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RADISHCHEV'S SPIRITUAL QUEST

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Alexander Radishchev is best known for the unenviable fate that resulted from the publication of his book. A Russian intellectual of the eighteenth century, Radishchev was schooled in Leipzig, served as a state official, wrote and then privately published the book *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (1790). Radishchev later destroyed most of its copies, but what passed to the public was enough to cause an uproar. The book is not by any means a literary masterpiece. It is a collection of disparate reflections and observations made during a traveler's journey and uses many different figures as Radishchev's spokesmen. In these reflections he criticized, directly or indirectly, the Russian social and political system, particularly the serfdom among most of the population and the autocracy of the tsarina. The book was read thoroughly and commented by Catherine II herself, whose notes became a basis for his death sentence. The sentence was reversed in the last moment, and Radishchev was sent to Siberia for 10 years, where he served half of the time and was released by Catherine's successor after her death.

In the *Journey*, Radishchev wrote as a representative of his age, an eighteenth-century enlightened gentleman wishing to improve society through the power of reason – reason which was opposed to traditional religion. Because of that, he has frequently been considered a revolutionary, a materialist, an atheist. He was none of these. He wanted evolutionary changes in Russia; he sincerely believed in God, and, for him, the soul was a substance of a different nature than matter. Yet the theological aspects of Radishchev's thought are often secondary in the discussion of Radishchev's views, in spite of the fact that his second most important work, *On man, on his mortality and immortality*, is a philosophical work that includes a great deal of theological and eschatological discussion. The work was written in Siberia, published posthumously, and was clearly

the result of Radishchev's need to clarify for himself the eschatological questions, the need of the heart of a man who narrowly escaped the death sentence.

G o d

Radishchev's theology is, in a way, rather simple, not to say simplistic. He did not question the existence of God. God's existence was as natural and obvious to him as the existence of natural objects.[1] Radishchev was not interested in presenting any proof of the existence of God. In this disinterest, he followed the tradition of Orthodoxy in which proofs of existence of God are, in fact, offered, but they are far from primary interest of theologians as has been the case in Western Christianity. Radishchev was satisfied with the statement that we have an inborn feeling of dependence on this Being ("A conversation about who is a son of the fatherland", 1.220).[2]

God is omnipresent by also living in man (2.122). He is also omnipotent, however, He limits Himself by the laws He created. Everything that occurs in nature is miraculous, but traditionally understood miracles as violations of natural laws are, in Radishchev's mind, incompatible with God's nature (2.122). Each miracle, as a violation of natural laws, would be "ridiculing the supreme almighty God and each miracle-worker is a blasphemer" (2.128). God manifests Himself in nature through inviolable natural laws that He created. How else would we know about God if it were not for nature? (2.122).[3] This rhetorical question is but a shadow of the proof from design.

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[1] "Radishchev does not argue about the existence of God, he simply accepts it as a fact," says J. A. Harvie, *A Russian view of immortality*, "Religious Studies", 10 (1974), p. 481.

[2] References are made to A. H. Радищев, *Полное собрание сочинений*, Москва, Академия Наук СССР, т. 1, 1938, т. 2, 1941, т. 3, 1952, in particular, to the following works: *Путешествие из Петербурга в Москву*, т. 1, сс. 227-392; [Положив непреоборимую преграду...], т. 1, сс. 399-410; *О человеке, о его смертности и бессмертии*, т. 2, сс. 39-141.

[3] "God is not only the creator of the universe, but He is the basis for its order", as phrased by Jesse V. Clardy, *The philosophical ideas of Alexander Radishchev*, London, Vision Press, 1964, p. 114.

The almighty, omnipresent God is also eternal, as expressed by the speech of God Himself before the moment of creation in the poem "Creating the world" (1.18):

> One forever and ever,
> Almighty, infinite God;
> Always I will be, I am and I was,
> The one making everything everywhere,
> I contain myself in myself,
> All is in me today, I lived in all.

God is the creator of all things brought into existence by His word: "May all things appear," and thus God, a self-subsisting being, is the first cause of all things (1.402).

