

The Mesorah

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It was the custom in ancient libraries to recognise the title and contents of a book by the first few words of that book at the beginning of said scroll. Therefore Mishnayot.1-2 describe to any ancient Librarian the title of the book and a small description of its contents. This technique will become clearer after we make sense of every word contained in these two initial verses.

I. Mordechai (Mark) 1:1

Αρχη (Arkhi) - this Greek term corresponds to the Hebrew “Resheet,” meaning “chief part” as in:

יְרֵאֵת יְהוָה, חֻכְמָהּ, יְרֵאֵת יְהוָה Resheet Chokhmah Yir’at Adonai (Psalm 111:10)

"Αρχη σοφιας φοβος Κυριου" (Septuagint – Psalm 110:10)

“The chief part of Wisdom is the reverential fear of Ha-Shem.”

The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament^a defines the Hebrew term “RESHEET” to mean “First,” “beginning,” “choicest,” “first/best of a group.” The same source continues stating:

“A feminine noun derived from the root “ROSH,” and appearing fifty times in nearly all parts of the OT. The primary meaning is “first” or “beginning” of a series. This term may refer to the initiation of a series of historical events (Gen.10:10; Jer. 26:1) but it also refers to a foundational or necessary condition as the reverence or fear of G-d (Ps. 11:10; Prov.1:7) and the initiation, as opposed to the results, of a life (Job 8:7; 42:12). It is used frequently in the special sense of the choicest or best of a group or class of things, particularly in reference to items to be set aside for G-d’s service or sacrifice. The “first fruits” (Lev. 2:12; 23:10; Neh. 12:44) and “choicest” (Num. 18:12) fruits are so distinguished. Difficult usages of the term occur in several passages. In Deut. 33:21 the KJV reads “first part” which is followed by JPS, however the RSV, “best of the land” is preferred. In Dan.11:41 the KJV reads: “chief of the children of Ammon,” but the RSV reads “main part of the Ammonites.”

When translating Mark back into Hebrew most translate the first word as: “The beginning” i.e. תְּחִלַּת (T’Chilat) rather than ראשית (Resheet) as Prof. Delitzsch originally did following the translation to Hebrew of Elias Hutter (circa 1600 c.e.) as shown below:

ראשית בשורת ישוע.
המשיח בן-האלהים : באשר

Now T’CHILAT is better translated to English as “commencement” – i.e. “beginning” in time. But this seems redundant, since we expect that a story or narrative starts with the beginning or from the beginning. Thus, to state in the opening words “This is the beginning of ...” seems to be somewhat clumsy, as we expect the narrative to start

^a Harris, R.L., Archer, G.L., Waltke, B.K. (1980), Theological Wordbook Of The Old Testament. (two vols.). Chicago: Moody Press, vol. II, p. 826

with or from the beginning.

This is also in agreement as well with Rashi's^b comment as to the import of the first words of Genesis 1:1 where he states:

בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא **IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED** — This verse calls aloud for explanation in the manner that our Rabbis explained it: **God created the world for the sake of the Torah which is called (Prov. 8:22) "The beginning (רֵאשִׁית - RESHEET) of His (God's) way"**, and for the sake of Israel who are called (Jer. II. 3) "The beginning (רֵאשִׁית RESHEET) of His (G-d's) increase". [The Rabbis translated thus: For the sake of (ב) the Torah and Israel which bear the name of רֵאשִׁית (RESHEET) G-d created the heavens and the earth."]

In other words, this introductory verse is telling us something critical about the Messiah and which forms the central argument of this book – i.e. that the Messiah is the **chief part** or **“the heart”** of something which will be explained throughout the book and for which sake creation took place (cf. Prov. 8:22 for a hint), and not just merely telling us that at the beginning of the book is the beginning of the so called “gospel,” a very clumsy and redundant statement indeed.

