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JUDAISM AND THE FUTURE OF ORTHODOXY
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(Translated from Russian by G. Nachinkin)

INTRODUCTION

The aim of a meeting of people representing different philosophies and confessions is, first of all, to bear witness of one’s faith and one’s hope. Such witness is one of the best ways to rid groups of mutual prejudice, which only leads to distrust and enmity. It is impossible, however, to bear witness without making an attempt to understand the other. In speaking of Judaism and Orthodox Christianity, I would like to begin the discussion by referring to the paper by Dr Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain. This paper was read at the annual conference of the International Council of Christians and Jews in Rome on September 8, 1997. The conference, as well as the paper, was concerned with the much discussed problem of “the Other.” I will take the liberty to briefly repeat the principal ideas of this paper.

JUDAISM

Jonathan Sacks defined Judaism as a “particularist monotheism.” This type of monotheism differs from polytheism as well as from universal monotheism. Polytheistic tribes wage war against one another, protected by their respective tribal gods. Universal monotheism leads to a tendency to impose one's own cult of One God on all people--hence forced baptism, jihad, inquisitions, and etc. According to Jonathan Sacks Judaism differs from other monotheistic faiths in that it is binding for Jews but does not force itself upon others.

Judaism does not say that to enter the Kingdom of Heaven one must be a Jew. Judaism believes in One God, but it allows for a multiplicity of ways to worship Him. According to Jonathan Sacks, Jews are, properly speaking, those obliged to bring to the world this faith--the belief in One God--Who may be worshipped in various ways.

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*This paper was written for the International Scholar Conference on Theology After Auschwitz and the Gulag and the Relation to Jews and Judaism in the Orthodox Church in Communist Russia, organized by ICCJ and SRPH. I would like to express my gratitude to Arkadi Choufrine of Princeton University, for his criticism of the first draft of this paper.
According to Dr. Sacks, Judaism does not stop at the commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself (Lev.19.18), when applying ethics. But it goes further to command love to strangers as well as to members of one's own people. Judaism commands her members to love the stranger as oneself, as a Jew by blood (Lev.19.33, 34). Thus, Sacks states that the problem of "the Other" and of "the Otherness" that we face today is successfully solved in Judaism. Moreover, Judaism is the religion that solves this problem best, thereby establishing it as the leading force to usher mankind into a happy future, understood as the Messianic era. This is the general conclusion drawn from the paper by Dr. Sacks.

As Dr. Sacks explains, Judaism has no desire to impose its religion on others as a special form of worship. It is destined for the elect—for Jews themselves. Yet, Judaism strives to spread among other nations a certain kind of ethics involving tolerance, pluralism, acceptance of religious differences, and love for one's neighbor, whether Jewish or not. Sacks points out that from a religious point of view, Judaism coincides with modern ecumenism in its main ideas. I am not speaking about the ecumenism that strives to unify certain confessions; I am referring to the ecumenism that says that, provided One God is worshipped, howsoever He be conceived, a variety of forms of worship is tolerated. This provides a common basis for believers of all religions who can thereby speak a common language and coexist peacefully, enriching one another with the values of their respective traditions. If Dr. Sacks is correct in crediting these attributes first of all to Judaism, it may be said that today's ecumenism is a spiritual child of Jewish ideals and thought.

Judaism, as described by Dr. Sacks, seems quite similar to the Western ideology of today's pluralistic society. Since the ideas and notions of modern pluralism is much younger than Judaism, it might be more correct to say that this ideology is a natural outflow of the ethics of Judaism. This is a conclusion drawn from Dr. Sacks' paper.
ORTHODOXY

Now I would like to turn to Orthodox Christianity. One of the main problems it now faces has to do with its attitude toward ecumenism. More books are being published on this matter than ever before. Different approaches to ecumenism have led to church schisms in the past. In the instances of the schisms within the Greek, Romanian, Bulgarian and the Georgian Churches, and the separation of the Moscow Patriarchy with the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile, the issues lie in the differing attitudes toward ecumenism.

This should not be surprising. It is not easy for the Orthodox Church--believed by Orthodox Christians to be the One True Church--to accept the spiritual leadership of Judaism. For one reason, traditionally Orthodox Christians have always been repulsed by this religion, opposing Christianity to Judaism in general.

