

# Dualism in Greece After Contact With Persians

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The Orphic tradition in Greece represents dualism insofar as it makes struggle among the gods explicit, though it is not known whether Orphism formed part of any organized religion. Russell notes: "Indisputably, dualist ideas and practices began to appear in Greece as early as the sixth century B.C., the period when the Greeks came into contact with the Persians. Orphism is wholly dualist insofar as it holds that man's nature is dual, spiritual and material. Unlike Iranian dualism, Orphism postulated a conflict between body and soul, body representing evil spirit and soul the good spirit, an idea that later on influenced Christian, Gnostic and medieval ideology. When Iran came under Greek Hellenistic rule after Alexander's conquest of Iran the Iranian dualism seems to have profoundly influenced the Orphic dualism which "became implanted in Jewish and Christian minds," (p. 139), though it found its acceptance only in Gnosticism.

Although Greek mythology contributed to the formation of the concept of devils, it did not lead to the personification of the principle of evil since the discussion of this subject passed on from the realm of mythologists to that of philosophers.

Russell maintains: "It was the Greeks who first asked in a rational and systematic way the question POTHEN TO KAKON: Whence does evil come?" I wonder where one can place Zarathushtra's sermons on evil in Yasna 30 and 45, etc., a millennium or so before that? Greek thought ultimately led to two ideas – dualism with two warring forces in the universe and belief in goodness of God by limiting his powers." "It was Plato," observes Russell, "who wrestled with these ideas most persistently, if not always most consistently, and it was he who, with his great impact on Christian thought, was most influential in the development of the concept of the Devil. Plato labored long and hard to crystallize his thinking on this subject and in the Philebus he resigned himself to the conception that the world was a MEIXIS, a mixture, which to me seems reminiscent of the Zoroastrian concept of Gomezishn, a mixture of good and evil in the world. While

free of Orphism, his dualism consists of two opposite spirits, which Russell posits it is “possibly derived indirectly from Iran.” (p. 145). Plato provides a number of resolutions to the question what are the sources of evil; for example, evil has no real being at all but it is lack of perfection, or privation. The world of ideas is perfect but as the phenomenal world cannot reflect it well, it becomes less real and therefore, more evil. Plato held that the ontological non-being of evil did not remove moral evil from the world but it freed the creator from any responsibility for evil, which is also a quintessential Zoroastrian notion. Russell finds little agreement among scholars on the meaning of Plato's theology and Russell himself finds it inconsistent and incoherent. However, he observes that Plato's followers made it more coherent, more metaphysical and even more religious. Aristotle's monism suggests that there were some ideologues that ran against Plato's dualism.

Plato's followers, however, developed clearer dualisms, Eudoxos of Cnidia (fourth century B.C.) made a direct attempt to synthesize Plato's ideas with those of Persians. Russell states that earlier followers of Plato were “predominantly dualist and those of the first two centuries A.D. were even more pronounced in their dualism between matter and spirit. Plutarch (45-125 A.D.) held that “it is impossible that a single being, good or bad, should be the cause of all that exists, since God cannot be the author of evil --- we must admit two contrary principles.”

Maximus of Tyre in 180 A.D. and Celsus in 179 A.D. also held similar views. As the matter was created by a spirit, Plutarch does not consider matter as the cause of itself, but conceives of two contrary and eternally opposed spirits, the good God and the evil spirit; the evil spirit creating matter, which resists the will of god. “Here,” explains Russell, “the Mazdaist belief in the two warring spirits is neatly combined with the Orphic-Platonic doctrine that matter is the enemy of spirit, the result being a cosmic war between a good spirit that generates soul, including the human soul, and an evil spirit, which generates matter. The existence of evil in the world arises first from the creation of matter and second from the action of the human free will” (p. 161), which at least echoes basic Zoroastrian notions as I have mentioned in my other treatises.

Since Mithraism and Christianity entered history more or less at the same time, it is possible their ideas influenced each other, at least at the popular level. For instance, there is

striking resemblance in their eschatological concepts or the concept of Ahriman and Satan. I have expanded on this subject in my 1955 essay, *Influence of Zoroastrianism on Judaism and Christianity*, now available on Avesta.org.

