

The Name of Jesus: A Metaphysical Doxology

By Larry Rinehart

*And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross
And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.
... and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.
(John 19:19, 20c)*

To begin with the obvious: What do we mean by a ‘metaphysical doxology’ relative to the name of Jesus? The word ‘doxology’ itself comprises the Greek roots δόξα (glory, splendor; notion, doctrine) and λόγος (word, speech). The first root also informs the word ‘orthodoxy’, in conjunction with ὀρθός (right, true), thus ‘right doctrine’. In ‘doxology’, the main accent is on the first meaning of δόξα, thus ‘to speak or give voice to the glory and splendor of God; to praise and glorify Him’. And in fact ‘orthodoxy’ also refers, as a secondary meaning, to ‘right praise and worship’, by the reference of δόξα to glory and splendor. But what does it mean to praise the name of Jesus metaphysically?

There is in the Hebrew Kabbalah, which was also carried over into Greek, a method known as Notarikon, by which a word can be expanded into a ‘spectrum’ of other words, each beginning with one of the letters in the original word. Notarikon has been employed in the interpretation of Holy Scriptures by sapiential rabbis of the Hebrew tradition and by sapiential Christian philosophers and theologians, the latter especially between the 15th and 17th centuries. A case has also been made that the origins of the Hebrew Kabbalah itself are entwined with Sufi influence.¹ To illustrate this method using an example in English: the

¹ Tom Block, ‘The Question of Sufi Influence on the Early Kabbalah’, *Sophia* (ISSN 1531 123), Vol. 13. No. 2, Winter 2007-2008.

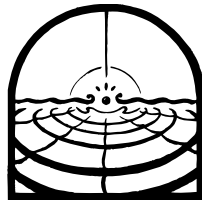
word GOD can be expanded to the phrase *Great Omnipotent Divinity*. The method of Notarikon also operates conversely and with other variations, but the simple application just exemplified will suffice for the present procedure.

Our intention, then, is to expand or magnify the name of Jesus in the three ancient Scriptural languages of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, into sets of words descriptive sequentially of four metaphysical orders comprised in the one universal Order described by the founding authorities of *philosophia perennis*.² This procedure can also be described as an inscription of that Name into the whole metaphysical Order, schematized as the Uncreated and the three orders of Creation: spiritual, psychic, and corporeal. So to answer our opening question, this metaphysical doxology means to praise the Name of the Lord that is confessed by Christians, by magnification and by inscription into the metaphysical Order of Reality, from Uncreated to Created Corporeal. And although Christians are instructed by Scripture that ‘at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (*Philippians* 2:10-11)—nevertheless it is here assumed that this procedure could possess doxological potential for at least the other two Abrahamic traditions, given the Hebrew origin of Kabbalah and the aforementioned Sufi connection. The Pali and Sanskrit traditions doubtless possess analogous resources of sacred grammar, should such a procedure be meaningful in these other traditional contexts.

The three forms of the Name contemplated here are YSh-V-` (*Yeshua*) in Hebrew, Ἰησους (*Iesous*) in Greek, and *Iesu* in Latin. The Hebrew form, here written in reverse, left-to-right, consists of the letters Yod, Shin, Vav and Ayin, with vowel markings not shown and the guttural Ayin represented as a reverse apostrophe: its root is Y-Sh-`, meaning ‘deliverance, salvation’. This four-letter form of the Name is predominant in the later scribes, Ezra and Nehemiah, though other related forms, most notably

² The schema of metaphysical Order here employed is found, with some variations in terminology, in various perennialist texts including: René Guénon, *Man and His Becoming according to the Vedanta* (Hillsdale NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), 27; Frithjof Schuon, *Survey of Metaphysics and Esoterism* (Bloomington IN: World Wisdom, 2000), 20; William Stoddart, *Remembering in a World of Forgetting* (Bloomington IN: World Wisdom, 2008), 49.

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