There is a clear monotheism in Radishchev's concept of God whose attributes are acknowledged by the Orthodoxy in which he was thoroughly educated as a child. However, Radishchev's God is not quite the God of Christianity. He never mentioned the Trinity; his references to Christ were very rare and it is not always clear if he recognized Christ's divinity; nowhere were biblical references used to determine the attributes of God.[4] Radishchev's God is a universalist God that can be accepted by most if not all cultures, even by atheists: "Jehovah, Jupiter, Brahma, God of Abraham, God of Moses, God of Confucius, God of Zoroaster, God of Socrates, God of Marcus Aurelius, God of the Christians, oh, my God! Only You are everywhere… The atheist who rejects You, by recognizing the immutable law of nature, proclaims Your glory, praising You even more than our hymns, since penetrated to his depths by the beauty of Your creation, he begins to tremble" (Bronnitsy 1.269). In this universalist light, he saw a shamanist ritual among the Tunguses as an expression of "sentiment of supreme power of a being which cannot be known and whose grandeur manifests itself in the smallest things".[5] This universalist God manifests Himself through nature, and His existence is inscribed into the soul; that is, at least on these two accounts He can be universally recogni-

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[4] However, Biblical imagery and vocabulary is not infrequent in Radishchev's works: Е. Д. Кукушкина, *Библейские мотивы у А.Н. Радищева*, "Русская литература" 2000, no. 1, cc. 119-123.

[5] Letter to Vorontsov, June 1794, 3.461.

zed. Particular religions add certain things to this image of God, but when making any additions they recognize Him nevertheless, curiously, even those who reject Him. "God always remains God, seen even by those who do not believe in Him" (Torzhok 1.332). In sum, this is the God of philosophers rather than the God of religious beliefs, a grand concept rather than a personal God who stirs an emotional need for worship.

In the *Journey* Radishchev was not interested in theological problems, which were only marginally treated. His death sentence made theological interests very personal, and he concentrated on the problem of immortality of the soul. In the *Journey*, he hardly touched upon that point, but from his brief mention it is clear that he took for granted that the soul was incorporeal (Lomonosov 1.389) and already in the *Journey*, "some mysterious voice" proclaimed to him that "something will live forever", which is the soul, as is clear from following verses in which Cato says that he will live (after his suicide) in immortal youth (Bronnitsy 1.269). The problem of this voice and what it proclaims became the center of his treatise *On man* in which Radishchev presented views in favor of and against immortality of the soul. The views were projected into a wider philosophical and metaphysical plane that included the discussion of ontological dualism.

Matter and spirit

When contrasting matter and spirit, Radishchev wanted to make clear what attributes made their natures incompatible. The properties of matter are commonly assumed to be impenetrability, extension, form, divisibility, solidity, passivity, gravity; and attributes of the soul are thought, feeling, and life (2.74).

It is not obvious that impenetrability is a property of matter since even the hardest substances seem penetrable – cf. light going through solid glass – and on a microscopic level, most solid bodies are just empty space; consequently, the impenetrability of matter is an illusory attribute (2.78). The same is true of extension and form, although Radishchev offered little insight into the reason why that is (2.78). We may contend that because of the possible penetrability of bodies, the borderlines between two bodies interfere, but, still, light going through glass can be quite clearly seen – and thus has a form – and is distinguished from glass that has its own form.

Another property is divisibility, which means that an infinite divisibility of matter is possible since for each particle of matter we can imagine a smaller one (2.79, 75), but this remains only a possibility, and thus, infinite divisibility is imaginary and effectively nonexistent (2.85). However, equating possibility with being illusory and nonexistent is not quite cogent. The property of matter is claimed to be divisibility, that is, the possibility of infinite division, whether such a division will even be made or not. The attribute itself, with such a view, clearly exists. Therefore, it is not quite true that solidity and divisibility cannot be present in the same object, as claimed by Radishchev (2.79). An object can be solid and also divisible, although not divided (cf. 2.75).

There has to be a force that keeps things together, that is, holds different parts to form a distinct entity, a force that holds things interpenetrated or at least close together; otherwise, there would be chaos. This is the force of attraction. Also, a force is needed that keeps thing apart, a force of repulsion, so that the composition of the world is the result of an interplay of these two forces. And so, solidity is the consequence of attraction. And there are "some who rightly conclude that, in fact, in matter only attraction and repulsion without solidity exists" (2.80). In this, Radishchev referred to Priestley, who was explicitly mentioned as "guiding us in these judgments" (2.81) and who had defended the view that "matter has, in fact, no properties but those of attraction and repulsion" and the view of penetrability of matter which, by his admission, he borrowed from Boscovich and Mitchell.[6] With such a concept of matter, its passivity is by definition rejected. Forces are factored into the definition of matter, and thus, matter is active and its inactivity is but a creation of "an inflamed brain, is a fog and a shadow" (2.81).

