which are wholly inaccessible to an oriental who is not highly educated, demonstrates in a manner beyond all doubt that the texts cannot have been translated into Kurdish in the past century. They are therefore older. Still I think that at any rate they cannot be as old as the Yezidis would like them to be. They are not therefore authentic in *this* sense. When they were written we do not know. But they contain and certainly reflect really Yezidic ideas and conceptions. In *this* latter sense, therefore, we can say that they are really authentic, as they are good

1. For all these notes I refer the reader to the above-mentioned publication of Bittner whose edition of the texts is to be regarded as the unique really scientific basis for the study of the religious books of the Yezidis. Joseph has also some good remarks in the work quoted above.

2. I refer to Mingana in the article often quoted and in another published also in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1912, 117 - 119, *Sacred Books of the Yezidis*.

sources of knowing the patrimony of ideas and thoughts which form the religion of the sect.

The Book of the revelation consists of an introduction and five chapters. It is said in the introduction that God is the Angel Peacock, that he sent 'Abtā'ūs on the earth, and that the revelation of God is to be found in the tradition and in the present book. In the five chapters it is God himself who speaks and manifests to his faithful ones his being, his qualities, his operations and his manner of behaving himself with men, and gives them instructions and admonishes them to follow his doctrine. If we would like to make this book correspond to one of the two sacred books of the Christians, we ought to say that it represents the New Testament.

The other, on the contrary, the *Black Book*, corresponds rather to the Old Testament. There is narrated in it, in the third person, the creation by God, called in the Kurdish text by his Persian name Ḥudā and in the Arabic one Allāh, the mission of 'Adī, the story of Adam and his sin, that of the kings of the Yezidis, the prohibitions which exist in the religion, and then once again another version of the creation, in parts different from that given in the beginning of this book.

Almost all that these books contain is encountered in and confirmed by narratives and notices of travellers and reporters on the religion of the Yezidis.

I publish in the following pages in an Italian version¹, besides the two principal sacred books, also a memorandum of the sect presented to the Ottoman authorities which gives a short explanation of the chief religious doctrines, two Yezidic prayers, a catechism of their religion redacted for the Russian authorities, a catalogue of the festival days of the Yezidis of the Caucasus, and a panegyric in honour of 'Adī.

1. The following English translation of these texts is from the Italian version of Furlani. (The translator.)

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

The literature on the Yezidis and their religion is rather abundant, but the quality of the notices which it contains do not correspond to the quantity of the pages dedicated to this curious sect of Western Asia, and to the studies which various authors have contributed to it, the majority of whom were travellers, who on arriving at Mosul did not let slip at any cost an opportunity of making an acquaintance of the presumed worshippers of the Devil. Still a profound and really scientific treatment of the Yezidis is lacking upto date. My present little volume is to be regarded as an attempt to bring a little order in the unclassified and often contradictory mass of news, very frequently false and inspired by sectarians, starting from the writings of the sect itself. In this bibliographical note I quote only the best publications, omitting all the rest, of which several are to be found already quoted in the notes to this work.

The best dissertations on the Yezidis are perhaps to be found in two books of A. H. Layard, *Nineveh and its remains: with an account of a visit to the Chaldaean Christians of Kurdistan, and the Yezidis, or devil-worshippers; and an inquiry into the manners and customs of the ancient Assyrians*, I-II, London 1849, and *Discoveries in the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon*, London 1853. Layard is a source of great importance, because he knew the Yezidis very well.

Another very good connoisseur of the sect was N. Siouffi who wrote extensively in *Notice sur la secte des Yézidis*, Journal Asiatique, VII e s., t. XX, 1882, and *Notice sur le chéikh 'Adi et la secte des Yézidis*, Journal Asiatique, VIII e s., t. V, 1885.

J. Menant published in 1892 a book entitled *Les Yézidis. Épisodes de l'histoire des adorateurs du diable*, Paris, which brings a good crop of news on the recent history of the sect and the persecutions which its members had to undergo specially at the hands of the Turks and the Kurds.

In *Ein Beitrag zur Kenntniss der Jeziden*, inserted in the first volume of the book *Meine Vorderasienexpedition 1906 und 1907*, Leipzig 1911, of Grothe, Th. Mensel gives a German version of a small book on the Yezidis of Muṣṭafā Nūrī Pāšā, written in Turkish and published at Mosul. It is a book in which all that is best written upto date on the sect and on its religion is collected.

One of the best, precise, prudent and exhaustive treatises is that of Father Anastās, a Carmelite of Bagdad, published in the Arabic language in the second volume of the periodical of Beyrouth *al-Mašriq*.

Mgr. Samuele Giamil, procurator-general of the patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldaeans in Rome, published with an Italian version and notes in 1900 a modern Syriac work on the sect written by a priest named Isaac who was the best connoisseur of the Yezidis. The work is one of the best as a source, although it shows the prejudice of the author against the Yezidis. The title is *Monte Singar. Taš'itā d. Dāsniyē. Storia di un popolo ignoto. Teste siro-caldeo e traduzione italiana*, Roma 1900.

Interesting notes on the Yezidis together with a German version of some writings concerning the sect are given by A. Dirr in Anthropos, XII-XIII: *Einiges über die Jeziden*.

Isya Joseph sums up that which he had explained already in his edition of the most important work on the Yezidis, in a book published in Boston in 1919, which has the title *Devil worship. The sacred books and traditions of the Yezidis*. An essay at explaining historically the religion of the sect is also made by Aḥmad Taymūr, who published in Cairo an opusculum in Arabic entitled *al-Yazidiyyah*.

H. Lammens, *Le massif du Gabal Siman et les Yézidis de Syrie*, Beirut 1906, was not accessible to me. R. H. W. Epsom, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel*, London 1928, is of little value.

As regards the religious books of the Yezidis, necessary bibliographical notes will be found in the chapter *The Sacred Books* and in the introductions to the translations of both these books.

TRANSLATION OF THE TEXTS.

THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.

PREFACE

1. He who existed before all creatures¹ is the Peacock Angel².
2. It was he who sent³ 'Abṭā'ūs⁴ in this world in order that he might separate and instruct his people⁵, and that he might save them from errors and from imaginations⁶.
3. And this happened first by means of the transmission of the verbal discourse⁷, and then through the medium of this book called *Gilwah*. This is the book which those who stand outside the nation⁸ must not read.

CHAPTER I.

1. I was and I am now existing and I shall remain⁹ upto the end

1. He who existed *al-mawjūd*; that is, really the existing one. This is the usual Arabic term to designate he who exists and, therefore, also God.

2. Melek Ṭā'ūs. Cf. for the meaning of this name of the Yezidi God what I have said above pp. 15 - 16 and 20 - 21.

3. *Arsala* "he sent, he sent as envoy" is the Islamic term to designate the sending of apostles or prophets by God. Therefore the apostle is called in Arabic *rasūl* which is also an epithet of Moḥammad.

4. The term 'Abṭā'ūs is undoubtedly composed of 'abd "servant" and ṭā'ūs "peacock"; it means therefore "servant of the Peacock". It seems that with this name the prophet of Yezidism, 'Adī is designated. His figure resembles those of Christ and Moḥammad, as it is seen also from what is said concerning his activity and his revelation.

5. The translation of the passage is not certain. Nau interprets the verb *yumayyiza*, "he separated", in the sense of "to separate the faith from the error, as if here it was not the question of separating the people of the Peacock from others of a different religion, although this idea of the separation of the faithful of one religion from those of another is a very common conception in the religions of Western Asia. The construction of the Arabic text is not good at this point. But in the Kurdish text we have exactly the same idea as we have translated: "so that he separated his own people".

6. *Wahm* "false imagination".

7. That is 'Abṭā'ūs gave his instructions by word of mouth, but afterwards he wrote them down. It is not certain whether the text says exactly this. At any rate it follows from these lines that the doctrines of the Yezidis are based on oral traditions and on the book called *al-Gilwah*. Yezidism follows here also Christianity and Islām.

8. By the expression "those who stand outside the nation", *al-millāh*, are to be understood all those who are not Yezidis.

9. God is *ab aeterno* and is eternal.

with my sway over the creatures¹ and with my directions² of the enterprises and affairs of all those who stand under my sway.

2. I am present immediately³ for those who confide in me and invoke me in the time of need.

3. No place whatsoever is empty of me. I participate in all events which those who stand outside (the pale of the community) call evil, because they are not made according to their desires⁴.

4. Every time has a director⁵, and this is by my counsel. The chief of the world is changed in every century, so that every one of the chiefs executes his own duty during his own period and in his office⁶.

5. I give the permission (to act) according to what is just to the created nature with its natural qualities⁷.

1. *Tasallut 'alā'l-ḥalā'iqi* means that God is after all a lord and prince and has the supreme dominion over the whole creation; he is the supreme *sultān*.

2. *Tadbīrī*, a common term in Islām to designate the activity of God, who is the guiding (force) and administrator of the universe. All the terms which the book employs to designate the qualities and prerogatives of God are the common terms employed also in the Islamic theology.

3. The author wants to say that when some one invokes him, i. e. God, he helps him immediately.

4. A clear definition of evil is given here. Evil, according to the Yezidis, does not really exist, and therefore also the author of evil, i. e. the Devil, does not exist. It must therefore be said that Yezidism is a religion which has got neither the Devil nor evil. Evil is a purely subjective concept; it is the result of a solely and strictly human vision of the world and accidents. Man calls evil simply all that does not please him, whereas considered in itself it is not in fact evil. It is sought with this theory to take away even the least suspicion that the Yezidi God can have anything whatsoever to do with evil. It would be interesting if we could settle the question when the Yezidis elaborated this doctrine. I have the impression that it is nothing but a reply to the calumnies launched against them by Christians and Mussulmans of worshipping the prince of evil.

5. That every time and cosmic period has its director and regent is an old religious idea of Western Asia, which arose as early as in Babylonian times, and succeeded in penetrating also into some unorthodox Islamic sects through astrology and the gnostics.

6. It is the same idea that the text makes more precise on this point. God does not rule and govern the world directly, but he entrusts its management, I should say, to a species of sub-gods, who take upon themselves, as representatives of God, to do all that is necessary for the right working of the course of the universe. According to this paragraph the changing of the administrator of the world, of the *ra'is* takes place every century. Cf. on this subject what I have said (pp. 37-38) as regards the Yezidi festival of the New Year and the idea of the transfer of the administration, which forms the substratum of the festival.

7. The sense of this paragraph is rather obscure. The Kurdish text says: "I allow the created nature its own law." Bittner remarks that these words are perhaps to be interpreted in the sense that the created natures can do what concerns them. Nau translates: "I allow every one to follow the law of his own nature." This is, it seems to me, the more probable interpretation.

6. He who revolts against me will repent and will grieve¹.

7. Other gods cannot mix themselves in my activity and keep me away from that which I intend to do, whatever it might be.

8. The books which are in the hands of those who stand outside (the pale of the community) are not true. Those who have been sent by us have not written them; but they have made errors, they have revolted, and they have altered them. Every one of these (books) makes the other useless and annuls it².

9. The truth and the falsehood are known and they become manifest, when they fall under examination and investigation³.

10. My threat is for those who speak of my covenant. I thwart, according to my judgment, the skilled directors to whom I have confided determined periods. I permit certain things and I prohibit necessary works at their time⁴.

11. I guide rightly and instruct those who follow my doctrine: they will find pleasure and joy in harmony with me.

CHAPTER II.

1. I reward and chastise this Adam⁵ in the ways I know.

2. The supremacy over all that is in this world, above it and under it is in my hand.

1. God chastises those who rebel (against Him) and do not follow his commandments.

2. On this subject, the Yezidis go still further than what the Mussulmans assert concerning the religious books of the Jews and the Christians. The Mussulmans admit in general their authenticity, but deny only that they are unaltered in all their parts. The Yezidis, on the contrary, do not admit at all that the sacred books of other nations go back in fact to the prophets to whom they are attributed. Moreover, they assert that they have been altered and that the one contradicts the other, and therefore annuls it.

3. Another paragraph of obscure meaning. The Kurdish text says on this point: "The just and the unjust are visible, the latter are always proved anew." Nau renders it: "The truth and the untruth are known to me." Anastās translates it by: "Moreover, the truth and the untruth are recognised by experience." Does this paragraph refer perhaps to the true and the false that is in the books of those who are foreign to the sect?

4. Again this paragraph can be interpreted in different ways. What is to be understood after all by "my covenant"? Is it perhaps that covenant which God concluded with his people of the Yezidis, just as in his time the God of Israel did with his own people, and just as also Jesus Christ did with his faithful ones? Why does God oppose clever leaders to whom he entrusts, as we have already seen above, the administration of the world for a certain period? Or does God entrust the administration to the leaders by means of a pact or contract, which thereupon some clever leader wants to change for his own benefit, contending its clauses? God menaces therefore precisely those leaders who dispute the concluded pact and show themselves opposed to it. The last sentence of this paragraph means certainly that God permits certain things and prohibits certain others, when he thinks it suitable and opportune.

5. Man in general is to be understood by "this Adam".

3. I do not permit that the worlds should fight one against the other¹.

4. I do not hinder their good, expressly to those who are specially mine and who obey me².

5. I entrust my work in the hands of those whom I have chosen and who are according to my desire.

6. I reveal myself³ in some way to those who are faithful to me and who are submissive to my counsel.

7. I take away and give, I make rich and poor, happy and unhappy according to the circumstances and the times.

8. There is nobody who has the right to mix himself (in my operations) or to hamper that which I have ordained.

9. I bring pains and maladies to those who oppose me.

10. He who is agreeing with me does not die like other sons of Adam⁴.

11. I do not grant anybody to inhabit this world below (for a) time longer than that which has been determined for him by me⁵.

12. If I wish, I send him repeatedly, for the second and the third time, in this world or in another different from this by means of the transmigration of souls⁶.

1. The Kurdish text says: "I do not wish that one creature hurls itself on another." "Men" is, therefore, to be understood by "worlds".

2. The idea expressed in the Kurdish text is different: "I do not prevent good which comes to them, although there are here those who appertain to me and do according to my discourse." It seems to me that this paragraph contains a refutation against those who see in the Yezidi God the Devil. The author says that God is not at all wicked; he does not inflict evil, and does not keep back and hamper in the least good of those — and particularly good of those — who follow his commandments.

3. We read in the Kurdish text "I appear" instead of "I make myself seen; I reveal myself". God announces here that he appears in visions to his faithful ones. The imitation of the Jewish religion and Christianity which know visions and apparitions of God is here evident.

4. That is: he dies of course, but not like other men. His death has a different character and is followed, in consequence, by a state of the soul different from that of other men. There is probably an allusion to the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul.

5. The duration of the life of every one is fixed by God who does not prolong it beyond the limit determined from the very beginning. Against whom is this attack directed?

6. The doctrine of metempsychosis, *tanāsuh al-arwāh*, is clearly expressed here. The Yezidis have a more elaborate theory of the transmigration of the soul than that which might appear from this text. They distinguish the passage of the soul into a plant, and call it in this case *rash*, the passage into an animal, called *mash*, from that into an inert matter called *fash*. *Nāsh*, is the transmigration of the soul from the body of one man

CHAPTER III.