A further and most important reason as to why RESHEET is to be preferred to T'CHILAT is found in the mechanism of verbal tally governing both the Annual and Triennial Torah Lectionaries. If we use RESHEET in Mark 1:1 then we surely have a verbal tally with the first Torah Seder – i.e. BERESHEET. Support for this line of reasoning is found in John 1:1 which also starts with the term “BERESHEET” and thereby indicating a verbal tally with the first Torah Seder starting in Genesis 1:1.^c

In a similar vein, Rabbi Sh'muel ben Meir, also known as the Rash'bam (Troyes, France, c. 1085 – c. 1158), a specialist of Peshat comments on Genesis 1:1 as follows:

“As to these scholars who understand the word BERESHEET as equivalent to the word TECHILAT in Hos. 1:2 – i.e. so that it would mean “at the beginning G-d created the heaven,” i.e. before He created heaven and earth there was chaos, darkness in the face of the waters, etc., so that it emerges that water had been created first, this too is nonsense. How could the Torah refer to a state of the earth prior to creation of the heaven?”^d

Here, clearly the Rashbam understands that Techilat deals with chronological time, while RESHEET deals with order or priority in a list of things. This why it is clumsy and unnecessary to state at the beginning of a chronicle: “This is the beginning of this chronicle,” since we expect chronicles to start at the beginning of some epoch or period of time.

Finally, we may bring the testimony of the Peshitta which is written in Aramaic, a sister language of Hebrew (much like Spanish is to Italian or French – i.e. sharing many root words in common). In Mark 1:1 the Peshitta has:

רֵשָׁא דְאֻוַּנְגֵּלִיוֹן – RISHA D'EUANGELION

The Aramaic term “RISHA” is the equivalent to the Hebrew RESHEET, which supports our contention that the original word at the beginning of Mark 1:1 is RESHEET and not T'CHILAT as modern Hebrew versions of the Nazarean Codicil have.

του ευαγγελιου (**Tu Euageliou**) – where “**Tu**” means “**of the,**” and “**Euageliou**” is translated as “**Gospelled.**”

^b Silberman, A.M. & Rosemblum, M. (2007 Reprint), Torah with Targum Onkelos and Rashi's Commentary: The Book of Genesis Hebrew/English, BN Publishing.

^c John 1:1 is strictly following the interpretation that Rashi gives in Proverbs 8:22 as found in the above quote.

^d As quoted in: Hachut Hameshulash, Translated and Annotated by R. Eliyahu Munk, (2003), New York: Lambda Publishers, Inc., vol. I, pp. 1-2.

The definition that modern Christians usually provide for the term “Gospel” is as they say, encapsulated in the words of Hakham Shaul:

”For I delivered (gospelled) unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” (1 Cor. 15:3-4)

In fact, Stern^e echoing much of modern of evangelical theology writes concerning these two verses:

”The essence of the Gospel is contained in these two verses, as we shall see, but the key point for Jewish people to grasp and Messianic Jews to stress is that the Gospel is in accordance with what the Tanakh says (as Shaul himself emphasises by saying it twice). That is, every major point of the Good News set forth in the New Covenant with Israel is spoken of or prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures.”

Whilst in some points Dr. Stern’s words are true, we disagree with this “Christian” and rather foreign (from a Jewish perspective) interpretation, and therefore must rather propose a complete different and radical Judaic approach to the meaning of the term in question.

Most Christian Hebraists point to the Hebrew word “**B’SORAH**” as the equivalent term and original word from which it was translated to Greek as “**EUANGELION**.” However, those that have proposed and still propose this idea seem to be ignorant of the following difficulties.

1. The awkwardness of the term –

In commenting upon the term **B’SORAH** the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament^f states:

”The root is a common one in Semitic, being found in Akkadian, Arabic Ugaritic, Ethiopian, etc. The root meaning is “to bring news especially pertaining to military encounters.” Normally this is good news, but (contra Friedrich, Theological Dictionary of The New Testament, vol. II, p. 707) it need not necessarily be so (I Sam. 4:7; II Sam. 18:20 where “TOV” is specifically appended). The Akkadian bears this out, for the word is largely neutral there.”

