

## VYACHESLAV IVANOV'S POETICS OF ETERNAL FEMININE AND THE JUDAIC MYTH ON SHEKHINAH

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The article attempts to compare Eternal feminine's symbols in V. Ivanov's poetry with the mythopoetics concept of Shekhinah (the Divine presence) which plays an important role in Judaic mysticism. In the focus of attention there are parallels between the myth about Shekhinah and the imagery of Eternal feminine, as well as the connected motives of "glory" and "transparency" in V. Ivanov's work. The possibility of comparing V. Ivanov's "poetic Sophiology" to Shekhinah's symbol is explained firstly by the especially accentuated fact of Sophia's existence, her eternal existence, co-existence with human being and the world and secondly by V. Ivanov's peculiar understanding of symbol not as some "name", but as a universal principle of nomination which makes it possible to find out symbolic similarities between different essences, many of them (such as Shekhinah) can be not consciously actualized in poetic texts.

*Key words:* Symbols of Eternal feminine, symbolic similarity, Sophia, Mariology, Hebrew mysticism, Shekhinah, "transparency"

## ПОЭТИКА ВЕЧНО ЖЕНСТВЕННОГО У ВЯЧЕСЛАВА ИВАНОВА И ИУДЕЙСКИЙ МИФ О ШЕХИНЕ

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Статья представляет собой попытку сопоставления символики Вечно женственного в поэзии Вяч. Иванова с мифопоэтической теорией Шехины (Божественного присутствия), имеющей ключевое значение в иудейском мистицизме. В центре внимания — параллель между мифом о Шехине и совокупностью образов Вечной женственности, а также тесно связанными с ним мотивами «славы» и «прозрачности» у Вяч. Иванова. Возможность сближения ивановской «поэтической софиологии» с символом Шехины объясняется, во-первых, особой акцентированностью присутствия Вечно женственного, ее непреходящего пребывания, со-бытия человеку и миру, а, во-вторых, характерным для Иванова пониманием символа не как некоторого «имени», но как универсального принципа именования, позволяющего выявить отношение символического подобия между разными сущностями, многие из которых — такие, например, как Шехина — могут быть не актуализированы в поэтических текстах.

*Ключевые слова:* Символика Вечно женственного, символическое подобие, София, мариология, иудейский мистицизм, Шехина, «прозрачность»

Vyacheslav Ivanov (1866–1949), one of the most notable Russian Symbolists, is known to have become a founder of an intellectual tradition, wherein the Hebrew mysticism was not a cornerstone. One cannot say, however, that this mysticism was not completely beyond Ivanov's interests. Some of his poems (e. g. melopoeia «Человек» (“Man”)) and the unfinished «Повесть о Светомире царевиче» (“Tale of Prince Svetomir”) include certain Jewish motives, most probably borrowed from the so-called European Kabbalah. Reflecting his attitude to the “Jewish question” in his texts,

Ivanov valued highly not only the Jewish mystics of the language, but also the Jewish mystical tradition as whole, though he knew it quite superficially and incompletely and most of his knowledge about it

was, so to say, “second-hand”. He included into his mythopoetic constructions a significant number of motives derived from the Jewish mystics. As he believed, the “secrets” revealed by Jewish mystics are an important component of the global secret knowledge (gnosis) of God, Universe and Man. (Paperni, 2011, 98–99)

This article will observe some Jewish parallels of Sophian symbolism in V. Ivanov’s poetry. To be more certain, the subject of our concern will be hidden in the similarities between these symbols and the concept of *Shekhinah* (the Divine presence), mostly important for the Judaism. What is also important for the analysis, there were selected not direct quotations or allusions, but rather the parallels which, though being obscure or unimportant for V. Ivanov himself, in his readers’ minds can be reconstructed as elements of an “objective context” (i. e. existing beyond the poet’s will) of V. Ivanov’s “poetic Sophiology”.

## 1

In his interpretation of Sophian symbols (and first of all Sophia as a philosophic and poetic symbol) V. Ivanov relies upon the principle which he had formulated in the article «Две стихии в современном символизме» (“Two Elements of Today’s Symbolism”):

Подобно солнечному лучу, символ прорезывает все планы бытия и все сферы сознания и знаменует в каждом плане иные сущности, исполняет в каждой сфере иное назначение. [...] В каждой точке пересечения символа, как луча нисходящего, со сферою сознания он является знамением, смысл которого образно и полно раскрывается в соответствующем мифе<sup>1</sup>. (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. II, 537)<sup>2</sup>

The symbol realized in any image is to be directly connected with an object (in other words, it should always symbolize something certain: a snake, the sun, a rose etc.). The symbol *per se* is, however,

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<sup>1</sup> “Like a sun’s beam, a symbol comes through the whole existence and all the spheres of conscience and in every aspect signifies other essences, fulfills in every next sphere another purpose [...] In every point where the symbol as a beam going down crosses with our conscience, it appears to be an omen, its sense being fully opened in the corresponding myth”.

<sup>2</sup> Subsequent references to Ivanov are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text by volume and page. The words in italics and [in brackets] are mine everywhere.

a pure element of “signifying”. Thus it has neither a certain number of meanings nor the only name, given once and for all (objective conceptual and image form). The symbol acquires its meanings and names when passing through different layers and aspects of culture (“spheres of conscience”), when altering and interchanging those myths which appear to be its particular, but not partial realization.

This is the way that the symbol of Sophia “chooses” to exist in the history of culture. The poet recognizes her

под разными именами, символами, космогоническими обозначениями: Хохма каббалистов, Ахамот гностиков, Дева Света мандеев, мистическая Роза суфийской поэзии и европейских средневековых легенд<sup>1</sup>. (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. IV, 382)

Behind these names, one can guess the Divine Wisdom (as O. De-shart says, Ivanov “recognized the non-human Wisdom in Sophia” (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. I, 108). In this context, it is notable that the poet does not suppose his own sophiological intuition to be directly dependent on any theories and myths about Sophia, in particular on V. Solovyov’s Sophiology (though it is Solovyov, the author of «Три свидания» (“Three Dates”), whom Ivanov is obliged to for the idea of “betrothal with Sophia”, as he tells A. Blok in a poem from the collection «Нежная тайна» (“Tender Secret”)).

The aforementioned article on Lermontov and some other earlier texts (for example, «Заветы символизма» (“The Legacy of Symbolism”)) contain philosophic definitions of Sophia, and it is possible to quote the following ones: Sophia is «форма зиждущая, forma formans, вселенной в Разуме Бога»<sup>2</sup> (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. IV, 379), «...она есть совершившееся единение твари со словом Божиим»<sup>3</sup> (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. IV, 382–383). There is a variant of the second definition, orally pronounced and fixed by O. De-schartes in the comments to the article «О значении Вл. Соловьева в судьбах нашего религиозного сознания» (“About the value of Vl. Solovyov in the fate of our religious consciousness”): «Там,

<sup>1</sup> “under different names, symbols, cosmogonic nominations: Chokhmah of the Kabbalists, the Ahamothe of the Gnostics, the Virgin of the Mandaean Light, the mystical Rose of Sufi poetry and of medieval European legends”.

<sup>2</sup> “forma formans, the creative form of the universe in the God’s Wisdom”.

<sup>3</sup> “she is the real unity of the creation with the God’s Word”.

где Логос касается материи — там и София»<sup>1</sup> (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. III, 762). In other words, Sophia in Ivanov’s understanding is a boarder which connects the Logos and the Matter. She is the moment of unity between perpetual and temporary, “nominal” and “phenomenal”. Sophia reflects the perfect harmony of ontologically different things, and at the same time states the principles of this harmony. What is more, within her there is not only co-existence of all essences, but also the invariable prototype of any co-existence.

