

Tawsi Melek, Religion and Innovation

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Received: August 8, 2019

Accepted: November 22, 2019

Available online: November 28, 2019

doi:10.11114/ijsss.v8i1.4635

URL: <https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v8i1.4635>

Abstract

Sheikh Adi Ibn Musafir, who was born 1079 in Lebanon and spent most of his life in Syria, did something no one has since attempted: He invented a new God, Whom He called Tawsi Melek, “The Angel of the Highest Order” (from the Kurdish) and a new religion to go with Him.

Sheikh Adi, a Sufi, and His colleagues, a ragtag fraternity of Buddhists, Christians, Hindus and Jews wrote a detailed explanation of This Angelic Being and His Pillars of Faith called the *Kitab al Jilwa*, “The Book We Wrote.”

The people Sheikh Adi taught about Tawsi Melek, called themselves Yazidi, the descendants of Angels, or “The Defenders of the Place”. Who attacked them? Other Christians, Muslims, and Jews without restraint. Weary of war, dogma, displacement, and the sheer ridiculousness of it all, Sheikh Adi led a revolution through Tawsi Melek.

What did Tawsi Melek say about His religious contemporaries and reasons for their Crusades?

“All the books of those who are without decency are altered by them; and they have declined from them, although they were written by their prophets and the apostles. That there are interpolations is seen in the fact that each sect endeavors to prove that the others are wrong and to destroy their books.”

Sheikh Adi and the Yazidi wanted none of it. Not their company, their books, their Bloodthirsty God, their restrictive and nonsensical rituals, their appetites for war. In the *Kitab al Jilwa*, Tawsi Melek fosters a GDI attitude towards the incredulous and irreverent aspects of other faiths without compromising the centrality of a loving and protective deity. The idea was wildly popular.

The *Kitab Al Jilwa*, a short text, and its counterpart, *the Book of the White*, were instrumental in the induction of over 20 000 000 Yazidi from India, Syria, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Eastern Europe. There are less than one million Yazidi left in the world today.

Because of their clout, the Yazidi were hunted nearly to extinction by the Ottomans, other Muslims, and their numbers were culled further by the DAESH. It didn't help that rumors confused Tawsi Melek's identity with a fallen angel, and that Hadith states that any abandonment of orthodox Islam is punishable by death Calabrese & Sexton et. al (2008.).

What is the truth of Tawsi Melek and why did His Appearance in the Spiritual Canon cause humanity to go mad? Are human beings allowed to make new gods and enter into new arrangements with the divine or not? Who is empowered by God to police these things and should their authority be recognized?

What of Yazidism itself? Can humanity grow from re-exposure to the beliefs, scriptures, and Archangel contained in the *Book They Wrote*?

Keywords: Religion, Philosophy, Theology, Comparative Religion, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Vajrayana, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Buddhism. Christianity, Hinduism, Vedanta, Yazidi, Yezidi, Sufism, Yazidism

1. A New Religion, Old Reasons

Yazidism originates from Sufism, Yazidi Reformer, (N.D.). Almost every verse in the *Kitab Al Jilwa* can be found in the Qu'ran, reorganized and nuanced by Sheikh Adi and his colleagues to reflect the voice of Tawsi Melek instead of the Archangel Gabriel, *Angels in Islam* (2001). Tawsi Melek, in contrast to Gabriel is more than just a messenger. He is the first Angel to have an autonomous and direct relationship with humanity.

Sheikh Adi, an Ummayyad and a Sufi wandered across Syria for most of his life and eventually settled in Lalish, north of Mosul in Iraq on Mount Laila in the 12th century, (Britannica, 2018). That's where the magic happened.

Sheikh Adi, weary of being bullied by Muslims and watching his kinsmen hunted and murdered, decided to stop trying

to blend in or argue with zealots armed with scimitars. Like any good prophet, he asked God what to do, Green (2014). Then he told his friends what God said.

Before the Yazidi established a cult and an organized religion, they were a mixed bag of Muslims, Sufis, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, and Nestorian Christians, Britannica (2018).

