

All this indicates a nonnormative nonjuridical character of the Orthodox Church. Along with this the Orthodox consciousness understands the Church more ontologically, i.e. it doesn't see the Church primarily as an organization and an establishment, not just a society of faithful, but as a spiritual, religious organism, the Mystical Body of Christ. Orthodoxy is more cosmic than Western Christianity. Neither Catholicism nor Protestantism sufficiently expresses the cosmic nature of the Church, as the Body of Christ. Western Christianity is primarily anthropological. But the Church is also the Christianized cosmos; within her, the whole created world is subject to the effect of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Christ's appearance has a cosmic, cosmogonic significance; it signifies somehow a new creation, a new day of the world's creation. The juridical understanding of redemption as a carrying out of a judicial process between God and man, is somewhat foreign to Orthodoxy. It is closer to an ontological and a cosmic understanding of the appearance of a new creation and a renewed mankind. The idea of Theosis was the central and correct idea, the Deification of man and of the whole created world. Salvation is that Deification. And the whole created world, the whole cosmos is subject to Deification. Salvation is the enlightenment and transfiguration of creation and not a juridical justification. Orthodoxy turns to the mystery of the RESURRECTION as the summit and the final aim of Christianity. Thus the central feast in the life of the Orthodox Church is the feast of Pascha, Christ's Glorious Resurrection. The shining rays of the Resurrection permeates the Orthodox world. The feast of the Resurrection has an immeasurably greater significance in the Orthodox liturgy than in Catholicism where the apex is the feast of the Birth of Christ. In Catholicism we primarily meet the crucified Christ and in Orthodoxy - the Resurrected Christ. The way of the Cross is man's path but it leads man, along with the rest of the world, towards the Resurrection. The mystery of the Crucifixion may be hidden behind the mystery of the Resurrection. But the mystery of the Resurrection is the utmost mystery of Orthodoxy. The Resurrection mystery is not only for man, it is cosmic. The East is always more cosmic than the West. The West is anthropocentric; in this is its strength and meaning, but also its limitation. The spiritual basis of Orthodoxy engenders a desire for universal salvation. Salvation is understood not only as an individual one but a collective one, along with the whole world. Such words of Thomas Aquinas could not have emanated from Orthodoxy's bosom, who said that the righteous person in paradise will delight himself with the suffering of sinners in hell. Nor could Orthodoxy proclaim the teaching about predestination, not only in the extreme Calvinist form but in the form imagined by the Blessed Augustine. The greater part of Eastern teachers of the Church, from Clement of Alexandria to Maximus the Confessor, were supporters of Apokatastasis, of universal salvation and resurrection. And this is characteristic of (contemporary) Russian religious thought. Orthodox thought has never been suppressed by the idea of Divine justice and it never forgot the idea of Divine love. Chiefly - it did not define man from the point of view of Divine justice but from the idea of transfiguration and Deification of man and cosmos.

Finally, the final and most important feature of Orthodoxy is its eschatological consciousness. The early Christian eschatology, the anticipation of Christ's second appearance and the coming of the Resurrection, was to a greater extent, preserved in Orthodoxy. Orthodox eschatology means a lesser attachment to the world and earthly life and a greater turning towards heaven and eternity, i.e. to the Kingdom of God. In Western Christianity, the actualization of Christianity in the paths of history, the turning towards earthly efficiency and earthly organization resulted in the obscuring of the eschatological mystery, the mystery of Christ's second coming. In Orthodoxy, primarily as a result of its lesser

historical activity, the great eschatological anticipation was preserved. The apocalyptic side of Christianity had less of an expression in the Western forms of Christianity. In the East, in Orthodoxy, especially in Russian Orthodoxy, there were apocalyptic tendencies, the anticipation of new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Orthodoxy, being a more traditional, a more conservative form of Christianity, while preserving the ancient truths, allowed for the possibility of a greater religious innovation, not innovations of human thought which is so prominent in the West, but innovations of the religious transfiguration of life. The primacy of the fullness of life over the differentialized culture was always especially characteristic for Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy did not see such a great culture which arose on the grounds of Catholicism and Protestantism. Perhaps this is so because Orthodoxy is turned towards the Kingdom of God which will come not as a consequence of historical evolution, but as a result of the mystical transfiguration of the world. It is not evolution but transfiguration which is characteristic for Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy cannot be known through surviving theological tracts; it is made known through the life of the Church and the Church's people, it is least of all expressed in understanding. But, Orthodoxy must come out from its condition of being shut up and isolated, it must actualize its hidden spiritual treasures. Only then will it attain worldwide meaning. The recognition of Orthodoxy's exclusive spiritual significance as a more pure form of Christianity must not engender self-satisfaction within it and lead to a rejection of the meaning of Western Christianity. On the contrary, we must acquaint ourselves with Western Christianity and learn many things from it. We must strive towards Christian unity. Orthodoxy is a good basis for Christian unity. But Orthodoxy suffered less from secularization and thus can contribute an immeasurable amount towards the Christianization of the world. The Christianization of the world must not mean a secularization of Christianity. Christianity can not be isolated from the world and it continues to move within it, without separation, and while remaining in the world it must be the conqueror of the world and not be conquered by it.