In other words, the term “**B’SORAH**,” still to this very day means simply “**NEWS**” and one needs to specify by means of the addition of an adjective (good/bad) so that anyone may understand us.

2. The term lacks antecedent and cultural or contextual validity –

Whilst most terms utilised throughout the Nazarean Codicil can be traced to and seen in use in Rabbinical literature of that period and after that period, the term “**B’SORAH**” lacks any use in a religious or legal sense by Jewish scholars pre and post 100 c.e. We do have terms like “justice,” “righteousness,” “born from above,” etc. etc. commonly used in Jewish religious and legal literature, but this is not the case with the term “**B’sorah**”.

In fact, when the Rabbis of the Talmud wanting to show the foreignness of Christianity and Christian teachings to normative Judaism, and Jewish culture/language (pre and post Christian) show this by employing a “pun” on the Greek term “**EUANGELION**.” The Greek word “**EUANGELION**” is transliterated to the Hebrew as “**AVEN GILAYON**” meaning “the falsehood of blank paper” (R. Meir) or **AVON GILAYON**” meaning “the sin of blank paper” (R. Yochanan) – see editorial footnotes on Shabbat 116a in the English translation of the Soncino Talmud. ^g

^e Stern, D.H. (1992), Jewish New Testament Commentary. Clarksville, Maryland: Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., p. 485

^f Harris, R.L., Archer, G.L., Waltke, B.K. (1980), Theological Wordbook Of The Old Testament. (two vols.). Chicago: Moody Press.

^g Epstein, I. (1987). Hebrew English Edition of The Babylonian Talmud. London, U.K. : The Soncino Press.

All Christian commentators and also all so called modern “Nazarene” and “Messianic” commentators in unison state that this shows but a malicious deed on the part of Jewish Rabbis against the so called “Jewish Christians” of that day. This is reflected in the rhetoric for example, of the anti-Semite Friedrich Kittel in his article in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*^h, where he states:

“This seems to be contradicted by the fact that EUAGELION appears to be a loan-word introduced into Judaism to describe the New Testament Gospel. In Shab., 116a, we have the malicious conversion of Gospel into AVEN GILAYON, gloss of destruction, or AVON GILAYON, gloss of sins: “R. Meir (c. 150) called it (the book of the Minim, i.e. of Jewish Christians, and therefore the Gospels) AVEN GILAYON, gloss or writing of destruction, and R. Yochanan (c. 279) called it AVON GILAYON, gloss or writing of sins.” **From this passage we may conclude that the Jewish Christians had adopted the Greek EUAGELION, since there is no real equivalent in Aramaic.** The pun is possible only in respect of the Greek. On the other hand the passage does not prove what has been deduced from it. Palestinian Judaism was bilingual. Aramaic might be spoken, but Greek was understood. It was known that BESORAH would be EUANGELIUM in Greek. The Rabbinic propensity for puns enabled them to seize on the Greek word for BESORAH and to bring it into disrepute, thus making the hated heretics ridiculous.”

However, Green, et al.ⁱ, make a very strange statement regarding this term:

“The reader of the Gospels must be wary in reading a post-Easter definition into the Evangelists’ use of the term gospel (such as is found in Pauline writings, 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Rom. 1:2-4). In the Synoptics it is found in the mouth of Jesus at the beginning of his ministry: “The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of G-d is at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel (Mk. 1:14-15; cf. Mt. 4:17,23; Lk 4:18,43). They use the term to designate Jesus’ message without prior definition, **implying that it was a term known to their audience.**”

Despite this statement, the only source pre or post 70 c.e. where we read about the term “Gospel” as being a Hebraic term to define a specific message or genre of literature is in the various Greek renditions of the Nazarean Codicil or parts of it. Yet, the undisputed fact remains that we have no evidence whatsoever that the term “Gospel” (Heb. B’SORAH) was used with any religious or legal significance by the Jewish people, prior to, during, and after the death of His Majesty King Yeshuah the Messiah. If the term was well known to His Majesty’s audience as Mordechai 1:14-15; Matityahu 4:17,23; and Luqas 4:18,43 makes it abundantly clear, then of necessity it must have been some other Hebrew word rather than that advance by Christianity – “B’SORAH.”