Neoplatonism, founded by Plotinus (205-270) turned away from dualism towards an inconsistent Platonism which seems to reflect the ideas of Plato himself, according to Russell (p. 161). Nevertheless, Russell opines that Plotinus had an immense effect upon later theologians such as Augustine, Aquinas and “all Western thought, showing up finally in temporized form in the Darwinian scheme of evolution. And in the great chain as described by Plotinus lurks a contraction that the Christians who followed him never resolved.” (p. 163). In Plotinus' ideology the status of the principle of evil is quite vague. It hardly exists ontologically. “But,” as Russell adds, “when the moral element is introduced, it is possible to conceive of a being of high ontological status making a choice for evil. This idea, though an implicit possibility in Plotinus, was never an explicit option for him, but eventually became a part of Christian tradition.” (p. 166).

Russell observes that such Hellenistic philosophy led Judaism to develop a theological approach away from the mythological one dominated hitherto by the Apocryphal and Apocalyptic works; Philo of Alexandria (circa 20 B.C.-40 A.D.) being its outstanding exponent. Relying very heavily on Plato, Philo synthesized “Greek and Jewish thought in a manner later imitated by the Christian Apologist Fathers.” To the extent that matter thwarts or resists God's work, Philo considers it evil. He held that corruption of the soul by matter as well as free will lead to evil – since every one is free to resist temptations and demands of matter on the soul. Philo's belief that the material world is the source of evil later on led to the Apocalyptic belief of evil spirits dominating the material world and Satan was the lord of the world, though Philo maintained that the material world is intrinsically good as it is the work and will of God. (pp. 166-7).

Thus, although Russell does not mention it, since the Greeks adopted in their own way the dualistic principle and conception adumbrated long ago by the Persians as soon as they came in contact with them in the sixth century B.C., the evidence for which I have presented elsewhere, such dualistic notions have influenced the Judeo-Christian tradition, though indirectly, as Russell so often mentions, and it considerably expands the scope of Zoroastrian influences, a fruitful area of research hardly explored.

The Greeks thus wrested the subject of theodicy out of its mythological underpinnings by making it explicit. Not only men and gods, but God too, had to conform to certain standards of behavior. While monism dominated Greek thought, when it came to hold that the power of God is limited, by evil spirit or matter, which coexists with God, it moved away from monism on the way to dualism. Even though monism remained dominant in Greece, Pythagoras and Platonists made dualism a significant factor in the late Jewish and Christian conceptions of the Devil. The eschatology of Mithraism which makes Ahriman increasingly powerful in the world until Mithra destroys him may have also contributed to the idea of Devil (pp. 168-170).

According to Russell, the best explanation for the concept of Satan is that "Satan is the personification of the dark side of God, that element within Yahweh which destructs the good, which would render Yahweh, like the God of monism, an "antimony of inner opposite," as explained by Carl G. Jung in *Answer to Job*, (London, 1954, p. 369) and by his student, Rivkah S. Kluger in *Satan in the Old Testament*, (Evanston, Illinois, 1967). In his *Book of God and Man* (Chicago, 1965, pp. 69-71), Robert Gordis maintains that the separation of the Lord and Satan occurred under the Mazdaist influence, which I have reviewed often.

As the corruption by men was deemed to be quite insufficient to account for the ever-present, ever multiplying, ever tortuous amount of evil in the world, the Hebrews removed the destructive aspect of Yahweh from Him and attributed it to the Devil, thus leading to the twinning of God, the good Lord and the Devil, all the while claiming to be monotheist. But to explain evil, which was ever present, "the Hebrews had to move in the direction of dualism. They were never fully aware of what they had introduced into a religion in which any retreat from monotheism was the greatest blasphemy. Even the Apocalyptic literature stops short of explicitly asserting that the Devil is totally evil in origin and essence. This tension between explicit monotheism and implicit dualism became characteristic of Hebrew and Christian religion. This theodicy was hindered – or helped – by an important blurring of distinctions.