Whatever important these definitions might be, V. Ivanov’s Sophiology finds a quite a general and a very fragmented theoretical basis in his works. Therefore, if Sophiology is considered as a philosophic concept, systematic and stated in set terms, Ivanov has nothing like this. He has a number of statements, which altogether constitute a rather complete “framework” of an unshaped theory. These statements are realized and developed (to be exact, sounding more or less distinct) beyond any logical or notional system in his poetry. As one of the poems of the «Римский дневник 1944 года» (“Roman Diary of 1944”) says, Sophia agrees more with the poets than with the “wise men” whose attention belongs to the abstractions of “law and order”.

When passing through multi-dimensional and multi-sensational symbols of his poems and other myths, V. Ivanov’s myth of Sophia appears to be a system of *Sophian* poetics, or, to put it another way, poetics of *Sophianness*<sup>2</sup>. In my opinion, this notion (the world’s inner connections with Sophia which are perceived intuitively) quite definitely characterizes the fundamental existential harmony (in Ivanov’s terms, «реальнейшее» (“the most real”), *realiora in rebus*), which is directly or indirectly unveiled in many plots and motives of his poetry:

...Исконное — и чуждое, не наше —  
То бытие, подобное по край  
Наполненной, покоящейся чаше<sup>3</sup>  
(Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. III, 534)

<sup>1</sup> “Where the Logos touches the Matter — there is Sophia”.

<sup>2</sup> This notion of *Sophianness* (Russ. *sofijnost’*) was widely used by S. Bulgakov. Cf. his idea on the *Sophianness* of poetry: “It is metaphysically explained by our real connection with Divine Sophia, who brings the energy of Logos into the world...” (Bulgakov, 1993, 158).

<sup>3</sup> “...The most real is not ours, strange, — / Th’ existence resting, like a bowl / Immoveable and filled up to the edge”.

The *Sophian* reality is constituted by the symbolic reflections of one and the same event — the Matter being “touched” by the Logos. Thus, one can call “Sophian” anything which displays this “touch”, or, to be more precise, anything which marks the border between the existing and the becoming. In V. Ivanov’s poetic world, this border does not divide all the imaginarily disconnected elements of what is existing, but rather connects them, vividly demonstrating their immovable, unchangeable concord. For Ivanov, this “border” reality is so obvious that appears to be even more sensually perceivable than intellectually observable: «Она [София] не покидает этот мир и чистому глазу видна непосредственно...»<sup>1</sup> (Ivanov, 1971–1974, T. IV, 383)<sup>2</sup>. The visible existential harmony (like a flash of the «нового мира с искупленной Красотой» (“new world with the expiated Beauty”), which «сердце увидеть хочет» (“Heart wants to see”)<sup>3</sup>), being a distinctly and directly distinguished phenomenon, is a common motive of V. Ivanov’s poetry; what is important, it sometimes corresponds to the symbols of the Eternal feminine:

Какой прозрачный блеск! Печаль и тишина...  
 Как будто над землей незримая жена,  
 Весы хрустальные склоняя с поднебесья,  
 Лелеет хрупкое мгновенье равновесья...<sup>4</sup>  
 (Ivanov, 1971–1974, T. III, 515)

Твоя ль голубая завеса,  
 Жена, чье дыханье — Отрада.  
 Вершины зеленого леса,  
 Яблони сада

<sup>1</sup> “She [Sophia] does not leave this world, and *one can distinctly see it with clear eye*”.

<sup>2</sup> N. V. Kotrelev declares the priority of Ivanov’s seeing-foreseeing (cf. the poem «Красота» (“Beauty”): «Кто мой лик узрел, / Тот навек прозрел, / Дольный мир навек пред ним иной» (“Who my face has seen, / has for good foreseen, / having other world in front of his eyes”)): “*Consideration, working thought can make the sense of what was seen more detailed, but only after the primary act of having seen*” (Kotrelev, 2002, 9).

<sup>3</sup> Here, see the poem “Starlit Sky” from the collection “Pilot Stars (Ivanov, 1971–1974, T. I, 526). One should also note its last lines which, according to Pamela Davidson, represent “a Sophiological note”, as «Ivanov followed Solovyov in associating Beauty with Sophia, as is clear, for example, from his poem ‘Beauty’» (Davidson, 1989, 155).

<sup>4</sup> “What a translucent glittering! Such sole and quite, / As if above the earth there were an unseen wife, / The crystal scale inclining down from the heavens, / Saves a frail snatch of th’ equilibrium essence...”

Застлала пред взором, омытым  
 В эфире молитв светорунном,  
 И полдень явила повитым  
 Ладаном лунным?  
 [...]  
 Еще окрылиться робело  
 Души несказанное слово, –  
 А юным очам голубела  
 Радость Покрова.  
 И долго незримого храма  
 Дымилось явленное чудо...<sup>1</sup>  
 (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. II, 279–280)

In his poems, somehow or other displaying the topic of Sophia, V. Ivanov, as a rule, avoids too vivid personifications and in general any “psychologization” of the Eternal feminine. Quite often he just briefly indicates her *presence*:

И она, улыбаясь, проходит мимо нас  
 Через тишину... Тишина таит богов<sup>2</sup>  
 (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. I, 740)  
 Ты с нами, незримая, тут;  
 А мы унываем, не зная  
 Той нити, что силы прядут.  
 Томит нас неволя земная.  
 А ты, несмутимая, тут.<sup>3</sup> (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. III, 539)

This is her presence, directly perceived (though nearly always depersonalized), indisputable, always immutable. It is always presence, not waiting for “her steps”, not calling for her, not wearisome watching Her in the long distance wherefrom she is supposed to appear (like, for example, in A. Blok’s «Стихи о Прекрасной Даме» (“Poems about Fair Lady”)). This presence seems to be the main subject of V. Ivanov’s poetic Sophiology, his attention being really concentrated not on *her* image, but on *the fact of her* intuitively

<sup>1</sup> “Is it you who with a blue cloud, / The gard’n apple-trees, all in blue, / The top of the forest hath covered / For our view // O Wife, who with Delight is breathing, / Thee midday appeared winding, / Moon incense in the ether wreathing, / Prayers reminding? / [...] // The words have still been immature / Of soul unwinged, not to mention, — / For young eyes got bluer and bluer / The Joy of Protection. // *Long since of th’ invisible temple / There was a revealed miracle...*”

<sup>2</sup> “*And smiling, she’s passing by in calm, / This calm enwombing, embosoming gods...*”

<sup>3</sup> “You’re with us, invisible, here; / In our despair we don’t know / The thread being spun. Tired we’re / Out by our earthly lot though. / And you’re, imperturbable, here...”

obvious presence (“she [...] passes by us”, “you are with us”, “you [...] are here”), on her immanent being within the world. By the way, her image can be unambiguously correlated both with Sophia-Wisdom herself, and with Virgin Mary, and with the World Soul, and with other realizations of the Eternal feminine.

## 2

Here it appears possible to draw a possible, though not necessarily a direct analogy between V. Ivanov’s Sophia and the mythic symbol of Shekhinah. “Encyclopaedia Judaica” gives the following definition to Shekhinah: it is “the numinous immanence of God in the world”, or “God viewed in spatio-temporal terms as a presence, particularly in a this-worldly context: when He sanctifies a place, an object, an individual, or a whole people — a revelation of the holy in the midst of the profane” (“Encyclopaedia Judaica”, 2007, 440). In kabbalistic theosophy, Shekhinah “is the final *Sefirah* <*Malhut*>, mediating between heaven and earth and serving as the passive eye or door through which a mystic can achieve divine vision” (“Encyclopaedia Judaica”, 2007, 443).

