



Devil Worship: The Sacred Books and Traditions of the Yezidiz

Isya Joseph

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THE ORIGIN OF THE MANUSCRIPT The Arabic manuscript here translated was presented to me before I left Mosul by my friend Dâud a?-?âi? as a memento of our friendship. ?awâja a?-?âi? was a man of culture, in sympathy with western thought, and an intimate acquaintance of M. N. Siouffi, the vice-consul of the French Republic in Mosul. From the first page of the manuscript it appears that through some Yezidis he had access to their literature. I know he was in close touch with many of them, especially with the family of Mulla ?aidar, which is the only Yezidi family that can read and guard the sacred tradition of the sect. The manuscript comprises a brief Introduction, the Sacred Books, and an Appendix. In the first, the compiler indicates the source of his information and gives a sketch of the life of Šei? ëAdî, the chief saint of the Yezidis. The Sacred Books comprise Kitâb al-Jilwah (Book of Revelation), and Ma??af Rêš (Black Book)—so named because in it mention made of the descent of the Lord upon the Black Mountain (p. 32). Al Jilwah¹ is ascribed to Šei? ëAdî himself, and would accordingly date from the twelfth century A. D. It is divided into a brief introduction and five short chapters. In each, ëAdî is represented as the speaker. In the Preface the Šei? says that he existed with Melek ?âûs before the creation of the world, and that he was sent by his god ?âûs to instruct the Yezidi sect in truth. In the first chapter he asserts his omnipresence and omnipotence; in the second he claims to have power to reward those who obey him and to punish those who disobey him; in the third he declares that he possesses the treasures of the earth; in the fourth he warns his followers of the doctrines of those that are without; and in the fifth he bids them keep his commandments and obey his servants, who will communicate to them his teachings. The Black Book, ² which perhaps dates from the thirteenth century, is larger than the Book of Revelation, but is not divided into chapters. It begins with the narrative of creation: God finishes his work in seven days—Sunday to Saturday. In each day he creates an angel or king (melek). Melek ?âûs, who is created on Sunday, is made chief of all. After that Fahr-ad Din creates the planets, man, and animals. Then follows a story about Adam and Eve, their temptation and quarrel; the coming of the chief angels to the world to establish the Yezidi kingdom; the flood; the miraculous birth of Yezîd bn Muëawiya; and certain ordinances in regard to food, the New Year, and marriages. The Appendix contains the following

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