"In a strict monotheistic religion he (devil) cannot be a god. What was he then? The answer proved difficult for both Jewish and Christian theologians." (p. 183). Russell finds the answer in God dividing "along two geological fault lines," - the BENE HA-ELOHIM and MUL'AK YAHWEH. Russell

observes that the Apocalyptic writer of the Book of Enoch, which I have reviewed at length for Iranian influence in my treatise on Dualism in Zoroastrianism (yet to be published) “has taken a long step in the development of the Devil. He reaffirms the original closeness of the BENE HA-ELOHIM with the Lord – they are children of heaven – but by demoting them to the status of angel, Enoch has safely removed them beyond the limits of the divine nature itself, and this in turn allows him and his fellow Apocalyptic writer a free hand in bringing out their evil nature. And now it becomes clear, as it was not in Genesis or Psalms, that these fallen angels are evil indeed.” (pp. 187-8). They are called Watcher angels and their leader is called Semyaza. The Devil is known by different names which denote different origins and they differ from one another in their origins and functions. However, ultimately they coalesced. The Devil came to personify the origin and essence of evil. There can be only one Devil, though he may be known by many names, Satan becoming the greatest. Satan, Azazel, Mastema and Belial were originally not a principle of evil but they got portrayed as such in the Apocalyptic literature which, as I have already shown, evinced some Iranian ideas and influence.

Even though Azazel or Mastema may seem to be far removed from the divine nature, “they still have the function of servants, arms, tools of the God. They still represent an aspect of God's personality.” Even though the BENE HA-ELOHIM become evil, one can still detect their original connection with the God. “The second great fault line upon which the nature of the God divided was that of the Mal'ak Yahweh” an aspect of the divine nature, remaining in heaven with the God but roaming the world in the service of the God. As God was ambivalent, good or bad, so was the MAL'AK.

For example, when Exodus 12:23 described Yahweh as slaughtering the first born of Egypt, it is the MAL'AK who carries it out. The Book of Job clearly reflects that MAL'AK and BENE HA-ELOHIM came to be identified with evil.

Even though the Qumran texts which reflect a rather distinct Apocalyptic tradition nudge towards dualism, they make it explicit that the Lord of Light has created everything, including the Prince of Darkness, whereas in Zoroastrian Dualism Ahriman can not create, but just destroys God's creation. In the final analysis Satan still seems to be the MAL'AK YAHWEH, however rebellious, envious or capricious he gets.

Scholars have found traits of Satan in Babylonian, Greek,

Canaanite, “and, most commonly, Iran.” Satan and Ahriman share many intrinsic similarities, which became evident in Hebrew after the Babylonian exile when Israel came under the Persian dominion, which, as I have already suggested, may have led the Hebrews to seek roots for these new ideas in their own scriptures.

Russell finds certain similarities between the Persian and Jewish texts “very remarkable” and posits that the image of Satan in the Book of Job and the role of Satan in two chronicles as opponent of God “may have been influenced by Persian thought. A strong indication of such influence appears in the Book of Tobit, where the demon

Asmodeus appears to be a form of Aeshma Deva. But even this influence has been questioned, (p. 218), “which I have addressed earlier and refuted. In the Qumran as well as in the Zoroastrian texts the Devil and Ahriman are depicted as the head of evil spirits, both arranged in orders and ranks. Both are represented by the serpent.” (p. 219).

The main characteristics of Ahriman and the Hebrew Devil are the attempts to seduce, accuse and destroy. The universe is divided into forces of light and darkness, always opposed to each other. Toward the end of the world, the Prince of Darkness seems to be in his prime, but is defeated in the end by the Prince of Light, followed by the eternal imprisonment (if not destruction) of the Prince of Darkness. Russell sees the main difference between these two doctrines in the limited nature of Hebrew dualism, but adds that despite the fact that the Hebrews, even the Qumran sect, never completely divorced the Devil from the God, (p. 219), “the Apocalyptic Satan or Belial often acts *as if* he were a principle of evil independent of the God. The concept of the Hebrew Devil approaches dualism, and it is fair to say that to at least some Apocalyptic minds such dualism would have seemed within the framework of tradition.” He adds, “On their side, Zervanism and other Zoroastrian movements edged away from the complete separation of the God from the Devil. If the mainstream of the two religious traditions remained different, the tributaries often ran close together, and MAY (emphasis mine) have mingled.” However, this is so uncharacteristic for him to presume without providing reliable evidence for it, as without it, it is hard to access its validity especially as Zurvanism is a highly debatable subject, Shaul Shaked challenging Mary Boyce about its very existence as detailed by me elsewhere.

