

In the Name of God: 100 Years of the *Imiaslavie* Movement in the Church of Russia

A Review Essay

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Schema-monk Ilarion, *In the Mountains of the Caucasus*, St. Petersburg, 2002. ISBN 5-88335-032-1. (Схимонах Иларион, *На горах Кавказа*).

Aleksei F. Losev, *The Name*, St. Petersburg: Aleteia publishing, 1997. ISBN 5-89329-020-8. (А. Ф. Лосев, *Имя*).

Sergei Bulgakov, *Philosophy of the Name*. Moscow and St. Petersburg, 1999.

(Сергей Булгаков. Сочинения в двух томах. Том второй. *Философия имени. Икона и иконопочитание*. – М: Искусство; СПб: Инапресс, 1999. – с. 13-175).

The last great dispute in the Church of Russia has slowly come back in that country to the forefront of discussions in dogmatic theology. The *Imiaslavie* (a.k.a. *Imiabozhie*) movement, which excited the Russian church circles a great deal in the 1910s has never really disappeared, but for most of the 20th century it was largely an intellectual pursuit of churchmen and thinkers associated with St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris.¹ The founder and the first head of the Institute, Fr. Sergei Nikolaevich Bulgakov, was a defender of *Imiaslavie*.

¹ Saint-Serge Institut de Théologie Orthodoxe, <http://www.saint-serge.net/>

The movement denounced in 1913 by the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in Russia has produced some interesting, but very controversial works. The book titled *Philosophy of the Name* (Философия Имени) by Sergei Bulgakov was published posthumously in 1953 in Paris, and was not available in Russia until the 1990s. By the end of the 1990s, the book that started the movement, *In the Mountains of the Caucasus* (На горах Кавказа), was once again published in Russia – after being banned for more than 80 years. In 1997, Aleksei Losev's selected works were published in St Petersburg under the title *The Name* (Имя).

Imiaslavie (literally, [those who] 'glorify the name') or *Imiabozhie* (literally, 'the name of God') movement was the last great dispute in the Russian Church before the Bolshevik takeover of the country. The controversies generated primarily stemmed from its main dictum: "the name of God is God (himself)." Some important names in the Russian Church and society were associated with either defending the movement or denouncing it as dangerous or heretical. Well known priests, and authors, Pavel Florenski and Sergei Bulgakov were defenders, so was monk-priest and a former military officer and an explorer of Africa Anton (Bulatovich), and Grigori Rasputin – a controversial public figure linked with the Russian royal family. Among the critics were Archbishop Antony (Khrapovitsky), Archbishop Sergiy (Stragorodskiy, the future Patriarch), Archbishop Nikon (Rozhdestvenskiy), theologian S. V. Troitskiy, Priest John (Vostorgov, glorified by the Church in Russia in 2000, martyred in 1918 during the Russian Civil War). Aleksei Losev, probably the most influential Russian philosopher of the Soviet period, was a defender and promoter of *Imiaslavie*. Two Ecumenical Patriarchs of Constantinople, Joachim III and Germanus V, also condemned the teaching, in 1912 and 1913 respectively. Emperor of Russia, Nicholas II (glorified by the Russian Church in the 1990s), Metropolitan Vladimir (Bogoiavlenskiy, martyred during the Russian Civil War, glorified by the Church in 1992), and Metropolitan Makariy of Moscow got involved trying to overcome the friction between the *Imiabozhniki* and the Church.

Schema-monk Illarion, the author of *In the Mountains of the Caucasus*, never dreamed of generating a movement within the church, let alone creating a firestorm and triggering a split among the Russian monks on the Holy Mountain. Not seeking fame or public attention, he published the book anonymously. Illarion dedicated the book to the Jesus prayer, and its importance in the life of monks. When the book was released, he lived as a hermit in remote areas of the Caucasus, having received training and preparation for this on Mount Athos.

Without a doubt, he was convinced that he was not promoting anything that was un-Orthodox or against the Church Tradition. Instead, the book was intended for those who wanted to know about hermit's life, the power of prayer, and for those who were contemplating monastic life. Monk Illarion was specifically concerned with the Jesus prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner."² Indeed, the book successfully cleared the official Imperial censor's desk and was issued in 1907. The volume was so well received that within five years it saw two more editions: in 1910 and 1912. St Elizabeth (Elizabeth of Hesse, Grand Duchess Elizaveta Fyodorovna of Russia) helped with funds for its subsequent publications.