Clearly we must not presume that Orthodox Christians are tempted to convert to Judaism. Today the problem is different from what it was in St. Vladimir's time, when Russia was “choosing its religion” and could, theoretically speaking, have chosen Judaism, as did the Khazars. Today the issue is the spirit (as well as the ideology) of Judaism and the attitude to assume towards it. Hypothetically speaking, Christians may now become Orthodox in appearance and accept the spiritual ideology of Judaism. Other attitudes are also possible also, for instance, to start hating Judaism, to reject its values and to proclaim totalitarian Orthodoxy as the only means of defense against the ideology of Judaism dominating the world. So we see that the future of Orthodox Christianity depends to a large extent on how the problem of the Church's attitude towards Judaism is resolved. (Here Judaism is taken not as a religion, but as a spiritual philosophy and ideological orientation.)

This certainly is an internal problem of Orthodox Christianity. But meeting with Jews and representatives of other confessions here, I would not like to avoid or camouflage this problem, as this would only hinder frank and open discussions. Even more than that, I would like to draw attention to this issue.

I think it is crucial to agree with Jonathan Sacks and to recognize that it is Judaism that has assumed the spiritual (i.e., informal) leadership in today's Western
society, as well as in the ecumenical movement. This is despite the fact that quite different people claim to fulfill this role, such as American Protestants for example.

It is well known that the strongest argument Judaism has against any kind of totalitarianism is the reality of “Auschwitz.” There can be no alternative to the ideology (and to the spirituality) of Judaism, since any different spirituality - be it “universal monotheism,” polytheistic “tribalism” or (we could add) atheism, leads to Auschwitz or to the Gulag. This argument is highly convincing. If based on totalitarianism which rejects the values termed as “bourgeois” or “Jewish,” the Orthodox Christianity inevitably stops being a true Orthodox Christian faith and lapses into antisemitism and hatred of the West, which, like all hatred, is opposed to Christian love.

All the same, the choice that Orthodox Christianity must make in this regard does not seem to me to lie between following the lead of Judaism and rejecting its values altogether. Might it be that choosing is just alien to the true Orthodoxy? Might it be possible to perceive the values proclaimed by Judaism, in quite a different light, one that does not exclude them, but on the contrary absorbs and then transfigures them?

Such is, in my opinion, the challenge faced today by Orthodox theology. As we can see, the Western world and the world civilization as a whole have attained, after centuries of historical development, a spiritual age corresponding to the ethics of the Old Testament. In this situation Judaism has been able to assume the spiritual leadership of the entire civilized world--of which Russia is now a part. This is in itself quite remarkable. Still, this fact must not provoke Orthodox Christians to develop an inferiority complex--or a superiority complex.

Whatever the spiritual growth the world has achieved, Orthodox Christians believe that the Church, always has “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph.4.13). This means that Christians are called upon to be as perfect as Christ Himself. We must be concerned about our not corresponding to the image of Christ, not being preoccupied with the unmasking and rejection of Judaism or “the wiles of the Western ideology.”
ONE'S OWN VS. STRANGERS

Having spoken about Orthodox Christianity as "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," I would like to explain what, in my opinion, the Orthodox answer is to questions asked by today's world, ethical and religious questions about "one's own" and "strangers," about unity and plurality. In attempting to answer these questions, I shall take as a starting point not so much the historical experience of the Orthodox Church, which has lived, among other things, through the period of "symphony with the state." But I would like to start with the Evangelical teaching interpreted by the Orthodox holy tradition. Jonathan Sacks, too, does not speak of the forced conversion of John Hyrcanus' of Idumaea to Judaism, when he states that Judaism is not aggressive and has no desire to impose itself on others. In other words, I wish to distinguish Orthodox based ideology from the Orthodox Faith itself, as Dr. Sacks does when speaking about Judaism. He refers to the Scriptures and not to the actual historical practice of Jews, which includes episodes of proselytism, hatred of Gentiles, compulsory conversion to Judaism and religious intolerance (e.g., the Jews' hatred of early Christians or of Jewish Christians in modern Israel).