As there are various forms of Divine presence, Shekhinah can appear in different images. “The Rabbins”, J. Abelson says, “pictured their ideas of the Immanence of God by the figure of material light. The Shechinah is universal light” (Abelson, 1912, 82). This light, in its turn, is associated with the Divine Glory, as in the Talmud tractate “Avot de-Rabbi Nathan”: “ ‘And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: [...] and the earth shined with his glory’ (Ezek. 43:2) — the words” shined (“Talmudicheskie traktaty” 2011, 80)<sup>1</sup>. Besides, Abelson always depicts Shekhinah as a cloud (Abelson, 1912, 92–93) (as well associated with the Divine Glory), as a certain winged creature (cf. set phrases “Shekhinah’s wings”, “to stay under Shekhinah’s wings” (Abelson, 1912, 89–90), as a rose field blossoming in the desert (Abelson, 1912, 97) etc. Finally, under the influence of the well-known tractate “Zohar” (the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century), there appeared a tendency to understand

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<sup>1</sup> Shkhinah” (where the second syllable is stressed) is a possible, and even more correct form than “Shekhinah”, if comparing with its Hebrew origin. There is also one more form (“*Shechinah*”), which is grammatically correct as well.

Shekhinah as a feminine origin in the God, equal to the “lowest” of the ten Sephiroth, which corresponds to the “border” between the Creator and the creature and marks His presence in the world (this function is typologically the same for Shekhinah in Judaism and Sophia in Christianity)<sup>1</sup>. From this point of view, Shekhinah is not only the Queen, the Daughter and the Bride of the God, but the great-grandmother of every Israeli<sup>2</sup>. Gershom Scholem calls her a symbol of “the Eternal feminine” (Sholem, 2004, 289), and “Encyclopaedia Judaica” says that “the popularity of the *Shekhinah* in Kabbalah corresponds to and may have been influenced by the popularity of the cult of Virgin Mary among contemporaneous Christians” (“Encyclopaedia Judaica”, 2007, 443)<sup>3</sup>.

According to kabbalistic ideas, which were also reflected in popular beliefs, as a result of Adam and Eve’s Fall, Shekhinah is “exiled” from the world, thereby its direct perception becoming impossible (Sholem, 2004, 290)<sup>4</sup>. In the world infected by the first sin, Shekhi-

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<sup>1</sup> Even the tractate “Sepher Ha-Bahir” (attributed to Nehunya ben HaKanaḥ, 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, though probably written in the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD) differs Shekhinah “below” (“on the border” between the God and the world) and Shekhinah “over us” (in the celestial world): “There is a Shekhinah <Divine Presence> below, just like there is a Shekhinah <Divine Presence> above. What is this Shekhinah <Divine Presence>? We have said that it is the light that was derived from the first Light, which is Wisdom. It also surrounds all things, as it is written (Isaiah 6:3), ‘The whole earth is filled with His glory’ ” (see: Sepher Ha-Bahir, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> One should also consider Scholem’s note that many philosophers and Talmudists refused to accept this interpretation, but “it became an integral part of European and Eastern Jews’ beliefs” (Sholem, 2004, 288–289).

<sup>3</sup> Here, see Arthur Green who is more definite in his ideas: “...The unequivocal feminization of *shekhinah* in the Kabbalah of the thirteen century is a Jewish response to an adaptation of the revival of devotion to Mary in the twelfth century Western church” (Green, 2002, 1).

<sup>4</sup> See also V. Solovyov’s interpretation of this event: “...Adam’s sin was that he stroke Malhut <the last sefirah, or Shekhinah> off the tree of the rest Sephiroth. What does it mean?... The sin is that the man aims at possessing life on its own, independently on the intellectual and moral qualities to be realized in it. Adam wanted to use the Fruit of the God’s life, aimed at it beside the conditions of this life, without assimilating its roots. However, as the fruit was from nothing but this tree, to deny this fruit means to deny the whole tree. The aim taken for the means, the man spoiled the meaning of the aim as well” (Solov’ev, 2011, 464). Methinks that there is something in common between the idea of “Shekhinah’s expulsion” and the gnostic concept of “Sophia’s sin” (the latter being the basis for Solovyov’s theory of the World Soul). J. Macrae says, for example, that

nah becomes inaccessible to the common (“profane”) perception, and opens herself only to the pious or sincerely praying people<sup>1</sup> (here, V. Ivanov’s aforementioned phrase is appropriate: “...one can distinctly see it with *clear eye*”). Piousness and pray are those new (not “celestial”, but “secular”) “canals”, for her unity with the God and mankind to be reconstructed. Arthur Green says that “the saint conjugal union of the God and Shekhinah (in fact re-union, as they originally were one and the same) is defined as a purpose of the whole religious life” (Grin, 2006, 57)<sup>2</sup>.

In Russian religious and philosophic tradition, there are some, though not frequent, comparisons of Sophia and Shekhinah. V. Solovyov mentions Sophia in his article about Kabbalah written for

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“...The idea of the fall of celestial beings is well known in Jewish apocalyptic literature as the result of interpretation of Gen. IV 1–4; moreover, the view of this event reflected in apocalyptic literature is that it caused the evil upon the Earth. [...] The principle source of the fall <in particular, that of Sophia in Gnosticism>, I suggest, is the Genesis account of the fall of Eve” (Macrae, 1970, 99). The similarity between Shekhinah and the “fall of celestial beings” is notable not directly, but typologically, as Shekhinah does not fall, she is “expulsed” (by the man), “disappears” out of the view.

<sup>1</sup> Here, one should consider Moshe Idel’s descriptions of seeing Shekhinah when praying during the ritual “mystic crying”. A Lithuanian hasid rabbi Itshak Safrin says, “I cried very much wholeheartedly when praying because of Shekhinah’s sufferings. My cries made me faint and sleep for a while, and I saw a girl’s figure, brightly shining, whose face I did not have good fortune to see [...] And she said: ‘Be strong, my sun’ ” (Idel, 2010a, 159). This combination of “girl’s” and mother’s traits is interesting. Shekhinah can be both mother and sister and even a beloved woman — perhaps because, as “Zohar” says, “all women of the world exist in Shekhinah’s mystery” (Sholem, 2004, 289).

<sup>2</sup> Here, one should remember that the symbol and the myth which it evokes have different logics. Moshe Idel says that “already in the Zohar, the biblical Moses has been conceived of as the husband of the Shekhinah” (Idel, 2010, 26). This conviction among many Kabbalists is widespread alongside with the idea of Shekhinah as a symbolic “wife” of any justly living man. The tractate “Tomer Devorah” by Moshe Kordovero (the second half of the 16th century) says, for instance, that “the one who wants to engage with the God’s Daughter <Shekhinah> forever, must first decorate himself with all possible decorations and pleasant clothes, and it will correct all the miseries <of the soul>. And whenever he improves himself with these corrections, he will want to get her <Shekhinah>, he who works with Torah and bears the burden of commandments in his innermost direction to the union (דוּסֵב דּוּחִיחַ תְּנוּכַ). And she will marry him at once, and will not leave him. This is on the condition that he will be pure and will sanctify himself” (Kordovero, 2016). Thus, Shekhinah is the “wife” of Moses and of any righteous Jude who has corrected himself. But the man’s “marriage” with Shekhinah can become universal and constant only if there is realized the conjugal re-union between Shekhinah and the God.

“The Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary”, but his most common analogies are those with the biblical Chokhmah (“All-wise”). In his early work «София» (“Sophia”), however, Solovyov names the Eternal feminine (in the aspect of pre-eternal matter) as “Beth-Col” (Solov’ev, 2000, 99), which in Modern Hebrew means “the Daughter of the Voice”. Beth-Col is used as one of Shekhinah names in the kabbalistic literature. According to K. Burmistrov, this might be the earliest example of Solovyov’s identification of Sophia with “the Eternal feminine”, “The Virgin of the God’s Wisdom”, “the feminine principle” of the Kabbalah, “the Daughter of the Divine Voice”, in this case coinciding with Shkhinah, or Malhut (Burmistrov, 1998, 33–34).