The Nestorians- a mixture of exiled and excommunicated Iraqis, Syrians and Iranians, Indians, and Tibetans, must have been especially drawn to Sheikh Adi's independent thinking. In 435 the Empire declared Nestorius and his church was heretical and vowed to shut it all down:

"Nestorius' followers did not go down without a fight. In regions controlled by Persia they formed their own church. At the beginning, it was a strong body which evangelized as far East as China. Nestorian churches appeared in Arabia, India, Tibet, Malabar, Turkistan and Cyprus." Graves, (2010).

The few Nestorians that are left today exist primarily in Iraq, not that far from what is left of the Yazidi. During their shared pre-history, we know the Nestorians had extensive contact with Indian Buddhists and Hindus and were fascinated with their beliefs and practices, Child, (2017).

There is clear evidence of Indian influences on Yazidi artifacts on Mount Laila, probably due to Nestorian imports including sculpture, friezes, and artwork, and one other Thing in particular... a certain Coquettish Blue God named Krishna with a penchant for peacocks...we will come back to Him, *Yazidis and Hindus Reuniting as One*, (n.d.).

By the mid-1200s, Yazidi Sun Temples dotted the land and Yazidism was in full sway, just in time for the Crusades and the region soured on the constant bickering of the Big Three. Tawsi Melek says in the *Kitab al Jilwa*, 3:1:

"I lead to the straight path without a revealed book; I direct aright my beloved and my chosen ones by unseen means."

The "straight path" is Islam, which was Sheikh Adi's First Love so long as it remained out of the control of other Muslims. He had similar sentiments regarding Judaism and Christianity, as did his fellows. Tawsi Melek goes on to say in 4:3:

"The books of Jews, Christians, Mormons and Muslims, as of those who are without understanding, accept in a sense, i.e., so far as they agree with, and conform to, my statutes. Whatsoever is contrary to these or that they have altered; do not accept it."

Tired of the tyranny of books, bullshit, fighting, arguing and bloodshed, tired of the wars...the Middle East began to gravitate towards Yazidism. Then things started going too well:

"The geographic spread and political power of the Yazīdīs continued to increase in the 13th and 14th centuries, while their belief system continued to develop away from Islamic norms. By the early 15th century, surrounding Muslim rulers had begun to view them as apostates and rivals for political power, and clashes ensued. As the power of the Yazīdīs waned, their numbers were reduced by massacres and conversions, both voluntary and forced.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries significant numbers of Yazidi fled to the Caucasus to avoid persecution. Most of the Yazīdī community in Turkey emigrated to Germany in the second half of the 20th century." Britannica, (2018).

After their numbers and popularity wanted, what was it about the Yazidi that brought the continued brunt of genocide upon them, and why is their existence to this day threatened?

The answer is Tawsi Melek.

2. Who is Tawsi Melek?

Tawsi Melek, the Shruti, or Narrator of the Divine, Stefan (n.d.), of the *Kitab al Jilwa* or means "The King of Angels"(Kurdish) . Tawsi Melek is also called the "Peacock Angel", though *Tawsi Melek* does not remotely translate into this terminology nor is it mentioned as one of Tawsi Melek's nicknames in the *Kitab al Jilwa*. Still it is if often erroneously applied to Him.

About Himself, Tawsi Melek in *the Kitab al Jilwa* says:

Chapter 1:

1. *I was, am now, and shall have no end.*
2. *I exercise dominion over all creatures and over the affairs of all who are under the protection of my image.*
3. *I am ever present to help all who trust in me and call upon me in time of need.*
4. *There is no place in the universe that knows not my presence.*

Tawsi Melek first appeared to Humanity as Enki, one of the consorts of the very first God, Innana, the Mother of the Gods, Pinkham (2016). Enki, the Mesopotamian god of intelligence, *The Peacock Angel in other Religions*. (n.d.)

dates as early as 5400 BCE, Geller, (2017). Enki is known as the Creator and Protector of mankind and the defender of Eden, Seguin (2018).

Enki's fights with the Adversary, the Underworld Dragon Tiamat are legendary *Annunaki.org* (2016) , as are his romantic liaisons with mortals of both sexes whose company he vehemently preferred over those of the other gods.