Speaking of Orthodox "ethics," I mean first of all the teaching and the life of Jesus Christ Himself. I mean His Cross, which is, according to the teaching of the Church, the answer to all questions the world may ask. In the context of the theology after Auschwitz, the so-called problem of "theocide" has been propounded anew. I shall not discuss the problem in full at this time. I shall only mention that the fact that He was crucified by practically all the "forces" representing the spiritual ethos of the time is crucial for our understanding of Christ's mission. In a passage in the Acts of the Apostles which summarizes the events recorded, it is said that the perpetrators of Christ's crucifixion were "both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel" (Acts 4.27). I would like now to dwell more at length on this passage and to interpret it within the context of the problems being discussed.

Let us define the spiritual ethos of each of the "forces" mentioned. Pontius Pilate was a person for whom the Law of Moses meant nothing at all. He personifies the Roman ideology that presupposed a unity of mankind. But this unity was thought
of as based on a common human nature, the laws of which the Romans were sure to
know and to understand better than anybody. Speaking about general well-being and
caring for justice, the Romans always remained masters of the situation. That is what
made the Roman ideology an imperialist one. It was based on the belief in the god-like
nature of the emperor. And “anthropolatry” was certainly unacceptable for the Jews.
So Pilate personified the “natural law” with all its limitations in a world fallen through
sin--of the natural law, which found expression in the Roman legal code. Historically
the Romans often appear accompanied by the nations they conquered. This
corresponds to the classical dyad of “the one and the many.” In the New Testament
this pair is described as “Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles” (see above). The dyad “the
one and the many,” as it was understood in Rome, comprise “the alien,” but “the alien”
has to be included into the One and to be subordinate to it. In this dyad there is room
for “the alien,” for non-Roman tribes and their gods, but no room for the Other. In its
essence this is the dyad of “universal (philosophical) monotheism” and “polytheistic
tribalism,” which is overcome by Judaism, according to Dr. Sacks.

Let us now consider Judaism itself. The “people of Israel,” according to the
Acts of the Apostles, took part in Christ’s crucifixion and this act represents the Law
of Moses. The essence of this Law, insofar as ethics are concerned, is to love one’s
neighbor as oneself. In contrast to natural law, the Law of Moses is based not on the
notion of a “common human nature,” but on the notion of the human personality.
“The Other” is just another personality like myself, and he must be loved as I love
myself. The ethics of the Law of Moses presupposes a certain community of people
within which all its members relate to themselves in the same way (it is not a mere
chance that it was the Law of Moses that formed the people of Israel). Certainly the
Law of Moses allowed for a certain openness to strangers. But the strangers who
converted to Judaism had to either (1) become assimilated to the Jewish people, (if
they accepted the Law), or, (2) remain forever outside Israel (if they did not accept
it). This was the case even if they believed in One God. Such was the fate of the
proselytes, the strangers. In modern Israel Arabs, Muslims, and Christians are
examples of “strangers” experiencing this outcome.
Besides Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, Herod is mentioned among those who crucified Christ, and he is mentioned first. Herod is a marginal, but nonetheless essential, figure in the Christ story (see Acts 4.27, and Luke 23.11-15). On the one hand Herod is undoubtedly subservient to Rome. On the other hand he is a Jew, although Judaism does not come naturally to him. By blood Herod is an Edomite and not a Jew. (The Edomites, descendants of Esau, were forcibly converted to Judaism by John Hyrcanus in 126 B.C.).

Apparently, in the New Testament story Herod's figure personifies the "stranger." Herod is a stranger on all sides: he is a stranger to the Jews because he is not Jewish by blood. He is a stranger to the Romans because he is a "Jew." Being a stranger to all, Herod is at the same time recognized as "one of theirs" by the Jews as well as by the Romans. His position is extremely ambiguous. He is a complete counterpart of Christ. Whereas Christ accepts death at the hands of the Romans, the Gentiles and the Jews, Herod panders to them all, while keeping his own interests in mind.

