

known in the West, and reduced to the status of a non-person in Soviet Russia, Rozanov nevertheless should be remembered for having probed one of the mysteries of Christian history: the affinity of many homosexual men and women for a religion that formally condemned and excluded them.

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RUMI (1207-1273)

Persian poet and mystic; founder of the Malawiyya order of dervishes. His name was derived from Rum (Central Anatolia), where he mainly lived, but he was also known by the sobriquet Mawlana. Rumi was born in Balkh and died in Konya.

After schooling in theology and mysticism, Jalal al-Din Rumi followed in the footsteps of his father Baha' al-Din Walad (d. 1231) and became a preacher. In 1244 he fell in love with a wandering dervish, Shams al-Din (ca. 1185-1248), who became the sun in his life: "A burning candle came and fired me with its naked flame." It was a mutual attraction, and each found in the other something for which he had been looking all of his life. Rumi saw Shams as "the Beloved," while Shams found in Rumi a true master and friend.

For six months they were inseparable, which made Rumi neglect his religious and social duties. This caused complaints from his wife and children and especially from his pupils, who jealously resented the intruder and even threatened him. Shams fled because of this, leaving Rumi behind full of grief: "Sweet moon without thy ray like a cloud I weep." But fortunately, Shams was found in Damas-

cus and brought back by Rumi's son Walad. When they met again they embraced and kissed each other warmly, and according to Walad nobody knew who was the lover and who the beloved.

But the jealousy and hate of the pupils knew no bounds and in 1248 they killed Shams with the help of Rumi's own son 'Ala' al-Din. All of this was concealed from Rumi, who thought that Shams had just left again. He felt desolate, his eyes and soul had gone, without him life was unbearable. He searched through Syria and wrote many poems with lamentations and cries of despair, but after a time he gave up hope and found comfort by identifying with Shams, so they were one after all.

The relationship between Rumi and Shams was unique because it was not the usual adoration for Divine Beauty in the form of a beautiful youth, as in Sufism, but a love between two older mystics of great personal strength and character. According to some sources, Shams was killed by having a wall thrown upon his head, which could symbolically refer to the Islamic story of Lot. Although this may suggest homosexual behavior, the writer thinks it designates the resentment of the pupils against a person whom they considered evil in general, because he had seduced their master away from the true religion. Rumi and Shams had a quite intimate and, probably, a purely spiritual friendship, in which sex had no part because it would interfere with the equality of friendship and the purity of love.

During the last twenty-five years of his life, Rumi found inspiration in music and dance and in relationships with the goldsmith Salah al-Din Zarkub (d. 1258), who became a mirror to his sun, and after his death, with Celebi Husam al-Din (d. 1283), who inspired him to write down his wisdom. This time he was more careful with his pupils, and threatened to desert them if they would not stop their malicious slander of his friends. In 1273 Rumi died at sunset; it is told that his cat refused food and died one week after him.

Rumi's attitude toward homosexual behavior was probably not different from that of his contemporaries. Dislike of passive homosexual behavior of adult men is reflected in his excoriation of the **mukhannath** as models of unreliability, who are bound to worldly pleasures, caught up in "forms" as women are, and not in "meanings" like real men. Loving boys was understandable because of their divine beauty, but Rumi warned against indulgence. Real love had to be spiritual, because love of forms was only relative to the love of God: "Human beauty is a gilt-gingerbread phenomenon, or else why does your beloved become an old ass? He was formerly an angel, but now seems to be a demon. The beauty he had was merely ephemeral."

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RUSSIA AND USSR

As an entity with links first to Byzantine and then to Western European culture, the Russian state may be said to have begun with the conversion to Christianity in 988. This development, which provided the foundation of a vast territorial expansion over the course of the centuries, brought much with it of cultural significance, including the characteristic Judeo-Christian ambivalence toward male homosexuality.

The Middle Ages. Male homosexual love appears in one of the earliest extant works of Russian literature, the *Legend of Boris and Gleb*, written by an anonymous but, one suspects, homophile monk at the beginning of the eleventh century. Combining history, hagiography, and poetry, this work enjoyed a remarkably wide circulation in subsequent centuries. It tells of the assassination in 1015, for

dynastic reasons, of two young Kievan princes by minions of their half-brother Sviatopolk the Accursed. Describing the murder of prince Boris, the author of *The Legend* brings up the favorite squire of Boris, "Hungarian by birth, George by name" (Hungarians and Kievan Russians had a common border at the time). Boris had a magnificent golden necklace made for George the Hungarian, for "he was loved by Boris beyond reckoning." When the four assassins pierced Boris with their swords, George flung himself on the body of his prince, exclaiming "I will not be left behind, my precious lord! Ere the beauty of thy body begins to wilt, let it be granted that my life may end." The assassins tore Boris out of George's embrace, stabbed George, and flung him out of the tent, bleeding and dying. While the *Legend of Boris and Gleb* is couched in the standard life-of-saint format that was imported from Byzantium, the author's sympathy for the mutual love of Boris and George comes clearly through as does his realization that the gratuitous murder of George resulted from his open admission of the nature of this love.

George's brother Moses, later canonized by the Orthodox church as St. Moses the Hungarian, was the only member of Boris' retinue to have escaped the massacre. His fate is told in *The Life of St. Moses the Hungarian*. Moses was captured by the troops of Sviatopolk the Accursed and sold as a slave to a Polish noblewoman who became enamored of his powerful physique. He spent the next year resisting this woman's efforts to get him to marry her, preferring the company of his Russian fellow prisoners. At the end of the year, exasperated by his refusals and taunts, the noblewoman ordered that Moses be given one hundred lashes and that his sex organs be amputated. Eventually, Moses found his way to the Kievan Crypt Monastery, where he lived as a monk for ten more years, constantly admonishing other monks against the temptations of women and sin. *The Life of St. Moses*