Perhaps, and from our view, most certainly the Sages of the Talmud are alerting us in veiled language to a sad event in history, which has remained unreported but for which evidence is abundantly mounting, where a heresy rose amongst Jews and Gentiles which gave rise to the destruction of almost all original Hebrew manuscripts extant of the Nazarean Codicil or parts of it and reworked them into the Greek to justify the beliefs and theological dogmas of this sect, and which unfortunately unleashed a systematic destruction of anything or anyone identifying as Nazarean. The wise sages of the Talmud are alerting us to the fact that Greek Manuscripts so called “GOSPELS” are reworked partial forgeries^j of the authentic writings of the Jewish Nazarean writings, who in fact never used the word “GOSPEL – EUANGELION – B’SORAH.”

If the term “B’sorah” (Gospel) was wide known and understood by all in Yisrael, as the so called Gospels themselves state (Mk. 1:14-15; cf. Mt. 4:17,23; Lk 4:18,43), then why is it that we find no Jewish record either in Hebrew or Aramaic showing that the term was widely used and known to the Jewish people and to Jewish Scholars of that epoch? No doubt we must conclude that the term “Gospel” lacks any cultural or legal antecedent, or for that matter contextual validity and we must reject or at least hold in high suspicion the view that such term was ever used by His

^h Kittel, G. (1964). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. (10 vols., translated by G. W. Bromiley). Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Vol. 2, p. 726, 727

ⁱ Green, J.B., McKnight, S., & Marshall, I. H. (1992). *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, p. 283

^j Although forgeries to some extent, they do not escape a detailed forensic analysis, and there are many tools available for us today to discover and excavate what lie beneath these partial forgeries, until the day comes, G-d willing, where a discovery be made of the authentic early Hebrew manuscripts underlying the writings of the Nazarean Codicil.

Majesty King Yeshuah the Messiah himself or his Talmidim.

Further, in the Aramaic, a sister language of Hebrew (much like Spanish is to Italian or French – i.e. sharing many root words in common), of the Peshitta at Mark 1:1 has the word EUANGELION without any translation. Why? If GOSPEL = BESORAH as modern Christian Scholars teach, then the Peshitta should have had the word TEBA which means “news” or “report,” and corresponds to the Hebrew BESORAH. The first verse of Mark in the Peshitta reads:

רשא דאונגליון - RISHA D'EUANGELION

Lastly, the Vaticanus Hebraica^k, a translation of the four so called four gospels into Hebrew by an anonymous scholar under duress, starts in Mark 1:1 with the word ZEHU HA-EUANGELION MI YESUS ... In other words, this Hebrew Scholar could not find a Hebrew equivalent for the Greek term EUANGELION, even when under duress at the hands of catholic authorities, much as the Aramaic Peshitta translators before him also could not find one in Aramaic.

So, where does this leave us? Is there any other term in the Hebrew language that we can reasonably suspect was used, before it was substituted by the Greek term EUANGELION? And does the Nazarean Codicil itself suggests any other possible Hebrew/Greek word that might have been used by the original writers of the Nazarean Codicil before it was substituted by the Greek term EUANGELIUM?

In our view the shortest answer to all of the above questions is simply “YES!” However before we state our case, we would like to let the Nazarean Codicil speak for itself and explain to us what a “gospel” is, and when it was proclaimed for the first time in history.

