

Mystery of the Mezuzah

By

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Hear, O Yisrael: YHWH our Elohim, YHWH is ONE. And thou shalt love YHWH thy Elohim with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates. And it shall be, when YHWH thy Elohim shall bring thee into the land which He swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee - great and goodly cities, which thou didst not build, and houses full of all good things, which thou didst not fill, and cisterns hewn out, which thou the didst not hew, vineyards and olive-trees, which thou didst not plant, and thou shalt eat and be satisfied - then beware lest thou forget YHWH, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Devarim 6:4-12

The *mezuzah*¹ is far more than a metal box with a scroll with verses written from the Torah inside and attached to your doorpost. Hidden deep within this *chukim*² is a key to help us as Yisrael to remember YHWH the Elohim of Yisrael, our enslavement to *Mitzrayim*, and the Creator's plan (Torah) for us to implement and follow. It is a piece of Higher technology that acts as a homing device for the Yisraelite soul. It has the ability for those who look upon it and touch it to change. The *mezuzah* allows us to see what others do not-the reality of the Divine. It is unfortunate that the significance of this commandment has not been taught or studied as it should by Nazarene Yisrael. It is not enough to affix one to your door posts, but we should be aware of its significance and importance. That small metal or plastic box has protective qualities and spiritual benefits. It is a *mitzvah* that has assisted Yisrael as a nation to endure throughout the ages.

The *Ramban* in his Sefer Shemot listed five important things one acknowledges by observance of this *mitzvah*:

- *YHWH's creation, YHWH's omniscient knowledge, His Divine providence, faith in the fundamental doctrines of the Torah, and the belief that the mercy of YHWH is great to all who do His will and fear His Name.*

The *mezuzah* is one of the few *mitzvot* for which the Torah states its recompense. The reward of observing this *mitzvah* is long life for oneself and one's children in the land of Yisrael. How can that promise be made to those who are observant of this particular *mitzvah*?

¹ What is a Mezuzah? In brief, a Mezuzah is two chapters from the Torah written (in Hebrew) on a piece of parchment. The parchment is then rolled into a scroll, wrapped in paper or plastic, usually inserted into a hard-plastic or metal case, and affixed to the doorpost.

² A *mitzvah* that does not seem to make any sense.

- *And you shall inscribe them on the doorposts ("mezuzot") of your house and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be prolonged upon the land which YHWH swore to give to your fathers for as long as the heavens are above the earth* **Devarim 11:20-21**

According to the writings of the ancient sages of Yisrael, the main purpose of the *mezuzah* is to protect the home from evil. To begin to understand this power of the *mezuzah*, we must first look into, study, and understand the concept and nature of evil itself.

Man, Good, Evil, and Free Will

Bereshith 3:22 *And YHWH Elohim said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever*

ויאמר יהוה אלהים הן האדם היה כאחד ממנו לדעת טוב ורע ועתה פן־ישלח ידו ולקח גם מעץ החיים ואכל וחי לעולם:

Evil was created *ex nihilo*³ (out of nothing) as was the rest of Creation. Elohim did not create the universe starting from something, but starting with what is not. There was only *Ain Sof*⁴. *Ain Sof* is the essence of all existence, good and evil. The concept of evil is the work of the will of Elohim, and therefore is not co-eternal with Elohim (evil has a beginning and will have an end). Scripture teaches that evil is ordained by Elohim and has its proper purpose in the plan of creation as nothing can exist unless it is created by Elohim. We must then conclude that evil is actually a form of good (as only Elohim is Good), even though at a particular time or place it may appear anti-Elohim. Every being requires something of the Divine Light to keep it alive and grant its very existence. It cannot be otherwise or there exists an Independent Evil Absolute, whose essence, being chaos, could not create an ordered universe, let alone maintain it and balance and bestow grace.

- “Through *emunah* we understand that the *olamim* were framed by the *Devar Elohim*, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” **Iyrim 11:3**
- *7 I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I am YHWH, that doeth all these things.* **Yeshayahu 45:7**

One of the two souls of man (the *nefesh*-animal soul) stems from the negative side of creation, called *kelipah* (husk or shell) and the *sitra achra* (the other side). Another term for the *sitra achra* is the external side (as in the Hebrew other and back derive from the same root). The husk (*kelipah*) is not just a name but also a metaphor for the relationship between good and evil. The side of holiness relates to the Holy One, Blessed be He, encompassing everything that recognizes and submits to Him. The other side has no intrinsic content or identity of its own, being that it is defined by the fact that it is not the side of holiness. So *kelipah* and *sitra achra* are two perspectives of evil. *Sitra achra* defines the contrast between the two sides and the *kelipah* defines the

³ The sages know that everything came forth from Absolute Nothing and Absolute All, which is not subject to the laws of science but to only its own Will. Both All and Nothing are the same.

⁴ *Ain Sof* is Infinite or Endless and cannot be comprehended by the finite human mind. No thought can apprehend Him at all. The Infinite can never be defined. However, His Wisdom can be comprehended by finite forms and words if He chooses to limit Himself. It is His infinity that allows Him to clothe Himself in finite garments.

⁵ Evil is both cosmic and conscious.

⁶ Kabbalah further delineates two distinct types of *Kelipah*: *Kelipat Nogah*—literally *Kelipah* that can be illuminated, and *Shalosh Kelipot Hatmayot*—“three totally impure *Kelipot*.” *Kelipat Nogah* can be uplifted and refined, while the only form of reformation or redemption for the three impure *Kelipot* is their destruction.

⁷ Angels are pure thought forms composed of hyper-light particles existing in the fifth dimension. In the Chabad teaching Angels do not have a free will. Angels are rooted in the world of Yetzirah while the human soul is rooted in the world of Beriah. R. Nachman taught that when angels descended into the world of Asiyah, they were overcome by its evil.

relationship between the two sides. Reality consists of a sacred core encompassed by an external husk; by penetrating the husk, one attains the core. Mankind is charged with crushing and subduing the *kelipah* and *sitra achra* in order to reveal the Light within.