**NATURAL LAW VS. THE LAW OF MOSES**

Now let us show how, according to the Gospel, the antagonism between the natural law and the Law of Moses is overcome in Christ at the same time with the "strangeness" and ambiguity personified by Herod. It is extremely important that Christ voluntarily suffers crucifixion not only as a man (however great), but as a Jew by birth ("the King of the Jews"). The Son of God, according to Christian teaching, received His flesh from His Mother, a Jewess, thus confirming that Israel is the Lord's firstborn (see Ex. 4.22). That is why it behooved God's beloved Son to become a Jew by birth. However, being a Jew by birth, Christ submitted to the Law of Moses and became "a Jew according to the flesh," observing the Law of Moses. Yet, since Christ, as the Christians believe, is actually God Who gave this Law, Christ was, according to His Godhead, the Master of the Law and therefore free from it. It was for this freedom from the Law that Christ was sentenced to death, as well as for His freedom from the Roman law. Still Christ did not reject the sentence passed by the Jews according to the Law. He accepted it; thereby He did not annul the Law, and did not
show it to be something not given by God. But at the same time He did not become a
d servant of the Law. He acted as free from it, for it was for this freedom that Christ was
sentenced to death. Even in voiding the Law He had to fulfill it. If the Law meant
nothing to Pilate, it meant everything to the Jews. And Herod personified those who
accepted the Law against their will and were at the same time subservient to Rome
(also against their will), to the natural law. Christ Himself goes beyond both these
positions. He was a Jew according to the flesh. For Him, unlike Pilate, the Law had
been given by God. He obeyed the Law naturally, because He was a Jew by birth, as
was His Mother. This means that for Him, unlike Herod, the Law was not something
“alien.” Yet at the same time Christ, unlike the Jews, was free from the Law. Strictly
speaking, He Himself was the true Law, since the Law of Moses was given by the
Father through the Son. Or as St. Maximus the Confessor teaches, (developing an idea
of Philo Judaeus): the Logos, the Son of God, before becoming Man, was incarnated
in the Law (in the natural law as well as in the Law of Moses), and was therefore free
from it. This freedom did not suppose a rejection of the Law (and that is why the
Lord accepted the sentence). Being, moreover, according to the flesh, not only a Jew,
but a man as well, Christ submitted to Pilate for an analogous reason, since Pilate (a
Gentile and Roman) personifies the natural law.

So Christ (and this means as well those Christians who have attained the
measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ) does not stand in opposition to any
kind of the world's spiritual ethos. A Christian does not have to take a stand against
the natural law or the Law of Moses. Yet the situation in the world is such that both
these spiritual forces are crucifying Christ. Still this Crucifixion must not be perceived
tragically. Christ accepted death voluntarily without rejecting or cancelling any value,
be it a value of the Roman law or of Judaism. Nonetheless

He exhibited complete freedom concerning these values. He did not identify
with them, neither did he side with the Jews against the Romans, nor with the Romans
against the Jews; nor did He accept the ambiguous position that Herod exhibited.

As we saw two thousand years ago, today we see both these forces at work:
the universal (philosophical) monotheism, and the quasi-polytheistic tribalism on the
one hand, and the particularist monotheism on the other hand. We also see other forces maneuvering between these poles. Yet, whatever the world's situation, Christianity which has attained the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ will never side with any of these forces. Moreover, it will, most probably, be crucified by all these forces, which are opposed only in appearance, being in reality connected in a deep dialectical way. Whereas the dyad "universal monotheism-polytheism" does solve the problem of "one's own" and "alien," it does not solve that of "the other," particularist monotheism does solve the problem of "the other," but does not fully solve that of "one's own" and "alien." Neither of these spiritual forces can, from the viewpoint of Christian teaching, fully answer the question of how to overcome the opposition between "one's own," "alien" and "other." For Orthodox Christians the Cross of Christ is the answer. I repeat: historically, Christianity, as well as the so-called Christian states, have often been very far from the truth of the Cross. Still this does not mean that true Christianity has never existed. Just as the "ethics" of Judaism was completely fulfilled by only a few, so few could attain the truth of the Cross. The Orthodox Church calls these few "saints." However, every Christian is called upon to strive for sainthood.