Now Radishchev asked a question whether properties of matter can also be properties of spiritual substance (2.83). In his answer, he used the common definition of matter, with all the attributes he just argued approvingly after Priestley, to have been illusory.

First and foremost, impenetrability, said Radishchev, was an attribute of matter and of thought. Whatever exists, must be somewhere (2.83),

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[6] J. Priestley, *Disquisitions relating to matter and spirit*, London, J. Johnson, 1777 [reprint, New York, Garland, 1976], pp. 17, 19.

also a thinking being. Each object is separate and two beings cannot be in the same place at the same time. Thinking is also extended, since thinking is in the brain (2.84). In this, Radishchev made an ontologically feeble assumption that being somewhere is being in space. An immaterialist can retort that, true, spiritual substance is somewhere, or better yet, it simply is, but this somewhere does not have a spatio-temporal character as is the case for material objects.[7] Spiritual substance exists in an extratemporal and extraspatial sphere which does not allow for material entities. In this sphere, penetrability is possible, even indispensable, for the unity of this sphere.[8]

Matter is characterized by gravity that comes in the form of attraction and repulsion and counterparts of the two forces can also be found in spiritual substance – consider love and hatred, feeding, life (2.85). Furthermore, fire seems to be a necessary element of life; life seems to be always accompanied by feeling and thinking; feeling is similar to electric power and acts on our nerves like magnetic power, thus thinking, feeling, and life are attributes of an impenetrable, extended, solid entity since fire, electric and magnetic power are properties of such an entity (2.88-89).

All these arguments were given by Radishchev on behalf of partisans of the traditional concept of matter and advocates of the reduction of spirit to matter thus understood. To this end, he materialized the spirit, trying to infuse it with material attributes – successfully or otherwise. In this, he spoke as materialists of his day could speak, and in fact, have spoken. Although he was clearly attracted to Priestley's concept of matter, he did not use it in his proof of the monistic character of reality. Priestley was much more controversial and not many materialists would have agreed with him.[9] Although Priestley called himself a materialist, his ontological re-

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[7] That is why Herder could say that the spirit was beyond the boundaries of time and space and yet, "disembodied, it is at once in its place, in its circle, in the new land, to which it belongs," J. G. Herder, *Über die Seelenwanderung* (1782), in his *Sämtliche Werke*, Berlin, 1888 [Hildesheim, Olms, 1967], v. 15, S. 272.

[8] Consider the importance of penetrability in the monistic systems of Solovyov and Frank and also in Berdyaev.

[9] Today, in the light of the famous equation of Einstein, Priestley concept of matter as, basically, energy, would be much less controversial.

duction was done by spiritualizing matter. Rejecting penetrability and making matter a force by definition alone led to transferring traditionally spiritual attributes to matter and, in essence, making it matter only by name. In this way, he could, somewhat defensively, state that although God is incomprehensible, He is not of an immaterial substance since such substance does not exist.[10]

Mortality of the soul

Radishchev's discussion of ontology of matter and spirit was instrumental to his main topic, the problem of the immortality of the soul. Is it mortal or not? Radishchev gave an answer after inscribing the problem into a wider ontological scene. And thus, after presenting the materialist outlook of reality, Radishchev listed certain consequences of this theory of matter in favor of the mortality of the soul.

First, the materialist tries to dismiss the immortality of the soul as mere wishful thinking. It is a simple fact that those who enjoy life want it to continue; those who suffer, want an amend after death (2.89-90). If someone regrets the good that is lost with death, he should remember all the bad which is always greater in life than the good (2.90).

Next, those who advocate simplicity of the soul should answer the question: how can a simple entity act on compound things and the unextended act on the extended? How can the unextended be included in the extended and the incorporeal in the corporeal, like soul in the body? The incorporeal soul is just a nonbeing (2.91). This materialist counterargument should not be answered, as Radishchev did, that thought is *inside* the brain. Philosophically, that is uncertain. When defending the incorporeality of the soul and thus of thought processes, an argument can be made that although in the earthly life thought processes use the brain as their organ, it does not mean that thoughts exist *inside* the brain. Inside the brain exist physiological processes of the nervous system, synaptic firings, etc. which accompany thinking and are material carries, as it were, of thinking, but this does no place thought inside the brain. Material processes accompany the immaterial process of thinking, the former being spatio-temporal, the

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[10] Priestley, *Disquisitions relating to matter and spirit*, cit., p. 108.

latter taking place extraspatially and extratemporally. There is an earthly coupling of these two kinds of processes and an inscrutable type of interaction, but thinking as a mental activity does not have to be encased inside the brain, otherwise, there must be a search launched for the seat of the soul in the manner of Descartes, which Radishchev also indecisively attempted (2.84). If the immateriality of the soul is truly pronounced, then it is also a matter of philosophical consistency to maintain its immateriality in the discussion of the brain-mind interaction.