However, Russell's concluding remarks are very

informative: “Whether parallel to the movement of vectors in Iran or whether under Iranian influence, the concept of the Devil moved strikingly in Hebrew thought, particularly in that of the Apocalyptic period. This motion had already begun powerfully in the post-exilic period of the Old Testament, when the relentless courage of the Hebrews in insisting that there was no other god than Yahweh forced them to consider their theodicy very carefully. In the pre-exilic period, all things in heaven and earth had been attributed to Yahweh, including destruction and violence. Yahweh was a divine antinomy, both good and evil. During and after the exile, when the trials of the Hebrews forced them into a deeper consideration of the meaning of their religion, the God twinned and became a divine doublet consisting of a good and an evil principle. Neither in the Old Testament nor in Apocalyptic literature was that twinning complete; always some sense was retained of the underlying integrity and oneness of the God. Both attracted to and shrinking from dualism, the thought of the Israelites manifests an ambivalence that persisted into Christian thought.

The Hebrew position stands between the monism of the Hindus and the dualism of the Zoroastrians. It refuses to acquiesce in the idea that evil as well as good proceeds from the divine nature; on the contrary it shuns and fiercely rejects evil. But it also declines to adopt the severing of the two principles, equally fiercely insisting that one god and one god alone can be worshiped and that one god and one alone exists.” (pp. 219-220).

What Russell adds again becomes so uncharacteristic of a scholar that has excelled in providing stupendous, objective data ending up in resorting to subjective argument. If this was his real stand, as is mine as revealed in my paper on Duality in Zoroastrianism (forthcoming), he could have written the whole book from that perspective and not end up negating the Herculean task he has so painstakingly undertaken. Nevertheless, the subject of dualism being quite complicated and often above our grasp at least we have some common ground after all, though *prima facie* it may not appear to be so. “It may be that the confusion and ambiguity of the Hebrew position, rather than being inferior to the clarity and consistency of the other two, mark it as superior, because it is founded in a creative tension. It allows us to sense the hidden harmony of the cosmos while urging us at the same time to spurn the blandishment of evil.” (But how can this be really accomplished, one wonders.) His answer: “that myth may be

most true which presents reality under a number of aspects at one and the same time.” However, this is the very dilemma he is presenting and constantly focusing on so consistently and persistently in the book without any indication of trying to resolve it except in a few words, leaving this age-old dilemma unresolved.

However, the objective side of Russell reemerges in his final comments on this subject: “The movement of Hebrew thought was an effort to obtain a satisfying theodicy. So long as the evil principle was dependent upon the divine nature, the God was in some way responsible for wars, plagues and tortures. And when the good Lord is confounded with the God, theodicy buckles under the strain. So long as the inherent inconsistencies were expressed mythologically and taken mythologically, the problem was not acute. With the efforts of Christian and Rabbinic theologians to elucidate it rationally, it became unmanageable.” (p. 220).

Russell opines that Christianity synthesized Jewish and Greek ideas about the Devil and essentially adopted demonology from Hellenistic Judaism. He does not find the view of the New Testament homogeneous as it was written by different authors over half a century and finds differences between the synoptic, Pauline and Johannine interpretations of the Devil.

Christian theodicy focused on evil and the Devil more vehemently than ever before. “The figure of Satan in the New Testament,” asserts Russell, “is comprehensible only when it is seen as a counterpart, or counter principle of Christ,” and “the Devil is not a peripheral concept that can easily be discarded without doing violence to the essence of Christianity. He stands at the center of the New Testament teaching that the Kingdom of God is at war with, and is now at least defeating the Kingdom of the Devil,” (p. 222), which is so reminiscent of the Zoroastrian concept of Saoshyant, the Messiah.