1. I guide rightly without a book. I direct secretly my friends and my chosen ones. My doctrine is without trouble¹.

2. I chastise those who act in a way contrary to my laws in other worlds, corresponding to the condition of things and to the times².

3. The sons of this Adam do not know the conditions destined for them and therefore they fall many times into error.

4. The animals on the firm land, the birds in heaven, and the fish of the sea are all in my hand and under my authority.

5. The deposits and the treasures, buried in the heart of the

into that of another. Cf. Anastâs, al-Masriq, *loc. cit.* 153. For some cases of metempsychosis see further below the chapter on catechism, § 25, note.

The souls are immortal and live after their separation from the body in the other world. The souls of the just go at once to paradise, those of the sinners err on the earth upto the day of the last judgment. They are in continual strife with the demons, *jinns*, or according to others, after death the angel of death transports them at once to hell. Immediately after the funeral and burial the angel of death presents himself before the dead and exacts from him a reckoning of what he had done during his life. Then the dead enumerates all his good and evil deeds. But the angel is not satisfied with a simple oral recitation on part of the dead and asks to have it all in writing to which the latter replies that he has neither ink, nor pen, nor paper. Thereupon the angel of death says to him: "*Thy nails are thy pen, thy saliva is thy ink, and thy funeral shroud is thy paper. Write down thy deeds and consign the list to me.*" The dead obeys him and the angel takes in his charge the list written on the shroud. Then he accompanies the just to heaven, the wicked on the contrary to hell, or according to others drives them away to the sepulchre. If a sinner disowns on the day of the final judgment his sins, the angel shows him his shroud and asks him, whether it was not he himself who has written on it. If he still disowns his sins, the angel precipitates him in a deeper hell; Dirr, *loc. cit.* 570.

It is the belief of the Yezidis that the souls of the dead can act as intercessors before God. It is therefore sought to render them propitious by means of funeral festivals and funeral banquets. Three festivals of remembrance are held in the first year after death. The first is held on the third or the seventh day, the second after three months, and the third after a year. This last is most solemn. Further, it is customary among the well-to-do people to carry every day of the year in the morning, at midday and in the evening *the portion of the dead* to the tomb of the deceased. Tombstones are not erected. Dead bodies are placed with the face turned towards the east and the hands crossed on the breast. Thus Dirr, *loc. cit.* 570.

1. I do not know what is meant by the words: "God guides justly without a book". Does it perhaps mean that in order to be good Yezidis it is not necessary to know the sacred texts? God says that his doctrine can be followed without difficulty, because he does not demand much from his faithful ones. This also is an Islamic reminiscence.

2. The punishment of God is not therefore manifested only in this world, but it can be postponed also to the worlds, i. e. to the cosmic periods which will follow.

earth are known to me, and I cause them to be shifted from one (person) to the other¹.

6. I reveal my miracles and my marvels to those who accept them and ask me for them in their time².

7. The opposition and the adversity of those who are strangers to me and to my followers is a damage for them³, because they do not know the power and the riches which are in my hand, and (they do not know) that I choose from the lineage of Adam him who is worthy of them.

8. The directions of the worlds, the revolutions of the centuries and the change of every one of their directors are ordered by me from remote times.

CHAPTER IV.

1. I do not give my rights to another God who is different from me⁴.

2. I have given four elements, four times, and four bases for the requirements of men⁵.

3. The books of strangers are acceptable in a certain way, in that which conforms to and agrees with my precepts, but that which is contrary to them, they have changed⁶.

4. Three things are against me and I hate three names⁷.

1. The dominion of God extends itself also to that which is under the earth, therefore also to hidden treasures, which he makes one or the other (person) discover, thus making them change their proprietors.

2. God makes also miracles and produces marvellous things which he shows to his faithful ones, when the suitable time comes.

3. It is a warning to the numerous persecutors of the Yezidi sect, who ought to remember that God is powerful and rich.

4. God is the unique God who has not got other gods beside him, as the pagans believe. The anti-pagan polemic of Islâm, perhaps also its aversion to Christianity is re-echoed here, in which, according to the Mussulmans, God the Father had ceded to God the Son some of his rights. But this assertion of the paragraph stands in a certain contradiction to the cession of the administration of the world to governors; cf. above pp. 37-38, and p. 48, note 6.

5. The Arabic text has *azminah* "times". I do not know why Bittner translates it by "signs". Epochs are understood by "times". I do not know what are the four epochs and the four bases.

6. This is precisely the Islamic doctrine about the sacred books of the Jews and the Christians.

7. It is not clear from the text of the sacred books of the Yezidis what the three things and the three names are. A name which the Yezidis never give to their sons is that of George, conqueror of the dragon. This must certainly be one of the three names hated by the Yezidi God. Such is indeed also Şaytân. But the third? Probably Iblis.

5. Those who preserve my mysteries¹ will obtain that which has been promised by me.

6. All those who bear the blows of destiny for me, I shall reward surely in one of the worlds².

7. I desire that my sons unite themselves in a body and thus also all my followers in consequence of the opposition of the strangers to them³.

8. O you, who have followed my commandments⁴, repudiate the discourses and all doctrines which do not come from me. Do not mention my name and my qualities, so that you do not sin, as you do not know what the strangers will do⁵.

CHAPTER V.

1. Honour my person and my image⁶, because they remind you of me that which you have forgotten for years⁷.

2. Obey all my laws and listen to my servants⁸ for what they will teach you of the science of the secret⁹ which comes from me.

The book of the revelation is completed.

1. *Asrūrī*. Is this term to be taken in the sense of the hidden religious doctrine, or in that of the sacrament?

2. The reward in one of the worlds corresponds to the punishment by God in one of the worlds. The paragraph re-echoes a well-known saying of Jesus.

3. That is, they form a religious community. What we have said about the preceding paragraph can be repeated also for this one.

4. Koranic reminiscence: *yā ayyuhā 'l-ladīna āmanū* "those who believed" occurs very frequently in the Koran.

5. Biblical reminiscence in what concerns the naming of the name of God. The last words of the paragraph seem to say that the Yezidis must not pronounce the name of God and his qualities, as strangers could misuse them, and drag them down from their real meaning into an evil one, i. e. employ them in a degraded sense. In fact the Yezidi God is coupled with the injurious names of Satan, accursed, etc.

6. It is a clear indication to the emblems of God in the form of a peacock. They are called images of God. It would therefore be wrong to accuse the sect of idolatry.

7. The Kurdish text says: "That which has gone away from your memory". The view of the *sanjāq* serves to revive the faith of the Yezidis.

8. Different grades of the spiritual hierarchy are to be understood by "servants".

9. *ʿIlm al-ḡayb* is an Islamic term.

THE BLACK BOOK

1. In the beginning God¹ created the white pearl from his precious breast², and created a bird called Anfar³. He placed the pearl on its back and remained on it forty thousand years⁴.

2. The first day on which God created was a Sunday. He created on that day an angel called 'Azrā'il: he is the Peacock Angel, the chief of all⁵.

3. On Monday he created the angel Dardā'il: he is Šeyḥ Ḥasan.

4. On Tuesday he created the angel Isrāfā'il: he is Šeyḥ Šams.

5. On Wednesday he created the angel Mikā'il: he is Šeyḥ Abū Bakr.

6. On Thursday he created the angel Ġibrā'il: he is Saġġād ad-dīn.

7. On Friday he created the angel Šamnā'il: he is Nāsir ad-din.

8. On Saturday he created the angel Nūrā'il: he is Fahr ad-din.

9. God made the Angel Peacock their chief⁶.

10. After him he created the form of the seven heavens, the earth, the sun and the moon.

11. Fahr ad-din created the man, the animals, the birds, the beasts and placed them in the pockets of the tunic⁷. He got up from

1. In the Kurdish text *Ḥudā* which is the Persian word for God; the Arabic text has *Allāh*.

2. *Mīn sirrihi al-azīzi* means literally "from his precious mystery". Anastās translates it freely "from his mysterious and impenetrable source". Nau and Joseph render it by "from his very precious essence".

3. The manuscript of Joseph gives to the bird created by God the name *Anġar*. It would be then a corrupted form of *Anfar*. According to the myth given by us above, God created Archangel Gabriel in the form of a bird. But Gabriel cannot be the bird Anfar. It does not seem to me that this bird can be taken for a crested cock or a species of falcon, called in Aramaic *anḡā*, as Nau does.

4. This is perhaps either the first period or the first epoch or the first world.

5. 'Azrā'il is then the first of the angels or rather the Angel Peacock. God the Creator is therefore different from the Peacock. God created in all seven angels, of whom every one presides a day of the week, just as among the Babylonians of the later epoch every one of the seven planetary gods presided a day of the week.

6. The Angel Peacock is therefore the chief or the first of the angels. He corresponds thus exactly to Iblīs. The great saints whom the Yezidis worship are six angels. It is therefore right to call the Yezidis worshippers of the angels.

7. The second creator or (the creator) in suborder is the last of the angels, Fahr ad-dīn. It is he who created man, the animals, and the birds. It is not understood why precisely the last angel should be the secondary creator.

the pearl and the angels were with him. He shouted very loudly over the pearl, and it was splitted and it became four pieces. Water came out from its interior, and it became a sea. This world was round without perforation¹.

12. God created Ġibrā'il in the shape of a bird and sent him. He made four corners of the earth with his hand. Then he created a ship and remained in the ship thirty thousand years². Then he went away and settled down in Lāliš. Then he shouted in this world³ and made the stones to petrify. This world became earth and began to tremble. He ordered Ġibrā'il concerning the two pieces of the white pearl and placed the one under the earth and the other in the gate of heaven. Then he made with them the sun and the moon, and created the stars from the small scattered particles of the white pearl and hung them up in heaven as ornaments⁴.

13. He created fruit-bearing trees and plants on the earth and the mountains with the object of the decoration of the earth. Then he created the throne over the carpet⁵.

14. The powerful Lord said: "O Angels, I shall create Adam and Eve and shall make them men. Šahr ibn Safar will issue from them, from the interior of Adam. A religious nation on earth will descend from the latter, and then the religious nation of 'Azrā'il, I mean of the Peacock Angel, i. e. the religious nation of the Yezidis."

15. Then he sent Šeyḥ 'Adī ibn Musāfir from the land of Syria who came to Lāliš.

16. Then the Lord descended on the black mountain, shouted and created thirty thousand angels and divided them into three groups. They began to worship him for forty thousand years. Then he consigned them to the Peacock Angel, and mounted with them to heaven.

1. *Bilā taḥallul*. Bittner renders it by "without splitting". The Kurdish text says "without hole". Nau translates it by "without fissure," and Joseph by "it was not divided".

2. The creation of Gabriel in the form of a bird and that of the ship agrees with the myth to which we have already referred on p. 24 following therein Siouffi.

3. It is therefore God himself who settles down in Lāliš, which means to say that Šeyḥ 'Adī was an incarnation of God himself. The present world is *ad-dunyā*: it is an Islamic term.

4. The creation of the sun and the moon is already related in paragraph 10. We have therefore here a partial repetition of the story of the creation. This story follows more or less closely that given in the Old Testament and in the Koran.

5. The throne on the carpet is the heaven on earth.

17. Then the Lord descended on the holy land¹. He commanded Ġibrā'il to bring earth from the four corners of this world. The latter brought the earth, the air, the fire, and the water. He created Adam with all these and put into him a spirit² by means of his own power. He ordered Ġibrā'il to let Adam enter paradise³, and (ordained) that he might eat all fruits of the trees, but that he must not eat wheat⁴.

18. After hundred years the Peacock Angel said to God: "How will it happen that Adam will multiply, and where is his descendance (race)?" God said to him: "I entrust the matter and its execution in thy hands". He⁵ came and said to Adam: "Hast thou eaten wheat?" He⁶ replied: "No, as God has prohibited it to me". He⁷ said: "Eat, thou wilt fare better". Immediately after he had eaten (the wheat) his belly was swollen and the Peacock Angel drove him out of the garden⁸, abandoned him and went up to heaven.

19. Adam found himself in distress⁹, because of his belly, as it had got no opening. God sent thereupon a bird which came, pecked him and made for him an opening. And the latter was relieved¹⁰.

1. It is said already in paragraph 12 that God settled down in Lāliš. Here the mission of the Saint 'Adi in Lāliš is mentioned again. Two different versions are placed one immediately after the other, as we have already ascertained for the tale of the creation. There is in paragraph 17 a mention of another descent of the Lord on the Holy Land, by which Lāliš is surely meant.

2. This is the second version of the creation of Adam. The Biblical reminiscence is clear in the first one, narrated in paragraph 14. Here also the text speaks of the spirit which God placed in Adam. It is worth mentioning how God creates Adam in this passage by means of four elements supplied to him by Gabriel.

3. In Arabic *al-firdaws*, a word derived from Persian, and commonly used in Islām for heaven.

4. That the prohibited fruit was precisely wheat is a Hebrew, Islamic, and also Christian legend. The Yezidis took it certainly from Islām. Cf. above p. 17.

5. Here the Angel Peacock, different from God, plays exactly the part of Satan or Iblis. The Peacock is to be understood by "he".

6. "He" is here, of course, Adam. It is noteworthy that in this tale of the seduction of the first man there is no mention of Eve, as she was not yet created. The Peacock addresses himself exclusively to Adam and incites him to eat the wheat prohibited by God. The idea which this second sacred book of the Yezidis has of the Angel Peacock is certainly the original one, according to which he is also the first of the angels.

7. It is again the Peacock who speaks.

8. On the contrary, according to the myth narrated by Siouffi, Adam, when he was driven out of paradise, felt that two canals were formed for the evacuation, and he was greatly relieved. The effect of the original sin is reduced to an indigestion of Adam! This shows clearly to what low intellectual and spiritual level the Yezidis have fallen.

9. We have already alluded to this incident above on p. 25.

10. See above p. 25.

20. Gibrā'il was absent from Adam for hundred years. The latter wept therefore and was sad for hundred years.

21. At that time God ordered Gibrā'il to create Eve. He came and created Eve from under the armpits of Adam, (i. e.) from the left (side)¹.

22. Then the Angel Peacock descended on the earth for our created sect, and kings besides the kings of the ancient Assyrians, sprang up for us viz. Nasrūh, who is Nāṣir ad-dīn, Kāmūš, who is the angel Fahr ad-dīn, and Arṭimūs, who is the angel Šams ad-dīn. After him we had two kings, Šabūr the First and Šabūr the Second, whose reign lasted for hundred and fifty years. Our chiefs up to date have sprung up from their race².

23. Our hatred is directed against four kings³.

24. (The following) have been prohibited to us⁴, the lettuce, because its name is like that of our prophetess Alhāsyah⁵, the kidney-beans, the dark blue colour⁶, and we do not eat fish, because of our adoration of the prophet Jonas⁷, and the gazelle, as they are the beast of one of our prophets⁸. The *šeyh* and his disciples do not eat the flesh of the cock for the sake of the adoration of the Angel Peacock⁹ — the Angel Peacock is one of the seven Gods mentioned above — because

1. Although the creation of Eve was of course announced in paragraph 14, it is mentioned only after Adam had committed the fault and was expelled from paradise. Here also the Biblical reference is evident. Still the whole is reduced to a lower level.