This implies that there is no neutral ground between holiness and unholiness. Everything is either holy or unholy, and if it is not holy, it is of the *sitra achra*. No one can be neutral in their relationship with the Creator.

Evil was not created for its own sake, however, but as an instrument of free will and choice. Evil is allowed to the extent that it serves the Creator's purpose. Letting go of the reality of separate evil, and really accepting that the *sitra achra* is a side of Divinity, is easy on paper and very difficult in reality. But we understand that YHWH in His wisdom ordained that all things are set in system that there should pertain to all things either *tikkun* (rectification) or damage / judgment (*kilkul*). Our souls were sent to earth because both good and evil reside here. We are thus free to choose our course of action, with the accompanying rewards and blessings or punishment and curse.

In order to allow for the existence of beings that would not be absorbed and nullified in the Source, *Ain Sof* chose to conceal and withdraw His Light to create a "vacuum" or black hole where created beings would experience their self-determining existence. This is the fundamental concept of *tzimtzum* (the concealment and contraction of the primordial Divine Light). *Ain Sof* contracted within Itself to make a womb/uterus to contain the new creation. The woman is not inside her womb, but the womb is inside the woman. Without this *tzimtzum*, there would be no room for a finite creation, for all would be obliterated by the immense Light of the Infinite. Another way of looking at it is that the Infinite could only reveal Itself through some measure of concealment (*olam*-world –comes from the Hebrew root *ne'elam* –hiddenness.)

The concept of *tzimtzum* demonstrates how a unified cosmos can lead to an apparent dualism.

- *The concept of tzimtzum, the contraction and "removal" of Elohim's infinite light in order to allow for Creation of independent realities, is elucidated in the teachings of the Arizal. In the generations that followed, two schools of thought developed with regard to the meaning of tzimtzum: one took the concept literally (i.e. that God's infinite light is no longer present within the "vacuum" or "womb" of the created universe) while the other (that of the Ba'al Shem Tov and his disciples after him) understood the concept as not meant to be interpreted literally, but rather to refer to the manner in which Elohim impresses His presence upon the consciousness of finite reality. In truth (according to the accepted second opinion), from the perspective of Elohim as it were, His omnipresence (and that of His infinite light) is constant, undergoing no change from before to after Creation. From our perspective, however, His light seems to disappear. This is necessary for the sake of the act of Creation itself, the bestowal of free will to man, and the fulfillment of Elohim's ultimate will in Creation, to "reveal Himself below." One of the philosophic dilemmas that finds its resolution in the doctrine of tzimtzum is the query as to how finitude may emerge from infinity and plurality from absolute unity. In Chassidut, we are taught that the Divine act of tzimtzum (the manifestation of the Divine attribute of Gevurah, "might," or din, "severe judgment"), the concealment of Elohim's absolute omnipresence, is ultimately for the sake of revelation. The tzimtzum is understood as the process by which a "teacher," the brilliance of whose knowledge and insight is infinite, must totally conceal his level of understanding in order to begin to teach and relate to a student of no previous background. The ultimate intention and desire of the teacher is to illuminate the consciousness of his student with the brilliance of his own mind, but first he must "contract" and constrain himself. The *reshimu* or "residue" (to be explained) of his brilliance which remains becomes the initial point from and through which all of his teachings to his student will emanate (by means of the *kav*, to be explained). **Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburg***

The absence of Light allows the option for darkness or evil. Our task is to discover Elohim hiding behind a veil of darkness.

- **Shemot 26:33** *And thou shalt hang up the veil under the clasps, and shalt bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony; and the veil shall divide unto you between the set-apart place and the most set-apart.*
- **Tehillim 18:11-12** *He maketh darkness His secret place, Round about Him His tabernacle, Darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies. From the brightness over-against Him His thick clouds have passed on, Hail and coals of fire.*
- **Tehillim 97:2** *Cloud and darkness are round about Him, Righteousness and judgment the basis of His throne.*

Chassidic Rabbi DovBer of Mezeritch once found his young son crying because while playing hide-and-seek, he hid but none of the other children bothered to look for him. Rabbi DovBer started crying himself and explained to his son that our Heavenly Father also is hiding from his children, as it is written, "You are a Elohim Who hides" (**Yeshayahu 45:15**), so that they should search for Him ,but no one bothers to search!

- **Matt. 7:7-8** *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

Conventional morality posits a dualistic psychology, in which a *yetzer tov*, the good inclination, balances out the evil one. For the *Kabbalah*, however, there is only truth and falsity: the truth that only Elohim truly exists, and the falsity that all of our own conventional existence is real. Truth leads to those acts which benefit Elohim -- for the sages, that includes ritual as well as ethical behavior. Falsity leads to those which seem to benefit the separate self. *Hasidim* maintain that the Torah provides the blueprint for right action, and that once the selfish inclination is abrogated, what remains are the commandments.

Evil is the destruction of creation and the ruining of Elohim's work and stop the spiritual development of man. The destructiveness by mankind is the ultimate expression of evil. Evil and good do not revolve around human philosophy. Good and evil are inherent definitions and existences prescribed by YHWH and present in all creation. Good and evil exist on other planes of existence and are not indigenous to the earth no limited to here. Evil is an intelligent life force seeking to embody itself in the physical world even as good does. Evil is not physical, it has no form of its own. It needs a physical form through which to manifest. The forms most conducive to this manifestation of evil are thoughts, feelings, and actions. Everything in the realm of holiness has its opposite in the realm of the profane. Everything in the physical world has its spiritual counterpart from which it derives its existence and vitality.