Russell states that ever since the rejection of Gnosticism, Christians have been finding it hard to face the dualist element: “There is but one God, the argument goes, and therefore but one principle. The argument fails. It fails because Christianity has the virtue of taking the problem of evil seriously. The conflict between good and evil stands at the center of New Testament Christianity. How indeed can there be one, all-powerful, perfectly good creator who allows the abundance of evil and the intensity of suffering that we perceive in the world? The God has been divided in two: the

good Lord and the evil Devil. If the Devil is dismissed, the deity is left unbalanced, and the concept of the good Lord loses identity through the abolition of its antithesis.” (pp. 297-8).

Russell maintains that even though theologians tried to reduce the status of Satan, Satan lives on. He regards Christianity as a semidualist religion: “On the one hand it rejects the full dualism that asserts the opposition of two eternal cosmic principles. But it has also generally rejected the monist complacency of the hidden harmony. (Italics mine.) The tension between monism and dualism had led to inconsistencies in Christian theodicy.” Russell describes this tension as creative.

“Creativity arises when meaning strains against the bounds of form, when novelty stains against the strictures of tradition. Water is drinkable only when held in a container. Precisely in its willingness to confront the problem of evil without recourse to the simpler solutions of either dualism or monism, Christianity advanced the notion of the concept of the Devil creatively.” However, despite describing his book in the very first sentence in the Preface as “a work of history, not of theology” and “not a metaphysical statement,” one would expect him to validate these views historically rather than subjectively reinforce his very seemingly personal view of Christianity and to advance the concept of the devil creatively by historical or other data rather than dropping the subject abruptly. It seems Russell's expertise on the subject would well dispose him to succeed in this task, something akin to what Mircea Eliade has tried to do in his own way in “The Two and The One,” (Harvill Press, London, 1965).

The names given the Devil in the New Testament reflect the double background of Hellenism and Apocalyptic Judaism. Most often he is “Satan,” or “the Devil” (*diabolos* being a translation of the Hebrew *satan*); he is also Beelzeboul,” the enemy, “Belial,” the tempter, “the accuser,” “the evil one,” the ruler of this world,” and “the prince of demons.” The Devil's connection with the demons is paralleled by his association with the fallen angels (Revelation 12:4; 12:7ff.; and Ephesians 2:1-2), which makes it clear that he is to be regarded as a spiritual being. These conceptions have their roots in both Apocalyptic and Rabbinical Judaism. Russell perceives the Devil as counter-principle to Christ. Christ saves us from the power of the Devil. If the power of the Devil is absent Christ has no mission to perform.

Russell sees the Devil as the chief enemy of the Lord in the

New Testament and wonders if the Devil is not an absolute principle of evil – as he was not in the New Testament – then how and why does the God permit, condone, or ordain his destructive activities? The opposition between Yahweh and Satan becomes the opposition between Christ and Satan.

To what extent is the Devil conceived as the principle of evil since this origin is not discussed in the New Testament. A few texts seem to equate him with the head of the fallen angels. However, the cosmic struggle between him and God, deriving directly from Jewish Apocalyptic and indirectly from Mazdaism, makes the Devil almost a principle of cosmic evil independent of the good Lord. Almost, because Apocalyptic Judaism and Christianity both stopped short of dualism by insisting upon the oneness of God. This makes the Devil's position in the New Testament replete with anomaly, though the scenario of cosmic dualism is more pronounced in Luke than in Mark and Matthew, and stronger in John than in any of the synoptics, per Russell. (pp. 231-2). This anomaly is quite apparent in the doctrine of the fall of humanity which is not mentioned in the Old Testament and appears rarely in the Rabbinical literature or in the New Testament.