Imiaslavie or *Imabozhie* has not developed in a single coherent doctrine, but rather appears to be a series of diverse opinions and beliefs about the nature of the name of God. The initial group of the followers of both monks and laypeople were immediately divided in their understanding of the dictum "the name of God is God,"³ and ranged from those who reportedly believed that the letters and/or sounds themselves were imbued with divine grace, to those who developed much more sophisticated philosophical schemes to defend the claim. Priest-Monk Anton (Bulatovich), and subsequently, Priest Sergei (Bulgakov) belonged to the latter group. In the pre-revolutionary Russia, the *Imiaslavie* movement was primarily associated with Monk Anton's name, as he published widely on the subject, and besides, he was a celebrity of sorts from the days of his military life and exploits in Ethiopia.

Excitements in Russia caused by *Imiaslavie* controversies were fuelled with the adoption of the movement by a large group of Russian monks on Mount Athos. Losev, who was a contemporary of these developments as a young student (he was born in 1893 and died in 1988) summarizes the events in his "*Imiaslavie*" article originally written for the German reader.⁴ According to him, *In the Mountains of the Caucasus* did not become a bestseller in Russia as much as it

² As cited by Monk Illarion in *The Mountains of the Caucasus*: «Господи, Иисусе Христе, Сыне Божий, помилуй мя грешнаго» (Господи, Иисусе Христе, Сыне Божий, помилуй мя грешнаго), p. 59.

³ In Russian: Имя Божие есть Бог, or Имя Божие есть Сам Бог ("the Name of God is God Himself").

⁴ Losev's volume contains more than 30 of his "selected works, translations, conversations, research, and archival material."

attracted wider attention because of the controversies in Russian monasteries of Mount Athos, where harsh disputes emerged, apparently, from casual conversations among monks. This caught attention of both the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Holy Synod in Russia. In September 1912, Patriarch Joachim III of Constantinople sent a message to the Hegumen of the Russian St. Panteleimon monastery on Mount Athos, in which he criticized the dangerous aspects of *Imiaslavie*. The issue was subsequently investigated by scholars of the Halki Theological School, who found the *Imiaslavie* teaching to be incorrect. Accordingly, in April 1912, the new Patriarch Germanus V, dispatched a note to Mount Athos informing them of the findings.

Surprisingly, the Russian followers of *Imiaslavie* on Mount Athos simply ignored the messages by the Patriarch of Constantinople, their spiritual father, and in January of 1913, St. Andrew's Monastery (Skete) there elected Monk David, an outspoken proponent of *Imiaslavie* as its Hegumen. This was an open rebellion by monks of St. Andrew's, and to make things worse, monks in St. Panteleimon's Monastery were openly divided in two factions, too. Monk Anton (Bulatovich), a vocal defender of *Imiaslavie*, was at this point in St. Andrew's Skete. All monasteries, including those populated by Russians, are under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, but since the two Russian houses actively rebelled against the Patriarch, it became clear that Russian authorities had to step in to sort things out. Soon after the election of Monk David, the heads of all the monasteries on Mount Athos issued a decision forbidding participation in divine services to all the inhabitant of St Andrew Skete.

Finally, in May 1913, the Holy Synod of the Church in Russia examined the issue and heard three independently prepared reports by two bishops and one lay theologian. All three reports argued that *Imiaslavie* was a "non-Orthodox" teaching. The Holy Synod accepted this view, and in the decision drafted by Archbishop Sergiy, the teaching was condemned, but compared to previous criticism of *Imiaslavie* (this meeting was preceded by numerous private opinions voiced and published both by clergy and laymen), the findings of the Holy Synod avoided extreme criticism and were comparatively mild. It was also decided that *Imiabochnik* was a more appropriate name for the follower of *Imiaslavie*, than *Imiaslavets* – strangely, the former does carry more negative connotations when uttered in Russian, although in translation it simply denotes a follower of 'the name of God' – a rather respectable sounding term.