S. N. Bulgakov directly identifies Sophia with Shekhinah, though only when she (Sophia) is considered an incarnation of Divine Glory (in other notions, “the Love of Love”, Eternal Beauty, immanent matter of Logos etc. — the comparison with Shekhinah is, probably, not relevant enough): “God reveals Himself in Sophia via Sophia herself, who, as a female acceptance of this afflatus, is ‘he Divine Glory’ (*Shekhinah* of the Kabbalah)” (Bulgakov, 1999, 258).

P. A. Florenski in his philosophical texts seems not to mention Shekhinah at all (though in the comments on his book «Столп и утверждение Истины» (“The Pillar and the Ground of the Truth”) he writes a lot about various Judaic interpretations of Sophia). Among his poetic writings, however, there is a juvenile poem «В лесу» (“In the Forest”). Here are four lines from it:

Все гармонию скрывает,  
Всюду свет идей играет, —  
И значенье естества —  
Лишь Шехина Божества<sup>1</sup>.

This can be compared with P. A. Florensky’s definitions of Sophia: “Wisdom [...] is predominantly the metaphysic side of the essence of the creature” (Florenskii, 1990, 346); She is the substantial “basis”, “intelligence” and “spirit” of the creature (Florenskii, 1990, 349) etc. (one should not of course forget that Florensky brings together all the “senses” of the Sophianness to the image of Virgin Mary (Florenskii, 1990, 351–369).

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<sup>1</sup> “Harmony’s everywhere hidden, / All ideas always glitter, — / And the nature’s meaning lot / Is Shekhinah of the God” (“Pavel Florenskii i simvolisty”, 2004, 49).

The ideas of another philosopher can be supplied hereupon — those of Sergei Averintsev. He was not a “sophiologist”, but one of the most sharp-witted interpreters of the myth about Sophia. As she “is neither transcendental nor immanent in herself, but the point for them to meet” (Averintsev, 2006a, 9), it is Sophia through whom the God “is present with us”. From this point of view, she is not even similar to Shekhinah, but close or equal to her by one of the most essential functions — by her ability to “contain” the God and to be the border connecting Him with His creatures. This connection can be defined by a number of symbolic similarities (which make “equality in the only sense of an algebraic formula” principally impossible): according to Paul the Apostle, “Christ crucified” <is> the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24), and here is, S. Averintsev says, “the utmost point of the God’s kenotic estrangement of Himself”. But it is for this reason that “the closeness of the Wisdom to the image of the innocent Maternity of Virgin Mary becomes clear” (Averintsev, 2006b, 599). Her names “remind us of the philosophical paradox of the God’s presence everywhere”, and “Her images are the Tabernacle, the Temple, the Ark of the Covenant (ikos 12), i. e. the images of Shekhinah” (Averintsev, 2006b, 600). If Virgin Mary is similar to Sophia and to Shekhinah, then, Sophia and Shekhinah are also similar: all the three images are reflected in the symbolic “mirrors” of each other. It is also remarkable that, according to Averintsev, the word *Shekhinah*, which is usually understood as a term of Gnosticism and Kabbalah, in itself had nothing “kabbalistic” nor gnostic, and was born directly from the translators’ and interpreters’ work on the Divine Word (Averintsev, 2006b, 596).

### 3

Certainly, V. Ivanov was acquainted with the concept of Shekhinah<sup>1</sup>, though, as it was mentioned before, there are no direct allusions on her in his poetry. The typological comparison (which is by no means identification) of his sophiological symbols with Shekhi-

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<sup>1</sup> This is proved by some fragments of «Повесть о Светомире царевиче» (“Tale of Prince Svetomir”) (Khors and his theory on “Keter Malchut”, even terminologically oriented on the concept of Shekhinah), by the symbols of his earlier poems (first and foremost, the melopoeia «Человек» (“Man”)), and by translations from Ḥayyim Naḥman Bialik.

nah is possible first of all due to the special emphasis on the existence of Sophia (or her constant, entire, though visible only for a “pure eye” *presence*) in his poetic world. Shekhinah, however, as it was mentioned above, not only displays similarities with Sophia, but is also defined through the concept of existence and immanence. Besides, I can say for sure that V. Ivanov’s imagery of poetry (because of its «polysemantics»<sup>1</sup> and inclusion in a complicated system of symbolic mediations, thanks to which at the same time she seems to be present in various cultural spaces) *provides* more or less clear allusions on Shekhinah’s myth, and through it on other (perhaps significant) religious and philosophical contexts of Ivanov’s Sophian poetics.

Here is an example from the poem «Внутреннее небо» (“The Inner Sky”) (1915, the collection «Свет вечерний» (“Evening Light”)):

За сферою горящей Серафима  
(О, Человек, когда б в себя ты вник  
И целостным узрел свой вечный лик!) –  
Есть скиния с ковчегом Элоима.

Что в мареве сквозит земного дыма,  
Что Женственным в явлении привык  
Именовать младенческий язык, –  
В раю души — лазурь и ночь Солима.

Когда бы ты почил в голубизне  
Того шатра, увидел бы во сне  
Сидящего средь Града на престоле.

Слепительный не ослепил бы день  
Твоих очей, и не смутила боле  
Мысль: «Он — я сам!» Ты был бы — ночь и сень<sup>2</sup>  
(Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. III, 563)

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<sup>1</sup> This term is used by D. N. Mickiewicz when analyzing Vyacheslav Ivanov’s poetic symbols; see, for example: Mitskevich, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> “Behind the blazing cycles of the Seraphim / (O Man, if once you could yourself embrace / And see completely your eternal face), / There’s a Tabernacle with th’ Ark of Elohim. // What’s seen through looming of the earthly steam, / What child’s tongue used to nominate in space / As feminine in its perpetual race / In soul — is night and azure of Solim. // If you reposed once within this forest’s blue / Of that Tabernacle, there would be in your view / The God who’s sitting on the City throne. // You wouldn’t get blinded by the blinding day, / Nor by the thought you wouldn’t be overthrown: / ‘He’s me myself!’ You would be night and shade”.

The most interesting here is the word «скиния» (“Tabernacle”). As a name of “the Holy of Holies” and at the same time as a symbol of Virgin Mary, it is quite common for V. Ivanov. In his «Повесть о Светомире царевиче» (“Tale of Prince Svetomir”), one of the characters, Lazar, says to his future bride, Delight: «...Отрадою ты мне из голубой той скинии, слезным покрывалом занавешенной, послана»<sup>1</sup>, and a bit earlier calls this “Tabernacle” «Богородичным раем» (“the Virgin’s Paradise”) (Ivanov, 1971–1974, T. I, 285). When «Внутреннее небо» (“The Inner Sky”) says about «скиния с ковчегом Элоима» (“a Tabernacle with th’ Ark of Elohim”), we can see that this Ark is contextually partnered with the «Женственное» (“Feminine”) and «голубизна шатра» (“the forest’s blue”). Through the symbols of Virgin Mary and Sophia (the blue color of the forest, “feminine” as a variant of the “Eternal feminine”, the “Tabernacle” as a symbol of the Holy Virgin) there appears, however, another row of images. The key role in it might probably belong to the word “Elohim” (Hebr. “the God”, “Dominus”), which by its belonging to the Old Testament draws the perception of the “Tabernacle” to its origin — *הַמִּשְׁכָּן* (*ha-mishkan*), meaning “a tent”, and in the Book of Exodus — the place of the Divine Presence: “And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, [...] and there I will dwell among the children of Israel” (Exod. 29:44–45).