2. The seven kings mentioned here correspond partly to the seven angels. Nasrūh, Kāmūš and Arṭimūs (Artemis) are all idols. The first is the Biblical Nisrokh (II Kings, XIX, 37: an Assyrian divinity), the second is the well known Camos, also Biblical, and the third is the Greek goddess Artemis. The Yezidis seem to seek by identifying their kings with the pagan idols, as it were, the motives for being calumniated and called worshippers of idols.

3. We do not know who are the four kings. Perhaps princes who persecuted the Yezidis.

4. I read in the Arabic text *hurrīma 'alaynā*.

5. This is the unique passage in which there is a mention of this prophetess of the Yezidis. They have also some female saints, Giamil, *loc. cit.* 35.

6. *Azraq*.

7. This will not be the unique and most important motive for which they do not eat fish. The worship of sources and of waters is diffused in the whole of Western Asia, and pools and lakes with holy waters are often encountered, whose fish are regarded as consecrated to some divinity and therefore non-comestible. This will be the true motive of the prohibition of eating fish.

8. We do not know of which prophet. But it seems to me that the Yezidis do not eat the meat of the gazelle, because the eye of this animal resemble those of Saint 'Adī, Luke, *Mōsul*, 127.

9. For this and other interdictions see pp. 66 - 67, note 6.

its shape is the image of the cock¹. The *šeyh* and his disciples do not eat even the pumpkins. It is prohibited to us to pass water while standing, to put on the trousers while sitting, to make the natural call in a water-closet, and to bathe ourselves in a (public) bath². It is permitted to us to pronounce neither the word *Šaytān*³, because it is the name of our God⁴, nor any other word which is similar to it, like *qūṭān*, *šatt* and *šarr*, nor the terms *mal'ūn*, *la'ana*, *na'l*, and such like⁵.

25. Before the coming of Messiah Jesus in this world our religion was called idolatry⁶, and the Jews, the Christians and Islam opposed our religion, and thus also the Persians.

26. (One) of our kings was Āḥāb⁷. He ordered everybody who was one of us to call him by a name peculiar to him. They called him God Āḥāb or Ba'izabūb. Now he is called among us Pīrbūb⁸.

27. We had a king in Babel whose name was Buḥtnašar⁹, and in Persia Aḥšūparaš¹⁰, and in Constantinople Aḡriqālūs¹¹.

28. Before the existence of the heaven and the earth¹² God existed

1. In fact, the emblem of the Peacock, which is usually taken round villages of the Yezidis, resemble at a closer distance the figure of a cock in some of its copies. On the two types of *sanjags* see above pp. 28 - 29.

2. That is, in the closed bath, in the building erected for bathing. They are not prohibited from bathing, provided that they do not do so in a bath.

3. It is not permitted to pronounce even a part of the word. Even the pronouncing of the *šin* and all words which have this letter is prohibited, because it reminds one of the name Satan.

4. It is to be understood in the sense that this is an injurious name which strangers give to the God of the Yezidis. The members of the sect therefore never pronounce it. Still it is not at all prohibited to them to pronounce the name of their god. The name Angel Peacock occurs very often in their sacred books.

5. *Qūṭān* means "pack-thread; cord". This word must not be pronounced, because with its termination it reminds us of *Šaytān*. *Šatt* means "bank of a river", and it commences with the letter *šin*. *Šarr* means "evil" and it begins with the same letter. *Mal'ūn* and *la'ana* mean "accursed" and "he has cursed" respectively, and are employed by the Mussulmans to designate the Devil who is called the accursed. *Na'l* means "sole; shoe", and it is composed of the same letters which occur also in the word *la'ana* "to curse".

6. *Waṭaniyyah*. They assert here that their religion is derived from paganism, and that before becoming Yezidis they were idolators.

7. He is Ahab of the Bible, son of 'Omri, king of Israel, I Kings, XVI, 28 - XX, 40. He reigned about upto 851 B. C.

8. A chapel or a sacred tomb dedicated to a certain Zīr Bōbō is mentioned in the text edited and translated by Giamil, *loc. cit.* 85.

9. It is the usual Arabic name of king Nabucadrezar (Nabucodonossor) of Babylonia.

10. It is the name Ahasverus.

11. Agricola. I do not know who is intended by this name.

12. *Kawn*. A new version of the creation begins here, which is partly different from that already given above.

above the sea. He made for himself a boat, with which he travelled in the midst of the seas, diverting himself by himself¹.

29. He created by himself a pearl and reigned on it forty years. After that he became angry with the pearl and he crushed it².

30. O the great miracle! From its noise sprang up the mountains, and from its fracas the hills, and from its smoke the heaven. Then God went up to heaven, strengthened it and made it firm without columns³.

31. Then he closed the earth with a key⁴. Then he took a *kalam* in his hand and began to write with it the whole creation⁵.

32. Then he created six gods from his essence and from his light. Their creation took place just like when a man lights one lamp from another⁶.

1. There are among the Yezidis also other stories of this episode in fuller details than those given here. They are published by Siouffi.

2. How great is the negligence which the Yezidis show for their legends and myths, and how little care they take to harmonise them can be seen by comparing this part of the legend with that corresponding to the version of the same myth narrated in paragraph 1 of this Black Book. We read there that God stood on the pearl for good forty thousand years, whereas here only for forty years.

3. The Kurdish text says that God holds on high the heaven without columns. The pearl created by God made to rise, by means of the noise produced by its being broken up by God, the mountains, and by means of its smoke the heaven. They are thus nothing but an indirect creation of God. According to the first version, on the contrary, continued in paragraph 1 and following, God created first the pearl, then the angels, and then, without having recourse to the pearl, the heaven, the earth, the sun and the moon. But the pearl intervenes also in the first version. In fact, it broke itself up into four pieces. Gabriel places one of these under the earth and the other at the gate of heaven, and the same angel makes with the remaining two the sun and the moon. He made with the small fragments of the pearl the stars. Water came out of its interior which became the sea.

4. The Arabic text has *qaffala*, which means really "to close with a padlock", just as the Kurdish text says. I do not know what the words "God closed the earth" should mean.

5. Already in the Babylonian and Assyrian religion the God Nabū writes down, if not the things created, at least that which the gods predestine, he being the god working as secretary of the great assembly which the higher gods hold on the New Year's day. Cf. Furlani, *La religione babilonese e assira*, I, Bologna 1928, 238. That God writes with his *kalam* is an idea rather common in Islām.

6. The six gods whom God created from his essence and light are the six angels enumerated in paragraphs 3 to 8. Their creation took place from the essence and light of God, not by means of the creative act itself with which he created other beings, but in the way in which one flame ignites another. We must not thus speak of emanation. The phrase of the text reminds us of *lumen de lumine*, φῶς ἐκ φωτός of the Nicene creed.

33. The first God then said to the second: "I have created heaven, but thou, go up to heaven and create something". He went up and became the sun¹. He said to the third who went up and became the moon². The fourth created the horizon, the fifth became the morning star and the sixth created the atmosphere, i. e. the air³.

The book is completed.

1. The text employs the word for the sun without the article, so that *Šams* could be taken for an abbreviation of *Šams ad-dîn*.

2. The article is missing here also. The identification of the six sub-gods — with the Peacock they are seven — with the planetary divinities is most evident.

3. A story of the universal deluge and of the way in which the serpent saved the ship of the deluge from ruin follows here in the text given by Joseph, who inserts here and there also other myths and legends. Then we read an interesting fragment about the descent of the seven gods on earth: "Every thousand years one of the seven gods come down (to the earth) in order to fix rules, statutes and laws, after which he returns to his own abode. While he stays in this world below he dwells with us, because we have different kinds of sacred places. God dwelt among us last time longer than each of the six other gods who came before him. He confirmed the saints. He spoke in the Kurdish language. He enlightened also Moḥammad, the prophet of the Ismaelites, who had a servant called Mu'āwiyah". Then the text relates the history of Mu'āwiyah, whose son was Yazīd. "But the foreign sects", continues the book, "do not know this fact and say that our God came from heaven, despised and driven away by the great God. They blaspheme us for this reason. In this they are mistaken. But we, Yezidis, do not believe it, because we know that he is one of the seven above-mentioned gods. We know the form of his image and of his person. It is the form of a cock which we possess". Then the text goes on to enumerate the prohibitions as in paragraph 24 of the text translated by us.

MEMORANDUM OF THE YEZIDIS TO THE OTTOMAN AUTHORITIES.

The Ottoman government sought twice to recruit for its army soldiers of Yezidi origin. The first attempt was made in the year 1847, but it was frustrated through the intervention of Sir Stratford Canning. Another tentative was made in the year 1289 of the Hejira, which corresponds to 1872 and 1873 of the Christian era, during the reign of Sultan 'Abd ul-'Aziz. The sultan sent to Mosul the major of the general-staff Muḥammad Ṭāhir Bey with the charge of recruiting among the Dasneans, inhabitants of the environs of Mosul, about 15,000 soldiers. The major summoned their chiefs and syndics in Mosul and read to them the *firmān* of the sultan. They demanded ten days' time. At the end of the time-limit they brought to him the memorandum which is published in the following pages.

The memorandum was written in Turkish, Arabic, and French. A copy of it in the Arabic text is to be found in a manuscript Sachau of the Preussische Staatsbibliothèque, fol. 37 a and seq. The Arabic text was published by M. Lidzbarski with his German version and interesting notes in the Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, LI, 592-604. (But E. H. Browne had published already in 1895 an English translation of an Arabic resumé in the book of O. H. Parry, *Six months in a Syrian monastery*, London 1895, p. 327 seq.) It was published in the Arabic version also by Isya Joseph in his often mentioned article *Yezidi texts*, 151-156, and in an English version on pages 244-247. A French version of the memorandum was published by Nau in *Recueil de textes et de documents sur les Yezidis*, Revue de l'Orient Chrétien, XX, 168-171.

The memorandum bears at its end the signatures of the political head of the sect, Ra'is ṭā'ifah yazidiyyah Amir Şeyḥān Ḥusayn, of the spiritual head, Şeyḥ rūḥānī ṭā'ifah yazidiyyah nāhiyah Şeyḥān Şeyḥ Nāşir, and of fifteen *muhltārs* (syndics) of various villages.

As a source of study of the religion of the Yezidis this memorandum is very good, because it gives almost an *official* explanation of the principal traits of their religion. On the other hand, it confirms nearly all that the other most trustworthy writers and travellers have to relate concerning their most important doctrines.

We, religious nation of the Dasneans¹, cannot, in accordance with our religion, enter the military service. We prefer to give money instead of men, as the Syrians and the Jews do. There are several motives which hamper us (from serving). We write here fourteen of them :

1. According to our Yezidi religion every member of our sect, whether young or old, woman and girl, must visit the image of the Peacock Angel, — His existence is exalted ! — three times every year, viz. for the first time from the beginning upto the end of the month of Nisān, according to the Roman calendar, for the second time from the

1. On the name Dasneans see above pp. 1-2. The introduction of the memorandum in the text published by Lidzbarski is in the dialect *felliḫi* of Mosul, i. e. in Neo-Syriac or Neo-Aramaic, which is spoken in Mosul and its suburbs. This part is written by Jeremias Šāmīr of Mosul, Lidzbarski, *loc. cit.* 592. The Yezidis are always called *al-Yazidiyyah* in the Arabic text. They are called here, on the contrary, *millah d. Dasnāyē*. *Millah* means a religious nation; it is an Islamic term.

beginning upto the end of the month of Īlūl, for the third time from the beginning upto the end of the month of Tišrin at-tānī. If he does not do it, he is an infidel¹.

2. If a member of our sect, whether young or old, does not visit the sanctuary of Šeyḥ 'Adī ibn Musāfir — may God sanctify his sublime mysteries! — once a year, viz. from the fifteenth upto the twentieth of the month of Īlūl, according to the Roman calendar, he is according to our religion an infidel².

3. Every member of our sect must visit the place of sunrise every day at the time of the rising of the sun, on condition that neither a Mussulman, nor a Christian, nor a Jew, nor any one else is present there. If any one of the sect does not do it, he is an infidel³.

1. As the emblems of the Peacock are preserved in the house of the Emir, who is the political head of the sect, visits to the emblems must be paid three times a year at Ba'idrī, where the Emir occupies the throne of Yazid. But in order to facilitate the visit to the emblems in a certain manner, they are carried by the *qawwāls* to different districts. The memorandum does not take notice of this circumstance, but wants to make us understand that every member of the sect must effectively visit three times a year the emblems in the house of the Emir. As regards the *sanjaqs*, it should be further observed, besides what we have already said above, that according to what the Yezidis relate, it was one of the seven gods, who made the emblems and gave them to no less a person than to King Solomon, after whose death they passed into the hands of their kings. When their God Yazid received them, he showed great reverence for them, and entrusted them to the sect. He composed on this occasion two hymns in the Kurdish language, which is the most ancient language of the world. These hymns are recited when they walk before these emblems with the accompaniment of flutes and tambours. Before sending the emblems on the tour the Emir and Šeyḥ Nāšir, the spiritual head of the sect, come together with the *qawwāls* and visit the *sanjaqs*. Before departure the emblems are washed or baptised in the sanctuary of Šeyḥ 'Adī with great expressions of joy and dance. Then the *qawwāls* take some dust of the tomb of the saint, make it into small balls of the size of walnuts and carry them with themselves in order to distribute them as benedictions or relics. The visits to the emblems take place every four months. One emblem travels always in the province of the Emir, i. e. in Šeyḥān, which is situated to the north-east of Mosul. The *qawwāls* travel in an established order which varies every year. Every time when the *qawwāl* starts on the journey of visit he must first wash and purify himself with water acidulated with *summaq* and also he must anoint himself with oil. He must further light a lamp before every emblem, which has a special room. See Joseph, *Texts*, 129-130 and 226-227 for this point. The months referred to in the text are April, September and November.

2. That is, from the fifteenth to the twentieth of September. These are the days of the annual festival in the national sanctuary, described by us on pp. 34-36. When speaking of the visit to the national sanctuary, the Arabic text employs the Islamic phrase *ḡāra ḡadrāḡ* of Šeyḥ 'Adī, i. e. "visits the presence", viz. the person of Šeyḥ 'Adī. The saint is, as it were, present in the temple, therefore his presence or person is visited, just as a visit is paid to a prince in his palace.

3. To visit the place of sunrise is equivalent to, some travellers relate, kissing the place where the rays of the sun fall. This custom is undoubtedly attested. Some relate that they kiss also the place where the rays of the moon fall, Giamil, *loc. cit.* 40, note 1. But we have a good deal between this custom and the pure and proper worship of the sun and the moon as it was practised, for example, in ancient pagan religions, in Babylonia:

4. Every member of our sect must kiss every day the hand of his brother, that of the brother of the next world, i. e. of the servant of the Mahdī, and the hand of his *šeyḥ* or of his *pīr*. If he does not do this, he falls into infidelity¹.