Defined in terms of negation, sainthood means not siding with any of the ideologies dominating the world. For the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world. Certainly not siding alone is not enough. Christianity is not a simple negation of the world waging a ruthless war; it is also an affirmation--now on this earth--of the Kingdom of the age to come. In Orthodoxy a Christian answer to the world's question about "one's self," the "other" and the "alien" is given by family, community and the Church respectively. I shall start with the last, the Church, since the Orthodox family and Orthodox community are unthinkable without the Church. It is the Church that gives an answer to the most difficult problem of "other people." The attitude towards "other People" is not as meek in the Orthodox Church as in Judaism. According to Jonathan Sacks the "aliens" for Judaism are "strangers," whom one must love as much as "one's own." But it happens that the "aliens" are anything but poor "strangers"--weak, penniless, orphaned and homeless. The "aliens" very often want to
kill us, hate us, do not share our views and our faith, and do not want to. More than that, they may want to convert us to their faith, and if we do not agree to this, may possibly want to destroy us. They may just despise us, being stronger or, as they think, more “civilized,” and try to “educate” us using economical and political means of enforcement. In other words, there may be “aliens” who do not want to be loved by us as “our own,” who do not need our love, or who on the contrary insist on our becoming “their own” and entering their ranks. If I am not mistaken, Judaism does not explain how it is possible to love such “aliens.” The totalitarian monotheism preaches still less the love for such “aliens”—it rather assumes their role insofar as the true Church is concerned.

The Hebrew Bible certainly starts answering this question, for instance, in the figure of the suffering servant in Isaiah, 53. A number of Jewish thinkers interpret this as Israel, suffering for the sins of the whole world so that Messiah will come. Still, this notion of Israel in Judaism differs from that in Christian theology. Judaism does not possess the theological interpretation of the Cross, through which the true relation to the “world” is realized. In Judaistic interpretation the figure of the suffering servant has the aim to explain the suffering of the Jewish people which has already occurred in history. In Christian thinking the stress is laid on the voluntary acceptance of the Cross to save the world—after Christ and in imitation of Christ. That is why Christians, in addressing Israel according to the flesh, speak first of all, of the voluntary acceptance of suffering. Referring to the well-known poem by Mother Maria (Skobtsova), written in 1942,

So let you, who are marked
With the mark of hexagram,
Learn to answer freely with your soul,
To this sign of bondage.

So the Church, understood as the Body of Christ, is suffering the crucifixion in Christ. And, along with Him, she has an answer to the question about the proper attitude to assume towards “aliens” who are no mere “strangers,” but display real enmity to the Church. The answer to the question about the attitude of the Church towards the “world” is the Cross of Christ. As the Patriarch of Moscow Alexiy I (Simanskiy) put it, "the Church is the Body of Christ, crucified that its tormentors
might be saved." All is said by these words. As Christ Himself, the Church in the persons of its saints accepts torment, but does not side with any of the forces at work in this world. That is how the problem of "aliens" is solved by the Orthodox Faith.

Let us remark that this solution is not a kind of new moral postulating that for all Christians suffering is obligatory. Nobody has the right to condemn another to suffering. What is meant here is a voluntary Crucifixion, taken by the saints upon themselves. Thus these saints give an answer to the question about the Church's true Christian attitude towards "aliens." Having said that this solution is not a new moral, I shall nonetheless say later what consequences it may have for morality and social life and how the experience of holiness may affect society.

The problem of the "other" is solved according to the Church's solution of the problem of the "aliens." The answer is first of all to be found in Christian community, be it a parish or a monastery. I am not going to speak about that in detail now. Let me only say that within the community every person confirms his own individual existence, and develops his own individual features. To a full extent that is possible only when the community itself is a true church community, i.e., when it suffers crucifixion in Christ and along with Christ for the sake of the world's salvation.

Finally, the problem of "one's own" is being solved within Christian family. It would seem that the family is, by its own nature, extremely closed. It has its own interests, which at first sight, seem fundamentally opposed to those of the community. Nonetheless, it has become evident that it is the world, not the community, which really threatens the family. The community and the Church, on the contrary, are able to save the family. At the same time a Christian family, too, can enrich the community and the Church. The community frees love within the family from its carnal limitations. This makes love one's own more than it belongs to others. When the community and the whole Church of Saints suffer crucifixion for the whole world's sake, it does not destroy the family by entering into competition with it. On the contrary, the Christian family reveals itself in its true nature, revealing also the true nature of the Church.