In the May 18 1913 decision by the Holy Synod in Russia there were made three significant points. One, the name of God was recognized as holy and divine,⁵ and was affirmed that God and name of God shall not be separated or conceived as separate from each other. However, the Holy Synod also stressed that God is God, and His name is only a name, and not “God Himself or His nature (свойства), the name of an object and not an object itself,⁶ and therefore cannot be recognized or called neither God (which would be absurd and heretical), nor Divinity,⁷ because it is not energy of God.”⁸ Two, the name of God pronounced in prayers could perform miracles, but not because it is God, but because God sees our faith and sends His blessings to us as He promised in Mathew 9-2. Three, holy mysteries are performed not due to the faith of a celebrant or the faith of the attendant or due to us pronouncing the name of God, but due to the faith and prayers of the holy church, which performs these mysteries because of the powers granted to it by the Lord.⁹

The intercession by the Russian Church failed to restore calm and quite on Mount Athos. After this, the Russians decided to resort to a heavy-handed approach, a method not unfamiliar in that country, and dispatched a small navy detachment to Mount Athos headed by a gunboat. After brief talks of May-June 1913 failed, in July 1913, the soldiers stormed the St. Panteleimon’s Monastery, and dragged the *Imiaslavtsy* monks out in a rather harsh and undignified manner. The *Imiaslavtsy* of St Andrew’s surrendered voluntarily, after which all but 40 monks who were judged to be too weak to travel, were taken to Russia. Some monks rejected *Imiaslavie* on the spot and signed the necessary papers, few did so in Russia and were sent back to Mount Athos. About 40 monks out of more than 800 captured were put in jail, and the rest were exiled to various parts of Russia.

In August 1913, the Holy Synod adopted another resolution on *Imiaslavie*, this one with stricter language and formulations. Monasteries throughout Russia

⁵ “Divine” – божественно.

⁶ There are no definite or indefinite articles in Russian – the language of the decision compares a name in general with an object in general.

⁷ “Divinity” – Божество.

⁸ Losev, *The Name*, pp. 12-13.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

were asked to make their monks sign a document condemning the erroneous teaching of *Imiaslavie*. Soon afterward; however, the measures against the followers of the movement were relaxed due to the intercession by the Czar, Nicholas II, and a couple of local level church edicts made things more conciliatory. With the outbreak of the Great War, some *Imiaslavtsy* were pardoned and were allowed to return to clerical activities, the most notably, Priest-monk Anton (Bulatovich), was reinstated and allowed to join the armed forces as a chaplain. The Russian revolutions of 1917, and subsequent civil war, prevented the Russian Church to do a follow-up study of the issue. Some influential theologians, such as Pavel Florensky and Sergei Bulgakov spoke in defense of *Imiaslavie*, but the fires of Bolshevism swept the participants of this dispute away and completely changed the landscape of their homeland.

Imiaslavie did not disappear completely. In the 1920s, many followers joined the Catacomb Church of Russia, others, like Sergei Bulgakov, continued their work in exile. Still others, Father Pavel Floresnky among them managed to survive openly in the new regime, at least for some period of time. For all practical purposes, the *Imiaslavie* dispute remains unresolved in the Russian Church. Archbishop Illarion (Alfeev), one of the contemporary intellectual leaders of the Church in Russia, authored a massive volume on the *Imiaslavie* disputes, in which he notes that the door on this dispute has not been completely closed yet.¹⁰

Had the Schema-monk Illarion offered a badly written volume more than 100 years ago, this dispute about the names would have never developed. But the book was well written and articulated, it not only stressed important theological points, but described the rich spiritual life of the hermit monk, praised beauty of the wilderness, and invited the reader for a spiritual journey. It did not; however, formulate a new movement; the reasoning behind the dictum ‘the name of God is God’ is briefly explored in Chapter 3, while Chapters 4, and 26 are intended to support the claim. In other words, of almost 900 pages of text, only one brief chapter is dedicated to the reasoning behind the dictum that became the foundation of *Imiaslavie*, and a couple of more chapters are given to support it.

¹⁰ Bishop Illarion (Alfeev), Священная тайна церкви. Введение в историю и проблематику имяславских споров (*Holy Mystery of the Church: An Introduction to History and Problems of the Imiaslavie Disputes*). Moscow: Oleg Abishko Publishing, 2007, pp. 912, ISBN 978-5-903525-05-8.