5. It is an insupportable matter from the standpoint of our religion: When the Mussulmans begin their prayer in the morning, they say — may God protect us! — “I take my refuge in: God etc.” If any one of us hears this, he must kill that man who is praying and himself; if he does not (do it), he becomes an infidel².

and Assyria or in Greece. It cannot wholly be adduced in support of this hypothesis the circumstance that the Yezidis have two sub-gods or saints, Šeyḥ Šams and Šeyḥ Sinn by name, because Šams ad-dīn, this is his full name, and Ḥasan — the name Sinn is due to nothing else but to a corruption of this name, as I shall explain elsewhere — are very common names among the Islamised Arabs. Again, it is wholly fantastic that the white oxen which are sacrificed to Šeyḥ Šams ad-dīn are oxen immolated in honour of the sun. Still there are certain passages in the text published by Giamil which seem to contradict that which we assert here. There it is expressly said that the sun and the moon are called precisely by the names of the two sub-gods, 15. The true Christ, says the text of Giamil, is the sun, whom the Yezidis call Šams ad-dīn, 42. Christ came down to the earth after having made the sign in the solar circle: therefore the solar circle attests the existence of Christ, whom they venerate, love and worship without following his instructions, 43. But this is, undoubtedly, a mere deduction of the author. See also B. Chabot, *Notice sur les Yezidis* Journal Asiatique, IX^e S., VII, 103 - 132, p. 152. Even the prayer performed in the direction of the rising and the setting sun proves nothing.

1. Every Yezidi must choose a brother or a sister for the next (world), for eternity. I do not know what is really the meaning of this religious custom. A brother or a sister for the future world is taken probably in order to have in him or her help and comfort. See Sicuffi, *Notice* (1885), 86; he observes that they are assimilated by the Yezidis with god-fathers and god-mothers of the Christians, although they have much greater importance among the members of the sect. As regards the *šeyḥs* and the *pīrs*, I must remark that from my standpoint Lidzbarski is wrong in seeing in the divinities or the sub-divinities, who have the title of *šeyḥ* the old, so to say, pre-Yezidi gods, *loc. cit.* 599, note 4. As I have already said, this is not at all the case of Šams ad-dīn. Neither do I see, why we should see in the Šeyḥ Naṣr ad-dīn the old god Naṣr, i. e. Nešrā of the *Doctrine of Adday* (Phillips, 24, 18). The brother for eternity is said to be the servant of the Mahdī, probably because he has to intervene in favour of his brother before the Mahdī. That is, every Yezidi wishes to assure for himself henceforward the help of him who could speak in his favour to the Mahdī.

2. The grave penalty which this paragraph sanctions against him who blasphemes the God of the Yezidis shows quite clearly that from their standpoint the Peacock is not at all the Devil. They must kill whoever utters despicable things against their God, in the present case regard him as an enemy of God. The Islamic prayer to which the text refers is the *Sūrah* 114 of the Koran. It says: “I seek refuge in the Lord of men, in God of men, from the jinns and from men”. The terms which the Koran employs for designating Satan are quite other than flattering, and therefore it is natural that the Yezidis are offended by them and they kill the blasphemer. But in practice, the Yezidis abstain from doing harm to the Mussulmans, at least when the latter are in a majority, because they live continually surrounded by the followers of the Islamic religion. The

6. If at the time when some one of our sect is on the point of death, his brother of the next world, his *šeyḥ* or his *pīr* or a *qawwāl* is not near him, and if he does not recite over him three verses: "O, servant of the Peacock Angel — his being is exalted! — thou must die in the religion of our adored one, who is the Peacock Angel, and (thou must) not die in the religion of another. If some one of the religion of Islām, or of the religion of the Christians, or of the religion of the Jews, or of the religion of some other religious nation comes to thee and talks to thee, (thou must) not put faith in him and (thou must) not believe him; and if thou puttest faith (in him) and believest in another religion, different from that of our adored Peacock Angel — his being is exalted! — thou wilt die an unbeliever", [he will die an infidel]¹.

7. We have something which is called Benediction of Šeyḥ 'Adī, it is the dust of the santury of Šeyḥ 'Adī — may his mystery be sanctified! — Every member of our sect must have some of it near himself, placed in his pocket, and must eat (a little) of it every morning. If he does not do it intentionally, he will become an infidel. And likewise unto death, when death is near, if some of this blessed dust is not found on him, he will certainly die an infidel².

strictest interdiction lies also on all words which allude directly or also only indirectly to some insulting name or to some less flattering quality of their God. See above p. 29.

1. This recitation on death-bed is neither mentioned by travellers and other informants, nor do other writings mention it. It is a sort of a declaration of the faith or better of a conformation and corroboration of the faith. We have here an explicit allusion to the possible underhand dealings of the Mussulmans, the Christians and the Jews practised in order to make the moribund leave the Yezidi sect. We read at the end of the text translated by Parry: "*O King 'Abtā'ūs, this man dies in our faith. He has not lived in any other religion and has not accepted another (religion)*".

2. Benediction, *barakāt*, literally "benedictions". Relics are meant. It is not referred to by any other source that every member must eat a little of the dust of 'Adī every morning. It is the dust of the tomb of Saint 'Adī, which the priests knead into a paste with the blessed water of the source of Zemzem; then they make with it small balls, which they sell to their faithful ones. These balls are even seen in the court of the temple. The *qawwāls* carry them with themselves, when they make a tour with the emblem of the Peacock. Every one of them takes with him two sacks full of the earth of Šeyḥ 'Adī, which is kneaded in the shape of balls, Giamil, *loc. cit.* 28. It is used also during the ceremony of marriage. When, for example, one wants to take a woman for his wife, if the *šeyḥ* is present, he sends some one to his house to fetch a bread, which is then divided into two pieces. One piece he offers to the bridegroom and the other to the bride, in order that they eat it. But if the Šeyḥ is not present, somebody is sent to fetch from his house the earth of 'Adī, which is reserved by him for these circumstances. When the earth is brought the bridegroom and the bride take from it a portion and eat it in the absence of bread. The marriage is celebrated in this manner. The same earth is used also during illness, when

8. Peculiarities of our fast¹. Every person of our sect, if he wishes to fast, he must fast in his own dwelling, not in a place other than his dwelling, because every day of the fast at the time of morning he must go to the house of his *šeyh* or of his *pîr* and begin his fast. Then he must go also at the time of breaking the fast² to the house of his *šeyh* or of his *pîr* and must break his fast with the sanctified wine of that *šeyh* or *pîr*. If he does not drink two or three glasses of this wine, his fast will not be valid, and he becomes an infidel³.

9. If one of our sect travels to a place other than his dwelling and remains there at least for a whole year⁴ and then returns to his dwelling, then his wife is prohibited to him. None of us will give him a wife, and if any one gives her to him, he is an infidel⁵.

10. Peculiarities of our clothes. Just as we have already mentioned

one is on his death-bed. The earth which has been already kneaded with water and dried for long time is brought and crushed to powder. A small portion of it is put into the mouth of the invalid, as well as on his face and on his breast. If the sick person dies, diverse funeral ceremonies are performed, among which we may mention the aspersion of the face of the dead with the earth of 'Adî, before he is buried and after he has been enveloped in the shroud, and his body has been turned towards the east. This paragraph informs us of the third use of the earth. I have translated *ta'ammudan* of the text by "certainly", as also Lidzbarski does, as it is the most obvious and natural sense: "with intention" as Nau translates it does not suit the context. Thus also Joseph translates, 245-246. But this is perhaps a later addition which should be precisely translated by "intentionally". That is, only the non-tasting committed with intention has as a consequence the exclusion from the sect. On the contrary, he is not regarded as an infidel who only by *force majeure* or by such other excusable circumstances cannot taste the earth. The Shiites regard in Kerbela as a sacred relic the earth of the tombs of Huseyn.

1. The text employs the term *šiyām*. The term *šawn* is employed usually in Islām.

2. Breaking of the fast, *iftār aš šiyām*, a term also used in Islām.

3. God is not verily pleased, according to the Yezidis, with prayers and fasts, as among the Christians, the Jews and the Mussulmans, but rather with virtue and good works, Giamil, *loc. cit.* 89. The priests only have a strict obligation of fasting, as for example, the *kočāqs* who must fast twice a year, for forty days in summer and forty days in winter. But the text of Giamil narrates further about the latter, that it happens that a layman brings to a priest who is fasting something to eat saying, as for example, these words: "Take this alms of Saġġād ad-dîn or of Šeyh Šams, or of some other god"; he suspends the fast immediately, and while eating persuades himself by saying: "This is a better virtue than fast". The rules laid down in this paragraph are somewhat strict, and at least, according to what the informants relate, they do not seem to have any practical value. The memorandum exaggerates without doubt on this as on other points in order to demonstrate with irrefutable arguments the incompatibility of the prescription of the Yezidi religion with military service. The fast must thus begin in the house of the priest and end there with the drinking of some cups of wine.

4. *Aqall al-muddah* has this meaning, A. Fischer, *Ein Gesetz der Jesiditen*, Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, LI, 595.

5. Also this is a far fetched doctrine as no traveller has mentioned it. On matrimony and marriages among the Yezidis, comp. Giamil, *loc. cit.* 45-49.

in the fourth article, that every person of our sect has a brother of the next world, so he has also a sister of the next world, and in consequence of this, if some one of us wishes to have made for himself a new shirt, the above-mentioned sister of the next world must open for him with her own hands the neck of that shirt. If she does not open the neck with her own hands for him, and he puts it on, he is an infidel¹.

11. If some one of our sect makes for himself a shirt or a new suit of clothes without dipping it² in the blessed water which is in the sanctuary of Şeyh 'Adî — may his mystery be sanctified! — he cannot put it on. If he puts it on, he is an infidel.

12. We must not put on dark blue clothes³. We must never comb (the hair of) our head with the comb of a Mussulman, of a Christian or of a Jew or of any one else. We must not shave our heads with the razor which somebody different from us might have used except that we wash it with the blessed water which is in the sanctuary of Şeyh 'Adî: if we then shave our heads with it, it is permitted. If it is not washed in that blessed water, and we shave our heads with it, we are infidels⁴.

13. A Yezidi can neither enter a latrine nor can go into a bath, nor can eat with the spoon of a Mussulman, nor drink from the glass of a Mussulman or of another of other religious nations. If he enters a bath or a latrine or eats or drinks with the spoon of a Mussulman or with those whom we have enumerated, he is an infidel⁵.

14. As regards food, the diversities between us and other religious nations are great, as for example, we do not eat fish, cucumbers, *bāmīyah* (marrow), beans, cabbage, and lettuce. Even we cannot dwell in a place where lettuce is planted⁶.

1. The shirts of the Yezidis have a peculiarity which distinguishes them from those of others: the aperture of the neck is cut at right angles in front. Our text alludes undoubtedly to this aperture. Why is it not round also in front? See Andrus, *loc. cit.* 798.

2. *Ya'amida-hu* means "to baptise; to immerse in water".

3. The dark blue colour is abhorred by the Yezidis, and a severe interdiction hangs on it. It is the colour of mourning. The red colour is, on the contrary, propitious and sought for.

4. Washing with the holy water makes the impurity attached to objects in possession of the non-Yezidis disappear.

5. Also these measures of the memorandum seem to be exaggerated, because no traveller has ever asserted that the Yezidis cannot drink from the cup of a non-Yezidi. But it is true that they cannot take a bath in company of a Mussulman.

6. Comp. above p. 29 for these interdictions. *Al-bāmīyah* is the *Hibiscus esculentus*. The Yezidis relate, in order to explain the origin of these interdictions, that one day their God Yazîd, returning from a long journey, and being much molested by heat, searched

For these motives and others different from these we cannot enter military service¹.

where he may refresh himself. He went therefore to those plants to ask for their hospitality by taking refuge under the shade of their leaves. But they refused to do so. Therefore Yazīd cursed them. After this malediction he went under the shade of the reeds which received him courteously. He blessed therefore the reeds and ordered his followers not to injure them in any manner whatsoever. For this reason the Yezidis never cut them. Whoever dares to cut even one of them is considered as a man without faith and as such excommunicated, Giamil, *loc. cit.* 70, note 1. They do not eat fish in honour of Jonah, because they saved him from drowning. For *Melek Tā'ūs* and the lettuce, see above p. 20, note 2. The priests do not eat cocks in honour of the Peacock, because they resemble the peacocks, Giamil, 70. There exist also certain particular interdictions, restricted to single individuals, like a *ṣeyh* or a *pīr*, which are self-imposed. But they are observed also by the *murīds* or parishioners of that particular priest. If a *ṣeyh* does not eat white hens, his parishioners will do the same. If another never sits on a carpet, his parishioners cannot also sit on it, Giamil, 70, note 2. Other interdictions of the Yezidis are the following: It is prohibited to cut or to destroy wood which is in forests dedicated to their saints; it is prohibited to drink from recipients, in which the water hindered by the air while coming out makes a noise, because such a noise is injurious, as they say, to their God; it is also prohibited to charge a load on a horse, as he is a noble animal and considered sacred; moreover it is prohibited to produce cross-breeds between a donkey and a mare, because this is a sin, considering that these two animals do not appertain to the same species. Finally they never spit on the ground, and do not wish to see also others spit on the ground, because he who does so, sits on the face of their God: Giamil, 71, note 1. But the list of the interdictions is not completed with these. It is also prohibited to pass water while standing, and to put on trousers while sitting, Giamil, 70

1. Whoever transgresses the rules and the precepts fixed by 'Adī is expelled from the Yezidi community. Neither penitence nor prayers, nor the intervention of the saints are sufficiently efficacious for allowing the sinner and the transgressor to re-enter into the fold of the community. Whoever transgresses with his words or with his deeds the commandments of the prophet is no more a Yezidi, but an unbeliever. The non-Yezidis cannot absolutely and never, according to a precise commandment of 'Adī, become Yezidis. In order to be a Yezidi one must be born a Yezidi, Dirr, *loc. cit.* 569.

PRA YERS OF THE YEZIDIS.

I¹

Amen, amen, amen.
By the grace of Šāmsādin,
Of Fāgrādin, Nāsrādin,
Of Sūgādin, Šehūsīn,
Of Šeyh Bākūr, of Qadūr Rāhmān².
O Lord, thou art gracious,
Thou art merciful, thou art God,
Thou art the lord of kingdoms and of countries,
Thou art the lord of essence and of joys,
Thou art the lord of the kingdom of grace.
From the commencement thou art eternal,
Thou art the essence of felicity and of existence,
Thou art the throne of benediction and of infinite love,
Thou art the lord of demons and of the (visible) beings,
Thou art the lord of holy men,
The throne of awe and glory,
Thou art a being deserving praise and thankfulness,
Thou art worthy of the extreme confines of heaven.
O Lord, thou art God of travelling,
Lord of the moon and of darkness,

1. Jegiazarow gives three different versions of the principal prayer of the Yezidis, which Dirr reports and translates on pp. 559 - 568 of his article *Einiges über die Jeziden*, *Anthropos*, XII - XIII, 558 - 574. S. A. Jegiazarow has published in 1891 in a geographical review of Tiflis an important work in Russian on the customs of the Yezidis, the work which Dirr resumes in his article. The versions translated by me are dictated by a Yezidi *pīr* named Ḥasan and by Šeyh Kalāš. The version of the prayer dictated by the *pīr* Ḥasan is nearly identical with the text given by Joseph, *loc. cit.* 149 - 150 and 248. An edition of the Kurdish text of the prayer together with a German translation is likewise in H. Makas, *Kurdische Studien*, Heidelberg 1900, 40 - 41. Nau has relied on this edition for his French version of the prayer, *loc. cit.* 167 - 168. This is to be regarded as the most important prayer of the Yezidis. It is addressed to the Angel Peacock. The author attributes to the Yezidi God many qualities and attributes which make him in no way different from the Christian or Mussulman God. This is the most brilliant and irrefutable proof to show that the Yezidi God is not at all the Devil, but is perfectly identical with the God venerated by the Christians and the Mussulmans.