One materialist argument states that the harmonious cooperation of different organs does not require an overseeing soul. An assumption can be made, according to this argument, that everything has a purpose, and thus organs have, as it were, a reason to cooperate (2.90). However, teleology can hardly be squared well with the absence of rationality; therefore, the mind that created harmony among organs is tacitly assumed to exist unless a *fiat* is presumed that material reality is purposive by nature. Similarly, by definition it can be stated that activity is a property of elements; there is no need for a soul to explain motion. Life and thinking are properties of matter (2.89).

He immortality of the soul is defended by stating that the soul is a simple substance, therefore, it cannot break into parts, it cannot dissipate and thus is eternal (1.403).[11] However, the materialist asks, how can the simplicity of the soul be maintained if there are different organs which are compound? (2.91-92) Radishchev could retort that this is exactly because the soul is simple and undivided and so can meaningfully use different organs to create single impressions. Why should the composition of organs entail the composition of a governing superorgan, that is, the soul?

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[11] Moses Mendelssohn, *Phaedon*, London, J. Cooper, 1789 (1767) [reprint: New York, Arno Press, 1973], pp. 137-139. The proof of immortality from indivisibility originates in Plato; it is used by Descartes and then by Leibniz, *The confession of nature against atheists* (1669), in his *Philosophical papers and letters*, Dordrecht, Reidel, 1969, p. 113; the first, 1766 edition of Ernst Platner's *Philosophische Aphorismen* (§803, §1079); the importance of Platner's views for Radishchev is indicated by [Евгений] Бобров, *Радищев как философ*, in В. [И.] Покровский (под. ред.), *Алекандр Николаевич Радищев: его жизнь и сочинения. Сборник историко-литературных статей*, Москва, Типография Лисснера и Собко, 1907 [reprint: Oxford, Willem A. Meeuws, 1985], сс. 52, 60.

A sensualist, like Locke, could make the argument that all knowledge comes from perception and thus opposing senses to the mind is not sustainable (2.92). Yet Radishchev could have answered that this may be only in the earthly life, but even if it were always so, the argument only shows that the soul needs sensory perception to work, not that the nature of thinking and perception is the same. Continuing this materialist argument, it may be argued that the soul only knows as much as it is informed by the senses, and in the absence of perception one would not even know about his own existence since not even a single thought could emerge (2.93). However, assuming even this extreme form of sensualism, the total absence of perception would make the soul barren, not material. Next, the state of the soul depends on the state of the body (e.g., hunger) and its passions (2.93). As Radishchev later argued, the soul influences the body as well. Also, such influence does not make the body immaterial nor the soul material. It simply indicates the presence of a dependence whose mechanism may not be quite perspicuous.

In the next argument, it is indicated that dreaming is little dependent on the senses; and thought and when no dreaming takes place, neither does thinking (2.94). However, why not argue instead that dreaming is the state in which the ego is freest although we do not remember all that we saw in sleep, and thus pronounce thinking to be sometimes inactive.

The next argument placed doubt upon the idea that the soul can live after death without access to sensory data, and also upon the idea that because of the different state of the soul before and after death that the continuation of personal identity is interrupted (1.94-95). But because the soul constitutes this identity, by definition, man after death is the same as before. Also, an idea that Radishchev addressed later, after death the soul does not have to stop thinking simply because the influx of data through the senses ceases.

Although Radishchev only presented arguments for the mortality of the soul without specifically addressing them, he ended them addressing his *alter ego*, who listed them, with an exclamation "Oh you, speaking with my voice, cruel tyrant, mad barbarian, cold-blooded hater of man enjoying more than any other tormentor to torture [people]", you are the one who takes away any hope and makes life meaningless (2.96). There is no such outburst following dualist arguments at the end of *On man*, quite the

contrary, in fact, which clearly indicates where is Radishchev's allegiance in respect to immortality of the soul.