Enki embodies all that the Yazidi find endearing about their Supreme Being:

Enki was the Sumerian god of wisdom, fresh water, intelligence, trickery and mischief, crafts, magic, exorcism, healing, creation, virility, fertility, and art. Iconography depicts him as a bearded man wearing a horned cap and long robes as he ascends the Mountain of the Sunrise; flowing streams of water run from his shoulders, emphasizing his association with life-giving water, while trees representing the male and female principle stand in the background. Mark, 2019.

Tawsi Melek is also said to have emigrated to modern times through Mithras, the Son of Ahura Mazda and Anahita, Murdock (2018), Kumar, also known as Kartikeya, and the Archangel Michael- all deities that defend the law, the safety of free and free thinking people.

Tawsi Melek is called Simurgh, a Peacock Dragon by the Persians, and also as Buraq, the angel that escorts Muhammad to heaven, Islam al Buraq, (n.d.).

Tawsi Melek also made a pit stop in Buddhism, where He is a She, and called the Mahamayuri, or the Great Peacock, Mahamayuri Vidyarijini, (n.d.).

Tawsi Melek has also featured prominently in Christianity and Catholicism as a peacock, which like the phoenix was associated with Christ's Birth and Resurrection, Klug, (2016).

The most accepted form of Tawsi Melek, Angel of the Highest Order is the Archangel Michael, which is universally recognized by Christians, Jews, and Muslims, and Saint George by the Templars.

The Yazidi feel the connection between Saint George and Tawsi Melek is linear. The Sufi term for Tawsi Melek, Al-Kadir "The Initiator" who made the world green and St. George, the Green Man who was known for His combat with dragons, similar to Enki.

The Archangel Michael is easy to spot in any of the ways He is visualized, but early cross-pollination between Yazidi beliefs and those of the Church became obvious when Michael was shown with peacock plumage, Whistler (2012).

As the Angel of the Highest Order, it is easy to overlay Yazidi beliefs about Tawsi Melek on the identity of Michael, the Supreme General of Heaven:

"Melek Taus, in Yazidi cosmology, is somewhat like the Christians' Archangel Michael, ruling over other angels. Yazidis believe Melek Taus and six other angelic beings rule the universe for God, who they say has no direct hand in the running of the affairs of the planets and the stars. They do not believe in sin or hell, nor in the devil, making Muslims' depiction of them as devil worshippers doubly ironic." Yazidis risk persecution, (2007).

If Tawsi Melek is the Creator and Defender of Humanity, and always has been, up to and including the Archangel Michael who is most certainly never confused with His Adversary, Lucifer, how is that the Yazidis are called devil worshippers and were nearly made extinct because of it?

3. A Case of Mistaken Identity

In the actual text used by the Yazidi, Tawsi Melek avoids explaining His appearance or defining it in any way. Sheikh Adi was acutely aware of the difficulties this would cause and Tawsi Melek says:

2:5-6:

I appear in diverse manners to those who are faithful and under my command. I give and take away; I enrich and impoverish; I cause both happiness and misery. I do all this in keeping with the characteristics of each epoch. And none has a right to interfere with my management of affairs.

What happened when the world found out about Tawsi Melek? Murder- of His reputation and nearly every last one of worshippers. It wasn't about deity or religion at first. Sheikh Adi's religion gained followers rapidly and with numbers came political power and control of resources, Britannica (2018).

Then came the name calling, then the genocides.

Muslims in particular took a dislike to Tawsi Melek being Someone or Something other than Allah, and the only frame of reference they had was Iblis, whom the Qu'ran said would not bow to Adam and was cursed:

Al Baqarah 34:

And behold, We said to the angels: "Bow down to Adam" and they bowed down. Not so Iblis: he refused and was

haughty: He was of those who reject Faith.

Al Araf 11:

It is We Who created you and gave you shape; then We bade the angels bow down to Adam, and they bowed down; not so Iblis; He refused to be of those who bow down.

Al Hijr 30-35:

So the angels prostrated themselves, all of them together. Not so Iblis: he refused to be among those who prostrated themselves.

((Allah)) said: "O Iblis! what is your reason for not being among those who prostrated themselves?"

(Iblis) said: "I am not one to prostrate myself to man, whom Thou didst create from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape."

((Allah)) said: "Then get thee out from here; for thou art rejected, accursed. And the curse shall be on thee till the day of Judgment."

