

EARLY HYMNS

The early hymns may be regarded as transitional psalms that have not achieved the metrical symmetry of the later hymns. There is some confusion among the Doukhobors themselves about the classification of many early hymns; some groups on the prairies refer to them as psalms, while others in British Columbia regard the same pieces as early hymns. In any case, the quasi-symmetrical arrangement of both the musical and the textual materials places the early hymns **midway in style** between the asymmetrical psalms and the metrically organized later hymns. Some early hymns, such as *Had I Realized*, *Mortal Man*, *That My Life Span Was Short*, are more psalm-like, while others, like *A Young Man Was Walking*, are musically later in style and can be organized somewhat by means of bar lines. Some early hymns carry over the use of staggered breathing from the psalms to produce a continuous flow of sound. Those with metrical texts allow the choir to breathe as a whole at the end of each line.



The Peter F. Horkoff choir of mixed elders, Grand Forks, British Columbia



Had I Realized, Mortal Man, That My Life Span Was Short

PEA 284-1722

Sung by the Peter F. Horkoff choir of mixed elders
Grand Forks, B.C., July 26, 1963

Slow ♩ = 72

Ка - - - - - бы я зна - - - - - л бы,

[solo] [tutti]

[я] че - - - - - ло - - - - - ве - - - - -

The musical score consists of two systems of four staves each. The first system includes vocal lines with Russian lyrics and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Slow' with a quarter note equal to 72 beats per minute. The lyrics are 'Ка - - - - - бы я зна - - - - - л бы,'. The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics '[я] че - - - - - ло - - - - - ве - - - - -'. The piano accompaniment features chords and melodic lines in both hands.

Музыкальный фрагмент, состоящий из четырех нотных стенов. Верхний стенов — мелодия в скрипичном ключе. Второй стенов — вокальная линия с русскими текстами. Третий стенов — басовая линия в басовом ключе. Четвертый стенов — басовая линия в басовом ключе. Текст: - - к, Что не до - - - л - - -

Музыкальный фрагмент, состоящий из четырех нотных стенов. Верхний стенов — мелодия в скрипичном ключе. Второй стенов — вокальная линия с русскими текстами. Третий стенов — басовая линия в басовом ключе. Четвертый стенов — басовая линия в басовом ключе. Текст: [ги - - - - - й] мо - - - - - й век.

Кабы я знал бы, человек,
Что не долгод мой век;
Кабы я знал бы, человек,
Что прешрашная моя смерть;
И взошел бы я, человек,
На Сион Гору;
И взглянул бы я, человек,
Вдоль по огненной реке.
Души праведные идут,
Точно по суку грядут.
Души грешные идут,
Себе брода не найдут.
Ты, Михаил Архангел,
Судья праведный ты наш.
Ты пойдн же к нам сюда,
Переведн нас туда,
На ту сторону реки,
На прекрасные места,
Во прешветлый Божий рай.

Translation:

Had I realized, mortal man,
That my life span was short;
Had I realized, mortal man,
That my death was so terribly imminent;
I would have ascended, mortal man,
The mountain of Zion;
I would have gazed, mortal man,
Down along the river of flames
Where righteous souls are walking
As if upon a paved pathway.
The sinful souls are travelling,
They cannot find any firm footing.
You, Michael the Archangel,
You are our judge, so just.
Come over here to our side
And take us over safely
To the other side of the [flaming] river,
To the wonderful places,
Into God's most radiant Paradise.

DATA:

This very old hymn goes back to the first years of the origin of modern Doukhoborism in the late seventeenth century when early Doukhobor sects were persecuted with renewed vigour by both Church and State. The apocalyptic imagery, however, suggests much earlier influences. For example, compare this hymn with the following passage from *The Sibylline Oracles*, a collection of old Greek texts that inspired many early Christian sects. Like the Doukhobors, early Christian believers would be led "thro' the flaming River, into a place of Light and into a Life without Cares, where the immortal Path of the great God is, and where three Fountains of Wine, Honey and Milk flow. And the Earth shall be equal to all, not divided by Walls or Partitions, but shall bear much Fruit spontaneously: All shall live in common, and their Wealth shall be undivided; neither Poor nor Rich shall be there, nor Tyrant, nor Servant, nor one greater or less than the other: No King nor Leader, all shall enjoy all Things in common . . ." (trans. Sir John Floyer, 1713, p. 30-1).