2. The names of the seven angels or the seven sub-gods are first of all invoked. They are, as it were, the intermediaries between the suppliant and the Peacock. I have given the names Šams ad-dīn, Fahr ad-dīn, Nasr ad-dīn, Saġgād ad-dīn, Šeyh Ḥasan, Šeyh Bakr, and Qadīr Rāhmān in the Kurdish pronunciation, changing slightly the transliteration here and there.

Lord of the sun and light¹,
 Lord of the supreme throne,
 Thou art God of benediction.
 O Lord, no one knows how thou art².
 Thou hast neither face, nor height,
 Thou hast neither gait nor measure³.
 O Lord, thou art the ruler of kings and servants,
 Thou art the ruler of the assemblies and of men.
 Thou hast created the repentance of Adam⁴.
 O Lord, thou hast neither house nor feathers,
 Thou hast neither wings, nor hast thou talons,
 Thou hast neither voice, nor hast thou colour⁵,
 Thou hast created for us felicity and joy,
 Thou hast created Jesus and Mary.
 O Lord, thou art merciful, compassionate, faithful.
 Thou art the throne and I am nullity.
 I am weak and fallen,
 I am fallen and thou rememberest me⁶.
 Thou has conducted us from darkness to light.
 O Lord, my fault and my sin
 Hold and pardon!
 O God, O God, O God, Amen!

* * *

1. It is apparent from these epithets given to God in the prayer meaning "Lord of the moon and darkness, Lord of the sun and light", that the Yezidis do not worship the sun as a god, and that therefore they do not identify him with Šams addn. The Yezidi God is Lord of the universe, and therefore of the sun and the moon. There is no place for another god, lord of the sun.

2. God is verily unknowable in his essence. The prayer shows a certain height of theological speculation. But it might have been composed by some *rara avis* of an educated Yezidi, who might have retouched it after some Islamic hymn or prayer. It is certain that the Yezidis of the present day are very ignorant as for theology and theological speculations.

3. God is thus not at all material and is not conceived anthropomorphically. This way of conceiving God stands in contrast singularly with the concept which the Yezidis seem to have of the divinity, of the saints, etc. The difference between the ideas contained in this prayer and the religious conception prevalent among the faithful ones of the sect is very great.

4. "Thou hast created the repentance of Adam" means that the suppliant also makes his penitence now for the sins committed by him. The suppliant invokes with these words the pardon of God in a very discreet manner.

5. It becomes quite clear from these words that God who is invoked is precisely the Peacock, but he is not conceived as a peacock. The emblems in the shape of a peacock are therefore mere emblems, and are not images of the Yezidi God. The Peacock is not an idol, but a purely spiritual being, rather of a very high spirituality and of a perfect divinity.

6. The prayer is addressed by a sinner, by one fallen, to God, who might remember him, as the suppliant hopes. It is a direct prayer for obtaining the pardon of the Peacock.

O my Lord, thou art gracious,
 O my Lord, thou art eternal,
 Thou art God, God of kingdoms and of countries,
 God of the reign of grace, possessor of the sublime throne.
 From the commencement thou art eternal, possessor of the throne
 and of the firmament,
 Thou art God of the demons and of the visible beings,
 Worthy of the extreme confines of heaven. Thou hast neither form
 Nor voice, nor colour,
 No one knows how thou art.
 Thou are the judge of prayers,
 Judge of kings and servants.
 Thou hast created Adam who repented,
 Thou hast created Jesus and Mary.
 Thou hast created for us grief and joy.
 Thou art God, but what am I?
 I am fallen, I am weak,
 Fallen, but thou rememberest me.
 Thou art the medicine of Żuk'ub.
 O Lord, pardon my sins.
 O God, O God, O God, Amen!

II

MORNING PRAYER TO BE RECITED WHEN ONE GETS OUT OF BED².

The sun has risen above me and two hangmen have come on me.
 O poor one, get up and make the confession of the faith, which is:

1. This is, as I have already said, a variant of the above prayer dictated to Jegiazarow by Šeyh Kalaš.

2. It is the morning prayer of the Yezidis and is recited while getting up from bed. It is redacted in the Kurdish language. It is here the question essentially of a declaration of faith. It begins with proclaiming that God is unique; i.e. with the *tawhīd* of the Mussulmans. Then after having acknowledged God, i.e. the Peacock, it acknowledges Šeyh 'Adī, his prophet, who is called Ḥabīb Allāh, meaning "friend of God". But as salutations to Šeyh 'Adī and to his people, i. e. to the Yezidis, follows this confession, it could be admitted that by "the unique God" God and by "Melek aš-Šeyh" the Peacock is to be understood. Hence, the sequence of the persons invoked would be: God, the Peacock, and 'Adī, almost a trinity. Then the sanctuary of the saint is invoked, i.e. the *qubbaḥ* underneath which he is buried. Then follows the invocations of Šeyh Tawris — we do not know who he is — and Fahr ad-dīn. It is strange that there is not the slightest allusion to Šams ad-dīn and to other great Yezidi saints. Then follows a declaration of faith in the spiritual hierarchy of the Yezidis, i.e. in the *šeyḥs* and the *pirs*. Then comes a confession of a place of holy pilgrimage, *mazār*, called Dayrāšūr, which is the name of a convent, it would be rather more exact to say, of a former Christian convent. The name is perhaps that of Der ez-Zōr; but this place will not be identical with the present small town situated on the Euphrates in Syria under the French mandate. Still it is very probable that the national sanctuary of Lālīs is

“God is unique, and Melek aš-Šeyḥ is Ḥabīb Allāh. Salute Šeyḥ ‘Adī and his people, and the big *qubbah* under which he is (lying), and the *qubbah* of Šeyḥ Tawrīs and Fahr ad-dīn and the *šeyḥ* and the *pīr* and the *mazār* Dayrāšūr, and acknowledge that he is by the force of the arm of the Šeyḥ. Acknowledge also the sepulchre of the time and the last day. Amen”.

understood (by the name). The prayer ends with an invocation and acknowledgment of the present time of this world and the future (one) of the next. The prayer is given by Anastās, *loc. cit.* 912, 923, in the Kurdish text in Arabic characters, and in transliteration with Latin characters and an Arabic version. A slightly different version is given by Joseph, *loc. cit.* 181, in the Kurdish text, transliterated in Latin characters and an English version. The mention of another convent, called Dēr Hankulie (thus written by Joseph) is added after that of the convent, named above, in the version of Joseph. Anastās says that the Yezidis erect after saying this prayer a stone which is according to them a temple (!) and they turn around it: a reminiscence of the Ka'bah (*tawāf*).

CATECHISM OF THE YEZIDIS.

(Compiled by their religious head Şeyh Mirān Ismā'il Bey 'Abdī Bey Oglū Nāzlı Raḥānī Yazīd of Bagdad in the Ottoman Empire, province of Mosul, on the 11th December 1908)¹.

1. We believe in an unique God, creator of the heaven, of the earth, and of all that is living².

2. Our prophet is Yazīd³.

3. The Yezidis have no scriptures. The word of God is communicated from the forefathers to the descendants according to the tradition *Gyli-e azim*⁴.

4. It is severely prohibited to the Yezidis to enter into relations with those appertaining to other peoples. Otherwise they expose themselves to the malediction of God.

1. The origin of the catechism is, according to Dirr, *loc. cit.*, the following: The spiritual head of the Yezidis went several years before 1917 to Transcaucasia, and was requested by the authorities of Igdyr near Eriwān to make some communications on his religion. His writing, which is precisely the present catechism, was translated into Russian. A rather bad copy, with several errors in the Kurdish words, was placed at the disposal of Dirr, who translated it into German and published it in the above-mentioned article of the *Anthropos*, Dirr, *loc. cit.* 558, on pp. 571 - 573.

2. The unique God, creator of the universe, is naturally the Peacock, who has here therefore nothing whatsoever of diabolic.

3. Therefore not 'Adī, but Yazīd. The author of the catechism wants to justify the name of the sect, and therefore calls his prophet Yazīd. 'Adī was according to him probably none else than a saint.

4. This declaration of the non-existence of a sacred Yezidi book could make a certain impression and induce one to regard certainly as spurious the two books translated by us. But it is to be observed that the Yezidis must always assert that they have no scripture, as the latter is secret. Moreover, the second part of this paragraph is evidently in contradiction with the assertion of the first. The paragraph asserts that there exists a tradition of the word of God, transmitted by fathers to their descendants, and that it bore the name *Gyli-e-azim*. This is the transliteration of the Kurdish terms given by Dirr who observes that its reading is doubtful. Now there is no doubt that *gyli* is nothing else but the corrupted Kurdish pronunciation of the Arabic word *ḡilwah*, which is, as we know, the title of the principal sacred book of the Yezidis. Hence *Gyli-e-azim* means *the glorious Gilwah*. The author of the catechism asserts in the same paragraph that the Yezidis have not got sacred scriptures, but attributes at the same time the title of the principal sacred book to the oral tradition of the word of God. It seems to me that this is the best proof that the Yezidis have a sacred scripture also according to our author. He has had recourse to this trick of camouflaging the sacred book by the tradition, in order to maintain the secret about the book.

5. The Yezidis must treat with respect other peoples, because all are existing by the will of God¹.

6. The Yezidis must serve God according to the rules which our prophet Yazid has laid down. In a contrary case the curse of God will strike them.

7. The Yezidi should not ravish the legitimate wife of another. A Yezidi must neither aid nor give shelter to the ravisher and the ravished. The ravished must be restored to her husband and the ravisher must be judged according to the Yezidi law. If the ravished refuses to return to the house of her husband, she will be expelled from the community of the Yezidis².

8. No Yezidi can marry either the wife of the brother of his father or of his mother or that of his brother. In a contrary case steps will be taken in accordance with article 7.

9. The clergy of the Yezidis are divided into three classes: the *şeyhs* of Şeyh Huseyn, the *şeyhs* of Şams, and the *şeyhs* of Şeyh Bekr. Every *şeyh* must choose for himself a wife from his own class³.

10. The *pîrs* are divided into two classes: Pir-e Hosmamama⁴, and

1. The Yezidis do not always treat with respect other peoples, as they accuse them often of having falsified the true religion. But here the spiritual head makes a good and clever political move in order to maintain the Russian authorities favourably inclined towards them.

2. The rape for the purpose of marriage is common among the Yezidis. They are accustomed to ravish also wives of others. If it happens that a person ravishes the wife of another and carries her to a place where other Yezidis are living, they defend him and hide him, but he must pay for the ravished woman a certain sum of money to her parents or give to the husband of the ravished one his own wife or one of his sisters or some other (female) person appertaining to his family. It must be proceeded in the same way, if the ravished one is a marriageable (girl). The rape is thus one of the causes of the dissolution of marriage. These are very barbarous and primitive social and juridic conditions. It is understood therefore that the spiritual head had found himself constrained to prohibit rape to the Yezidis residing in the Russian territory, whose authorities would not certainly have permitted that wives of others could be ravished so easily. Anyhow there is no doubt that such strange juridical conditions existed in Kurdistân at the time of the Turkish Empire. See Giamil, *loc. cit.* 45 - 46.

3. Cf. above p. 26 for the division of the *şeyhs* according to the head of the family from whom they are descended. A layman can never take to wife the daughter of a *şeyh*. If one goes against this law, he should be publicly excommunicated, and nobody could thenceforth either eat or speak with him, or drink water from his house. Similarly, the *şeyhs* cannot take to wife the daughter of a layman, but only a woman of their own class. The only exception is the Emir, who being a descendant of Yazid sits on the throne of the Yezidi nation, can take to wife every woman he likes the best. Doing this he really commits a sin, but his sin is none other than venial. See Giamil, *loc. cit.* 46.

4. Dirr gives, besides this reading of the name, a variant *Gozmamama*.

Pir-e Pirafata and other Pir-e Omarhala, and others. Every *pīr* must choose a wife from his class.

11. If ecclesiastics (lit. spiritual individuals) of the classes mentioned in articles 9 and 10 marry girls of other classes, they lose the right of receiving offerings from the *mūrīds*¹. The *mūrīds* must not recognise them as ecclesiastics and must expel them from their community.

12. The lay (lit. simple) Yezidis are called *mūrīds*. They have got no right to marry girls of the ecclesiastical classes, but only those of their own (class). In case of transgression they expose themselves to severe punishments.

13. God created the world and all creatures in six days, and on the seventh day he reposed. Therefore the Yezidis must work six days and repose on the seventh, viz. on the sabbath. Whoever acts in a contrary manner shall pay a fine of five rubles. It is the duty of the *qādī* whom I nominate in every district for carrying out religious acts, to make the people observe this precept². The *qādīs* nominated by me are confirmed by the government, i. e. by the governors³. Every *qādī* has his seal with his name and with the designation of his territory.

14. No Yezidi must repudiate his wife, if he cannot prove her infidelity and that in the presence of at least three witnesses. In case of infraction of this measure the guilty one will be severely punished⁴.

15. If a Yezidi betroths his son and cannot pay the *kalan*⁵, he has not got the right to leave the bride longer than the duration of three years in the house of her father.

1. The *mūrīds* — this is the Kurdish pronunciation of the Arabic word *murīd* "disciple; novitiate" — form the class of laymen among the people of the Yezidis. They are "the simple ones" just as they are called in paragraph 12.

2. The *qādī* or "judge" is nominated by the spiritual head of the Yezidis and confirmed in his post by the Russian authorities.

3. By the governors of the provinces or by the Russian government under which they reside.

4. It is not clear from the text whether the act of infidelity must occur in the presence of three witnesses or whether the deceived husband must show the infidelity of his wife before three witnesses with those proofs which would seem to them possible and expedient. The article wants undoubtedly to stop the ease with which the Yezidis repudiate their wives. The woman who has become a widow is made to marry for a second or a third time by her relations, even upto the sixth time, because the woman inherits nothing from her father, but she is, as the Yezidis are wont to say, a garden which is rented, and of which the rent, i. e. the dowry is enjoyed. Then if she does not wish to remarry, she must pay her dowry to the relations (of her husband). Cf. Giamil, *loc. cit.* 47.