(Iblis) said: "O my Lord! because Thou hast put me in the wrong, I will make (wrong) fair-seeming to them on the earth, and I will put them all in the wrong."

An angel that led people astray...who else could it be? He was not named Tawsi Melek but Iblis, and the *Kitab al Jilwa* which says Tawsi Melek has a different relationship with Adam than Iblis who hated him:

2:1:

I requite the descendants of Adam, and reward them with various rewards that I alone know.

3:3:

Now the sons of Adam do not know the state of things that is to come. For this reason they fall into many errors.

3:7:

But those who are without guidance are my adversaries, hence they oppose me. Nor do they know that such a course is against their own interests, for might, wealth, and riches are in my hand, and I bestow them upon every worthy descendant of Adam.

Wherever humanity needs a protective spirit, Tawsi Melek is there, Finney (2011), which the *Kitab al Jilwa* affirms:

I exercise dominion over all creatures and over the affairs of all who are under the protection of my image.

I am ever present to help all who trust in me and call upon me in time of need.

There should have been and should not be any confusion over Tawsi Melek's role in Yazidism or any other faith.

But there were many. After the political problems of the 16th century, then came the Ottomans in the 18th Calabrese, Sexton et. al (2008) and 19th Centuries, then Hitler and Stalin who killed millions of Eastern European Yazidi, and after them, al Qaeda, and ISIS, Jalabi (2014). Jalabi, a contemporary reporter still calls Tawsi Melek a fallen angel!

Nowhere, under no circumstances does the *Kitab al Jilwa* claim Tawsi Melek failed Adam, God or "fell".

He did, however, resurface.

4. The Blue Skinned God

Attempts are being made to destigmatize the Yazidi and provide support though many including Booksfact, state erroneously that Yazidi are "ancient Hindu Priests", Booksfact (2016) though we know this to be inaccurate. Yazidi origins are a hybrid of faiths of which Hinduism was but one.

Murugan.org gives us the most insight into how Indian and Iraqi cross pollination resulted in Tawsi Melek:

The Yezidis are an Aryan people originally from Airyna Vaeja, the mystical homeland of Aryans, who today live primarily in the Nineveh Province of Iraqi Kurdistan. The word aryan is not related to race but refers to 'The Righteous'. The Yezidi calendar is 6,764 years old and is the oldest in the Middle East. It is believe that about five thousand years ago the Yezidis migrated to Afganistan, Iran, Iraq and the Middle East. At that time they were called the children of Melek Taus. Melek or Malik is an ancient Semite god of Babel and Canaan. Melek or Malik can be seen in the old Tamil word Malaiklavon, another name for Murugan, the equally ancient and still hugely popular Tamil god of South India.

There are very few similarities in practices or scriptures between Tawsi Melek and Murugan, however. The symbiosis comes from obscure references as in the former or are aesthetic, vis a vis the peculiar presence of the peacock in Yazidi

Temples, and a ubiquitous tendency of the Yazidi and Hindus to visualize Tawsi Melek as a blue skinned youth possessed of compelling features. Both gods are ecstatic, lacking any reluctance towards randomness. The Yazidi are a lot less shy about this than their Indian cohorts, the boys in particular. Another aspect of Yazidism that the world finds antagonistic.

5. Tawsi Melek According to Himself

The Yazidi and their allies have spent and continue to attempt to mend Tawsi Melek's reputation in order to survive and gain a foothold in host countries that have taken on refugees from genocides.

There are no copies of the Kitab al Jilwa in circulation and most Yazidi have not read it. Those that have won't speak of it as Tawsi Melek Himself commands all Yazidi to keep themselves and its contents secret:

Tawsi Melek's discussions of Himself are distinct from what we see in iconography. In no way does the Kitab al Jilwa contain a coy boy who looks like He's dying to get into your pants. The Divine Personality we meet in the text is pragmatic, authoritative, and often legalistic.

Important quotes Tawsi Melek makes about Himself and the practices and beliefs of Yazidism from the Kitab al Jilwa include the following.