The Hebrew equivalent for *I will be present* (יִתְנַכַּח, *veshakanti*) has the same root as *ha-mishkan*, whereas the “presence” itself is *שְׁכִינָה*, *Shekhinah*. From this point of view, it is *Shekhinah* who stands in the foreground of the “feminine” semantics: she fills the “Tabernacle”, and within her the “Man” can «почить» (“repose”) and see (which is transcendent to the experience of feeling the Divine presence) «Сидящего среди Града на престоле» (“the God who’s sitting on the City throne”). This “City” gets the obscure connotation of the “Divine Presence” via the contextual partnership with “Elohim” and “Solim” (perhaps, a variant of “Salem”, “Salim” — the first name of Jerusalem<sup>2</sup>, cf.: “In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion” (Psalm 76:2).

<sup>1</sup> “You are sent to me as a Delight of *that blue* Tabernacle, covered with a veil of tears”.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sonnet VI of Part III of Ivanov’s melopoeia «Человек» (“Man”) (the sonnet sequence «Два града» (“Two Cities”)): «Солима белый царь, Мелхиседек! / Без родичей

These obscure connotations were perhaps generally presupposed by Ivanov himself, as it is hardly believable that the name “Elohim” was for him nothing but the “word ornamentation”. With the help of these connotations, the two contexts of the Sophian symbols are brought together — the Christian one, which is first of all connected with the image of Virgin Mary, and the Judaist one, developing round Shekhinah. The main motive of the poem is most probably associated with the motive of “Virgin Mary’s Paradise” from «Повесть о Светомире царевиче» (“Tale of Prince Svetomir”). The “Tabernacle” is a receptacle of the “feminine”, marked with the light-blue<sup>1</sup> “Sophian” halo (cf. “You are sent to me as a Delight of that blue Tabernacle”). The one who rests in her «blue» would see “The God who’s sitting on the [...] throne”, and he would not be confused by the «мысль: “Он — я сам!”» (“thought: ‘He’s me myself!’”). This thought obviously indicates the connections of the soul’s paradise (as if the «лазурь и ночь Солима» (“night and azure of Solim”) being brought into it) not only with the God-Father, but also with the God-Son, by means of whose image (in Ivanov’s interpretation, by no other means) their identity is declared.

In the context of this poem, both the «Tabernacle», and the “Ark of Elohim”, and the “Feminine” are to be associated with Virgin Mary, the Christian tradition seeing in them Her symbolic analogies<sup>2</sup>. The main thing is that if these symbols are not correlated with Her image or correlated indirectly, — then, the formula “He’s me myself!” in the end of Ivanov’s sonnet becomes completely inexplicable.

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земных, но человек! / Каких первин полны твои кошицы?» (“Melchizedek, the white tsar of Solim, / A man without an earthly relative, / With what first fruits are there your baskets filled?”) (Ivanov, 1971–1974, T. III, 226).

<sup>1</sup> After Solovyov, the blue color, and especially “azure”, became a common, even important attribute of Sophia in the literature of Russian Modernism. Here come V. Ivanov’s above quoted lines «Твоя ль голубая завеса, / Жена, чье дыханье — отрада...» (“Is it you who with a *blue cloud*, / ...O Wife, who with Delight is breathing”), and also, in the article «Наш язык» (“Our Language”), the metaphor of “Sophia’s blue” which comprises the branches of the “word tree” (Ivanov, 1971–1974, T. IV, 677). See also Andrei Bely’s article «Священные цвета» (“Saint Colors”) and Florensky’s convictions on the blue color as that of Sophia (what is important, quoting Ivanov’s «Покров» (“Protection”)) in: Florenskii, 1990, 552–576).

<sup>2</sup> Here, one should consider ikos 12 of the Acathist to the Holy Virgin and S. Averintsev’s article, where the Virgin is called “the Saint of the Saints” and “ark gilded by the Spirit”.

When the “Tabernacle” is Virgin Mary, on the contrary, this formula becomes not only suitable, but necessary: one can «see completely his eternal face» and without any confuse understand his identity with the God (“Elohim”) only if this face is that of Christ<sup>1</sup>, and, therefore, it is She, “Mother of the Lamb and the Shepherd” (ikos 4), who is “seen through looming of the earthly steam”. The closure of the sonnet is nothing but a variant of the famous phrase from the Gospel of John: “I and my father are one” (John 10:30).

Looking at both feminine images, resp. Virgin Mary and Shekhinah, seeming to shine through each other, we can say that the latter ones do not contradict the former, but harmonically complement them. In Judaist literature, Shekhinah is connected with the temple “Tabernacle”, as Virgin Mary does. For example, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi’s tractate “Taniya” says, “Shkhinah was in the Holy of Holies” (Shneur-Zalman, 1998, 230)<sup>2</sup>. The same thing can be found in one of the rabbinic texts quoted by Abelson: “Until the Temple was destroyed the Shechinah abode in it; after its destruction the Shechinah departed and ascended up to heaven, as it is said, ‘The Lord hath established his throne in the heavens’ (Psalm ciii. 19)” (Abelson, 1912, 120). There can also be found an interesting association between these words of the psalm and one of lines

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<sup>1</sup> In one of his talks with the philologist M. S. Altman, Vyacheslav Ivanov said, “It was He the Savior who appeared the man to a man. Being the Son of the God, He was a mirror to a man. Not to his part, not to a certain individual, but to a man as a whole” (Altman, 1995, 4). The motive “He’s me myself!” can be clearly distinguished in the melopoeia «Человек» (“Man”): «Пою, что тает сон сновидца, / Встречает сердце Пришлеца; / Что блудный сын обрел Отца / в себе, невинном, и дивится» (“I see the dreamer’s dream is fading, / The heart agrees to meet the stranger, / *The prodigal son has found his father / In himself innocent, and waiting*”) (Ivanov, 1971–1974, T. III, 236).

<sup>2</sup> One should hereby note that understanding Mary the Virgin as a symbol of the church could have influenced the Kabbalistic idea of Shekhinah as an image of “the Knesseth Israel”, (a religious commune in Israel), which appeared approximately in the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries and became a significant addition to the traditional idea of Shekhinah as a Divine Presence in the Holy of Holies of the Jerusalem Temple or — after its destruction — on the Western Wall (the so-called “Wailing Wall”). Here is what Arthur Green says: “...Mary who represent, embodies or symbolically *is the ecclesia* is also directly parallel to *shekhinah* as representing or identified with *keneset ysra`el*. This identification of the embodied community with the divine or quasi-divine female took place first in Christianity, where it made considerably more sense, and that may well be the source of the parallel development in Kabbalah” (Green, 2002, 29).