However, in the war between the worlds it is central in the New Testament in that context and the Devil functions most clearly as principle of evil. However, Russell regrets: "The meaning of the "Kingdom of God" has exercised Christian thinkers for two millennia and no interpretation is without difficulty." I find it to some extent at least related to the Zoroastrian concept of Vohu Khshathra as expanded in Zoroaster's own words in Yasna 51. Russell explains it as the Devil's sway over the world became almost complete, (as is also implied in the later Zoroastrian concept of Gomezishn expounded in the Bundahishn), God sends Christ "to break the power of the old eon (world) and to replace it with the new, the Kingdom of God." (p.234). The struggle between these two eons is also referred to in terms of light against darkness, again recalling the Qumran and Zoroastrian texts.

Russell explains how exorcism of demons is no strange element introduced in the New Testament from contemporary practice and superstition: "It is central to the war against Satan and therefore an integral part of the gospels' meaning," and Jesus accomplished a defeat of Satan in each act of exorcism through the power of the Holy Spirit, which Mary Boyce and others conceive as quite analogous to the Zoroastrian concept of Spenta Mainyu, more often than not translated as Holy Spirit.

At the second coming, Christ will bind Satan for a thousand years as mentioned for the first time in the Slavonic Enoch 22-23, written around 50 A.D. Enoch is generally regarded as reflecting Iranian ideas and the idea of a thousand years is also so often found in the Iranian texts as Hazara. The idea of fire and brimstone of hell found in I Enoch Test. Jud. 25:3 and the Sybylline Oracles, 3:73 can also be found in the Zoroastrian literature. Russell states that "The conflict between light and darkness is so central to the New Testament that it permanently fixed the image of Satan as lord of darkness." (p.247).

In his final chapter, Russell notes that Hebrew-Christian thought most fully developed the tradition that "posits a principle of evil and accords its personality." He states: "The first clear departure from monism occurred in Iran, where Zarathushtra's followers posited two principles, each independent of the other. One was the good God, the god of light, the other the evil god, the god of darkness. In Iranian dualism, both principles were spirit." (p. 251). It is however very important to bear in mind when referring to dualism in Zoroastrianism that there are at the least two forms of dualism in Zoroastrianism – the one preached by the prophet Zarathushtra himself in his Gathas, the divine songs and the post-Sasanian dualism almost two millennia later, which itself was greatly impacted by alien ideas as well as by religio-political factors after being subjected to Arab domination, as explained by me in great detail in my treatise on Dualism in Zoroastrianism. Unfortunately, the former the quintessentially Zoroastrian dualistic philosophy is somehow for no valid reason almost invariably ignored by scholars when discussing this subject, though perhaps not through their own fault, but owing to the lack of data for the various forms of dualism that existed from Zarathushtra's times (1200 B.C. at least) to the tenth century that scholars such as Shaul Shaked have recently pointed out, as already addressed by me. My thesis is Zarathushtra's original dualism is not as dualistic as it is unfortunately made out to be by most scholars, save Shaul Shaked, but it comes close to being monism insofar as it regards the two spirits (Mainyus) Spenta and Angra, good and evil, as Yima (twins), but only Spenta Mainya working under the supremacy of Ahura Mazda. It was only when Spenta Mainyu later on came to represent Ahura Mazda Himself that dualism was conceived as consisting of opposition between Ahuramazda and Angra Mainyu. Insofar as Russell does not address this dilemma and historical fact, it may affect his conclusions.

Another important notion brought out by Russell is: "Before the advent of Iranian dualism, it was not necessary to assume an end of the world, a climax to cosmic events. But a universal warfare between a good and an evil spirit ending in the triumph of one and the destruction of the other renders some kind of climax inevitable.

Russell observes that the idea of the fall of the Devil is rather ambiguously expressed in the Christian tradition: Eschatology marks the final fall and ruin of the evil one. He adds that "Mazdaism has two accounts of a fall, one of Ohrmazd pushing Ahriman down into darkness when he first saw the light and another of Ohrmazd pushing him down from heaven to the earth and even deeper into the primeval waters below. Russell posits: "that this may have led Hebrews and Christians also to emphasize the double fall of Satan, especially in order to explain his fall from the grace of God as originally he was a creature of the good Lord in Christianity," utterly unlike Ahriman. However more data is needed to confirm such a proposition, as Ahriman from its very inception was diametrically opposite to God thereby rendering his fall from the grace of God so inconceivable.