MOTHER MARIA SKOBTSOVA

Lest my witness to the faith of the Church seems to lack foundation, I would
like to describe an example of a Russian Orthodox family, the family of Mother Maria (Skobtsova), whose poem I have cited. Mother Maria suffered a martyr's death in Ravensbruck for saving Jews from Nazis in France and for helping the Resistance. After emigrating from Russia together with her mother, her husband and three children, Elizaveta Skobtsova experienced a deep crisis. After the death of her daughter Anastasia in 1926, she felt the limited nature of private family life did not let her true Christian love for all people develop fully. Elizaveta Yuryevna divorced and became a nun. Having renounced the world and its passions, she did not separate from people. Having received the Church's blessing, she organized, together with like-minded persons, a movement called Pravoslavnoie Delo (The Orthodox Cause). This movement provided aid and help to needy Russian emigrants.

A Russian Orthodox community developed, and Mother Maria was its soul. We can see that at this stage community superceded family for Mother Maria. Mother Maria had already acquired her own individuality among Orthodox Christians, that of a secular nun whose love, like a mother's, was giving its warmth to the poor. Still, her relations with her husband and son were far from serene, according to her memoirs. Then the persecution of Jews set in. Mother Maria and other members of her community took an active part in helping the Jews. They gave shelter to the hunted and the rejected, issued certificates confirming membership in the Christian community, and baptism certificates to those who received baptism. Many people were saved in this way. During this time Mother Maria again was understood and helped by her ex-husband, her mother and her son, Yuriy. Yuriy took an active part in Mother Maria's and the whole community's activity of saving Jews and others persecuted by Nazis. Having become open to the suffering not of only of Russian Orthodox emigrants, but also to the suffering of the whole world personified in persecuted Jews, Mother Maria transfigured in Christ her own family relationships. More than that, her son, Yuriy suffered a martyr's death alongside his mother. Thus in her heroism Mother Maria imitated not only Christ, who suffered death to save the world, but the Mother of God as well, who accepted Her Son's sacrifice for the sake of the salvation of the world.
Certainly the Jews who did not accept Christ did not become members of Mother Maria's community. But their suffering, their abandonment, their lives themselves were accepted and transfigured by the Christians' voluntary act of heroism. Mother Maria, her son and her comrades who suffered death in the Nazi concentration camp, were rejected and crucified by the world alongside with the persecuted Jews. Having taken upon themselves the suffering of the world, the Christians justified their calling themselves "Israel." The history of the twentieth century has shown that the Church has a right to call itself Israel only insofar as it does not separate itself from Israel according to the flesh.

In quite the same way the Church has a right to call itself the New Mankind only insofar as it does not separate itself from all mankind. Also, the Church voluntarily accepts the Cross and is crucified by any separations existing in the world, which are caused by ideologies.

Having shed his blood for people's sake, Christ, according to St. Paul, established peace between "those that were nigh" and "those which were afar off" (i.e., between non-Jew and Jews), because from that time on both have through Him access unto the Father by one Spirit (see Eph. 2.17, 18). The Gentiles who have accepted the Cross of Christ, have stopped being strangers and foreigners; they have become fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God (Eph. 2.19). This means that whereas the ethical culmination of Judaism is the commandment to love "strangers," Christianity aims at altogether removing the distinction between "one's own" and "strangers," which always may engender envy and enmity.

So Mother Maria came to love the Jews she was saving, as much as her own son, as much as her own fellow Russian who found shelter under the same roof with the persecuted Jews, and whose life was in danger too. The Jews became her own "rodnie" in Russian, which means "those who have the same origin," or, verbally, "those who have the same 'rodina,' i.e., the same Mother-country." They are her own in Christ. It is the notion of "rodnie" that removes all opposition between "one's own," "others," and "strangers." She overcame the opposition that existed in the world even for Christians who have not yet attained the measure of the stature of the fullness of
Not only Jews and Russians were “rodnie” for Mother Maria. As her contemporaries tell us, when accused of loving only Jews, Mother Maria said to the Nazi Hofinann, a Baltic German who came to arrest her, that she could help him, too, if he were in danger. Thus, for a saint every human person is “rodnoi,” and one must not think that Christian love displays itself only towards the weak and the unfortunate. When the weak and the rejected are persecuted, as was the case with the Jews, the saints, on the one hand, suffer crucifixion at their side, voluntarily sharing the fate of the victims. But on the other hand, they do so for the sake of the salvation of both the persecuted and the persecutors.