of ikos 8 of the Acathist to the Holy Virgin (in fact, one of Her symbolic “definitions”): “all-glorious temple of Him Who is above the Seraphim”. The “throne” of the psalm (Shekhinah) is the same as the “temple” of the acathist (the Virgin), and this connection is as if unwisely accentuated by the poet in the beginning of the poem «Внутреннее небо» (“The Inner Sky”): «За сферою горящей Серафима /.../ Есть скиния...»<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> “Behind the blazing cycles of the Seraphim /.../ There’s a Tabernacle...”. Comparing the images of Virgin Mary and Shekhinah, one cannot help mentioning one more (though not mostly important in this context) similarity between them — the ability to comprise different states of the “feminine”. Here, for example, Ann Matter, when analyzing the connection between the medieval symbols of Mary and the images of the Song of the Songs, noted that “the understanding of the Virgin Mary as the exalted spouse of the Song of Songs emphasizes her flexible nature in medieval Christian piety: she is the bride of God, and the mother of God; she represents the Church and each individual Christian” (Matter, 1990, 15). In the tractate “Sepher Ha-Bahir”, there is a *mashal* (a parable) describing Shekhinah in this versatile image: “This is like a king who was in the innermost of many chambers. The number of such chambers was 32, and to each one there was a path. Should the king bring everyone to his chamber through these paths? You will agree that he should not. Should he reveal his jewels, his tapestries, his hidden and concealed secrets? You will again agree that he should not. What then does he do? He touches the Daughter, and includes all the paths in her and in her garments. One who wants to go inside should <or it is enough to> gaze there. He married her to a king, and also gave her to him as a gift. Because of his love for her, he sometimes calls her ‘my sister’, since they are both from one place <or space, world>. Sometimes he calls her his daughter, since she is actually his daughter. And sometimes he calls her ‘my mother’ ” (see: Sepher Ha-Bahir, 2016). Therefore, Shekhinah is the feminine in all its possible definitions: a sister, a daughter, a mother, a bride and a wife. One should note here that Eternal feminine, according to V. Ivanov, can also refer to the God from different “positions” — at least, as both a daughter and a wife. For example, the poem «Ночь» (“Night”) from the collection «Нежная тайна» (“Tender Secret”) says about the World Soul: “the Daughter of the God’s Abysses”, but further on, the Night itself, which is perhaps an aspect of the World Soul, is called “the God’s Eternal Bride”. Finally, in the last but one stanza, this feminine element is called “Mother” (a common name for the World Soul or for the Earth, in V. Ivanov’s interpretation): «И всех рождений ложесна, / Мы спим, как плод, зачатый в ней, — / и лоно Матери со дна / Горит мирьядами огней!..» (“A sleeping bed of all the births, / We’re like a child conceived in her, — / And Mother’s womb, ablaze in depths, / Is shining with a myriad fire!..”) (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. III, 13–14). Here, an interesting peculiarity was noticed by M. Weisskopf for religious and erotic “feminine” poetry plots of the beginning of the XX century: “...The Virgin, replaced by the heroine, getting pregnant by the Holy Spirit, married both the God-Father and her own Son, i. e. became Christ’s wife, and bearing Jesus, bore as well His Father (= the Celestial Father of the whole mankind, hence Her own Father)” (Vaiskopf, 2006, 28).

Connotations with the image of Shekhinah add to the image of the “Tabernacle” in Vyacheslav Ivanov’s sonnet an additional aspect: in a manner, they “objectify” it, prompting to see this pure “space” of the Divine Presence in it. Here, Virgin Mary is Shekhinah of the ancient “Solim”, and of the even more ancient “first” tabernacle, i. e. of that “tent”, the elevation of which, according to some Hebrew exegetes, is understood as the true beginning of the world<sup>1</sup>. But both of them meant the symbol of “feminine”, and were marked with the blue glow, distinctive for this “feminine”. In other words, both Virgin Mary and Shekhinah possess the features of Sophia, and, moreover, *appear to be* Sophia, according to the above-mentioned principle of symbolic assimilation.

The meaning of the image of the Mother of God, figuratively speaking, from the cosmological point of view, in one of the poems of the «Римский дневник 1944 года» (“Roman diary of 1944”) (the first poem of the «Май» (“May”) cycle) is represented as follows:

Помирила Небо с долом  
Благодатная глаголом:  
Ecce Ancilla Domini<sup>2</sup> (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. III, 609)

But Sophia plays the same role: she is “where the Logos touches the Matter», and that is why she is also «примирение» «неба с долом» (the “re-union” of “the sky and earth”). According to Andrzej Dudek, Virgin Mary in V. Ivanov’s poetry is a “hypostasis of Sophia”, and from this point of view she is “the mediator between heaven and earth” (Dudek, 1993, 49). The word “hypostasis” in this case might be not the most suitable, as it makes Sophia and Mary hierarchically dependent: the former is primordial, while the latter,

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<sup>1</sup> “‘Genesis Rabba’ [...] says that from the first day of creation God was desirous of dwelling, not above but within the universe. But He did not do so until the Tabernacle was erected. Then the Shechinah rested within it, and God said, ‘Let it be written that this day the world was created’” (Abelson, 1912, 118). It is interesting that in orthodox Maryology, both this Tabernacle and the Holy of Holies of the Jerusalem Temple are symbols of the Virgin Mary because they were supposed “to contain the uncontainable God”: “The Holy of Holies was the idea of the Virgin who contained the God’s Word [...] In the inner sanctuary of the Tabernacle, there was the Ark of the Covenant, a gold-covered wooden chest, containing saint artifacts. This Ark is similar to the Virgin who contained the Testimonies not of the Law, but of the Lawgiver” (see: “Skazaniia o zemnoi zhizni”, 1904, 27–29).

<sup>2</sup> “She was blissful with her word / To unite the sky and earth: / Ecce Ancilla Domini”.

being her personification, is her “derivative”. It seems more correct to speak about their symbolic identity — this identity, for example, Ivanov himself states between the Sophian symbolism and the image of Virgin Mary in the article «О Новалисе» (“About Novalis”). The three images of Eternal feminine are intertwined by “shining through” each other: through the “redding rose” of the World Soul, there “shines” the deity of Sais (Isis, the virgin essence of nature), and through her there “shines” Virgin Mary. The verb «просквозить» (“to shine through”) meaning ‘to become apparent’, ‘to reveal itself’ (with a shade of some spontaneity) is used by Ivanov in those cases when there takes place the symbolic manifestation of one reality through another. For example, in the poem «Мать» (“Mother”) from the collection «Свет вечерний» (“Evening Light”), he, just as in his reflections on Novalis’ poetry, used this verb to denote the context of mutually “shining through” symbols of Death, the World Soul and (implicitly but with certain hints) the Mother of God:

И дольняя как бы ни застила пыль  
 Очам одряхлелым священную быль,  
 Во мне не найдешь иноверца:  
*Зане нам обоим чрез милую Смерть*  
*В земле просквозила нетварная Твердь*  
*И тайна глубинного Сердца*<sup>1</sup> (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. III, 524)

One symbol, which is close to another one, is not its hypostasis, but appears within it, as if originally being a part of it, or even the same one, but conveyed from another, particularly changed point of view. Every symbol of Ivanov’s poetry is like a crystalline prism, which always looks at us by only one of its sides, the other sides being reflected in it. This is how Sophia’s image is seen in the image of Virgin Mary and vice versa, and in both of them there are opened the other “sides” of the symbolic prism — the World’s Soul, the Earth, the Memory (Mnemosyne) etc., up to those not ever mentioned. To the latter, undoubtedly, one can refer Shekhinah (even though she appears in the implications or obvious similarities), as she is not only a personification of the Eternal feminine, but also

<sup>1</sup> “Whatever dust earthly obscuring be / For old eyes instead of the heavenly, me / You’ll never consider apart: / *That’s how for us both through th’ amiable Death, / Through th’ Earth there came th’ uncreated Expanse / And depth of mysterious Heart*”.

an image of Virgin Mary in her distinctive qualities (“a Tabernacle”, where there is the God), and an image of Sophia (as a border between the sky and the earth, and as הלכה הלולכה לכה, a “bride who comprises all” (see: Green, 2002, 30)<sup>1</sup>, according to a Sophiological-like definition).

#### 4

In Judaic religious and philosophic tradition, as I have already mentioned, Shekhinah is a common symbol of the Divine Glory (Hebrew דְּבוּקָה, *kavod*). For example, according to a 9–10<sup>th</sup> centuries philosopher Saadia Gaon’s “The Book of Beliefs and Opinions”, the Divine Glory (“what wise men call Shkhinah” (Zabolotnaia, 2016)<sup>2</sup>) is an invisible form for a “common” man, but for prophets and people with a mystic eyesight it can open as a slightest light substance. This “second air” lies between the material world and the celestial reality, it is *transparent* and colorless as consisting of various colors, which neutralize each other (see: Sirat, 2003, 61–62).