This Sibylline prophecy could be considered an almost perfect blueprint for the much later Doukhobor Christian commune. Compare also with the two Doukhobor texts in the Introduction (p. 1) and with the hymn *The Holy Temple of the Living God* (p. 73).



Women elders from Brilliant, British Columbia, singing an old hymn

A Young Man Was Walking

(Record 1, Side 2)

PEA 276-1681

Sung by the Nick Makortoff choir of mixed elders
Grand Forks, B.C., July 21, 1963

Moderately slow ♩ = 56

234
444

[solo] [tutti]

Он _____ тел, _____ про - - - - - те - - - - - л,

234
444

234
444

Detailed description: This system contains the first four staves of the musical score. The top staff is the vocal line, starting with a whole rest followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The second staff is the vocal line with lyrics, marked with [solo] and [tutti]. The third and fourth staves are the piano accompaniment, both starting with whole rests followed by a half note G3, a quarter note A3, and a quarter note B3. The time signature is 2/3 and the key signature has one sharp (F#).

мо - - ло - - до - - й ю - - - - - но - - - - -

Detailed description: This system contains the next four staves of the musical score. The top staff is the vocal line with lyrics. The second staff is the vocal line with lyrics. The third and fourth staves are the piano accompaniment. The time signature is 2/3 and the key signature has one sharp (F#).

па. Он и - - - ду - - - чи

сле - - - зно пла - - - чет,

(ж)

Он шел, прошел, молодой юноша.
Он идучи, слезно плачет,
Тяжелехонько вздыхает.
И на встречу ему, Сам Иисус Христос:
— Ты о чем плачешь, молодой юноша?
— Да и как же мне, да не плакать?
Потерял же я золоту книгу,
Уронил в море церковный ключ.
— Ты не плачь, не плачь молодой юноша.
Золоту книгу я ее выпишу,
А сине море я его высушу,
И церковный ключ я достану,
И на истинный путь я наставлю.

Translation:

A young man was walking,
And as he passed he wept profusely,
Letting forth sorrowful sighs.
Jesus Christ Himself met him and asked:
“Why are you weeping, young man?”
“How can I help weeping?
I have lost the golden book,
I have dropped the church key into the sea.”
“Do not weep any more, young man;
I shall write out another golden book,
I shall cause the blue sea to dry up,
And recover the church key,
And I shall put you on the road of truth.”

DATA:

According to Doukhobor tradition, the youth in this early hymn was Daniel Filipovitch, a prominent leader of the Russian sect known in the seventeenth century as the ‘Children of Israel’ or ‘People of God.’ Outsiders sometimes referred to them derisively as the *Khlisti* or ‘Self-Lashers’ from their custom of self-flagellation to gain greater spiritual insight. Aside from this ancient practice, some of their other beliefs seem remarkably ‘modern.’ They did not believe in the Trinity and refused to worship ikons. They believed Christ’s birth was natural, that only his spirit arose after his crucifixion, and that his spirit later became resurrected in their leaders. This latter belief was inherited by the Doukhobors but has now passed from general acceptance, except among a few of the more radically oriented members of the Freedomite sect. Although Daniel Filipovitch was an educated man

and used the Bible as a basis for his writings and teachings, in a fit of despair one day he threw everything into the Volga River. This 'cleansing' removed the remaining obstacles to true enlightenment, and, as the hymn relates, the spirit of Christ soon visited him and set him 'on the road of truth.'

The 'People of God' later arose to prominence again as the *Staroveri* (Believers in the Old Ways) during the era of reforms instituted by Peter the Great. In Eli A. Popoff's *Historical Exposition on Doukhobor Beliefs* (mimeographed by ISKRA, Grand Forks, B.C.) Popoff writes: "Some extremists of this group were so fanatical in their opposition to the reforms of Peter the Great, whom they referred to as the 'Antichrist,' that they formed into groups and secluded themselves in the wilderness. There they made for themselves large prayer houses and prayed for their tribulations to pass. But when it seemed evident that Peter's reforms were there to stay, rather than return to bow down to them, many of the groups used to lock themselves in the prayer houses and burn themselves alive, era 1675-1691 . . . The Doukhobors still read and sing psalms that point to this time." Tracing the origins of these early Doukhobor texts will require years of diligent research. Some may wish to draw analogies between the extremist tendencies of these early sects and the zealot fringe of the Freedomite sect. The analogies may be valid. However, of far greater importance is the fact that Doukhobor culture in general, both in Russia and in Canada, has evolved to a rational level far higher than some of these early practices would indicate.