Russell believes that the concept of the Devil in the New Testament is not strikingly beyond the position of late Jewish Apocalyptic and the two literatures are more or less contemporary and arise from the same Hellenistic Jewish milieu. Many of the elements of Hellenistic Jewish tradition are firmly established in the concept: The Devil, "most of the time acts as if he had far greater power. He is lord of this world, chief of a vast multitude of powers spiritual and physical, angelic and human, that are arrayed against the Kingdom of God." (p. 247). He reiterates the above in his concluding remarks on the New Testament: "Christianity, like Apocalyptic Judaism, refused to embrace dualism, but Satan's power, attributes, and ultimate fate are very similar to those of Ahriman in Mazdaism. (Emphasis mine.) As Satan is the opponent of the good Lord of Judaism, so he is the opponent of Christ, the Son of the Lord. As Christ commands the armies of light, Satan commands those of darkness. The cosmos is torn between light and darkness, good and evil. In the end, Satan and his powers will be defeated, cast down, and perhaps annihilated, and Christ's other world, the kingdom of goodness, of light, of spirit, will be forever established. The dualism of the New Testament is thus not the extreme dualism of Gnosticism. Yet it is even farther from monism. New Testament Christianity is best perceived as a semi-

dualist religion, in which both the unity and goodness of the Lord are preserved, however precariously, while Satan is given almost as vast a scope as Ahriman.” (Emphasis mine.)

Russell posits that vast powers were attributed to Satan because the traditions of Mazdaism, Orphism, Hellenistic religion and philosophy, and late Judaism were passed on to New Testament Christianity, and these traditions were eagerly accepted and reinforced because they provided an answer to the question of theodicy. To the corruption of the cosmos by Satan can be assigned natural ills, such as death and disease and storm, whether they are simply sent upon us as diabolical afflictions or are meant as punishment for our sins.”

For all I know about Zoroastrian dualism, Gathic and post-Sasanian, Satan has in some respect more powers than even Ahriman, e.g., Ahriman is never depicted as “lord of this world,” not even during the period of Mixture (Gomezishn) when for a while he at best becomes an equal of Aluramazda swaying humanity's conduct but has, unlike Ahuramazda no sway whatsoever over anything else going on in the governance of the universe. Does it tend to make Christianity more dualistic than Mazdaism? One wonders! Moreover, the concept of Gomezishn is not mentioned or even implied as far as I know in any authentic Zoroastrian scripture but is a late concept found only after the decline of the Zoroastrian Iran in texts that are not really authentic scriptures but views of some sages which at times even differ from each other. Moreover, as I have already explained, the sages were prompted to highlight dualism in their debates about the stark, absolute monotheism of their conquerors which afforded little explanation for the existence of evil in the world but others did.

“The saving mission of Christ can be understood only in terms of its opposition to the power of the Devil: that is the whole point of the New Testament.” (pp. 247-8).

Satan's first fall is described, very much like in Zoroastrian texts, as a geographical descent from heaven due to his free will or due to angels forcefully pushing him out. In the second fall his descent was definitely involuntary when he was cast down into the pits and valleys of the earth. “Eventually Christianity would amalgamate these various descents into one stunning headlong plunge from heaven to hell.” (p. 256). While Judaism, adhering to the Rabbinic tradition, very much limited the role of the Devil, Christianity expanded it even further. It fixed the time of Satan's rebellion at the beginning of time rather than at the end and merged his identity with

the serpent of Genesis as well as with Lucifer and Anti-Christ.

Russell concludes by evaluating whether the belief in the Devil has any positive value. On the one hand he believes that recognizing the reality of evil and taking action therefore to overcome or remove it will benefit mankind intellectually and psychologically. On the other hand, however he posits that “belief in the Devil is harmful, because attributing evil to the Devil may excuse us from examining our own personal responsibility for vice and the responsibility of unjust societies, laws and governments for suffering.” This may not be necessarily so and Russell does not provide examples to support such assumptions. But even if this may be true in some cases, the history of Zoroastrianism indisputably and uniformly points in the other direction, the historical data being too vast to include here, but have been widely published.