

NAMES OF GOD AND FORMS OF ADDRESS TO GOD IN YEZIDISM WITH THE RELIGIOUS HYMN OF THE LORD

Introduction

The aim of this work is to explore the different forms of addressing God in Yezidism. In this paper a general overview of the names of God in the Yezidi religion is given and the different forms of address to God (using the relevant examples from the religious texts) are investigated. For this study the relevant examples from the Yezidi published as well as unpublished religious texts were used, such as *Qewlê Padişa* [1] (“The Religious Hymn of the Lord”), *Qewlê Afirîna Dinyayê* (“The Religious Hymn of the Creation of the World”), *Qewlê Bê Elif* (“The Religious Hymn of B and A”), *Qewlê Zebûnî Meksûr* (“The Religious Hymn of the Weak Broken One”), *Qewlê Hezar û Yek Nav* (“The Religious Hymn of the 1001 Names”), *Qewlê Tawûsî Melek* (“The Religious Hymn of Tawûsî Melek”), and some other texts. The results of this study are presented to the scientific world for the first time.

No exact data is available concerning the number of Yezidis. Nevertheless, according to unofficial estimates, the population of the Yezidis in the world exceeds approximately 700–800,000. This means that Yezidis constitute about 2.3% of the Kurdish population. The Yezidis live mainly in Iraqî Kurdistan, especially in the mountainous region of Shingal and Sheykhkan. Yezidis also live in Iraq in the area named Bashiq and Behzan. They live also in Turkey and in Syria, but the overwhelming majority of those moved to Europe and especially to Germany. A few Yezidis live in Iran. They live in post-Soviet states, mostly in Armenia and Georgia, the majority of them settled there in the beginning of the 20th century following religious oppression in the Ottoman Empire. The Yezidis, as a result of massive emigration from Armenia and Georgia during the post-Soviet period, were forced to move to Russia. Additionally, there are now Yezidis living in the Ukraine, as well as in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the United States of America.

The only centre of the religion and its ceremonial rituals is called Lalish. It was likely built in pre-Christian times and is located in the Sheykhkan region of Iraqî Kurdistan.

Yezidis, who are the adherents of a non-proselytizing, pre-Islamic Kurdish religion, always had a great fear of writing down their religious texts and hence avoided the practice. Yezidis, much like other insulated religious and national communities based on oral traditions, arguably preserved their customs and beliefs better than the others, especially those based on written tradition. At the same time, Yezidism remained rather closed religion, in particular to adherents of different creeds.

In the Yezidi religion, alongside the mostly Kurdish religion of Ahl-e Haqq, one can observe the ancient of cults whose roots are embedded deeply into past millennia. The basis of Yezidism is a combination of the most ancient Indo-Iranian concepts, similar to the Indo-Aryan ones. In the process of investigating Yezidism it is necessary to pay attention to the presence of several genetically various strata in it. There are at least two of them: historically earlier and historically later levels. As a result, different ideas and their combinations, including those examined under this paper's focal point, can be found in Yezidism.

Yezidis believe in the existence of the supreme power and the Truth in the Universe, which is God. There is a belief that He has different emanations, which makes it very difficult for the researcher to explain succinctly the concept of God and Holy Beings in Yezidism. The nature of Yezidism helped Yezidis to adopt and assimilate foreign ideas to their system of beliefs and allowed them to coexist harmonically. Sometimes these ideas seem to be contradictory, but in the minds of Yezidis they are harmoniously present and even supplement each other. What is significant to understand is that this religion focuses commonalities and not on differences, and that this is an inclusive and not exclusive tradition. This is what helps Yezidis to connect different phenomena with each other.

The Yezidi myth of creation begins with the description of the emptiness (*Berê ne 'erd hebû, ne 'ezman bû, ne 'erş bû* [2]; *Ne 'erd hebû ne 'ezman bû,*