Evil begins with separation; that is evil begins with creation. Creation, the world of *Beriah*, is where separation and imperfection begin as *Beriah* (the World of Creation) was separated from *Atzilut* (The World of Emanation). This imperfection increases the further creation leaves the presence of the Light of the Perfect. A further consequence of the separation is that evil gains more and more ground as each lower World comes into being. It is associated with the two outer columns of the Tree of Life, without the conscious direction of the Middle Pillar (*Moshiach*). Anything can become evil when it spins off its central axis or *raison d'etre* of consciousness is removed. When that happens, then the demonic realm of the right or left columns can gain hold and use and feed off the undirected Form and Force.

Evil⁵ is that which conceals the True Source of all existence, the Creator. The term for evil in the *Kabbalah*, *kelipah*,⁶ means "shell" or "husk" similar to the bark of a tree or the shell of a nut. It is something that has no independent value, other than to serve as a covering/ husk for the grain, tree, or fruit. The fruit is the desirable element, whereas the husk serves only to protect the fruit and enables its development. The husk of a nut is inedible, and when the fruit has matured, the husk becomes an impediment, to be cracked and discarded; now its role is not to be.

Evil is defined as the absence of the Light or the Light is withheld and good is when anything has the capacity to be illuminated by the Light of Elohim's presence and achieve *tikkun*. An orange will not retain its juice if it does not have such a protective jacket. However when one eats the orange, one discards the peel. The peel is only there to preserve the fruit. The same is true of the existence of evil. *Hasidism* uses the terminology "inner will" (*Pnimitiyut HaRatzon*), and "external will" (*Chitzoniut HaRatzon*). When a person goes out to work, he gets involved with all the details of making a living. However, his is engaged only with his external will. His inner desire is to make money in order to do what he really wants. The existence of *Kelipah* stems from the outer will of Elohim, whereas *Kedushah* (holiness) stems from the inner will of Elohim.

In *Hasidism*, it is stated that evil exists as part of the Divine revelation itself. Indeed, to think that evil really is separate from Elohim is, itself, the essence of evil, which is precisely the illusion of separation. The most common form of evil is something we all do all the time: assume that we are separate from Elohim. The natural consequence of this belief is that "good" and "bad" are best evaluated according to how they benefit or harm the self. Thus, enriching the ego, making ourselves feel good all these quintessentially human endeavors stem from the illusion of separation. The *yetzer hara*, the "evil inclination," might be better thought of as the "selfish inclination" or the "separating inclination." It is that which grounds all experience in the separate self, and does its best to enlarge, enrich, and empower that self above others.

Evil was created to provide mankind (Adam) with a free will and the freedom of choice, which is possible only where there, is made available an alternative to good. Had there been no outer shell/husk concealing the Truth, we would be forced to obey Elohim's will. If denied free choice, mankind would also be denied any reward for the right choice. Mankind does this through what is known as *kelim*. *Kelim* are neutral and achieve a moral character when man chooses to use them in one direction or another. Those used for good are called *kelim shel taharah*, and are the vehicles for *kedusha* (purity). Those which are used for negative goals are called *kelim shel tumah*, vehicles of impurity. Man does not need a devil or demons to create for him havoc. The devil did not cause pollution-man did. So free will can be a blessing or a curse. Elohim has given mankind responsibilities. Man is therefore obligated to uphold those responsibilities and not depend upon Elohim to do those things that man is required to do. Also, many of us suffer because of free will and the results of the poor choices we have made throughout our lives. Others suffer because they do not use their free will with enough resolve and end up become victims of the other forces around us, which we could have avoided.

Only Adam (mankind) was created in the image of Elohim, and according to *Rashi* this term implies "creator of worlds". Man has been given the gift of the freedom to make moral choices. As a result of man's choices, changes occur in the physical world. Man's choices also have spiritual and physical repercussions. The choices that a person makes also effects their psychological development and make up. Thus man has the power to influence the world and its inhabitants in any manner his free will desires. But, man is the only creature created with both the physical and spiritual, thus his actions directly influence this physical world and also influence the forces in the Higher realms. He relates to creation both downward and upward.

Conversely, where there is no free will or choice, there is no evil. Sin (*khata*) is only possible when one chooses deliberately and consciously to act contrary to the Torah. Sin can also be defined as that which separates us from Elohim and our True Self. If there were no temptation to go against Torah, and no resistance to temptation, then there would be no application of free will. An animal killing its prey for food cannot be accused of committing an evil act since it has no choice in this instinctive act. It was created by Elohim with a predatory instinct and no free will. Similarly, *malakim* (angels)⁷ cannot be considered "good" because they were created to do only the will of Elohim. Man has an unconscious wherein resides the vast majority of his knowing. Angels have no such thing. Man's mind is split and thus is his compression of the universe. With angels, there is no such thing. Man's mind can expand and grow to infinite levels. Angels are what they are; they cannot evolve beyond their present state. Only men possessing free will can actually rise above angels or fall below animals, depending upon the free will choices they make in life. Free will then becomes more so important when we recognize that there are far reaching consequences of even the smallest action.

- **Tehillim 8:4-6** *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him but little lower than Elohim, And crownest him with glory and honor. Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet:*
- **Iyrim 2:6-8** *But someone somewhere solemnly testified, saying, "What is humanity [or, man], that You remember him, or [the] son of humanity, that You look after him? "You made him only a little lower [or, only for a short while lower] than [the] angels; You awarded him the victor's wreath [of] [or, crowned him with] glory and honor, "You put all [things] in subjection under his feet."*

Thus we see that without evil there is no free choice, and without free choice there is no good or evil. Evil allows for the implementation of good in the sense that a ray of light can be seen only in a cloudy sky. Free will also makes us responsible for every thought, word, and deed.

Once we understand that evil must exist and that it plays a positive role in the plan of Creation, we are confronted with another problem: If evil is the concealment of Divine Light, where does its power or energy come from? What or Who maintains its existence? The answer is: The Creator Who gives life to everything. Whereas, though, the domain of set-apartness receives Elohim's sustenance in abundance, the merely tolerated realm of evil is left to eating the "leftovers." We cannot place limits upon Elohim's omnipotence and in order for evil to exist He created a root and source.