- a) Hakham Shaul in Bereans (Hebrews) 4:2ff. states that the so called “Gospel” was first proclaimed at Har (Mount) Sinai in connection with the laws regarding Shabbat which must be appropriated by means of EMUNAH (Faithful Obedience):

“For indeed we have had EUIGELISMENOI (gospel) [announced to us] even as also they; but not did profit them the word of the report, not having been mixed with faith in those who heard – For unto us was the gospel proclaimed, as well as unto them, but the word proclaimed did not profit them, not being mixed with faithful obedience in them that heard it.”

Or, as the Literal English Translation Bible by Morris with Strong’s numbers added puts it:

"[2532] indeed [1063] For [2070] we are having [2097] had the Good News preached [2509] even as [2548] those also. [0235] But [3756] did not [5623] profit [3588] the [3056] word [0189] of hearing [1565] those, [3361] not [4786] having been mixed [4102] with faith [3588] in those [0191] hearing.”

It is most interesting that a self-confessed Nazarene, Dr. James Trimm in his commentary on the so called Epistle to the Hebrews^l leaves very conveniently this key passage unexplained. However Dr. Stern^m, a Messianic teacher does go on to make some ridiculous comment which is completely out of order with the P’shat (plain literal meaning) of this passage. He states:

”The Good News the Israelites heard was the promise of entering His rest in the Promised Land; the Good News which has been proclaimed to us is, of course, that we enter the rest that comes from knowing that our sins are forgiven.”

It is obvious, that we need a much better and logical analysis of this verse at least at the P’shat (plain meaning) level.

^k Vat. Ebr. No. 100 from the late Medieval period.

^l <http://www.nazarene.net/hebframe.htm?>

^m Stern, D.H. (1992), Jewish New Testament Commentary. Clarksville, Maryland: Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., p. 672.

To do this let us look at the clauses:

- a) For indeed we had gospel proclaimed to us even as they (them);
- b) But it did not profit them the LOGOS (Torah) proclaimed (of the report);
- c) Not having been mixed with faithful obedience in those who heard.

We start by asking who is Hakham Shaul describing with the pronouns “us” and “them” in the first clause? Christians and Messianics will readily say that the “us” refers to Christians and that the “them” refers to Jews, particularly those at Har Sinai. However, such interpretation depends on an illegitimate straight-jacket approach imposed by Christian Theology and not justified by the text. At best it can be said that Hakham Shaul is making a distinction between the same people (Jews) living at Har Sinai and Jews living when he wrote this Epistle – thus, the difference between the “us” and “them” is one imposed by the distance in time and not a difference of ethnicity. From this perspective, the “gospel” is the same, and the difference is not one of ethnicity or religion but one of generations amongst the same people.

Delitzschⁿ schooled evidently on a diet of Replacement Theology proposes that the text should read: “We have a message of salvation, as even they had such a message.” This rendition thus favours two messages of salvation as proposed by replacement theology one of salvation by works (that of our apparently ignorant Jewish people) and that of salvation by faith (whatever that means) which is superior and belonging to Christians. This replacement theology view is reflected in the RSV translation of this verse:

”For good news came to us just as to them; but the message which they heard did not benefit them, because it did not meet with faith in the hearers.”

Enough to say that this view is increasingly being rejected by Gentile Theologians, and has no place in our proposition which advocates virtually no or at best very minor differences between Nazareans and Jewish Orthodoxy. This view for example is found in the rendition of this verse by the Catholic New Jerusalem Bible which puts it:

”We received the gospel **exactly as they did**; but hearing the message did them no good because they did not share the faith of those who did listen.”

And the Aramaic Peshitta (Lamsa, 1987) translates:

”For the gospel was preached to us **as it was to them also**, but the word they heard did not benefit them, because it was not mixed with faith in those who heard it.”

Consequently, we are left at this point using strictly a P’shat (plain literal meaning) mode of interpretation with the idea that the this “gospel” being proclaimed by Hakham Shaul and being accepted by these converts to Judaism in Berea is the same which was proclaimed at the foot of Har Sinai to the people of Israel. What this “gospel” consisted of is not explained in this first clause of this verse.