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Being a loyal son of the Orthodox Church, N.A. Berdyaev remained an independent thinker in his philosophical creativity, which he himself repeatedly pointed out. For this reason his testimony about the Truth of Orthodoxy is that much more valuable for us, being unencumbered with the conventional and frequently lifeless language of "scholastic theology."

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# THE TRUTH OF ORTHODOXY

Nicholas A. Berdyaev

The Christian world doesn't know Orthodoxy too well. It only knows the external and for the most part, the negative features of the Orthodox Church and not the inner spiritual treasure. Orthodoxy was locked inside itself, it did not have the spirit of proselytism and did not reveal itself to the world. For the longest time, Orthodoxy did not have such world-wide significance as did Catholicism and Protestantism. It remained apart from passionate religious battles for hundreds of years, for centuries it lived under the protection of large empires (Byzantium and Russia), and preserved its eternal truth from the destructive processes of world history. It is characteristic of Orthodoxy's religious nature that it was not sufficiently actualized nor exposed externally, it was not militant, and precisely because of this the heavenly truth of Christian revelation was not distorted so much. Orthodoxy is that form of Christianity which suffered the least distortion in its substance as a result of human history. The Orthodox Church had its moments of historical sin, for the most part in connection with its external dependence on the State, but the Church's teaching, her inner spiritual path was not subject to distortion. The Orthodox Church is primarily the Church of tradition, in contrast to the Catholic Church, which is the Church of authority, and to the Protestant Churches which are essentially churches of individual faith. The Orthodox Church was never subject to a single externally authoritarian organization and it unshakably was held together by the strength of internal tradition and not by any external authority. Out of all forms of Christianity it is the Orthodox Church which remained more closely tied to early Christianity. The strength of internal tradition in the Church is the strength of spiritual experience and the continuity of the spiritual path, the power of super personal spiritual life in which every generation shakes off a consciousness of self-satisfaction and exclusiveness and is united with the spiritual life of all preceding generations up to the Apostles. In that tradition I have the same experience and the same authority as the Apostle Paul, the martyrs, the saints and the whole Christian world. In tradition my knowledge is not only personal but super personal and I live not in isolation but within the Body of Christ, within a single spiritual organism with all my brothers in Christ.

Orthodoxy is first of all, an orthodoxy of life and not an orthodoxy of indoctrination. For it, heretics are not so much those who confess a false doctrine but those who have a false spiritual life and go along a false spiritual path. Orthodoxy is before all else, not a doctrine, not an external organization, not an external norm of behavior but a spiritual life, a spiritual experience and a spiritual path. It sees the substance of Christianity in internal spiritual activity. Orthodoxy is less the normative form of Christianity (in the sense of a normative-rational logic and moral law) but is rather its more spiritual form. And this spirituality and hiddenness of Orthodoxy were not infrequently the sources of its external weakness. The external weakness and the insufficient development, the insufficiency of external activity and realization affects everyone, but her spiritual life, her spiritual treasures remained hidden and invisible. This is characteristic for the spiritual nature of the East, in contrast to the spiritual world of the West, which is always active and always visible but then, it

not infrequently spiritually exhausts itself because of all that activity. In the non-Christian world of the East, India's spiritual life is especially hidden from outside eyes and is not actualized in history. This analogy could be carried through, although the spiritual nature of the Christian East is far different from the spiritual nature of India. Holiness in the Orthodox world, in contrast to holiness in the Catholic world, did not leave written monuments after itself, it remained hidden. But this is not yet the reason why it is difficult to judge Orthodox spiritual life from the outside. Orthodoxy did not have its Scholastic age, it experienced only the age of Patristics. And the Orthodox Church to this day relies on the Eastern teachers of the Church. The West sees this as a sign of Orthodoxy's backwardness, a dying out of creative life. But this fact can be given another interpretation: in Orthodoxy, Christianity has not been so rationalized as it had been rationalized in the West, in Catholicism where, with the help of Aristotle it saw everything through the eyes of Greek intellectualism. [In Orthodoxy] doctrine has never attained such a sacred significance and dogmas have not been so attached to mandatory intellectual theological teachings but they were understood primarily as mystical truths. We were less confined by the theological and philosophical interpretations of dogmas. Nineteenth century Russia experienced a genesis of creative Orthodox ideas [thinking] and these expressed more freedom and spiritual talent than did Catholic and even Protestant thought.