The activity of the evil forces depend upon the extent of Elohim's Light and His Presence is concealed. The greater the extent of the concealment or absence of Light, the more power these forces have to act. These forces are the roots of all created things are damaged. This in turn then weakens these evil forces and their branches, the physical things associated with them. The effects of these evil forces are called corruption (*tumah*), darkness, pollution (*zohamah*), mundane (*chol*), and the like. When these forces are deprived of their authority to act, then good becomes strengthened. The roots of all created things are then rectified and are set in a state of good so both they and the branches are strengthened.

The primary *Kabbalistic* term for evil is *sitra achra*, which means "the other side." In the subtle depth of this term alone lies some of the most transformative wisdom of the *Kabbalah*. Although often mythologized in terms of demons and devils, the "Other Side," at its root, is not separate from the Divine. Coins have two sides; papers have two sides; Elohim has two sides, at least from our perspective.

All are essentially one thing; what we experience as evil is as Divine as what we experience as good. But we must be very discerning as the tactics of evil is to blur the differences between itself and good. Evil will present itself as good and presents good as evil. Some of the noblest of causes are not good but rather evil in the eyes of Elohim. As long as we can be deceived-we will be deceived!

- **Iyov 2:10** *But he said unto her: 'Thou speakest as one of the impious women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of Elohim, and shall we not receive evil?'*

Elohim allows a very small amount of life-giving energy to drip down to the "other side" in order to continue its existence. Too much of this powerful energy destroys it completely. As the sages of Yisrael put it, "Bright light blinds the eyes of evil forces." The intellect, particularly wisdom (*Chochmah*), is the bright light that disperses darkness.

- **Yochanan 3:19-21** *"Now this is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their works were evil." For every [one] practicing wicked [things] hates the Light and does not come towards the Light, so that his works shall not be exposed. But the one doing the truth comes towards the Light, so that his works shall be revealed, that they have been done in Elohim."*

That is why evil must always remain in darkness, feeding on what leaks through the small holes in the sphere of set-apartness. The *Kabbalah* calls a hole *ra* (evil) because it allows remnants of set-apartness to seep through, providing the "other side" with its life force.

The Great Mystery

Now we can clearly understand how the *mezuzah* protects the house. An Yisraelite home, which is a diminutive Temple, is a vessel of set-apartness. A door opening to a strange and hostile world, to the "other side," is thus called evil. *The Zohar* tells us that the forces of evil reside near a door, because that is where they receive their sustenance. Containing the wisdom of absolute unity, "Hear O Yisrael, YHWH our Elohim, YHWH is One," the *mezuzah* is the beam of brilliant light which blinds the evil forces, denying them the right of entry and dispersing them.

- **Bemidbar 25:5** *Moshe said to the judges of Yisrael, "Everyone kill his men who have joined themselves to Baal Peor."* [Baal-peor = "lord of the gap/opening"1) the deity worshipped at Peor with probable licentious rites]
- *The worship of this idol consisted in exposing that part of the body which all persons usually take the utmost care to conceal. It is related that on one occasion a strange ruler came to the place where Peor was worshiped, to sacrifice to him; but when he heard of this silly practice, he caused his soldiers to attack and kill the worshipers of the god (Sifre, Bemidbar 131; Sanh. 106a).*
- *How was this idol worshipped? The word Peor means to 'open up' or 'disclose'. According to the Talmud, the worshippers would bare their backsides and defecate in honor of the idol.*

According to Rav Kook, Peor was not an aberrant form of idolatry. On the contrary: Peor was the epitome of idolatry! Other forms of idolatry are more aesthetic; but they just cover up the true ugliness of idolatry. The Golden Calf was the opposite extreme, a beautiful, elegant form of idol worship. But Peor, as its name indicates, exposes the true nature of idolatry. All other forms of idolatry are just branches of Peor, with their inner vileness concealed to various extents. The repulsive service of Peor contains the key for abolishing idolatry.

By rearranging the Hebrew letters of *mezuzot*- מזוזת - we create *Zaz Mavet*-, the ability to overcome death in our lives. *Mezuzot* also has the same gematria as מזיך - one of the 72 Names that means the death to death.

- *In the morning when you leave your house, put your hand on the mezuzah and say, "Master of the World, have mercy on me and save me from the evil inclination and all its helpers." **Derek Chayim 6-80***

Maimonides, wrote:

- *"Whenever one enters or leaves a home with the mezuzah on the doorpost, he will be confronted with the declaration of Elohim's unity...and will be aroused from...his foolish absorption in temporal vanities. He will realize that nothing endures to all eternity save knowledge of the Ruler of the Universe."*

We are to meditate on how Elohim is the Owner of the house and we are just visitors. Think upon the Name of Elohim- *SHADDAI* (the Almighty represented by the SHIN ש on the *mezuzah*). This name is an acronym for "Guardian of the Doors of Yisrael." The gematria of *Shaddai*- שדי - is 314, which is the same number as the Name *Metatron* - מטטרון - a Name synonymous with the *Memra* (the Word or *Moshiach*) and Elohim. The YHWH is called My Salvation (*Y'shuati*) in the Hebrew text of Shemot **15:1-3**. Yet the **Targum Onkelos** says of this verse, "He said through His *Memra* that He would be a Deliverer to me..." The *Memra* is a Living, Creative Word of Elohim, and the *Sheliach* (Sent One) of Elohim.

We saw in the Torah how the serpent of bronze which Moshe raised up in the wilderness was, according to the Wisdom of Solomon, a "sign of salvation". The Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel says here that "He who turns his heart to YHWH's Memra will be spared". Professor Gottlieb Klein identified Metatron, used as an epithet for the Messiah, with Yahweh's Memra or 'Word'. In Klein's opinion it was precisely this Aramaic word which gave the grounds to the belief that Messiah is "the Word or Logos of Elohim become flesh".