Immortality of the soul

In books 3 and 4 of *On man*, Radishchev presented the views in favor of the immortality of the soul, assuming that there were two universal laws in operation: Leibniz' law of continuity and the commonly assumed eighteenth century law of universal progress.[12]

When natural forces begin, they work constantly and gradually. "Nothing takes place by jumps, says Leibniz, everything in it [nature] [takes place] gradually". And thus, everything that exists cannot, even for one moment, be immutable. There is no moment in time that can be viewed separately; no two moments whose limits can be shown (2.99). And so life and death are not separate, as appears to our senses; they are but our judgments, not states of things.[13] "This is the first ray of hope... here is the end of torment, here is a new life!" (2.100). Between being and nonbeing there are intermediate stages. Therefore, being cannot turn into nonbeing and vice versa. Nature is not a cause of one or the other (2.101). After the death of the body, the soul's thoughts, desires, and passions do not disappear since that would mean perfect annihilation of the soul. But natural forces do not expunge anything perfectly, and so the soul is immortal (2.102).

In another proof, Radishchev relied on the law of progress which ruled in nature, with language playing a fundamental role in the progress of humankind (2.130). There is a hierarchy of beings, from inanimate nature to man, which points to the existence of invisible forces that exceed man (2.111). Man is not the crown of all creation, since his corporeality is so different from his spirituality that when finding similarity of the former with lower beings we cannot deny the existence of superior beings similar to us in respect to spirituality (2.112). No limit can be placed upon this

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[12] One of strong advocates of the latter law was Herder, see K. Bittner, *J. G. Herder und A. N. Radiščev*, "Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie", 25 (1956), S. 46.

[13] "There is no moment in time at which we could, strictly speaking, say, now the animal dies," states Mendelssohn, *Phaedon*, cit., p. 68.

progress. Effectively, this progress must continue indefinitely, and even eternity is insufficient to make it happen (2.135). The essence of humanness is the ability to think (2.136), and this ability has to develop after death when it will act by itself, in separation from the body. In this way, Radishchev projected his belief of universal progress into the hereafter.[14] He even said somewhat vacuously that the essence of the soul is incessant progress (2.136) – vacuously, because progress is a universal law and, in a sense, constant progress lies in the essence of everything that exists. In the future state, the soul may not exist completely separately from everything. It needed the body to act on earth, after death, man will have some new, unknown, but better organization that the soul will use for its activity, maybe even the ability to feel (2.140-141). In this way, Radishchev, without mentioning it, reverts to traditional Christian eschatology, which states that in the new world, resurrected people will have both soul and body, a new body, that is.

In objects composed of parts, there is order in composition and order in forces of elements. These forces limit or enhance one another, but there is no force that emerges only as the result of putting parts into a whole (2.104). If the soul, that is, the thinking force, were the property of composition, it would be the result of the order of the configuration of parts, or, as the force of the whole, it would be the result of the activity of parts. The harmony of sounds or of the configuration of bricks, and beauty are the result of comparison and thus they are present in the thought only. Therefore, "each composition, since it is related to comparison, has its principle in the thinking force" (2.105, 135). "Since each whole composed of parts, one being inside another, presupposes comparison of these parts, since comparison is the action of a thinking force, this force cannot be attributed to the whole composed of parts; because to say that means the same as saying that the thing originates from its own action" (2.106). In these arguments, Radishchev claimed that *order* of a composite whole is

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[14] The existence of souls begins "with a progress from one degree to another; their being is capable of perpetual growth and expansion: their propensities point visibly at infinity," argues Mendelssohn, *Phaedon*, cit., pp. 199, 162, 181. How far – asks Herder – can a man progress? Not far on earth, but that changes "when death demolishes the prison, when God plants us like flowers in entirely new field and surrounds us with entirely new environment", cit., pp. 273, 282.

in the mind of the beholder. However, because the whole is determined by the order of parts and the order of their forces, Radishchev argument effectively states that the whole exists only in thought. Does the house as a whole exist if no one is thinking about how the bricks are put together? Actually, it is hard to imagine anyone being able to grasp how all the bricks, tens of thousands of them, are put together. *Ergo*, the house does not exist, only bricks do. The argument resembles Berkeley's claim that things exist only when perceived. However, the absurdity of a real disappearance of objects when no one is watching in Berkeley's universe is avoided by the existence of the all-seeing God. Actually, Berkeley saw it as a strong argument for the existence of God. There is a God in Radishchev's argument who could be called upon to think about the orderly arrangement of parts of everything that exists; however, Radishchev did not use God's help here to maintain the real order of the real world. Without this help, Radishchev's argument is hardly convincing. Also, the world as a whole, by Radishchev's argument, lacks order. If order stems from comparison, with what would the world as a whole be compared? Could the problem be solved with God's comparing the order of the world with Himself? God is presumably a simple spiritual substance, with no parts, and thus orderliness could not be God's attribute just as color cannot be an attribute of an atom.