5. The *kalan* is the price which the bridegroom, respectively his father, pays for the bride.

16. The *kalan* for a girl cannot exceed one hundred rubles. He who takes more shall restitute the excess to the *qādī* of the district and the guilty one will be punished.

17. The *kalan* for a widow must not exceed forty-five or fifty rubles. In case of transgression the guilty one will be punished.

18. It is prohibited to Yezidis to give or to take money on loan against payment of interest.

19. Usury is severely prohibited.

20. It is prohibited to take a bath, to change linen and to practise coitus on a Wednesday, because there is a bad Wednesday, which cannot be predicted (lit. be fixed beforehand)¹.

21. The clergy of the Yezids must wear a beard. Otherwise the *mūrīds* are not obliged to recognise them as priests and to make them their gifts and offerings.

22. Theft is severely prohibited, because it is said: "*The left (hand) must not make use of the work of the right.*" Thieves must be given over to the authorities. Their accomplices are severely punished.

23. The Yezidis must behave themselves honestly towards all peoples and all men; they must neither cause them damage nor appropriate the goods of others without the knowledge of the proprietor. The guilty will be struck by the curse of God.

24. The Yezidis must comply with the laws of the country in which they find themselves.

25. There must be a *čāwīs*² in every village of the Yezidi who

1. Wednesday is a holiday for the Yezidis. But it means here that among many Wednesdays there is also an evil one, on which something unlucky will take place. It is therefore better to avoid taking a bath, changing clothes, and consummating coitus on a Wednesday, as that same Wednesday could be the infamous, nefarious, and black Wednesday, which it is necessary to avoid at all cost. The Yezidis have also other interdictions concerning days and months. It is prohibited, for instance, to contract a marriage in the month of Nisān, which corresponds to April, because it is a sacred month, it being the one in which the New Year falls and the plants of lily, roses, and other flowers blossom. Moreover, in this month saints and princes of the Yezidis are united by matrimony. Cf. Giamil, *loc. cit.* 46. Their holy-day is also Friday; but they do not abstain from work, although some observe fast on this day. Their year commences at the same time, when that of the Christians of the East begins, which they follow in the names and in the order of months. Thus they follow the Christians and not the Mussalmans in this important aspect of their religious life. See Wigram, *loc. cit.* 301 - 302.

2. Dirr writes it *Tschausch*, but it is undoubtedly *čāwīs*, from which is derived Arabic *šāwīs*; for this word see what I have said above on p. 28. During the funeral the Yezidis perform on the corpse the ceremony with the earth of 'Adī, already mentioned above, p. 64, note 2, and then give it over to sextons. The latter accompanied

must, in case of the death of a Yezidi, fast for seven days and recite the *qawli*¹ near the tomb of the dead.

26. Three men must be elected in every village of the Yezidis who will watch over observance of these rules. Negligence on the part of the supervisors has as its consequence the curse of God.

27. The Yezidis must not take false oaths. Whoever transgresses this law will be severely punished. The text of the oath is fixed by me in accordance with the religion of the Yezidis². The Yezidis can make use of the alphabets of other peoples for the printing of the forms of oath, as they have no alphabet of their own³.

by two *qawwāls*, whom musicians follow playing on tambours or cymbals, and flutes or clarions, and by the people, the *şeyhs* and *keçâqs*, carry it on foot to the sepulchre. A Mussulman *imām* leans over the coffin and reads a verse of the Koran. But nowadays the ceremony of reading a verse of the Koran is no more performed. In its place the head of the dead is uncovered and turned towards the east; then they bestrew the head with the earth of 'Adî and bury him. Then a little of the dung of sheep is taken and rubbed over the tomb and over those of the saints, if they are in its vicinity. After having done this, all return to the house of the dead, where they sing in lugubrious and dolorous tones. Women cry and lament, tear their hair and beat their breasts. Then they return again to the sepulchre and all abandon themselves anew to complaints and tears. This ceremony is repeated twice daily for three successive days. Every day a great funeral banquet is held, in which all those who had attended the funeral procession take part. The *keçâqs* celebrate one of their ceremonies near the coffin in order to know whether the soul of the dead is reborn, because the Yezidis believe, as we have already mentioned, in the transmigration of the soul. They shake themselves like possessed, fall on the ground, rise up again, tremble, and then hear a voice which speaks from the tomb. When the voice has ceased, the priest becomes quiet again, and sleeps nearly for an hour. He wakes up in perfect calm, and the relatives of the dead kiss his hands and give him something to eat; thereupon he announces to them, the lot of the soul, whether it has entered into another Yezidi, which happens if the dead was virtuous, or whether he has entered into the body of, for instance, a dog, a donkey, a horse, or some other animal. In the second case the relatives offer sacrifices, so that these animals come to dwell with them and thus on their death the soul returns to dwell again in a human body. Owing to this belief in the transmigration of the soul, many fathers of families, who have bad sons conceal their money under the ground, and put there a sign, so that at their second rebirth they can return to take and enjoy it. See Giamil, *loc. cit.* 50 - 52. The ceremony performed by the priest to know the fate of the soul of the dead is clearly shamanistic.

1. *Qawli* means "speech"; it is what the *qawwāl* recites. The latter is called after it.

2. In order to make a Yezidi tell the truth on oath it is customary to draw a circle around the man, and to tell him: "All that is inside this circle is the property of the Angel Peacock". Wigram, *loc. cit.* 185. Cf. also I. Goldziher, *Zauberkreis*, Aufsätze Kuhn, 88 - 86.

3. This last assertion does not seem to be wholly exact, because there exists a cryptic Yezidi alphabet, in which the sacred books are written. Cf. above p. 40. The alphabet is in fact cryptic.

28. The cases of divisions and separations are to be submitted to the district *qāšî*.

29. Every Yezidi must hold once a year a funeral banquet for his dead (relations).

30. The Yezidis must built schools and educate their sons in sciences and languages¹.

31. The supervision of schools from the spiritual and moral standpoint appertains to the district *qāšîs*, who must also occupy themselves with the material assistance.

1. The great ignorance of the Yezidis is almost proverbial. They are, according to some, obliged by rules of their religion to keep themselves ignorant, and not to learn to read and to write. In fact, only a unique family among them knows how to read and write. But some deny that they are ignorant by their religious laws, so to say. When Mesopotamia was occupied by the English, they opened an elementary school for the Yezidis in the village of Singâr. The first difficulty encountered in the composition of text-books was the fact that therein words must not occur which resemble even only vaguely the word *seytân* and other kindred ones, even none beginning with a *sin*; it was conquered by a little of goodwill and the school was frequented in principle, but it was afterwards deserted, and was perforce closed in the end. Luke, *Mosul*, 126. The measures prescribed in this paragraph are naturally a compliment and an accommodation to the laws and customs of the land — Russia — which harbours the Yezidis. It would be interesting to know how the Yezidis are treated by the Soviet regime, and whether their schools are thriving or not.

THE HOLIDAYS OF THE YEZIDIS¹.

1. A fast of one day is observed every year on the first Wednesday² of April, and a banquet is given on the fourth day, i. e. on Thursday, and for every dead person one hot bread is distributed, because this day is the *malaik zaina*³.

2. The festival of Šeyh 'Adi is celebrated on the tenth of June of every year.

3. The same festival is celebrated on the thirtieth of June of every year as on the tenth of June.

4. The twentieth of July of every year is a day of festival.

5. The fifth of August of every year is *layla qadira*⁴. Nobody ought to sleep on this night but ought to pray. The festival of Šeyh Šams is celebrated on the following morning in honour of the angel who guides the destinies of men.

6. The festival of the prophet Yazid is celebrated in September of every year, nine days after the commencement of autumn. When the day and the night become equal, a fast is observed for three days and a festival is celebrated on the fourth.

7. The *p'irafat* falls seven days after this festival. A sacrifice ought to be offered on Friday and hot bread ought to be distributed in honour of the procreatrice of God.

8. The *sar-e ċla* falls three days afterwards.

9. The festival of the *qurbān*⁵ falls eleven days afterwards, on which it is necessary to sacrifice, according to one's means, from a dove upto an ox.

1. This sacred calendar of the Yezidis of Russia was published in a German version by Dirr, *loc. cit.* 573 - 574. I have retained the transliteration of the Kurdish words given by Dirr.

2. On the sacred character of Wednesday, on which some prohibitions are prescribed see above p. 75.

3. I do not know what the name of the festival means. *Malaik* might be the Arabic term *malā'ikaḥ* "angels".

4. It is the *laylat al-qadr* of Islām, the blessed night, Kor. XLIV, 2, the night of the decision, on which the Koran was revealed, Koran, XCVII, 1 - 5. It falls in the month of Ramaḍān and is one of the five odd nights of the month, probably the 21st or the 23rd of Ramaḍān. According to others, on the contrary, it is the 27th of this month. It is recommended to pass the odd nights of the last third part of the month in the exercise of pious works. The Yezidis imitate also this Islamic festival in their religious practices.

5. *Qurbān* means in Arabic "sacrifice; eucharist; mess". Among the Yezidis, it is a festival either of Islamic or Christian origin.

10. The festival of Şeyh 'Adî is celebrated seven days afterwards. One day is celebrated in honour of the baptism of Christ¹.

11. The *çãmâ-i mera*² falls after the festival mentioned in No. 8.³

12. The festival of Hüdür-Eliâz falls fifteen days afterwards: three days of fast are enjoined. A festival in honour of Saint Sergius³ is celebrated on the fourth day.

1. The Christianisation of the Russian Yezidis is clearly evident from this festival.

2. *Çãmî* might be Arabic *ğami*; "cathedral mosque; mosque".

3. Hüdür-Eliâz is the prophet Elias. Also the festival of Saint Sergius represents an infiltration of the Christian religion.

THE PANEGYRIC (MADĪHAH) OF ŠEYH 'ADI¹.

- 1 My comprehension comprehends (understands) the truth.
And my truth is mixed in me.
The truth of my extraction is apparent by itself.
And when it was known, all was already in me.
- 5 All those who are in the world are under me,
And the whole of the inhabited parts and deserts
And all created (things) are under me.
I am the directing power, anterior to all that which exist.
I am he who pronounced a true speech.
- 10 I am the just judge and the director of the world,
I am he whom men serve in my glory.
They come to me and kiss my feet.
I am he who extended above the heavens their height².
I am he who shouted in the beginning.
- 15 I am the one and unique Šeyh³.
I am he who revealed all things by myself.
I am he to whom the book of the good tidings came⁴

1. English translations of the hymn in praise of Šeyh 'Adi are given by Badger and Layard in their books often quoted above. A French version is given by Menant based on the English translation of Layard; it is inserted in his book on the Yezidis already mentioned. The Arabic text of the hymn — because it is written in Arabic and not in Kurdish — is published by Joseph in *Yezidi texts*, 147 - 149; it is followed by an English version on pp. 241 - 242. The version of Menant is reproduced by Nau in *Recueil*, 168 - 165. This sacred writing of the Yezidis which is the only sacred writing which they show to those who do not appertain to the sect, is a sort of a rhapsody or hymn in honour of Šeyh 'Adi, who chants his own praises and exalts his own divinity. He speaks, as if he were the divinity itself, the Angel Peacock. In fact, the Yezidis hold this poem often as sacred and revere this sacred writing; all Yazidi prayers are composed of fragments and portions of this poem. I have followed for my version the Arabic text of Joseph, but I have inserted two verses omitted by the American editor. We do not find in this writing the least indication of the presumably diabolic nature of their God. The personage who speaks and praises himself has the traits of God, of the Christian and Mussalman God, and of the Saint 'Adi, the prophet to whom has been revealed the good news. The poem is modelled on some Islamic original. It shows, as it has been already said by us on p. 12, several points of contact with some authentic poem of the *šūfi* and Mussalman saint 'Adi.

2. All these exaltations and descriptions of the most salient qualities of 'Adi refer really to God.

3. Šeyh is used in this verse almost in the sense of God. 'Adi is indeed one and unique God.

4. The *Gilwah* is to be understood by the "book of the good news". It is dictated by 'Adi, as the Yezidis assert, after he had its revelation from God.

- From my lord who burns the mountains.
I am he to whom all created men come
- 20 In order to kiss my feet in obedience.
I produce fruit from the first lymph of the youth
By means of my presence, and my disciples return to me.
The darkness of the morning passed away before his light.
I guide him who asks to be guided.
- 25 I am he who made Adam, so that he might dwell in paradise,
And Nimrūd, so that he might dwell in a flaming fire¹.
I am he who guided Aḥmad the just²,
And I guided him on my way and on my path.
I am he from whom all creatures
- 30 Come for my good examples and good gifts.
I am he who visited all heights.
Goodness and charity proceed from me.
I am he who made my plans dreaded in all hearts,
And they exalt my power and the majesty of my awfulness.
- 35 I am he from whom the destructive lion came,
Full of madness, but I shouted against him and he was changed
to stone.
I am he from whom the serpent came,
But my will reduced him to dust.
I am he who struck the rock and it trembled,
- 40 And who made the sweetest of the waters spring from its side³.
I am he who made a part of truth descend.
The book which comforts the oppressed came from me⁴.
I am he who judges with justice.
When I have judged, it is my law.
- 45 I am he who made the sources which give water,
Sweeter and more pleasant than all rains.
I am he who made it appear in
My mercy and with my power, (the water) which thou callest pure.
I am he to whom the Lord of heavens said :

1. Nimrūd dwells in the flaming fire, i. e. in hell.

2. I do not know who is meant by Aḥmed the just. It is possible that Muḥammad is meant, who might have also this name in the Koran. The name Aḥmed would be, according to Nau, *loc. cit.* 164, note 1, that of the grandfather of 'Adi, if we pay attention to the Syriac document published by him. It does not seem to me that this is so, because here it might be perhaps the question of a patriarch or saint like Adam.

3. Allusion to the holy water of Zemzem, which flows in the national sanctuary, and which was made to spring up by Šeyḥ 'Adi, saying *zem zem*, i. e. "murmuring; overflowing in abundance", Menzel, *loc. cit.* 156 - 157.

4 This too is an allusion to the sacred writing of the sect.

- 50 "Thou art the just judge and the director of the earth"
 I am he who made evident some of my marvels,
 And some of my virtues are manifest in existing things.
 I am he who made the mountains under me,
 And I made them move under me and at my will.
- 55 I am he in the presence of whose terrible majesty the wild animals
 cried.
 They turned towards me and worshipped me and kissed my feet.
 I am 'Adī the Syrian, son of Musāfir.
 The merciful, the element has given me the names,
 The celestial throne, the seat, the seven (heavens) and the earth¹.
- 60 In the secret of my knowledge there is not a God different from me.
 These things serve my power.
 O my enemies, why do you disown me? ²
 O men, do not disown me, but submit yourselves to me!
 Thou wilt be happy to encounter me on the day of judgment.
- 65 He who dies in my love, I shall elevate him
 With my will and with my joy in the middle of paradise.
 But he who dies without caring for me
 Will be given over to (lit. hurled in) punishment, disgrace and
 torture.
 I say that I am unique and exalted.
- 70 I create and make rich those whom I like.
 The praise is for myself and all things are by my will.
 The existence is illuminated by some of my gifts.
 I am the king who exalts himself.
 All riches of the creation are under my command.
- 75 I have made you understand, O my people, some of my precepts.
 He who desires me, should forsake the world.
 I am verily in a position to speak a true discourse.
 The garden on high is for those who do my pleasure³.
 I searched the truth and I became the confirming truth.
- 80 By means of such truth they shall possess like me the highest position.