The Jewish philosopher Philo, who lived about the same time as Yahshua, considered the Logos to be Elohim's delegate, his emissary and angel who "prays as High Priest before YHWH on behalf of the world". The Memra concept associated with Elohim and his manifestations appears 596 times in the Targums -- but not once in the Talmud. Targum Onqelos uses the word 179 times, Targum Yerushalmi 99 times, and Targum Jonathan 321 times. Over half of these references to the Memra approach it as if it were "personified". The absence of 'Memra' from the Talmud may be a reaction to the first Nazarenes' interpretation of it as indicating Yahshua. But are there really grounds for understanding 'Memra' to mean the same as the Brit Chadasha's 'Logos'?

In answering this question there is good reason to look to the Rabbis' way of grading the old writings according to their source value:

- "The Old Testament leads to the Targums, the Targums lead to the Mishnah, the Mishnah to the Talmud, and so on." Sifrei Shoftim, piska 160a

Proceeding in this way the Targums give earlier information on the Rabbis' exegesis than even the Mishnah, the oldest part of the Talmud. Therefore, from the point of view of our subject, it is worthwhile familiarizing ourselves with these roots of our faith which are concealed in the Targums.

The Memra appears in the Targums in the following contexts, among others: On the creation of man in Bereshith 1:27 the Targum says: "And the YHWH's Memra created man" (Targum Yerushalmi); In Bereshith 16:13 Hagar speaks with the "angel of YHWH" and "calls him the YHWH's Memra" (Yer.); In Bereshith 22, where Avraham speaks with the angel of YHWH who is given the name "YHWH's Memra", and in v.8 "YHWH's Memra himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering" (Yer.); In Bereshith 28:20 Jacob makes a vow and says, "If YHWH's Memra will be with me... then YHWH's Memra will be my Elohim" (Onqelos); Bereshith 15:6 is interpreted by the Targum as follows: "Abraham believed in YHWH's Memra, and it was credited to him as righteousness" (Onq.); Along with the giving of the Torah in Ex. 20:1 the Targum reads, "And YHWH's Memra spoke all these words" (Yer.); In Bemidbar 10:35 Moshe prays, "Rise up, O YHWH!... Rise up, O Memra of YHWH... Return, O Memra of YHWH!" (Yer.); When in Ex. 14:31 we are told that the people believed in YHWH and in his servant Moshe, the Targum reads this as "they believed in YHWH's Memra and in the prophecy of his servant Moses" (Onq.); The beginning of Devarim chap. 28 stresses that if Yisrael will obey the voice of Elohim, all the blessings spoken of will come upon them, which is interpreted by the Targum as: "If you will accept YHWH's Memra so that YHWH's Memra will be your Elohim", then all this will be fulfilled (Onq.); Yeshayahu 45:17, 25 says that "Yisrael will be saved by YHWH with an everlasting salvation" and "In YHWH all the descendants of Yisrael will be found righteous". The Targum interprets this as, "Yisrael will be saved by YHWH's Memra" and "Through the instrumentality of YHWH's Memra they will be made righteous" (Jonathan); Hosea 1:7 promises: "Yet I will show love to the house of Judah, and I will save them" -- the Targum says: "Yet I will show love to the house of Judah, and I will save them by their Elohim, YHWH's Memra" (Jon.); And also Devarim 33:27, "The eternal Elohim is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms", is interpreted by the Targum as, "these arms are the Memra, through whom the world was created" (Onq.).

Of special note in these passages from the Targums is that often the Memra seems to be identified with the Name of Elohim: "YHWH's Memra will be my Elohim"; "I will save them through their Elohim, YHWH's Memra"; Avraham was justified through the Memra; the Memra gave Yisrael the Torah; Moshe prayed to the Memra; Yisrael was justified through the Memra's instrumentality and the Memra created the world. If these ideas are joined to the Messianic expectation, a connection the Rabbis made, they will receive a new significance for Nazarenes too.

It is worth noting at this point that a similar 'Word' doctrine as that found in connection with the Memra was among the Essenes of Qumran before the birth of Messiah. These former Temple priests, wrote in their scrolls :

- *Everything received its beginning through Elohim's deliberate purposing, and "without him nothing was made" -- "Through your word everything received its beginning, and without you nothing was made". Eg. Megilath ha-serachim 1 QS XI,10 and Hôdayôth 1 QH I, 19.*

These same words are repeated to this day when a person blesses a drink taken separately from an actual meal. He recites a blessing taken from the Talmud:

- *"Blessed be thou, YHWH, King of the world: everything was made by his word" (ha-Kol niyhâh bi-Dvarô).*

The Jewish professor Gottlieb Klein was aware that certain early Nazarenes saw "Metatron, Memra, the First Man (Adam ha-Qadmôn), and the second Moshe" as related to Messianic hopes. The Talmud says that the name Metatron is equivalent to 'YHWH', and he sits in the Holiest of Holies and acts as Elohim's emissary. He is called the "Angel of YHWH", "The Prince of the Universe", "The Prince of the Countenance" and even by the name "Shekhinah" - the Presence of Elohim. The Zohar , which concentrates in its thousands of pages on describing Elohim's essential nature says:

- *"Metatron is the angel called the 'Prince of the Countenance', the 'Prince of the Torah', the 'Prince of Power', the 'Prince of Glory', the 'Prince of the Sanctuary', the 'Prince of Angels', the 'Prince of Kings'(Judges 5:3), and the 'Prince of Princes'."*

Yisrael is to present all its prayers in the name of this Prince of the Countenance. It may further be noted that the Hebrew word for 'angel-malak' means 'messenger-emissary' and not necessarily 'angel' in every instance it is used in the TaNaK.