In the same vein, Radishchev also argued that the force of a whole depends on the forces of components. A mixture of yellow and blue hues is perceived as green. "If a new force, different from partial forces, should be understood as a whole, it is necessary that there has to exist a thinking subject who would compile it from the comparison or grasping of partial forces" (2.107). Would that mean that water would not extinguish fire if no one would have thought about the attributes (or forces) of hydrogen and oxygen? And how would this thinking help, considering the fact that the attributes of hydrogen (inflammability) and oxygen (maintaining fire) are quite contradictory to the attribute of water? The argument Radishchev offered should convince us that because the force (attribute) of a whole requires a thinking subject for its existence, "thinking power must stem from parts that are lacking such power". Thinking power can stem only from thinking power (2.107). There must be one soul to be able to derive conclusions from axioms, to be able to remember past events, to have a meaningful interplay of different concepts, to maintain the identity

of personality from one moment to another (2.108). That requires one soul; but, Radishchev added, the soul must have no parts, otherwise, there will exist a discord among parts (2.109). Why would there be discord among the parts of the soul should there be any parts? An argument could be made that the natural state of a compound soul would be harmony, and disharmony would be an unfortunate influence of the body. After all, the maintenance of the identity of personality is undermined in the inebriated who cannot remember what they did after a party (cf. 2.93). However, Radishchev was satisfied with this argument and concluded that "there can be no doubt any longer" that the soul is independent of the body and it gives body its movement, life, feeling, and thought. The soul is simple, unextended, indivisible, the seat of thoughts and feelings. Calling it material is groundless. Its force surpasses all natural forces. Also, a thinking being presupposes extension and formation. "A thinking being is needed to create a whole; without a thinking being there would be no past, no present, no future; there would be no graduality/progress, no continuation; time would disappear, motion would stop, old chaos would emerge and eternity would again come down" (2.109). The last conclusion is somewhat overstated. In Radishchev's universe, attributes of composites are constructed by the mind, but not the attributes of parts or, at least, atomic parts. If there were no mind, the world would exist in the state of perfect entropy, filling space and time with atomic elements. A perfect spatio-temporal chaos.

Man is a wonderfully organized being, at the top of the earthly ladder of earthly beings. Can we assume that the whole of man disintegrates and turns into nothingness? "No, the Divinity did not act so unreasonably! There would not be any sense in it, no goal, and the most perfect, almighty, eternal thought would be meaningless! What a blasphemy!" exclaimed Radishchev (2.114, 135). This is a moral argument that was only briefly mentioned, but it was quite popular in Radishchev's time: God is a perfect being and does nothing which would undermine this perfection; in particular He did not create anything in vain. And the destruction of something so wonderfully crafted as a human being seems to be quite unreasonable, particularly if rationality is assumed to be the divine attribute in man, an

element of the divine image.[15] In this way, the argument relies on the perfection of God and if this perfection is denied, the argument falls along with it.

On similar grounds relies an argument from desire that states that God put a desire of immortality in man, and thus He, a perfect being, could not have put in man a misleading desire.[16] Radishchev only briefly stated that man holds the conviction of his immortality (2.109) that is stronger than any proof. But rather than using it as an argument in its own right, he said that because of this conviction, rational proofs are not quite sufficient. Proofs of the heart are needed (2.110), which are really proofs from human experience.[17]

One proof consists in showing that spiritual force cannot be reduced to bodily forces. The soul is a different kind of substance from the body, although the soul uses the body as its organ in an inscrutable fashion. And so, Radishchev rejected Helvétius' claim that all human faculties, including reasoning, the power of comparison, and even memory, were mere attributes of physical sensation. Radishchev countered with the example of two eyes producing only one image which means that there is a force unifying sensations of both eyes into one image. And so it is in generating one compound image from different sensations (2.114). Granted, cognition uses perceptual data, and knowledge cannot be reduced to sensations. The concept of number and mathematics as a whole cannot be reduced to sensations; and with sensations alone – morality would disappear, "magnanimity, honesty, and virtue would be meaningless words". Newton

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[15] As to his corporeality, man is dust, his body is made out of elements that can be found in a stone. As to his rationality, man is a god (2.111), says Radishchev, alluding thereby to the Orthodox doctrine of deification.