To the spiritual nature of Orthodoxy belongs the primordial and inviolable ontologism which first presented itself as the manifestation of Orthodox life and only then, of Orthodox thought. The Christian West went by ways of critical thought in which the subject was opposed to the object, and thus the organic whole of thinking and the organic connection with life was violated. The West is more capable of a complex unfolding of its thinking, its reflection and criticism, its precise intellectualism. But here was a violation of the connection between the one who knows and thinks and the primordial and original existence. Cognition came out of life and thinking, came out of existence. Cognition and thinking did not pass through the spiritual wholeness of the person, in the organic unity of all his strengths. The West accomplished great feats on this foundation but this resulted in the falling apart of the primordial ontologism of thinking, the thinking did not enter into the depth of substance. This resulted in Scholastic intellectualism, rationalism, empiricism and the extreme idealism of Western thought. On the Orthodox ground, thinking remained ontological, joined to existence, and this is evident throughout the whole of Russian religio-philosophic and theological thought of the XIX and XX centuries. Rationalism, legalism and all normatism is alien to Orthodoxy. The Orthodox Church is not defined in rational concepts, it is conceptualized only for those living within it, who are united to its spiritual experience.. The mystical types of Christianity are not subject to any kind of intellectual definitions, they do not have any juridical signs nor do they have rational signs. Genuine Orthodox theologizing is theologizing on the basis of spiritual experience. Orthodoxy almost completely lacks Scholastic manuals. Orthodoxy understands itself through Trinitarian religion; not with abstract monotheism but in concrete Trinitarians. The life of the Holy Trinity is reflected in its spiritual life, its spiritual experience and its spiritual path. The Orthodox Liturgy begins with the words: "Blessed is the Kingdom, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Everything begins from above, from the Divine Triad, from the heights of the Essence, and not from the person and his soul. In Orthodox understanding it is the Divine Triad which descends and not the person who ascends. There is less of this Trinitarian expression in Western Christianity, it is more Christocentric and anthropocentric. This difference is noted in Eastern and Western patristics

where the first theologizes from the Divine Trinity and the second, from the human soul. Thus the East first of all proclaims the mysteries of Trinitarian dogmas and Christological dogmas. The West primarily teaches about Grace and free will and about the ecclesiastical organization. The West had greater wealth and a greater variety of ideas.

Orthodoxy is that Christianity wherein is a greater revelation of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Orthodox Church did not adopt the Filioque, which is seen as a subordination in the teaching about the Holy Spirit. The nature of the Holy Spirit is revealed not so much by dogmas and doctrines but by its action. The Holy Spirit is closer to us, it is more immanent in the world. The Holy Spirit acts directly upon the created world and transfigures creation. This teaching is revealed by the greatest of Russian saints, Seraphim of Sarov. Orthodoxy is not only Trinitarian in essence but it sees as the task of its earthly life, the transfiguration of the world in the image of the Trinity and have it become pneumatic [Grk. Spiritual] in essence.