The authority on the Dead Sea Scrolls, the late professor Yigael Yadin, drew the attention of the world to the fact that the Letter to the Hebrews speaks about the angelic world in the same way as the Essenes of Qumran. He says:

- *"The Letter to the Hebrews is one of the most interesting letters in the NT and differs in its contents from all the other early Nazarene writings which the NT comprises...'He is as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs' " (1:4). "This letter wishes to say that Yahshua is an anointed priest, a priest who is not of the seed of Aaron, but of a far nobler descent."*

The writer speaks "powerful words of rebuke" to his readers and centers his message on Messiah, demonstrating that he is the promised High Priest. Yadin thinks that the letter was addressed to the Essenes:

- *"Indeed, the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews could hardly have chosen examples closer to his audience's hearts, an audience which, according to my thesis, was identical with the Dead Sea sect."*

The beginning of Hebrews describes Messiah as the Son of Elohim, "through whom he made the universe." Messiah is also "the radiance of Elohim's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word". These thoughts too rise from Hebraic thinking and are connected with the Memra theology, with Messiah as the Word of Elohim become flesh.

Another concept of *Metatron* is the Keeper or Guard of Yisrael. *Memra* is connected to *Metatron* and *Metatron* is joined to the *Malak YHWH* found in **Shemot 23:21**, "For My Name is in Him." *Metatron* is also called the "lesser YHWH". RaSHI suggests that the words at the end of the verse "'my name is in him' mean 'He and I have the same name.' "

- "And our Rabbis have said," He continues, "that this is *Metatron*, whose name is the same as the name of YHWH. The numeric value of '*Metatron*' corresponds to that of '*Shaddai*', the name of the Almighty."

It was of him Moshe was speaking when he said, in **Shemot 33:15**: "If your presence (Heb. 'face') does not go with us do not send us up from here." RaMBaN sees here and in the preceding verses *Metatron* and the angel of the covenant. Small wonder that as early as the **Talmud** we find the simple statement that *Metatron* is also the Prince of the Countenance (**Hagigah 13.**)

- *Out of the love which he had for me, more than for all the denizens of the heights, the Holy One, blessed be he, fashioned for me a majestic robe. . . . He fashioned for me a kingly crown He set it upon my head, and He called me, 'The lesser YHWH' in the presence of his whole household in the height, as it is written, 'My name is in him' "***3 Enoch 12:1-5**
- "Metatron is Prince over all princes, and stands before him who is exalted above all elohim. He goes beneath the throne of glory, where he has a great tabernacle of light . . ." **15B:1**
- "I made honor, majesty, and glory his garment; beauty, pride, and strength his outer robe, and a kingly crown I bestowed on him some of my majesty, some of my magnificence, some of the splendor of my glory, which is on the throne of glory, and I called him by MY NAME, The Lesser YHWH, Prince of the Divine Presence, knower of secrets.' Every secret I have made known to him in love, every mystery I have made known to him in uprightness. "I have fixed his throne at the door of my palace, on the outside, so that he might sit and execute judgment over all my household in the height. I made every prince stand before him to receive authority from him and to do his will. I took seventy of my names and called him by them, so as to increase his honor. . . . **3 Enoch 48C:1-10**
- *Metatron* is often identified with the Word or Logos, and he shows that there are five such intermediaries in the Talmud: "1. *Metatron*, 2. The Word of Yahweh, *Memra*, 3. Elohim's hovering glory, the *Shekhinah*, 4. Elohim's Holy Spirit, *Ruach ha-Kodesh*, and 5. the Voice from Heaven, *Bath Qôl*. (lit. 'daughter of a voice')" **Gottlieb Klein, Bidrag till Israels religionhistoria, p89.**

Yahshua HaMoshiach said:

- **Yochanan 17:11** And I a
- *No more in the world and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me that they may be one, even as we are.*
- **1 Kepha 2:25** for ye were as sheep going astray, but ye turned back now to the shepherd and overseer [Guardian] of your souls.

Thus, the only conclusion according to Scripture and Hebraic writings is that *Moshiach* is YHWH!

- **Yochanan 1:1, 14** *In the beginning was the Word/Memra [or, the Expression of [divine] Logic], and the Word was with [or, in communion with] Elohim, and the Word was Elohim [or, was as to His essence Elohim]... And the Word/Memra [or, the Expression of [divine] Logic] became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of an only-begotten [or, uniquely-begotten] from [the] Father, full of grace and truth.*

- ***Tehillim 121:5-8*** Behold, He that keepeth Israel doth neither slumber nor sleep. YHWH is thy keeper; YHWH is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. YHWH shall keep thee from all evil; He shall keep thy soul. YHWH shall guard thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and for ever.

This is only one of the great mysteries contained in the *mezuzah*.

Time, Space, and Soul

An additional mystery of why the *mezuzah* is affixed to the door posts of the house can be found in one of the laws of *Shabbat*.

The gates of a house separate *reshut ha'yachid* (the private domain) from *reshut ha'rabim* (the public domain). On *Shabbat* it is forbidden to carry an object from one domain to the other. *Kabbalah* associates *reshut ha'yachid* (literally, the "domain of the one") with the Singular Master of the Universe. *Reshut ha'rabim* (the "domain of the many") represents the domain of evil -- the multiplicity of the physical world that disguises and hides the underlying unity of Creation.

During the first six days of the week, we must deal with the multifarious world, albeit trying to refine and repair it, to reveal its inner unity. On the seventh day we must abstain from all creative activities to observe the set-apartness of the day. The Hebrew word for set-apartness, *kodesh*, means literally "separated." Therefore, we observe the set-apartness of *Shabbat* by honoring that separation and not carrying an object from one domain to another.

The ancient book *Sefer Yetzirah* says that Creation exists in three dimensions: time, space, and soul. The book tells that Elohim created the world by the means of thirty-two paths of knowledge which are the ten "*sephirot*" and the twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet. It is believed the ten *sephirot* were originally thought as referring to numbers but later representing emanations from which the cosmos was formed. Each of the ten emanations within the *sephirot* is called a "*sephirot*," and together they form what is called the Tree of Life. Each *sephirot* describes a certain aspect of Elohim, and taken together as the *sephirot* they form the sacred name of the Creator. The Tree also describes the path by which the divine spirit descended into the material world, and the path by which mankind must take to ascend to Elohim.