The suffering that was inevitable for the Jews and rendered the Nazis guilty, became voluntary for the Christians. A Christian is not afraid to leave this world; even more, he knows that it is only in God that he can attain the full measure of Resurrection and that before this he has to go through death, into which he was baptized. Yet a Christian may not die at will. His death, as well as his life, must be an act of love—not of God only, but of people too, as were the life and death of the Savior (cf. Phil.1.23,24). Because of her love of God and of her desire for Eternity, Mother Maria did not fear and abhor death. The apparent violence inflicted on her by the Nazis was voided or brought to nothing through the voluntary nature of her death. It was not a suicide, a death for death’s sake, a means to escape suffering or to encounter God. First of all, Mother Maria was saving the persecuted, and that is why she suffered death. Yet in a metaphysical, religious sense, Mother Maria actually voided the violent murder committed by the Nazis through her voluntary acceptance of death; at the same time she showed the persecuted how violence could be made of none effect and real freedom achieved.

This attitude to death left Mother Maria free of any hatred—even of the Nazis. Although she rejected Nazism as an ideology and a policy based on hatred, (and this rejection was expressed in her participation in the Resistance and in her activity to save Jews), she, like other martyrs, was quite free from hatred and contempt for her enemies. Thanks to her love for God, she could separate people from the sin they
committed and face the sin itself (the Nazi ideology)--though this dark spirit which had conquered the German nation deserved full contempt.

Such attitudes towards the "enemies" and towards the weak and persecuted "strangers" (whose role was fulfilled in this instance by the Jews), were made possible by the Christian teaching to love one's enemies. This complements the biblical teaching to love one's neighbors and strangers and puts it into a new perspective. The example of Mother Maria's life shows us what this "complement" means, what answer the true Church gives to the questions put by contemporary history, and how the values of Judaism are not rejected, but transfigured in Christ.

We never meet the persecuted (strangers, orphans, widows, exiles) alone, but always along with those who persecute, despise and exclude them from life. That is why it is extremely important to find a proper attitude towards the situation where the "other" comes to us not alone, but as it were accompanied by his "enemy." (The absence of this problem is the principal drawback of the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, an outstanding Jewish thinker, whose philosophy of the "Other" has probably influenced Jonathan Sacks.)

Defending the persecuted may very often mean resisting the persecutors and taking active measures. This resistance may include killing persecutors, murderers and rapists or limiting their freedom. At least society and individuals as members of society must assume these functions. And here the state and society may, in order to feel in the right to take punitive measures, have a tendency to create ideologies fostering hatred and contempt for criminals--Nazis, oppressors, murderers, and tyrants. In turn these ideologies give room to hatred, and then seem to feed on it. The unity of the state or of the people becomes based not only on positive values, but on the hatred of the enemies as well. In this situation the enemies of the weak and of the innocent themselves become humiliated and hated. As a result the defense of some people leads to the making of pariahs of others.

The experience of the saints, on the contrary, teaches us to relate to the persecuted "other" in such a way that the persecutor, his "enemy," is not excluded from Being. If necessity compels to deprive a person of life, it happens only because
this person is possessed by the spirit of hatred and evil. In such a case his death is seen as a cessation of deadly sin. Still nobody may be damned or hated—that is, excluded from the eternal Being. According to the Apostle Judas, even the Devil may not be damned (see Jude 1.9). We must not let hatred possess us, not only when somebody wants to kill us, but when we are defending innocent victims as well. Such is the social rule following from the experience of the saints, and this rule is important for public morals and for the task of saving society from ideological hypnotism.

Speaking of today's Russia, one can say that Western ideology is not successful in this country. I believe that the reason for this lies not so much in the force of the old communist ideology as in the unwillingness of the majority of population to accept any ideology. Such a situation has its positive as well as its negative sides. It is dangerous insofar as Russia, while rejecting Western ideology, does not assimilate the values of an open society either—and these values presuppose, among other things, the defense of the weak and the handicapped, the defense of minorities. Neither does the Patriarchate speak out resolutely and persistently in defense of the values of an open society. Sometimes it even rejects them. There is no clear understanding that these values and the ideology of today's western consumer society are two distinct things that should be treated differently. One is to be assimilated and the other rejected. It seems to me that in this situation it is particularly important to show how it may be possible to combine the acceptance of open society values, while rejecting their ideologies, which are always inseparable from hatred and contempt for the "enemies."