For Vyacheslav Ivanov, the “glory”, according to his own words, is “something visible”, it is like “an aureola, a halo around his head, a light”. He says that “he sees all things within the glory”, and it is for this reason that the poets of the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century were “false classics”: “they did not understand the true glory, i. e. the *ontological essence of all things*” (Al’tman, 1995, 52–53). Indeed, Ivanov is probably the only Russian poet who managed to represent “the true glory” as a visible phenomenon of the ideal world. One of the best examples here is represented in his poem “Sogno Angelico” (“Segno Angelico”) from the book «Кормчие звезды» (“Pilot Stars”). Here is its first stanza:

Скрылся день — и полосую  
Дали тонкие златит.  
Выси млеют бирюзою;  
Тучка в зареве летит.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. V. Solovyov’s definition: “Sophia is a unity, which does not oppose to the multiplicity, which does not exclude it, but *contains everything in itself*” (Solov’ev, 1999, 444).

<sup>2</sup> According to Gershom Scholem, the Kabbalists’ idea of Shekhinah as a Divine Glory “was borrowed from Saadia, whose theory of the Divine Glory should have been an explanation of the Bible anthropomorphisms and of the prophets’ visionary revelations of the God” (Sholem, 2004, 153).

Полнебес замкнув в оправу,  
Светл смарагд, и рдеет лал:  
Вечер пламенную славу  
Ополчил и разостлал...<sup>1</sup>

In this poem, the airy pictures are seen quite clearly and, so to say, usually: there is but a light of the setting sun and its colors and shades — «златящиеся» дали (“slightest ethers”), «бирюза» (“turquoise”), precious stones to be compared with the color of the sky; and, finally, the colloquial (according to N. Kotrelev) «тучка» (“light cloud”). However, after the poet’s look has been focused on the sunshine, there comes to be opened a completely new landscape — still directly visible, though transcendent to our “earthly” experience:

И пред оком умиленным  
Оживляется закат,  
И по тучам отдаленным –  
Легионом окрыленным –  
Лики с пальмами стоят.  
Блеск венцов, и блеск виссонный...  
Но Христовой луч красы  
Им довлеет — отраженный  
В злате дольней полосы.  
Там, в близи недостижимой, –  
Ученик Христа любимый:  
Как горят его волосы!..<sup>2</sup> (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. I, 535)

The “glory” in the general picture of this poem appears to be a board line between the real and the transcendental. Both of these sides are perceived at one and the same glance: it is “double”, as peering into some object immanently makes it transfer from one ontological areal to another (cf. the poem “Gli spiriti del viso”: «духи глаз» (“the spirits of the eyes”) «...глядят: молчанье — их

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<sup>1</sup> “Day is over — and the skies / Slightest ethers gild. / A light cloud glows and flies / In the turquoise field. / Emerald locked in a rim, / Fainting rubies red, / *Blazing evening glories seem / Armed and outspread...*”

<sup>2</sup> “And for th’ eye alleviated / Sunset is in charm, / Over clouds alienated — / In a legion elated — / Saints stand in a palm. / Halos shining, byssines shining, / But Christ’s perfect beam / Dominates in golden lining / Of the farthest brim. In the closest distance lightened, / Christ’s beloved Archangel brightened / There’s in a blazing rim!..”

завет, / но в глубях далей грезят даль пространней»<sup>1</sup> (Ivanov, 1971–1974, T. I, 785). The picture, however, remains integral, and, what is important, immediate, and the “glory” as a light emission of the “ontological essence of things” is the necessary “environment” for it to realize its duality.

Commenting on “Songo Angelico”, N. V. Kotrelev notes that “Ivanov’s word *glory* preserves its objective certainty, sometimes even thingness, as in the Holy Writ... The most important thing is that the God always opens Himself to a man in His Glory, either in a Major Prophet or in an Apostle, and the shining of the Glory can even blind, as it happened to Paul the Apostle” (Kotrelev, 2002, 16–17).

If referring to what the Old Testament says on the Glory of the God, one can remember the words from the book of the Ezekiel: “And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the east, and his voice *was* like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory” (Ezek. 43:2). Even in those days when the Talmud was compiled, this “glory” was identified with Shekhinah. For example, the tractate “Pirkei Avot” (as well as “Avot de-Rabbi Nathan” quoted above) says: “The words *lightened by his glory* indicate Shekhinah’s face”. In the same way there was interpreted the verse “A glorious high throne from the beginning *is* the place of our sanctuary” (Jer. 17:12). According to Abelson, in some rabbinic interpretations of the Book of the Exodus Shekhinah, as another name for the Divine Glory, is depicted in the form of a glowing cloud, and the Glory itself is called “a cloud of Shechinah” (Abelson, 1912, 381). In these texts, Shekhinah is the light which comes from the God and reveals his presence. Later, in Saadia Gaon’s interpretation, she is the same, generally observable light, but only represented as midair (“the second air”), which is located between the worlds of the Creator and creation.

As well as the “glory” in Vyacheslav Ivanov’s poetry, this “air” not only blinds, but also gives an opportunity to see the things which are invisible for a “secular” eye. Like this “fame”, it has a solar, “blazing” nature; being transcendental (and even estranged), it is a property of all things as their “ontological essence” (“the second air” within the first one and everything that is in it). One of Ivanov’s

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<sup>1</sup> “look: the silence is their legacy, / But in the depths of dale they dream a dale more distant”.

diary notes (14<sup>th</sup> April 1910) seems to be accordant to this understanding of Shekhinah: «При каждом взгляде на окружающее, при каждом прикосновении к вещам должно сознавать, что ты общаешься с Богом, что Бог предстоит тебе и Себя тебе открывает, окружая тебя Собою; ты лицезришь Его тайну и читаешь Его мысли»<sup>1</sup> (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. II, 806).

To continue this parallel, one can note that Vyacheslav Ivanov's Sophian world, being opened to a «pure eye», has the same Shekhinah's visual прозрачность (*transparency*):

Какой прозрачный блеск! Печаль и тишина...  
Как будто над землей незримая жена,  
Весы хрустальные склоняя с поднебесья,  
Лелеет хрупкое мгновенье равновесья;  
Но каждый желтый лист, слетающий с деревьев,  
На чашу золота слагая легкий вес,  
Грозит перекачнуть к могиле хладной света  
Дары прощальные исполненного лета<sup>2</sup> (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. III, 515)

“Transparency” is a symbolic attribute of the «незримой жены» (“invisible wife”) (apparently, Sophia or the World Soul), but if we remember that every “symbol” to some extent stands for the idea it symbolizes, then the “transparency” and the “invisible wife” appear to be one and the same thing. In other words, both are unchangeable manifestations of the Sophiological feminine, and wherever there is the latter, there is always the former.

In V. Ivanov's system of poetic symbols, “transparency” is a state of the world, which is experienced when the hidden becomes available, the transcendent turns into apparent, and the invisible into visible:

Прозрачность! улыбчивой сказкой  
Соделай видения жизни,  
Сквозным — покрывало Майи!  
Яви нам бледные раи

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<sup>1</sup> “Whenever you look around, whenever you touch anything, you should understand that you communicate with the God, that He stands before you and opens Himself to you, surrounding you by Himself; you contemplate His mystery and read His thoughts”.

<sup>2</sup> “What a translucent glittering! Such sole and quite, / As if above the earth there was an unseen wife, / The crystal scale inclining down from the heavens, / Saves a frail snatch of th' equilibrium essence... / But every yellow leaf, which trees don't hold, / Its lightest body putting on the scale of gold, / Hangs over farewell presents of the passing summer / And makes them go the th' algid grave of mighty color”.