On Social Progress

1:7 *I allow everyone to follow the dictates of his own nature, but he that opposes me will regret it sorely.*

2:5-6 *I appear in diverse manners to those who are faithful and under my command. I do all this in keeping with the characteristics of each epoch.*

On Monotheism:

1:8 *No god has a right to interfere in my affairs, and I have made it an imperative rule that everyone shall refrain from worshiping all gods.*

2:3 *I do not allow friendly association with other people, nor do I deprive them that are my own and that obey me of anything that is good for them.*

4:1 *I will not give my rights to other gods.*

4:3 *The books of Jews, Christians, and Muslims, as of those who are without, accept in a sense, i.e., so far as they agree with, and conform to, my statutes. Whatsoever is contrary to these they have altered; do not accept it.*

On Critical Thinking:

1:9 *All the books of those who are without are altered by them; and they have declined from them, although they were written by the prophets and the apostles. That there are interpolations is seen in the fact that each sect endeavors to prove that the others are wrong and to destroy their books.*

1:11 *Moreover, I give counsel to the skilled directors, for I have appointed them for periods that are known to me.*

1:14 *I teach and guide those who follow my instruction. If anyone obey me and conform to my commandments, he shall have joy, delight, and goodness.*

3:1 *I lead to the straight path* without a revealed book; I direct aright my beloved and my chosen ones by unseen means.*

*This is almost certainly a reference to the Qu'ran and Islam.

As the Creator:

3:4 *The beasts of the earth, the birds of heaven, and the fish of the sea are all under the control of my hands.*

4:2 *I have allowed the creation of four substances, four times, and four corners; because they are necessary things for creatures.*

And His Commandments, which constitute all of Chapter 5:

1. *O ye that have believed in me, honor my symbol and my image, for they remind you of me.*
2. *Observe my laws and statutes.*
3. *Obey my servants and listen to whatever they may dictate to you of the hidden things.*
4. *Receive that that is dictated, and do not carry it before those who are without, Jews, Christians, Muslims, and others; for they know not the nature of my teaching.*
5. *Do not give them your books, lest they alter them without your knowledge.*
6. *Learn by heart the greater part of them, lest they be altered.*

6. Innovations in Religion- Allowed or Not?

Innovation always threatens convention, especially when it causes a shift in political power, loyalty, money, and erodes at the wealth of its beneficiaries Raiser, (2013). With their amazing ability to toggle the facts, religions have always played a role in restoring power to those who lost it and taking it back from those who needed it, even when religious beliefs were just one of the sources of tension between parties Geinger (2017). Whether or not the religion is helpful or hopeful, doleful or oppressive, we keep and use it as a countermeasure against those whose power distance is less than ours, Tarakeshwar, Stanton, et. al, (2003).

The emergence of Yazidism, its Book, and its newly minted God, Tawsi Melek, even with its meager 700,000 remaining believers are proof something new and good can happen in spite of the evil men do and why. A Yazidi Sheik, one of the last, told me, *“This is a beautiful place and each of us should have a chance to enjoy living here.”* His Holiness worried we have spent far too much time fixating on all the wrong things and that the earth’s destiny was sealed. He also said, *“Good work and good judgement”* might save us yet.

7. Conclusion

The Yazidi are still under attack across the Middle East and some parts of Eastern Europe. In spite of the fact there are so few, the centuries old misconception that they are Devil Worshipers has made it acceptable to allow persecution to continue and caused difficulty in obtaining critically needed military and humanitarian aid.

In spite of the fact the Yazidism is a synthesis of the world’s major belief systems and emphasizes human intuition, aid for the Yazidi has been elusive. This is no doubt tied to the fact that a coherent response to the DAESH was slow in coming over the past decade as well.

The number, frequency and severity of genocides and ongoing persecution of the Yazidi has demonstrated the tendency of human beings to respond with violence and force against the innocent rather than in their defense.

Sheikh Adi Ibn Musafir witnessed one of the world’s most holy war torn eras and responded with a logical solution. One that provided others who were weary of the debates, emigration, conflagration, and persecution based on the superstition people believed and read about. His ideas and those of his colleagues were a huge success. Perhaps too successful, the world responded with extreme prejudice: suspicion, genocide, and war.

We like to think we know better and can do better, but we never do. Still the opportunity exists.

Tawsi Melek said:

I reveal my wonders to those who seek them, and, in due time my miracles to those who receive them from me.

Perhaps that time will come soon.

Ye Xode e Tawsi Melek, *“The Most High Watches Over Us.”*

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