The second clause: “But it did not profit them the LOGOS (Torah) proclaimed (of the report)” needs further elucidation. The Literal English Translation Bible by Morris renders the Greek “LOGOS TIS AKOIS” as: “[3056| word |0189| of hearing.” Similarly the Douay-Rheims Bible renders this verse as follows:

”For unto us also it hath been declared, in like manner as unto them. But the word of hearing did not profit them, not being mixed with faith of those things they heard.”

The Latin Vulgate has “**sermo auditus**” – lit. “**auditory sermon**” when translating “**the word of hearing**” clause. So, let us ask a critical question at this juncture, do the Jews distinguish between the LOGOS (Word) of writing and

ⁿ Delitzsch, F. (1871, reprint 1978). Commentary On The Epistle To The Hebrews (2 vols), Minneapolis, Minnesota: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers.

the LOGOS (Word) of hearing? And the answer of course is a resounding YES! The “LOGOS of Writing” we call “**Torah Shebiktav**” – **Written Torah**, and widely known as the Pentateuch, and the “LOGOS of hearing” we call “**Torah Shebeal Peh**” – lit. “**Torah from the mouth**,” that is the “**Oral Torah**.” Second, does the Oral Torah of the Jewish people itself records its genesis or origins? The answer of course is a resounding YES! And any Jewish Orthodox child will direct one to Pirque Abot 1:1 where we read: משה קיבל תורה מסיני “Mosheh Qibel Torah MiSinai – Mosheh received the Torah from Sinai, ומסרה ליהושע UM’sarah LiYehoshua – and handed it down (gospelled it down, or, rehearsed it in the ears) of Yehoshuah ...”

The second clause of this verse, then identifies the nature of the so called “gospel” as stated in the first clause. In other words, the second clause of this verse acts as a circumstantial clause subject to the first clause and which object is twofold. First, to explain what the “gospel” is, and second to inform us that this so called “Gospel” did not profit them at Har Sinai. The reason for this is given to us in the third clause – “**Not having been mixed with faithful obedience in those who heard.**” Now the Greek term used here for “FAITH” is “PISTEI” and which answers to the Hebrew “EMUNAH” meaning “Faithful Obedience” and not just as Christians teach: “the firm conviction that G-d exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Messiah,” or even “a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Yeshuah is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of G-d.” No, “EMUNAH” is the perfect union of “believing what is said as being the truth” and then “doing what is commanded in what was said.” In fact the whole of Chapter 12 of Bereans (Hebrews) is replete with the phrase “By (through) faith” that is, by and through EMUNAH so and so did such and such. Thus Emunah is not just believing but rather something more profound and meaningful – FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE! – Something that must be believed and faithfully obeyed.

Now, note that in Pirque Abot 1:1 the Hebrew term “**M’SORAH**” is interpreted as that which is privately handed down from one generation to another, from the mouth of one Torah teacher to the ear of his Talmid (disciple), and so on, throughout the generations. It is but a logical deduction, from what we expounded above, then that the original word in the Nazarean Codicil, replaced later by the Greek EUANGELION, was none other than the Hebrew M’SORAH which in the Greek is translated mainly as PARADOSIS and meaning “a giving over which is done by word of mouth or in writing, i.e. tradition by instruction, narrative, precept, etc. – (a) objectively, that which is delivered, the substance of a teaching; and/or (b) of the body of precepts, which were orally delivered by Moses and orally transmitted in unbroken succession to subsequent generations, which precepts, both illustrating and expanding the written law, as they believed and obeyed them with equal reverence.” We have traces of this, for example in 2 Thessalonians 2:15, where we read:

”Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.”

However we need to examine other definitions given in the Nazarean Codicil of the term “Gospel” to see if we obtain a similar pattern and consistency throughout.

- b) Hakham Tsefet (Peter) states that the “word of Ha-Shem abides forever, and this is the word which was EUAGELISTHEN (gospelled) to you” (1 Peter 1:25), thus equating the word of Ha-Shem with the so called “GOSPEL.”