His intention was to demonstrate that there is this “internal unity” between the hearts of the faithful and that of God.

(The volume is composed of three parts, of which the first is dedicated to the name of God and Jesus prayer, the second – to the person of Jesus Christ, and the third contains spiritual correspondence by a hermit elder. In Part I, Chapters 1-2 are introductory. Chapters 5-7, 19, 38-39, 41 are given in a form of questions and answers exploring such topics as the name of God, Jesus prayer, the meaning of life, faith in God; Chapters 8, 29-34 are dedication to a description of natural beauty of the Caucasus; Chapters 9, 43-44 provide a brief biography of “the elder” – presumably of the teacher of Monk Illarion, his farewell and repose; Chapters 10-18, and 27 are dedicated to prayer in general, and to the Jesus prayer in particular, with its various ‘degrees;’ Chapters 20-25, 28 offer commentaries regarding human spirit, human heart, human dignity, and spiritual world; Chapters 35-37, 40, 42 explore feelings and thoughts of a hermit monk. Part 2 and 3 of the volume are loosely organized, and are not divided into thematic chapters).

This is what Monk Illarion had to say about his understanding of the divine nature of the name of God:

Chapter 3. In the Name of God there is Present God Himself

First of all, we have to confirm for ourselves the immutable truth, which is in agreement with both Divine revelation and with well-founded concepts of the mind, that in the name of God there is present God Himself – with all His essence and with (all) His infinite properties. Of course, this we have to understand spiritually – with the enlightened heart, and not with the mind of the flesh, which improperly invades the spiritual realm, desiring to comprehend corporeally spiritual things, and being unable to understand, objects: “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?”(John 6:52)? Or objects due to its complete inability to understand the case: “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” (John 3:4). However, the Lord says: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6), that spiritual objects should be understood spiritually, in the light of them being illumined with grace.

....

It cannot be otherwise. The Lord is intelligent, spiritual being [accessible through] contemplation, and so is His name; in an equal manner, our souls are spiritual, thinking beings,

....

In a word, all this happens in the realm of spirit, where nothing corporeal takes place. And from this point of view, everyone should understand that it is impossible to separate the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ from His blessed Person. Knowing this, and moreover feeling this highest mystery, is so precious in our spiritual life that it serves as its center and foundation. And that is why one speaks about [this subject] with such persistence, force, and conviction...¹¹

Monk Illarion does not elaborate his understanding of the issues much further. It appears from his text, that he was more concerned with the subject of Jesus prayer, and its relation to the lives of faithful, than he was with the formula ‘the name of God is God.’ But his ideas struck the cord in unexpected ways and gave the beginning to a whole new movement. *Imiaslavtsi*; however, did not think they were creating anything new. In fact, they repeatedly claimed that they were the true followers of the original and ancient tradition of the church. However, the teachings and expressions by Church Fathers and saints they cite – none of them advance the claim dear to *Imiaslavtsi*, and all of them fall within the three parameters outlined by the Church of Russia in its February 1913 decision. No church father or saint, in Russia or outside Russia, has ever claimed that the name of God was God. At the same time, no one has denied that the name of God was holy and divine. From the contemporaries of the original *Imiaslavtsi*, St John of Kronstadt often praised the name of the Lord and its significance in the lives of the faithful. His words have been cited by *Imiaslavtsi* to show that John of Kronstadt had the same view on the subject – his words calling the faithful to respect the name of God (and that of Mother of God and those of Angels and the saints), not to use it in vain, for “the name of the Lord is the Lord Himself – the Spirit ever-present and filling all things; the name of the Mother of God is the Mother of God Herself, the name of Angel – Angel, [that of] a saint – a saint.”¹² It is the most unlikely that St. John was making an ontological

¹¹ Monk Illarion, *In the Mountains of the Caucasus*, pp. 57-58.

¹² Cited from his *My Life in Christ (Моя жизнь во Христе)*: <http://www.hamburg-hram.de/ioann/wp-print.php?p=2380>

argument, but instead he was engaged in rhetoric, as most evidently, the name of St Nicholas, for instance, is not St Nicholas himself.