1. That is "God has made me God."

2. This demand is not made to the atheist, who do not at all believe in God, but to those who deny that the Peacock Angel is verily God. He says therefore that men will be happy in meeting him on the day of judgment, when he will elevate those who loved him to the summits of paradise. The poem has especially in this point evidently Christian-Islamic traits.

3. The garden on high is paradise, called very often in the Koran simply the Garden, *al-jannah*.

ADDENDA.

P. 2, l. 10:

But M. Guidi asserts in his two works *Origine dei Yazidi e storia religiosa dell' Islam e del dualismo*, RSO., XIII, 266-300, and *Nuove ricerche sui Yazidi*, RSO., XIII, 377-427, to which latter we shall have occasions to refer, that in the belief of the Yezidis Yazid was the Caliph himself.

P. 5, ll. 22-23:

It has been asserted recently by a certain scholar (M. Guidi) that in the very beginning it was a Mussulman sect.

P. 6, l. 8 seq.:

Many passages of Arab authors on the Yezidis are quoted by Guidi in his two articles mentioned above. Still it is not at all proved that in all these cases we have to do with the Yezidis in question. This hypothesis is certainly to be set aside in many cases, in others, on the contrary, it is less probable, so that we cannot indeed maintain that Guidi has advanced proofs in its support. I shall treat this question at length elsewhere.

P. 10, note 2:

On the figure of the saint and his connections with the Yezidis cf. Guidi, *Nuove ricerche*, pp. 408-420. Still I must say that what he has asserted is not convincing. However it must be borne in mind that also according to Guidi, it is necessary to distinguish between two 'Adis, to the second of which the deeds attributed by Rāmīšō' should be attributed.

P. 13, note 4:

Guidi, *Nuove ricerche*, 421, sees in these two saints precisely the two above-mentioned individuals, deified by the Yezidis. This is correct. Guidi has reconstructed the genealogy of 'Adi, l. c. 420-423. Still all the links do not fit in. I do not believe that we are still in a position to wind up this confused mass of information.

P. 14, note 1:

On the narrative of Rāmīšō' cf. also what I have advanced in *Sui Yezidi*, III, 105.

P. 15, note 3:

I have treated the passage of Theodor bar Kōnay fully in *Sui Yezidi*, III, 115.

P. 16, note 1:

On the various forms of the name Tamūz, cf. *Sui Yezidi*, 116-119.

P. 20, note 2:

On this point cf. *Sui Yezidi*, 119-120.

P. 40, l. 9:

Chapters from the *Ġilwah* and from the *Black Book* as well are reproduced only in the Arabic text on pp. 100-103 of the book of Ismā'il Beg Chol (Bek Čöl), mentioned below.

P. 40, l. 48:

Costi K. Zurayk has recently published three works of Ismā'il Beg Chol on the Yezidis in Arabic, of which the first deals with the Yezidis in general, but without adding new information to what is already known from other works and narratives of travellers. The book is published in Beyrouth in 1984. Its English title runs as follows: *The Yazidis, past and present, being three original texts about Yazidi doctrines, customs, and some events of their history, with an autobiography of their Amīrs*. The editor gives in a preface the opinions expressed by scholars on the origin of the Yezidis.

P. 41, note 2:

On the futility of the arguments advanced by Mingana, cf. *Sui Yezidi*, 123-131.

ADDITIONAL NOTES by the translator.

In "La Question Kurde, ses origines et ses causes," Le Caire, 1930, Publication de la Ligue Nationale Kurde — Hoyboon, No. 6, p. 13, note 2, Dr. Bletch Chirguh has contributed an interesting note on the Yezidis. This periodical was presented by Prince C. A. Bedr-Khan to the translator on his visit to Damascus on the 9th July 1931.

Another interesting contribution on the Yezidis is an article entitled "The Origin of the Yazidi Tribe and their present home in Iraq. An account by Dr. A. Mohaqqaqi" — Translated (from Persian) and summarised by P. P. Bharucha and R. K. Jehanbaxi, and published in the Iran League Quarterly, vol. III, No. 4, June 1933, pp. 221-229. In this article, Dr. Mohaqqaqi who had stayed for thirty-five days among the Yezidis gives his impressions about the sect, its religion and customs. His chief informant was however one of the chiefs of the tribe.

P. 1, l. 1:

I have translated here and elsewhere "l'Asie Antérieure" by *Western Asia*, as the terms *Asia Minor* is employed for Asiatic Turkey and the *Near East* for Asiatic Turkey, Syria and Palestine.

P. 1, l. 6:

The means of livelihood of most of the Yezidis or Yazidiyan is fruit-growing and cultivation of the soil; Mohaqqaqi, op. cit. p. 221.

P. 2, note 5, l. 23:

Mohaqqaqi, p. 223, gives the recent statistics of the Yezidi families, as follows: "The Yezidis' present home is the mountainous territory to the north of Mosul. They are spread in five towns as Baashifeh (790 families), Behzani (385 families), Aine Safni (650 families), Baazra (560 families), Shaikh Aadi (279 families), and the Sanjār district (1,036 families). In all there are at present 3,700 families in these places."

P. 3, l. 7:

"The Yezidis have a priestly chief in every one of the five towns, mentioned above, and he is called Baba Shaikh. At the head of the five Baba Shaikhs is the 'Mir-Mirān' on whose death his son succeeds him. If he happens to have no male-issue, one of his near relatives who may be well-versed in the communal lore is selected for the high-priesthood"; Mohaqqaqi, p. 225.

P. 4, l. 10 seq.:

Mohaqqaqi, p. 225, sees in Melek Tā'ūs a vague allusion to the idea of the "Farohar" and to the cock. It is obvious that the Farohar has nothing in common with Melek Tā'ūs, except that the Farohar is represented on Achaemenian monuments as winged. The resemblance of the image of Melek Tā'ūs to that of a cock is merely accidental, due to the incompetence of the Yezidi artists; s. p. 30, note 1, ll. 19-21.

P. 6, l. 14 seq.:

Kurdish spoken by the Yezidis is said to be a dialect incomprehensible to the Kurds, as it contains words and phrases which resemble those of the dialect of Mazanderan and Gilan; Mohaqqaqi, p. 223. It is probable that the Yezidis have tried to make their language incomprehensible to the hostile Kurds following Islām. Still Dr. Bletch Chirguh, loc. cit., p. 13, note 2, asserts that the holy scripture of the religion of the Yezidis (*Eyzédís*) is in Kurdish, that all ceremonies performed at Šeyh 'Adi are performed in

Kurdish, and that all their prayers are recited in Kurdish, further that the holy scripture of the Yezidis says in its exuberant nationalism that the Creator spoke in the gracious Kurdish language; cf. p. 60, note 3, ll. 12 - 13.

P. 7, l. 3 seq. :

The Yezidis show pronouncedly eclectic tendencies as is evident from their religious customs and beliefs. There are some resemblances to the later Zoroastrian customs and beliefs; cf. pp. 7-8 and the appendix. Still the assertion of Mohaqqaqi, p. 224, that they possess a book called Zand-Avesta which is neither shown to any one nor is it intelligible to the masses of the Yezidis themselves is hardly tenable, as all reliable sources of our information on the Yezidis, European and Oriental as well, have not mentioned the existence of a Zand-Avesta among the Yezidis. It should be taken as a wishful thinking on the part of Mohaqqaqi. The same is the case with his other assertion that the chief in whom the secular power appears to have combined with the ecclesiastical authority, recites from the book and explains the contents to his fold; *ibid.*

P. 7, ll. 17 and 29 :

That the Yezidis hold fire in great reverence is attested by Mohaqqaqi, p. 226, who says that to extinguish fire with water or by any disrespectful means and to blow out light by the breath of the mouth are considered by them heinous sins. For the purpose of blowing out the lamp or fire they have a special implement, perhaps a sort of a snuffer.

P. 8, note 1, l. 4 seq. :

Mohaqqaqi, pp. 223 - 224, says on the authority of one of the chiefs of the tribe that the present Yezidis are really of Persian Zoroastrian extraction and that their ancestors were once the residents of Persia proper. Then he speaks of the emigration of some of the Zoroastrians from Iran after the Arab conquest to India, and of some others in the vicinity of the actual Russian frontiers. Here these latter were known as "Yazdānparaat". Thence they spread gradually towards Tiflis, Erzerum and Antioch. After a lapse of several years when quarrels broke out among the Arabs on the question of the Caliphate and when some fighting took place in the neighbourhood of Nineveh, the Yezidis moved into the interior of Iraq and occupied the above-mentioned five towns. It is highly probable that the origin of this tradition lies in the consonance of the name Yezidi and Yazdi "(inhabitant) of Yazd" in Īrān. Bletch Chirguh, *loc. cit.*, p. 13, note 2, is positive of the Iranian origin of the Yezidis and of their religion being Zoroastrian, and sums up his note by the words that the Kurds are at present divided from a religious standpoint into Zoroastrians, Catholics, Protestants and Mussulmans. He does not admit that Caliph Yazid, son of Mu'āwiyah, had anything to do with the religion of the Yezidis.

Layard, *Nineveh and its remains*, p. 303, says: "The Yezidis have a tradition that they originally came from Basrah, and from the country watered by the lower Euphrates, that after their emigration, they first settled in Syria, and subsequently took possession of the Sinjar Hills, and the districts they now inhabit in Kurdistān."

P. 14, l. 1 seq. :

The account of the service of the Yezidi chief Gordi rendered to two Christian missionaries, of his struggle against them, fight and death, of the final success of his son Seyh 'Adi, and of the ruins of the place named after him, which Mohaqqaqi, p. 224, gives according to a history of Mosul in Arabic, reminds us of the legend about Seyh 'Adi, s. p. 9, and also of the story of the Nestorian monk Fāmišō' given by Nau, pp. 13 - 14. At any rate, this source of the history of Seyh 'Adi is not mentioned by European travellers. It is therefore to be regretted that Mohaqqaqi has given neither the exact Arabic title of this history of Mosul, nor the folios on which the account occurs.

Fp. 35-36:

The Yezidis rise early and offer their prayers at dawn and also at sunset; Mohaqqaqi, p. 225.

P. 36, l. 29:

Speaking of the annual sacrifice of male animals and birds, which is offered in the middle of September, Mohaqqaqi, p. 227, mentions the following curious custom. A man dips his finger in the blood of the slaughtered animal and marks with it the foreheads of all the members of the family. This is done in order to exempt them from wretchedness and poverty. Thereupon they roast the animal and take out its tongue, heart and head, and share them among the members, who eat them in order to be immune from calumny and evil thoughts. The translators of Mohaqqaqi compare this annual sacrifice correctly with the Mehrgān festival as observed by the Zoroastrians of Irān.

P. 37, l. 3 seq.:

In connection with the New Year's festival Mohaqqaqi, pp. 226 - 227, relates that the Yezidis decorate their houses with tulips and other flowers and collect fagots in an appointed place. On the dawn of the New Year's day, after reciting their prayers all members of the family come together and kindle a large fire with these fagots in which they burn dates and nuts. They leap across this fire with the object of becoming absolved from past sins, and to have done with all that is evil. The translators compare this practice of kindling a fire on New Year's day with a similar practice observed in ancient Irān in connection with the Jasn i Sadeh, which was celebrated fifty days before the New Year.

P. 59, note 3, l. 8:

Comp. for "God holds on high the heavens without columns" *Yasn 44, 4* — "Who held the earth and the heavens from falling down?"

P. 60, note 3, l. 8 seq.:

Franz Cumont, *Fin du monde selon les Mages Occidentaux, Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 1931, p. 49, calls the Yezidis the last heirs of the Maguseans, among whom the idea of the millenarian reign of every one of the seven planetary gods is preserved upto date with surprising faithfulness.

P. 64, note 2, l. 8 seq.:

Mohaqqaqi does not mention the sharing of a bread or a ball of the earth of Seyh 'Adi between the bride and the bridegroom as the essential part of the marriage ceremony. He says on p. 228 that they present themselves to Bābā Mir or Bābā Šeyh. The latter rising from his seat recites prayers, joins the hands of the couple and showers on it his benedictions. Then the party goes about in a procession with music, dancing and merry-making.

P. 65, l. 1 seq.:

The Yezidis observe fast on three days, beginning from the 1st of October, i. e. they do not take anything between sunrise and sunset; Mohaqqaqi, p. 226.

P. 65, l. 13:

Mohaqqaqi, p. 229, says that the sign by which a Yezidi recognises his co-religionist is the round shape of the neck of his tunic. The V-shape is always avoided. The Yezidis of the Singār grow their hair in locks and dress themselves in long white robes. Their head-gear is dome-like and pointed. The rest of the Yezidis wear a handkerchief on their heads in the fashion of the Kurds of Irān.

P. 65, note, l. 3 seq.:

The assertion of Mohaqqaqi, p. 229, that upto the time of Šeyh Gordi, the Yezidis consigned the dead to the towers-of-silence and that in the time of Seyh 'Adi this custom disappeared is unique. But it requires confirmation by solid proofs, the more so as

Seyh Gordi is not mentioned by those who have written on the Yezidis and their religion. Mohaqqaqi, *ibid.*, says further that they do not bury a corpse at night, but wash it and keep it ready by dawn at the grave-yard. With the rising of the sun they kneel down, join their two hands in a praying attitude and supplicate the deity to pardon the dead person for his sins. Then they put the body in the grave, taking good care to keep the face to the east. The pit is always oriented north-south for the purpose.

P. 75, note 1, l. 11 seq.:

Layard, *Nineveh and its remains*, p. 303, says about the date of the Yezidis: "Sheikh Nasr informed me that they had a date of their own, and that he believed we were then, according to their account, in the year 1550. This suggested some connection with Manes; but neither by direct, nor indirect, questions could I ascertain that they were acquainted with the name, or recognised in him in any wise as the originator of their peculiar doctrines with regard to the Evil Principle".

Disputes among the Yezidis are settled, says Mohaqqaqi, p. 226, by a *qādi*, who keeps before him two pieces of paper, one crimson, the other black, they being symbolical of the following oath to be taken by the defendant: "May Melek Tā'ūs send me from the crimson world to the black and dark region if I lie." It is evident that the crimson world refers to heaven and the black one to hell. Crimson or red is the favourite colour of the Yezidis; s. p. 66, note 3. According to Bletch Chirguh, *op. cit.*, p. 13, note 2, even to-day the Kurds of Bostan, either Mussulman or Yezidi, take the most solemn oath *Be Moushafa res (Maṣḥaf-i rās) qavile cezirede*, i. e. "By the Black Book lost in the ruins of Djéziré." He observes that it should be noted that the belief in the loss of the sacred book of the Yezidis in the ruins of Djéziré proves the existence of a Kurdish civilisation before the advent of Islām, a civilisation which had seen the rise and fall of Djéziré.