За листвою кущ осенних;  
За радугой легкой — обеты...<sup>1</sup> (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. I, 738)

On the other hand, the same “transparency” can be a dynamic force, a non-substantial energy that has obvious signs of the ontological (“subjective”) independence and undoubtedly connected with the transcendent source of existence — the Divine Light:

Когда, сердца пронзив, Прозрачность  
Исполнит солнцем темных нас,  
Мы возблестим, как угля мрачность,  
Преображенная в алмаз<sup>2</sup> (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. I, 754)

Finally, there is a possible understanding of “transparency” as a substantial principle, equal and even identical to the world itself, in this case “world” being not a given reality of things and phenomena, but a revelation of the perfect (Sophian) prototype of being:

Пустых зеркал стооумутная мрачность  
В ста бликах пьет дня первый робкий блик,  
В ста откликах рассветный множит клик.  
Глядится Бог в свой мир, и мир — прозрачность<sup>3</sup>  
(Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. I, 784)

In the aspect of comparing this multi-faced “transparency” with the image of Shekhinah, it should be above all noted that she appears to be a kind of glory: being “sunny” («...исполнит солнцем, темных, нас» (“In dark we shall be filled with sun”)), she is behind «Покрывало Майи» (“Maia’s veil”), the deceptive world of phenomena, but therewith she is present in everything and generally implies the constant *presence* of Sophia, of the Divine Light, and through them — of the God himself<sup>4</sup>. She is also open both to the

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<sup>1</sup> “Translucency! make up a smiling / Tale out of our nightmares, / As Maia her sheer veil rises! / Display us the pale paradises / Behind the autumnal leafage; / Behind the rainbow — a promise...”.

<sup>2</sup> “When our hearts’re stabbed with Translucent, / In dark we shall be filled with sun, / We shall shine like the dark inclusion / Of carbon transformed in diamond”.

<sup>3</sup> “A hundred empty mirrors pools are loosened, / In hundred flecks they drink the first day’s fleck, / In hundred specks of sound there’s sunrise speck. / The God looks in his world, and it’s translucent”.

<sup>4</sup> According to A. Hansen-Løve, V. Ivanov’s “solar myth” is based on the varying system of symbols of the Creator and his hypostases: “It <this myth> comprises <the images> from the sun (creating the world like the God-Father) and Apollonian and Dionysian sunrise

“earthly” and to the “heavenly” sight («Глядится Бог в свой мир...» (“The God looks in his world...”). Therefore, for anyone who sees her “from here” she herself might seem to some extent seeing — in other words, she does not only allow the God’s view to “pass” through herself, but she also (perhaps by virtue of her distinct “subjectness”) possesses her personal capability to see — to be a “beholding sphere”, as stated in the poem «Сфинкс» (“Sphinx”) (from the book «Кормчие звезды» (“Pilot Stars”)):

И новый свет нахлынувшей волною  
Мой дух воззвал, и зрящая среда  
Слепительной разверзлась глубиною<sup>1</sup>  
(Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. I, 648)

There is one more poem translated by Ivanov in 1915 which shows that this motive is implicit for the mythopoetics of the Divine Presence<sup>2</sup>. It is «Заводь» (“The Creek”) by Hayyim Nahman Bialik (1905) about a small watery place (“creek”) in the forest which symbolizes the ideal world of Shekhinah. After having been close to the character, she left him long time ago. The “creek”<sup>3</sup> is depicted as an ideal place: it is dreaming quietly,

Но что в заветной глубине  
Она таит — не разгадать...<sup>4</sup>

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and sunset of Phoebe up to the orthodox Sun-Christ and up to *solificatio* of the artist, who, as a ‘fire bearer’ fulfills his Promethean work” (Khanzen-Leve, 2003, 169). From this point of view, sunshine in the sphere of “translucency” can be really understood as a visible realization of the Divine Creative Powers or, in another aspect, of the Divine Presence.

<sup>1</sup> “And newest light with newly rushing wave / Called for my spirit, *and the beholding sphere / Was split apart with blinding, dazzling depth*”. Cf. in the poem «Наг возвращусь» (“I’ll come back naked”) (the collection «Свет вечерний» (“Evening Light”)): «О плаванье, подобное покою, / и кругозор из глуби сферы полой — / Твое ли, Вечность, взморье то и всполье? / Пред очесами тихими какою / Одеждою прикрою стыд мой голый?..» (“O sailing, which is calm and nothing more, / But scope of depth of the hollow sphere, / ’Tis thy, Eternity, this seashore and fieldshore? / Before the quiet eyes where I will go for / The clothes to cover shameful parts of mine?..”) (Ivanov, 1971–1974, Т. III, 563).

<sup>2</sup> On the history of this translation see: Timenchik & Kopel’man, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Originally הכייר, *breikha*, the Hebrew word for “pool”. V. Ivanov translates this word as «заводь» (“Creek”), probably to underline its feminine character («заводь» falls to feminine gender in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> “But what secret it keeps within, / We cannot find by any means...” The poems of Hayyim Nahman Bialik in Russian translations are available at: Bialik, 2016.

There is a «лесная храмина» (“forest temple”) around the creek, and in the very thicket there is

...погруженная в дрему,  
На ложе золотом, — юней  
Весенних роз и роз нежней –  
Лежит царевна прежних дней<sup>1</sup>.

The «царевна» (“princess”) is also sleeping, and she will not wake up until her fiancé, «жених» (a prince) comes to her. “The creek” itself, while dreaming, tries to understand,

...к чему  
В песках сухих, в лесах глухих  
Найти невесту мнит жених?<sup>2</sup>

The word “princess” (originally, in Bialik’s poem, הכלמת — Hebr. “a tsar’s daughter”) is commonly used instead of “Shekhinah”. She and “the creek” seem to symbolize one and the same substance: the princess, as if in the “dream” of “the creek”, is waiting for “the fiancé” and cannot understand why he is not coming, and “the creek”, in its turn, appears to be an original implementation of the princess’ dream lasting ever since. “The fiancé” does not come at all, but everything is filled with tense, though obscure, waiting for him.

In this text, there is practically the only mentioning of the name “Shekhinah” in Ivanov’s texts:

О мир блаженный, тайный свет  
Моих невозвратимых лет,  
Когда над отрока челом  
Шехина дрогнула крылом!<sup>3</sup>

This name seems to be a meaningful focus for all the details, intentions, and the tonality of the poem to become definite. As soon as it appears, the «лесной шатер» (“forest tent”) becomes a “temple” (Vyacheslav Ivanov uses here the word «скиния» (“tabernacle”), which is not used in the original), and “the creek” turns

<sup>1</sup> “...submerged in dreams, / On beds of gold, in youthful age, / More tender than the spring bouquets — / There lies a princess since th’ old days...”

<sup>2</sup> “...what for / In sands, in forests the fiancé / Imagines finding his fiancée?”

<sup>3</sup> “O blissful world, o secret light / Of my irrevocable life, / When over th’ adolescent’s fling / Shekhinah waved her blissful wing!”

into «лазоревый глаз» (“an azure eye”), reminding of Ivanov’s transparency and of the God’s Light:

Передо мной — не заводь вод,  
А глаз лазоревый... Открыт,  
Он в небо небом недр глядит,  
Неизреченных полон дум,  
Как леса непробудный шум...<sup>1</sup>

*Translated from Russian by Vladislav Bortnikov*

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<sup>1</sup> “I look at water — it’s not a creek, / But an azure, sky-like eye... / Its entrails turned towards the sky, / Full of unuttered thoughts around, / Like the eternal forest sound...”

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