Without stepping into a philosophical drama, the first difficulty the *Imiaslavie* dictum encounters is rather obvious and plain: if the statement “the name of God is God” is true, then the statement “God is the name of God” must also be true. Since God cannot have parts and is not a process, the *Imiaslavie* dictum cannot be understood as a claim that something specific is part of something more general. Instead, the dictum implies tautology – a complete equality of both sides of the statement is implied. However, such a claim would be a most pointedly absurd, as God cannot be reduced to a name, even if it is His own. Therefore, both Losev and Bulgakov dedicate a significant portion of their theological works to explaining this conundrum *Imiaslavie* faced from the get go: how could the name of God, in fact, be God?

Bulgakov criticizes those *Imiabozhniki* who believe in the equality of the two sides of this statement, and rejects similar claims by “fanatical *Imiaslavtsi*.” He denies that the verb “is” in the dictum means either equality or identity of the concepts. Bulgakov insists that in the sentence “the name of God is God” the second word “God” is a predicate. He does not elaborate; however, whether “the name of God” is the subject of the same sentence. If “the name of God” is the subject, and “is God” is the predicate, then in this sentence “the name of God” is modified by “is God” – according to traditional grammar, the predicate modifies the subject, provides information about it, explains what the subject is doing, what the subject is like, and indeed, what the subject is. There are two difficulties with Bulgakov’s grammatical argument: if the “the name of God” is the subject, and “is God” is the predicate,” then “God” in the predicate will be the object, but to insist on this and explore it further would make this and other similar theological arguments absurd – the name of God cannot be possibly be defined or modified by God either semantically or ontologically. The second problem with this claim is that even if Bulgakov is correct, the statement “the name of God is God” remains fully reversible. To draw a parallel, in the statement “she is a girl,” “she” would be the subject and “is a girl” – the predicate. If the statement is reversed, “a girl is she,” the sentence becomes awkward, but the meaning remains the same. Further, because in our example it is communicated that a specific person (“she”) belongs to a class of objects (“girl”), the statement is not tautological: “she” is a “girl,” but not all “girl” are “she” (or her). However, in the *Imiaslavie* dictum both the subject (“the name of God”) and its predicate (“is

God”) represent the most universal and general thing there is, God. Therefore, the dictum is not only fully reversible, but it is also tautological: both the subject and the predicate signify exactly the same thing. But this is one conclusion Bulgakov wanted to avoid.

Losev also understands that without further qualifications the *Imiaslavie* dictum is easily reducible to the absurd claim of God being His own name. He clarifies things differently, and explains that *Imiaslavie* has devised this “mystical formula,” which needs to be spelled out. He writes:

... the exact mystical formula of *Imiaslavie* will sound like this: a) the name of God is energy of God, inseparable from the essence of God itself,¹³ and therefore is God himself. b) However, God is distinct from His energies and from His name, and that is why God is not His name or a name in general... (p. 15).

Losev’s ontological argument is more sophisticated than a grammatical explanation offered by Bulgakov; however, he, too, falls into difficulties that resemble scholastic arguments waged in the western church through the Middle Ages. The idea that energy of God is God were established by the Orthodox Church in the 14th century as a result of teachings by St. Gregory Palamas. He distinguished between God’s essence and God’s energies – between what God is, and what God does in relation to His creation, and in particular, to humans. A human being cannot know the essence of God, but could know God through His energies. Biblical references for this are Hebrew prophets, and from the New Testament the uncreated light of Mount Tabor that Apostles Peter, James, and John witnessed as the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ. Losev’s argument that the name of God is energy of God has a couple of significant theological and logical errors. One, the name is not necessarily something that God does in relation to His creation – this could be so or it may not be – the name could be just a human construct, we just do not know, and the Bible has no specifics about this. Two, it is not clear whether the name is one of many energies of God or it is the same as God’s energy. If it is the latter, the claim makes no sense and contradicts Biblical narratives, as many prophets knew God not necessarily through His name only, and the light of Mount Tabor was something else besides the name. If it is the former, the claim implies that God’s energies has at least two distinct parts, of

¹³ In the original: “Имя Божье есть энергия Божия, неразрывная с самой сущностью Бога, и потому есть сам Бог.”

which one is His name. This; however, makes no sense in Orthodox Christian theology, as per definition God could have no distinct parts.