Mohaqqaqi, p. 226, says that the Yezidis avoid throwing away the nails of fingers and toes carelessly in the way of passers-by. They wrap them in a piece of paper or cloth and bury them in a hole away from ordinary resorts. The practice of interring human nails with similar precautions, while reciting a special *nirang* or charm is also enjoined by later Zoroastrianism, especially in the *Rivāyats*; cf. *Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, edited by Ervad Manockji Rustamji Unvala, Bombay 1922, vol. I, pp. 244 and 246-247. The main idea underlying this practice is, however, that of preventing the use of nails in black sympathetic magic.

APPENDIX by the translator.

SOME RESEMBLANCES OF THE YEZIDI CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS WITH THOSE OF THE ZOROASTRIANS OF INDIA AND IRĀN.

The opinion has been advanced by some students of the religion of the Yezidis that this sect derives its name from the town of Yazd in Irān¹, whence in comparatively recent times a number of Zoroastrian refugees had emigrated to Mt. Singār, the headquarters of the Yezidis, and assimilated themselves with them in course of time². This opinion is supported, they assert further, by some customs and beliefs of the sect which have such striking resemblances to those of the Zoroastrians of India and Irān, that they cannot be taken as merely accidental³. Now, it is generally accepted that the Yezidis call themselves *Izidis* or *Ezidis*, i. e. "worshippers of *Ized*", which is the Modern Persian name for God, generally employed in the plurale tantum *Yazdān*⁴. We think, however, that the resemblances of some of their customs and beliefs to those of the Zoroastrians are due rather to the eclectic character of their religion than to the direct borrowing from Zoroastrianism through the Zoroastrian refugees from Yazd⁵.

It cannot be denied that Zoroastrianism attained a pronounced dualistic tendency in the later Avesta, which was still more pronounced in the Pahlavi *Bundahišn*, and later in the Persian *Rivāyats*. The world of Ahura Mazda or Ōhrmazd, comprising his spiritual and material or heavenly and terrestrial creations, was placed in diametrical opposition to the world of Aingra Mainyu or Āharman with his spiritual and material creations. Still this dualism was not absolute, as throughout the Zoroastrian literature, including the Pahlavi *Bundahišn* and the Persian *Rivāyats*, it is often said that Āharman and his evil creations will be finally destroyed, and Ōhrmazd will reign all supreme in the world of celestial bliss. On the final fate of the Evil Spirit, of Satan of the Bible, the Christian doctrine is glaringly silent.

Of Ōhrmazd the Yezidis have guarded, it seems, only a vague souvenir in their name Yezidis. They have their seven Šeyḥs mentioned in the Black Book, who remind us of the Babylonian planetary heptad and, at the same time, of the seven Amšāspands. Still these seven Šeyḥs have nothing to do with God, they are rather dependent on

1. S. p. 6. — 2. S. p. 8, note 1. — 3. S. p. 7. — 4. S. p. 6, note 3. — 5. Comp. p. 8, ll. 1-6, and note 1.

Melek Tā'ūs or the Angel Peacock who corresponds to the Devil in Christianity and Islām. He is supreme among the angels, who after his fall and repentance, has been re-installed by God in his original and pre-eminent position¹. It is, therefore, not permitted to the Yezidis to pronounce the name of the Evil Spirit, *Saytān*, by which he is called by the Mussulmans, neither wholly, nor in parts, nor even to utter its syllables which might remind us of this name. As regards the prohibition of uttering his name, after he was elevated to the rank of God², there is perhaps the care taken against its profanation by untimely invocations, exactly as the Jewish and Christian practices prescribed it — “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain”³. Again, just as the Jews replaced the pronunciation of the name *Yahveh*, the real name of God, by *Adonai*, meaning “My Lord”, the Yezidis replaced the name *Šeytān* by *Melek Tā'ūs*, i. e. the Angel Peacock, the peacock being the bird symbolic of the Evil Spirit⁴. It is well known that among the ancient Mesopotamian peoples, the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians, the real names of gods and goddesses, and even men were never uttered, but they were replaced by their substitute names, as in the name rests the personality, and therefore, if the real names were influenced adversely by magicians, the personality concealed behind these names can be also adversely influenced.

Now, for a quite different reason the names of the Devil and his comrades are avoided by the Parsis. It is a widely spread popular belief that even the utterance of their names might conjure them up. We may mention in this connection the repugnance of some Parsi women to name the serpent, ghosts and sprites by their Gujarati names — સિંહ, બુદ, etc. They call it euphemistically “the long one”, “the maternal uncle”, etc.

Further we may mention the Parsi practice of exorcising the devil and evil spirits by a filip cracked with the thumb and the middle-finger of the left hand on one's left side at the moment one is forced to pronounce their names, especially in the Pāzand *Nirangs* recited after certain *Yašts*. On other occasions this gesture of the hand, this filip, is accompanied by an adequate sentence of exorcism in the current Gujarati expression સેતાનને ડાબે કરવે, i. e. “to place Satan on one's left”; on the contrary, “to place a Yazat on one's right”, દક્ષિણીક of Neryosangh's Sanskrit version of *Yasn* XI, 18, means to honour him.

Just as we have seen above, Melek Tā'ūs, the first in the divine hierarchy after the supreme God is represented in the shape of a peacock, which resembles sometimes a cock. Similarly in later Zoroastrianism

1. S. p. 4. — 2. S. p. 53, note 5. — 3. *Exodus*, 20, 7. — 4. S. pp. 20 - 21.

Vohu Manō, who is the first of the Amšāspands has for his sacred symbol the cock¹.

The Yezidis worship the sun, the moon, and the stars, just as the Zoroastrians venerate them as the sublime creations of Ahura Mazda. Moreover, like the Zoroastrians the Yezidis show great veneration for fire. It is possible that the name 'Adī is none other than a popular explanation of the ancient name Ādar, the Yazat presiding over fire².

There are different grades of Yezidi priests³. They are enjoined to select a wife from their own grades. If they act contrary to this, their *murids* or lay brethren may not obey them⁴. Although no such interdictions are binding on the Zoroastrian clergy, and a priest or *mōbad* may take to wife the daughter of a layman or *behdīn*, still the daughter of a *mōbad* looses certain privileges, if she marries a *behdīn*.

A Yezidi priest should always wear a beard, otherwise his lay brethren are not obliged to recognise him and to give him their offerings and gifts⁵. A similar rule was strictly observed by Zoroastrian priests in general until very recently. But nowadays it is observed only by those priests who perform higher ritualistic functions, like the *Yazišn* and *Darūn* ceremonies. Still they are not permitted to shave their beards.

The non-Yezidis can never become Yezidis, according to the precise commandment of 'Adī. In order to be a Yezidi one must be born a Yezidi⁶. Thus there is no conversion among the Yezidis. Similarly, conversion of non-Zoroastrians into their religion is not looked upon with favour by the Zoroastrians ever since the downfall of the Sassanian empire.

The Yezidis have a cryptic writing⁷ in which their sacred texts are written. It was divulged to Father Anastās by a renegade Yezidi. In a certain sense, the Pahlavi script can also be called cryptic⁸.

The opposition shown by the Yezidis to the Mussulmans is clearly recorded in their memorandum sent to the Ottoman authorities in 1872 - 1873. The attitude of the Zoroastrians of Irān towards the Mussulmans was also hostile before the advent of the Pahlavi regime.

Every member of the Yezidi sect must select from his community *a brother of the next world* for eternity who is called the servant of the Mahdī, and a *šeyḥ* or a *pīr*. He must kiss their hands daily⁹. They are his temporal and spiritual guides. Similarly, it is enjoined in the *Saddar Bundeheš* (Dhabhar's edition, p. 140, ll. 11 - 27) that every Zoroastrian must select a protecting patron from the Yazats and

1. S. p. 7; Pahlavi *Šāyast Nēšāyast*, X, 9. — 2. S. *ibid.* — 3. S. pp. 26 - 28. — 4. S. pp. 73 - 74. — 5. S. p. 75. — 6. S. p. 67, note 1. — 7. S. p. 40. — 8. Hoshangji and Haug, *An old Pahlavi-Pasand Glossary*, Bombay. London 1870, p. 87 seq. — 9. S. p. 68.

Amšāspands and a spiritual counsellor from the Dastūrs. Just as the father and the mother are the corporeal parents of a child, this spiritual counsellor is the spiritual father. Thus it is obligatory to obey all three unconditionally¹.

During the period of segregation of forty days from the outside world which precedes the initiation of a *faqīr* he has to wear a cord of black wool on his neck. It falls down on his breast like a necklace. This cord reminds him that he must avoid all sorts of sins and vices². It can be compared to the *Kūstī* of the Zoroastrians. The *Kūstī* which a Zoroastrian is to wear continuously tied around his waist reminds him among other precepts, to follow the path of good and to avoid evil.

Every member of the Yezidi sect must select from his community also a *sister of the next world* for eternity, whose duty it is to open for him with her own hands the neck of the shirt. According to Andrus, the aperture of the neck is cut at right angles in front³. Mohaqqaqi, p. 229, says that the shape of the neck of the tunic is round, and that they avoid the V-shape. The latter is particularly the shape of the neck of the *Sūdreh*, the sacred shirt of the Zoroastrians. The V has at its lower end a sort of a bag or purse, called *gīreh-bān*, which is the most important part of the *Sūdreh*. We do not know if this difference is intentional.

Although the custom of rubbing the dust from the tomb of Šeyḥ 'Adī, which had been kneaded with the water of the spring called Zemzem and dried, on the face, the mouth and the sides of moribund Yezidi is evidently a copy of administering the extreme unction among the Christians⁴, still it can be compared with the once prevalent custom of administering the consecrated *Hōm*-juice and the consecrated bull's urine (*nīrangdīn*) to a Zoroastrian on the brink of death⁵.

During their ceremonies the Yezidis sacrifice a sheep, whose meat is distributed among the poor. They slaughter a sheep or a hen also on the New Year's eve⁶. This custom reminds us of the custom of the Zoroastrians of Īrān of sacrificing a ram on the eve of the Mehrgān festival, whose meat is consecrated on the following day and distributed among the poor. In ancient times a bull was sacrificed on this occasion; comp. the sacrifice of white oxen offered to Šeyḥ Šāms ad-dīn (p. 33).

On the festival of Šeyḥ 'Adī, the guardian of the sanctuary presents to every pilgrim a burning lamp of sesam oil over the flame of which the latter passes his hands and then passes them over his face. This ceremony is called that of inhaling the sacred fire of 'Adī⁷. Similarly,

1. Act. Orient. vol. IV, p. 312. — 2. S. p. 27. — 3. S. p. 66 and note 1. — 4. S. p. 31 and p. 64, note 2. — 5. S. D. Bharucha, *Rīstīstān*, Bombay 1917, p. 46, note 46. — 6. S. pp. 36 - 37, and p. 86. — 7. S. p. 29.

when the emblem of the Angel Peacock is carried to a village, it is preceded by two *pīrs* who balance censers. The people bow before it in adoration, murmur some sentences and dip their hands in the smoke of the censers, with which they thereupon perfume their faces and arms¹. Some Zoroastrians make similar gestures of the hands before oil-lamps often kept burning in a fire-temple, and when the house is fumigated with sandal-wood dust and frankincense, burnt in a portable fire-receptacle every morning and evening.

A *pīr* or a *šeyḥ* recites a prayer in the ear of a moribund Yezidi which purports to exhort him to die a Yezidi and to renounce all other religions². This custom reminds us of the custom of reciting an *Ašem Vohū* and a *Patēt* in the ear of a Zoroastrian who is on the brink of death. These prayers are recited in practice generally immediately after his death. The efficacy of the *Ašem Vohū* recited preferably by the moribund is extolled in the *Hadoxt Yašt* (*Yašt*, 21, 14 - 17). The *Patēt* is recited by way of extreme repentance for sins (*Patēt Pašemānī*, 13).

A *Kočāk* performs a ceremony before the tomb of a Yezidi three days after his death in order to know whether he is reborn as a Yezidi or in an animal shape. In the former case the dead is considered to have passed away as a virtuous man, in the latter as a sinner³. The Zoroastrians used to have similar anxiety to know whether the soul of the dead had heaven or hell in store for him. According to some Greek writers, the ancient Iranians considered the person whose dead body was immediately devoured by birds and beasts of prey as pious (*dahma*) and the person whose corpse was not so quickly disposed of as a sinner (*tanu-peretha*). Similar, though erroneous, belief is traceable also in some *Rivāyats*. In the case of a sinner they had certain extra ceremonies performed for his soul. According to the *Vidēvdāt*, 12, 5, the certitude received on this subject determined the period of mourning.

It is customary among the well-to-do Yezidis to carry every day of the year in the morning, at midday and in the evening *the portion of the dead* to the tomb of the deceased⁴. This custom reminds us of the consecration of choice dishes for the deceased by the recital of a *Satūm* prayer (*Yasn*, 26) also three times every day of the year, just as it is customary among the Zoroastrians of India. The relatives of the dead partake of these dishes.

Moreover, there are some prohibitions common to the Yezidis and the Zoroastrians. As Melek Tā'ūs is represented often in his emblems more like a cock than a peacock, the Yezidi priests do not eat the

1. *Ibid.* — 2. S. p. 64. — 3. S. p. 76, note, l. 12 seq. — 4. S. p. 51, note, ll. 24 - 26.

flesh of cocks¹. We have seen above that the cock is the sacred symbol of *Vohu Manō*, and as it wakes up mankind at dawn it is called *Parodarš*² and is therefore doubly sacred. For this reason, the Zoroastrians do not eat a cock, particularly a crowing cock.

The Yezidis do not eat fish, as it saved Jonah, they say, from drowning³. But the real reason for this interdiction is perhaps that some fish are scaleless like serpents. For this very reason the Zoroastrians do not eat, or at least consecrate for the dead, scaleless fish.

Again spitting on the ground and passing water while standing are prohibited to the Yezidis⁴, because thereby they would insult their God, who resides as Satan underground. Forceful spitting on the ground is disliked by some orthodox Zoroastrians, as thereby they would injure Spendarmad, the Amšaspand presiding over the earth. Passing water while standing is prohibited in *Vidēvdāt*, 18, 40, the *Patit* and the *Rivāyats*.



1. S. p. 67, note ll. 9 - 10. — 2. *Vidēvdāt*, 18, 15 seq. — 3. S. pp. 66 - 67, note 6. — 4. S. *ibid.*

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Zagmuk 37.
zem zem 81.
Zemzem, holy water of 32, 61.
Zend-Avesta 85.
Zīr Bōbō 58.

The Alphabet of the Yezidi-Kurdish Language

Δ	ه	ك	ل	ا	م	ن	ا
چ	ج	ث	ت	پ	ب		ا
خ	ك	ن	ر	و	د	خ	ح
ز	ز	ر	ذ	د	خ	ح	
د	#	7	x	+	م	س	س
ع	ظ	ط	ض	ص	ش		
ل	x	{	T	ج	L	#	غ
ل	گ	ک	ق	ق	ف		
	ق	و	د	ن	L		
	ي	ه	و	ن	م		