I am speaking about the depths of mysteries in Orthodoxy and not of superficial trends in it. Pneumatologic [Grk. Spiritual] theology, the anticipation of a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the world arises easier on Orthodox soil. This is the remarkable particularity of Orthodoxy: on the one hand it is more conservative and traditional than Catholicism and Protestantism but, on the other hand, within the depth of Orthodoxy there is always a great expectation of a new religious manifestation in the world, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the coming of the New Jerusalem. Orthodoxy did not develop in history for nearly the whole millennium; evolution is a stranger to it but within it the possibility of religious creativity was concealed, which is held in reserve for a new, not yet achieved, historical epoch. This became evident in Russian religious trends of the XIX and XX centuries. Orthodoxy makes a more radical division between the Divine and the natural world, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Caesar and does not accept those possible analogies which are frequently evident in Catholic theology. The Divine Energies act covertly in man and in the world. One cannot say about the created world that it is a god or is divine, nor can one say that it is outside the Divine. God and Divine life do not resemble the natural world or the natural life, one cannot make analogies here. God is eternal; natural life is limited and finite. But, Divine Energy is poured out upon the natural world, acts upon it and enlightens it. This is the Orthodox understanding of the Holy Spirit. Thomas Aquinas' teaching about the natural world, positing it in opposition to the supernatural world is, for the Orthodox, a form of secularizing the world. Orthodoxy is in principle pneumatological [Grk. Of the spirit] and in this is its distinction. Pneumatism is the final result of Trinitarianism. Grace is not the mediation between the supernatural and the natural; grace is the action of the Divine Energy on the created world, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world. It is the Pneumatism of Orthodoxy which makes of it a more complete form of Christianity, revealing in it the predominance of New Testamental origins following those of the Old Testament. At its apex, Orthodoxy understands the purpose of life as the seeking and the attainment of the grace of the Holy Spirit, as a means of the spiritual transfiguration of creation. This understanding is essentially opposite of the legalistic understanding in which the Divine world and the supernatural world is the law and the norm for the created and natural world.

Orthodoxy is primarily liturgical. It informs and enlightens the people not so much by sermons and the teaching of norms and laws but by liturgical services themselves which give a foreshadowing of transfigured life. It likewise teaches the people through the examples of saints and instills the cult of holiness. But the images of saints are not

normative; to them is granted the graceful enlightenment and transfiguration of creation by the action of the Holy Spirit. This, not being the normative type for Orthodoxy, makes it more difficult for the ways of human life, for history; it makes it less attractive for any kind of organization and for cultural creativity. The hidden mystery of the Holy Spirit's activity upon creation has not been actually realized by the ways of historical life. Characteristic for Orthodoxy is FREEDOM. This internal freedom may not be noticed from the outside but it is everywhere present. The idea of freedom as the foundation of Orthodoxy was developed in Russian religious thinking of the XIX and XX centuries. The admission of the freedom of conscience radically distinguishes the Orthodox Church from the Catholic Church. But the understanding of freedom in Orthodoxy is different from the understanding of freedom in Protestantism. In Protestantism, as in all Western thought, freedom is understood individualistically, as a personal right, preserved from encroachment on the part of any other person, and declaring it to be autonomous. Individualism is foreign to Orthodoxy, to it belongs a particular collectivism. A religious person and a religious collective are not incompatible with each other, as external friend to friend. The religious person is found within the religious collective and the religious collective is found within the religious person. Thus the religious collective does not become an external authority for the religious person, burdening the person externally with teaching and the law of life. The Church is not outside of religious persons, opposed to her. The Church is within them and they are within her. Thus the Church is not an authority. The Church is a grace-filled unity of love and freedom. Authoritativeness is incompatible with Orthodoxy because this form engenders a fracture between the religious collective and the religious person, between the Church and her members. There is no spiritual life without the freedom of conscience, there is not even a concept of the Church, since the Church does not tolerate slaves within her, but God wants only the free. But the authentic freedom of religious conscience, freedom of the spirit, is made evident not in an isolated autonomous personality, self-asserted in individualism but in a personality conscious of being in a super personal spiritual unity, in a unity with a spiritual organism, within the Body of Christ, i.e. the Church. My personal conscience is not placed outside and is not placed in opposition to the super personal conscience of the Church, it is revealed only within the Church's conscience. But, without an active spiritual deepening of my personal conscience, of my personal spiritual freedom, the life of the Church is not realized, since this life cannot be external to, nor be imposed upon, the person. Participation in the Church demands spiritual freedom, not only from the first entry into the Church, which Catholicism also recognizes, but throughout one's whole life. The Church's freedom with respect to the State was always precarious, but Orthodoxy always enjoyed freedom within the Church. In Orthodoxy freedom is organically linked with Sobornost', i.e. with the activity of the Holy Spirit upon the religious collective which has been with the Church not only during the times of the Ecumenical Councils, but at all times. Sobornost' in Orthodoxy, which is the life of the Church's people, never had any external juridical signs. Not even the Ecumenical Councils enjoyed indisputable external authority. The infallibility of authority was enjoyed only by the whole Church throughout her whole history, and the bearers and custodians of this authority were the whole people of the Church. The Ecumenical Councils enjoyed their authority not because they conformed with external juridical legal requirements but because the people of the Church, the whole Church recognized them as Ecumenical and genuine. Only that Ecumenical Council is genuine in which there was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit; the outpouring of the Holy Spirit has no external juridical criteria, it is discerned by the people of the Church in accordance with internal spiritual evidence.