Schema-monk Illarion, he who inadvertently started this movement, never engaged in philosophical discourse or sophisticated defence of his thesis. In Chapter 3 of his book (pp. 57-59, 60, 63), Monk Illarion explains his line of thought in a simple and concise manner. In devising and communicating the dictum “the name of God is God,” he assumed two things: 1) language and thought are essentially one and the same, one cannot exist without the other, and 2) there is no distinction in language between the signifier and the signified, they are assumed to be ontologically indistinguishable.¹⁴ Both assumptions are erroneous, but such mistakes are easy to make, especially if one is reasoning about such matters in early 20th century.

It would be natural to assume that thought and language are the same phenomenon, that one cannot exist without the other: after all, human thoughts are expressed through words, and words do not make sense without thoughts behind them. However, they are not the same thing: language may not exist without thought, but thought could exist without language. For instance, people sometimes experience moments that are divine or aesthetically exceptional or emotionally moving and cannot find the words to express their thought or emotions. Another example would be the infants – the infants could think, but they do not have language to communicate those thoughts. Monk Illarion implies in his reasoning that the mental image of God that people have (or the most spiritual monks could have) is necessarily identical with God’s energies, but there is no way to prove or ascertain this, and even if this were possible, the ascertained knowledge will be impossible to communicate, as there is a good chance of these mental images and the words associated with them to be subjective, and dependent on one’s education, maturity or the level of spiritual enlightenment. In other words, human beings have neither mental instruments to prove such things nor they possess revealed knowledge through Holy Scriptures to convincingly argue their existence.

¹⁴ Ferdinand de Saussure, a French linguist, who first made a distinction between the signifier and the signified was contemporary of Monk Illarion, and was developing his linguistic ideas at the same time, but his collected lectures were published by his former students, few years after his death in 1913.

Further, Monk Illarion's perception of reality relies on the assumption that a mental image or an idea of an object is essentially the same thing as the word describing it: God as a spiritual reality is the same as a spiritual name describing it. This is; however, an incorrect assumption: one's mental image or an idea of chair is not the same thing as the word "chair." Monk Illarion makes this connection between God and His essence as he argues that "the Lord is intelligent, spiritual being [accessible through] contemplation, and so is His name,"¹⁵ implying that God and His name to be made, so to speak, of the same 'stuff.' Further, he argues that "all these takes place in the spiritual sphere, where nothing material is present."¹⁶ In fact, words, language, and therefore, names, have both abstract (ideal) and material sides, the latter being the sounds people make or symbols they draw to communicate the meaning.

It should be noted that *Imiaslavie* movement has not spread beyond the Church in Russia and has remained localized as both a church teaching and a philosophical doctrine. It may well be that reasoning behind *Imiaslavie* is closely tied with distinct characteristics of the Russian language, its poetic nature, its accommodation of rhetorical and factual in the same argument, and its ability to communicate both general and specific in the same sentence. English language, in comparison, is much more precise and tolerates very little semantic ambiguity. In Russian, it is possible to state that 'the name of God is energy of God' without specifying whether "energy" is plural or singular and whether it is one of His energies or it is the energy itself – Russian language has no definite or indefinite articles. Russian also makes it easy to confuse a rhetorical proclamation with a statement of fact: St John of Kronstadt's proclamation of the Lord being His name, and the name of a saint being the saint, most definitely was not intended as a factual statement, much like the Biblical passage in which Jesus says "I am the door" (John 10:9) does not imply Jesus being a physical door with hinges and handles.

Arguments and ideas *Imiaslavie* has generated are intellectually very interesting, and thought provoking. But there are very good reasons why this teaching has not been adopted as part of the church doctrine, but instead rejected as erroneous, and even condemned as heretical. The basic postulate of *Imiaslavie*

¹⁵ *In the Mountains of the Caucasus*, p. 58.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

cannot be coherently communicated in a concise and precise manner, so that it is understood by all mature faithful, but requires sophisticated elaborative efforts, and even those fail to pass tests of logic and scholarly examination. Besides, the chief danger of *Imiaslavie* teaching has been demonstrated by its own history: there is a good chance of people misinterpreting it entirely, and falling into grave error and practices that may include worship of material objects and sounds.

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