The primary task of an Yisraelite is to reveal hidden set-apartness in each of these dimensions. Elohim sanctified the seventh day, a point of set-apartness in time. He sanctified the Set-apart Land of Yisrael, Yehrushalaim, and the Temple Mount as areas of ever increasing set-apartness in space. He gave us a set-apart spark, "a part of Elohim from above indeed," for our souls. Utilizing all of the above, we must set apart the rest of Creation by revealing its hidden unity.

The *mezuzah* combines the set-apartness of all three dimensions. It is affixed in space to the doorpost of the house. As the threshold marks the shift from one domain to another, the *mezuzah* symbolizes motion. *Zuz*, the Hebrew root of the word *mezuzah*, means "to move." Motion is the essence of time. The words *shanah* (year) and *shniyah* (second) come from the word *shinui* (change). All these words denote change or motion. Hence, the *mezuzah* marks set-apartness in time.

Torah requires that a *mezuzah* be affixed only to a permanent structure. The essence of space, as opposed to time, is immobility. The stillness of the *mezuzah* connects it to the concept of space. Furthermore, many of the laws of *mezuzah* deal with its position in space, where it must be affixed on which side of the doorpost, at which height and angle. Thus *mezuzah* brings set-apartness to the idea of space.

Finally, the *mezuzah*, which protects the souls of Yisrael, is associated to the concept of soul. In the text of the *mezuzah* scroll is written, "You shall love your Elohim with... all your soul."

- **H5315 -nephesh BDB Definition:** 1) soul, self, life, creature, person, appetite, mind, living being, desire, emotion, passion 1a) that which breathes, the breathing substance or being, soul, the inner being of man 1b) living being 1c) living being (with life in the blood) 1d) the man himself, self, person or individual 1e) seat of the appetites 1f) seat of emotions and passions 1g) activity of mind 1h) activity of the will 1i) activity of the character

So we see how the *mezuzah* unifies and sets apart the three dimensions of time, space, and soul. The concept of the *mezuzah* unifying and sanctifying time, space and soul is ultimately expressed in the last verse inscribed on the *mezuzah* itself:

- "...that your [soul] days [time] and the days [time] of your children [soul] may be prolonged upon the land [space] which YHWH swore to give to your fathers [soul] for as long as [time] the heavens [space] are above the earth"

Elohim gave His people signs of their special relationship. *Shabbat* is a sign in time. *Mezuzah* is a sign in space. *Brit milah* (circumcision) is a sign on the level of soul. The connection between *mezuzah* and circumcision can be observed from the command in *Yehezkiel 16:6* recited at the *brit milah* ceremony, "In your blood, live." Blood appears in the Torah in *Shemot 12:22* where the word "*mezuzah*" is first mentioned. This is in the context of the *mitzvah* to mark the doorposts of the homes with blood of the Passover at the time of the Exodus. Moreover, the *Zohar* states that "The blood was of two kinds, that of circumcision and that of the Passover lamb." The *Zohar* compares the place of circumcision with the "door of the body." The two concepts are juxtaposed also in *Bereshith 18:1*, describing Avraham, "... he sat [ill from his circumcision] at the door of his tent."

- *Shemot 12:22* And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning.
- *Ezek. 16:6* And when I passed by thee, and saw thee wallowing in thy blood, I said unto thee: In thy blood, live; yea, I said unto thee: In thy blood, live;
- *Soncino Zohar, Shemot, Section 2, Page 36a*-viz. mercy and justice. Said R. Abba: 'In how many ways does the Holy One show His loving-kindness to His people! A man builds a house; says the Holy One to him: "Write My Name and put it upon thy door (*mezuzah*), and thou wilt sit inside thy house and I will sit outside thy door and protect thee!" And here, in connection with the Passover, He says: "You inscribe on your doors the sign of the mystery of My Faith and I shall protect you from the outside!" They inscribed the likeness of the Holy Name in the form of the letter He'. As the Holy Name was then turned from Mercy to Judgment, chastisement came into view at that time. Everything was turned into red, as a symbol of vengeance on Israel's enemy. Esoterically speaking, it is fitting to show below the color corresponding to the state above, whether mercy or judgment. And as it was then even so shall it be in the future, as it says: "Who is this that cometh from Edom (=Rome), with dyed garments from Bozra?" (Isa. LXIII, 1); for He will clothe Himself entirely in judgment to avenge His people.' AND NONE OF YOU SHALL GO OUT AT THE DOOR.... The reason is found in the dictum of R. Isaac, that, when punishment impends over a place a man should not go out into the open, since, once the Destroyer is given leave, he does harm indiscriminately, and makes no distinction between the righteous and the unrighteous; therefore the people of Elohim should hide themselves lest they be consumed in that vengeance which is the due of the Destroyer. R. Jose said that the same power which exercised judgment on the Egyptians was the agent of mercy to Israel, as it is written: "When I see the blood I will pass over you" (v. 13). For, as we have been taught, all the holy crowns above contain at one and the same time both judgment and mercy. R. Hezekiah drew the same inference from the verse, "And YHWH shall smite Egypt, smiting and healing" (Isa. XIX, 22), i.e. smiting the Egyptians and healing Israel, to wit, from the wound of circumcision, the phrase "YHWH will pass over the door" suggesting the "door" of the body, which is the place of circumcision. R. Simeon interpreted it in a similar way: at the moment when the night was divided and the Holy Crown (the *Sephirah Keter*) was moved to unite with the masculine principle which is the supernal Grace- for they never manifest themselves one without the other- one smote and the other

healed. Also, "YHWH passed over the door": that door which is the opening of spirit and body. That circumcision is of such significance can be seen from Abraham: before he was circumcised he was, as it were, a closed vessel, impervious on all sides, but when he was circumcised, and the sign of the letter yod of the Holy Name was manifested in him, he became open to supernal influences, this being the inner meaning of the words, "he sat at the door of the tent in the heat of the day" (Bereshith XVIII, 1), i.e. of the supernal holy Tent. R. Eleazar said that when the yod was manifested he received the glad tidings that Grace was confirmed with Righteousness. R. Abba said it refers to the tenth crown (that of Grace), with which he was then endowed, as indicated by the words "in the heat of the day", namely at the time when Grace predominates