Communists and nationalists as well as sectarians are gathering strength from their position of those hated, despised, and expelled from civilized society. They are proud to be exiles and put on the romantic disguises of the persecuted, which seems to be attractive—particularly to the young who are in the process of searching for justice while being ignorant of history. In this situation the Church could show society how to survive without having recourse to Western or any other ideology, a society where "strangers" find a refuge and where everyone has the right to disagree with majority opinion or faith and get his questions answered. "The enemies of the Church and of the Motherland," if there are any such, must be punished with the utmost rigor of the
law. There can be no doubt about that. But no one may be hated, even the satanists, the most miserable of all people, who murder priests and pollute temples. This is the only means to assimilate the values of an open society (which are not alien to authentic Orthodox traditions) without lapsing into Western ideological hypnotism. Besides, this could save Russia from sliding into communo-fascism or any other form of dictatorship. ONLY A FEW ARE ABLE TO LOVE EVERYBODY AS THEIR OWN, BUT ALL CAN ABSTAIN FROM HATRED, CONDEMNATION, AND CONTEMPT.

The state, civil society, and every citizen of that society cannot fulfil the commandment “thou shalt not kill” unless it is interpreted in a very limited sense as a prohibition to kill the defenseless. It is most surprising that, although Christianity is considered to be ethically more unrealistic than Judaism, it is in Christianity that we find freedom from this binding commandment. Christ remarks that what matters most is not so much murder in itself, but hatred, condemnation and contempt. These are the sources of all murder, and so they must be eradicated first of all (see Matt. 5.23-25).

As Emmanuel Levinas and others remark, the commandment “thou shalt not kill” supposes not only a refusal to use violence against the peaceful and the defenseless, but also giving shelter and saving the persecuted. It impossible not to agree with that. Moreover, it must be added that the latter often means violently resisting the persecutor and depriving him of life. This is where the Christian moral principles prohibiting hatred are to take effect. Otherwise the souls of the “host” and of his guest may perish as well, infected by their hatred of the enemy. Christianity eliminates the necessity of physically killing the enemy, an act compulsory according to the law. Actions are not limited by the narrow confines of the commandment as Judaism mandates. Christianity takes into consideration that the refusal to deprive a hateful person of life, while not returning his hate, effects at once the salvation of the persecutor, of the persecuted and of the defender. This extinguishes the gehenna of hatred which Satan kindles in this world.

Christ has not cancelled the values of natural law and the values of the Law of Moses. The self-sacrifice of Christ as an Act itself does not cancel them. But it defeats
the spirits of anger, hatred and discord that seek to hang on to these values as parasites. This sacrifice serves to unite all people in God, and to overcome not only the opposition of “one's own” versus the “stranger’s” or the opposition of “one's self” versus “others,” but alienation itself—the alienation of man from himself, from others and from God. It serves to defeat the last enemy—death (see 1 Cor.15.26).

The Church believes that in Christ all can become one family according to the new birth given from on high, after being born of the Holy Spirit and adopted by the Father. Even when others do not desire to become our family in Christ, we, Orthodox Christians, can love them through the Cross of Christ in the Holy Spirit as our own родные, thus showing the way to our true native country—the Heavenly Kingdom. If we are unable to love them as our own родные, we can at least, out of respect for the saints, try to abstain from hatred, condemnation and contempt, no matter whom we are dealing with. That is the principal conclusion that may be drawn from the heroic deeds of the holy martyrs of the twentieth century. That is also the main hope and belief of the Church. With this ancient but not outdated hope, the Church may successfully enter the twenty-first century without fearing she may be left behind in the spiritual progress of mankind. More than that, with this hope the Church remains what it always has been—the earnest first fruits of mankind's salvation. If the Church stops being true to this hope, and either reacts in a totalitarian manner to particularist monotheism, or submits to it, the Orthodox Church will cease to be Herself. It is my hope and belief that this shall not be the case.