[16] Cf. Mendelssohn, *Phaedon*, cit., pp. 39, 94-96; Platner, *Philosophische Aphorismen*, cit., §1092; Бобров, *Радищев как философ*, cit., p. 60.

[17] In this approach we can hear an echo of the wish expressed by Radishchev's Leipzig professor in the preface to his *Moral lectures* (1770, posthumously) where he wanted to lecture "not by means of mere proofs of reason, but also by statements of the heart and the voices of the inner feeling and of conscience," C[hristian] F. Gellert, *Moralische Vorlesungen*, in his *Sämtliche Schriften*, Berlin, Weidmann 1856, v. 6, S. 10; an influence of Gellert on Radishchev is acknowledged by Н. Д. Кочеткова, *Радищев и масоны*, "Русская литература", 2000, no. 1, cc. 105-106.

would be no better than a savage and the falling apple would only squash his nose (2.115). And the one who wants to reduce works of art and literature to sensations without imagination, and workings of the mind involved is a robot (2.115). Attention, the ability to focus on only one idea, is the best argument that the soul is a self-sufficient force (2.116). Dreams, sickness, even madness show that the soul can act independently of sensations (2.116). A very strong argument is language, the best if not the only organizer of thoughts (2.118). Also, the development of the child points to the self-sufficiency of the soul; for example, the same image is interpreted differently by a child and by an adult (2.117). Man can also separate himself from sensations and "live disembodied in the body itself" (2.118). For example, we can control our movements at will, although the mechanism is unknown. This makes us god-like figures: "Just like before the beginning of time, the eternal thought to act emerged, the Almighty said: may there be light – and it was. And you say to yourself: go – and you move. Oh, man! In your domain you are almighty! You are a son of God!" (2.119, 137). The soul also controls the body by not submitting to bodily desires, restraint from food in spite of hunger, but also action in spite of fatigue (2.119). The soul can cause sickness as well as healing, although we do not know how it does this (2.120). Suicide cannot be explained by bodily causes: how can "the compression of juices" bring a decision to commit suicide (2.123)? Acts of martyrdom cannot be reduced to bodily functions either" (2.123). And Radishchev quoted approvingly the words of Christian Garve: "blessed be even the infirmity of the sick body, so often teaching me how the spirit prevails over body!" (2.123). Radishchev knew from his own experience how the body could be fortified by "the exertion of spiritual force" (2.123).

Radishchev's proofs of immortality were hardly original, but they were very forceful. Ultimately, faith decides whether this immortality can be accepted, but proofs are certainly very helpful in fortifying such faith. It is worth noticing that Radishchev almost reluctantly referred to God the maker of the universe as the guarantor of the soul's immortality. He relied much more on the law of universal progress and the law of continuity. Particularly, the law of progress was uncontroversial in Radishchev's times, and thus using it as the foundation of his proofs could be understood. However, it seems that the law itself should ultimately be based on the attributes of God: just as the universe is His creation so are its laws,

including the law of progress. Because God is perfect, He wishes to have perfection for His creation by making progress a natural tendency of inanimate and animate nature. Therefore, although there is a theistic component in Radishchev's proofs, he made only indirect reference to it, thereby making his proofs more palatable for the deistic age.

Orthodoxy and unorthodoxy

There is also an important religious question about the fate of souls after death – the problem of salvation and condemnation. According to Radishchev, God does not reward nor penalizes anyone after death. There is an order in the universe that should not be violated. "What can be sweeter than the conviction that we went along the path designated for us?" Virtue is its own reward, vice its own punishment.[18] This is the result of conscience. And so, good deeds can bring peace and satisfaction by dispelling "light haze" that can cloud the soul. Evildoers, when they see virtue around them, are tormented by their misdeeds. "Why should we look for a paradise, why should we descend to hell: one is in the heart of the virtuous, the other lives in the soul of the evil" (2.138). Conscience so torments the evildoer that he finally turns away from evil. Conscience is like medicine that heals us – if not on earth, then in the hereafter. "Will the Father exclude from His embrace those healed by their conscience?" asks Radishchev rhetorically (2.138). By this, he promoted the idea of universal salvation. Everyone will be saved, will be embraced by God since conscience will simply force everyone to turn away from evil, now, or after death. By this, Radishchev embraced the idea of purgatory and disposed of hell altogether. Hell is a subjective feeling of torment in the face of sin,