Thus the Zohar says:

- **Soncino Zohar, Devarim, Section 3, Page 266a-** From the direction of this handmaiden issue many officials of judgment who bring accusations against Israel, but the Holy One, blessed be He, protects Israel from them as a father protects his son. YHWH says to Israel: "Many are the accusers looking out for you, but be diligent in my service and I will protect you without, while within you will sleep safely in your beds. Now when the evil species come to the door of a man's house, and they raise their eyes and see the Holy Name written outside the mezuzah, namely **Shaddai**, which has power over all of them, they flee away in fear of it and do not come near the door.' Said R. Isaac to him: 'If that is so, a man should inscribe only this name on his door; why all the section?' He replied: 'This is quite right, because this name is crowned only with all those letters, and when the whole section is written this name is crowned with its crowns and the King goes forth with all his hosts stamped with the impress of the King, and they all flee from him in fear.' R. Abba said: 'Many holy hosts are present when a man fixes a mezuzah on his door, and they all proclaim, "This is the gate of YHWH", etc. (Ps. CXVIII, 20). Happy is the portion of Israel, for then Israel know that they are the sons of the Holy King, for all bear His stamp. They are stamped on their bodies with the holy impress; their garments bear the stamp of a religious precept; [Tr. note: The fringes.] their heads are stamped with the compartments of the phylacteries with the name of their Master; their hands are stamped with the straps of holiness; their feet with the ceremonial shoes; [Tr. note: The shoe used in the ceremony of halizah.] without they bear the stamp of the [precepts connected with] sowing and reaping, and in their houses that of the mezuzah at their doorway. Thus in all ways they are stamped as the sons of the Most High King.
- R. Eleazar said: 'Against all this Elohim desired to protect Israel, and therefore a man should inscribe on the door of his house the Holy Name in which all faith is summed up. For wherever the Holy Name is the evil species cannot come and are not able to accuse a man. The place of the door of the supernal House is called mezuzah, which is a necessary part of the house, and from it flee the emissaries of justice and punishment. Correspondingly when on earth a man affixes a mezuzah to his door with his Holy Name inscribed in it, such a one is crowned with the crowns of his Master and no "evil species" come near to the door of his house.' **Zohar Vol.III 265b**

The **Talmud** states that the *Chanukah menorah* should be placed in a doorway opposite a *mezuzah*. In *Chassidic* philosophy, oil symbolizes Yisrael. Just as oil does not mix with other liquids, so Yisrael does not mix with other nations. The Belzer Rebbe discourse on this subject states:

- "Oil does not mix with any other liquid. No matter how much one tries to blend the oil with other liquids, it always remains separate." The oil, he went on to explain, represents the Jewish people who, no matter how hard some may try to mix them with others, will always remain separate, like the oil... The light... separates us from darkness. As the light symbolically separates the sacred from the profane - the Jews from the other nations - so too the mezuzah on our doors separates and protects us. Both have stood from the beginning as signs distinguishing between Jews and others. Chanukah lights and the mezuzah both symbolize separation, and thus protect the Jewish people from corrupting foreign influences "that threaten to make us disappear." Both are ... "a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (**Psalms 119:105**).

Conclusion

Now all the pieces of the puzzle fit together. In the dimension of time, one is not allowed to carry an object from one domain to another on *Shabbat* because this would violate the set-apartness, lines of separation -- of the day. On the level of soul, one is forbidden to intermarry, which would cross the line of separation between the set-apart people and the rest of humanity, between "one nation unto Elohim" and many nations.

In the dimension of space, the *mezuzah* stands to separate the domain of one from the domain of many, and this separation should not be violated by bringing ideas, customs, and moral values of the *goyim* into the home.

Just as *Shabbat* is a sanctuary in time and the soul is a miniature sanctuary in the dimension of soul, the *mezuzah* marks a home as a miniature Temple in the dimension of space. By making one's house a Dwelling Place of the Creator, one not only fulfills their purpose in life, but helps to bring about the most important goal of Creation, which is giving Elohim "a dwelling place in the lower worlds."

Mezuzah not only stands on the perimeter between the domains of One and many, it also points inward, toward the domain of One. This comes to teach us that while Elohim created our many-sided world from One into many, our purpose is to elevate the physical world and to bring it back into the Unity of the Creator. This reverse process of bringing many back into One is the direction in which the *mezuzah* points us.

In the dimension of space, the *mezuzah* points toward the domain of the One, singular Master of the universe; in the dimension of soul, the *mezuzah* points to our singular Divine spark; and in the dimension of time, the *mezuzah* points to the rule and reign of *Moshiach*, when the Unity of Elohim will be revealed in this world.

The sages said, "*He who is observant [of the precept of] mezuzah will merit a beautiful house.*" May we soon see in the merit of this great *mitzvah*, the rebuilding the Temple in Yerushalayim, as it is written:

- "*I shall dwell in the House of YHWH all the days of my life/ To behold the beauty of YHWH and to meditate in His Sanctuary*" (***Tehillim 27:4***).

The blessing said while hanging a mezuzah:

בָּרַךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְקַבֹּעַ מְזוּזָה

Transliteration: *Baruch atah YHWH, Elohaynu, Melech ha-olam, asher keedishanu b'meetzvotav v'tzeevanu leek'boa mezuzah.*

Translation: *Blessed are you, YHWH, our Elohim, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us to affix a mezuzah.*