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[18] Buddha; Ovid, *Ex ponto* 2.3. One form of this sentiment was advocated by Radishchev's three Leipzig professors, Christian Garve, even in the title of one of his later works, stated that virtue by itself makes man happy, *Die Tugend macht den Menschen glücklich* (1794), in his *Vermischte Aufsätze*, Breslau, Korn, 1800, v. 2, S. 1-16; very similarly, Gellert writes in his fifth lecture, "virtue is the only and sure way to our happiness (*Glückseligkeit*)," *Moralische Vorlesungen*, cit., p. 80. Also, Ernst Platner devoted many pages in the second volume of his *Philosophische Aphorismen* to the problem of virtue being the highest subjective determination of man and a means to the highest objective determination, happiness (*Glückseligkeit*).

not a place in which souls are subjected to torment.[19] The same sentiment was expressed in his "Prayer" (1.136):

> You, Whom all creation proclaims everywhere.
> Listen to the last voice: [even] if I sinned,
> I searched for your law, [and] I loved you in my soul;
> Without hesitation I look into eternity;
> But you gave me birth and I do not understand
> That God, by Whom in my days shined the ray of happiness,
> When life will end, He [will] torment me forever …

In that spirit we may understand his pleading: Almighty God "accept the imperishable offering of my soul and heart, accept repentance of a sinner and do not turn Your face from me!",[20] although it would be more difficult to fuse this understanding with his "Testament to my children" (1790), where he wrote: "remember, friends of my soul, always remember that God exists and that we cannot make one step, we cannot have one thought that is not under His almighty hand. Remember that He is just and merciful and that a good deed will not remain without reward nor a bad one without punishment. And begin every task by asking for His help and come to Him with your ardent prayers. Oh, what consolation you will find in Him!" (1.338). If reward and punishment is but a subjective feeling, resulting from a state of conscience, why ask God for any reward? Recognizing God's providence, thereby considerably weakening a deistic understanding of God, makes the problem of rewards and punishments much less subjective: if the state of conscience depends on God's help, then, in a way, paradise or hell are infused into the soul from the outside, from God. Paradise and hell, in this way, would be objective, independent of the state of the soul, after all. However, the tendency toward a subjective and thus unorthodox treatment of the problem of eternal reward and punishment is very pronounced. Unorthodox is also his treatment of suicide, which he considered to be an offering given to God: God gave life, but he takes upon himself to decide when the life should end (Sofiia 1.230). Unorthodox is the understanding of the basic laws to guide man. In the "Ode" (1.3) he stated:

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[19] The idea of a subjective hell was later promoted by Berdyaev.

[20] Letter to Sheshkovskii, 26 July 1790, 1.341.

Almighty God, giver of the good,
You, the Creator of natural goods,
You put Your law in the heart

But what is this law, "the fundamental law, written in the heart of every man? If I strike anyone, he can strike me back" (Liubani 1.234), the law of revenge, not of turning the other cheek.

Although in his writings he frequently presented God as the God of philosophers, almost a creation of reason that uses its own power without resorting to revelation, the image of the Christian God never left him altogether and resurfaced very powerfully in his last moments. According to the account of his son Pavel, he drank nitric acid presumably because of the possibility of his being sent to Siberia again, and he tried, unsuccessfully, to cut his veins. "'I will suffer a long time,' said Radishchev. He asked for a priest. 'A priest, a priest!' he said with choking voice. His son ran out to find a priest whom he found by chance at the gates. He made his confession [to him] like a true Christian. 'Lord! Take my soul,' he repeated several times".[21] Physicians came, but it was much too late. Significantly, Radishchev called for a priest, not for a physician. Although he ended his life like Cato, he ultimately wanted to depart this world as a Christian. In the moment of death, philosophy was of little consolation. His Leipzig professor once wrote about Christianity; "if you find a teaching, which gives you more restraint in happiness and more consolation in distress, and which can better pacify the terror of vice, the fear of death, of judgment, of eternity … then despise religion since it is certainly not from God."[22] Radishchev's final act indicated that he found no such teaching.

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[21] П. А. Радищев, *Биография А. Н. Радищева*, in Дмитрий С. Бабкин (ред.), *Биография А.Н. Радищева, написанная его сыновьями*, Москва, Изд. Академии наук СССР, 1959, с. 95.

[22] C[hristian] F. Gellert, *Betrachtungen über die Religion* (1756), in his *Sämtliche Schriften*, v. 5, S. 83-84.