The Literal English Translation Bible with Strong’s numbers renders this verse as follows:

”|3588| the |1611| but |4487| word of |2962| {the} Lord |3306| remains |1519| to |3588| the |0165| age. |5124| this |1161| And |2076| is |3588| the |4487| word |2097| preached as Good News |1519| to |5209| you.”

Similarly, the Catholic New Jerusalem Bible renders this pasuk:

”But the Word of the Lord remains forever. And this Word is the Good News that has been brought to you.”

The Greek term used here for “WORD” is “RHIMA” (Strong’s # 4487) and meaning basically “that which is or has

been uttered by the living voice.” In other words, this is the “Oral” and not the “Written” Word of Ha-Shem, this is nothing but **Torah Shebeal Peh – the Oral Torah!** Therefore, this verse is much better translated from a Rabbinical perspective as:

”But the Torah Shebeal Peh of Ha-Shem abides forever, and this is the Torah Shebeal Peh which was MASARAH (handed down, gosselled down) to you.”

Here we find three things. First, a harmonisation and complete agreement of Hakham Tsefet’s (Peter’s) words with the Mishnah Tractate Pirqe Abot 1:1. Second, the Greek term EUAGELISTHEN translated by Christians as “preach as Good News” or “has been brought” was most probably changed for the original Hebraic term “MASARAH” (handed down, gosselled down - PARADOSIS) sometime after the destruction of the Second Temple in the year 70 c.e. Thirdly, we have here the Oral Torah (Greek: RHIMA) – Oral Word of Ha-Shem being equated with the so called “Gospel,” which no doubt in the original was M’SORAH and not B’SORAH as Christians and Messianics teach.

If as we propose the original Hebrew word “M’SORAH” in the Nazarean Codicil was later replaced for EUANGELION / B’SORAH, it clearly explains the claim made by Green, et al.^o that: “In the Synoptics it is found in the mouth of Jesus at the beginning of his ministry: “The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of G-d is at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel (Mk. 1:14-15; cf. Mt. 4:17,23; Lk 4:18,43). **They use the term to designate Jesus’ message without prior definition, implying that it was a term known to their audience.**” The more, we might add, particularly since most of His Majesty’s Jewish audience were conversant with Mishnah Tractate Pirqe Abot 1:1.

- c) Hakham Yochanan in his Apocalypse states that the so called “Gospel” is “ever-lasting” and about “fearing G-d” – ie. at least observing the 7 Noachite Laws which renders a Gentile a “G-d fearer” (see Rev. 14:6-7).

The two verses in question are rendered by Morris Literal English Translation Bible with Strong’s numbers as:

”6. [2532] And [1492] I saw [0243] another [0032] angel [4072] flying [1722] in [3321] mid-heaven, [2192] having [2098] Good News [0166] everlasting [2097] to preach [3588] to those [2730] living [1909] on [3588] the [1093] earth, [2532] even [3956] every [1484] nation [2532] and [5443] tribe [2532] and [1100] language [2532] and [2992] people,
7. [3004] saying [1722] in [5456] a voice [3173] great, [5399] Fear [3588] - [2316] God, [2532] and [1325] give [0846] to Him [1391] glory, [3754] because [2064] came [3588] the [5610] hour [3588] of the [2920] judgement [0846] of Him. [2532] And, [4352] worship [3588] Him [4160] having made [3588] the [3772] heaven [2532] and [3588] the [1093] earth [2532] and [3588] the [2281] sea [2532] and [4077] fountains [5204] of waters.”

And the Catholic New Jerusalem Bible renders it:

- 6. Then I saw another angel, flying high overhead, sent to announce the gospel of eternity to all who live on the earth, every nation, race, language and tribe.
- 7. He was calling, "Fear God and glorify him, because the time has come for Him to sit in judgement; worship the maker of heaven and earth and sea and the springs of water.

At this point, Stern^p comments on this section as follows:

“The three angels exhort G-d’s people to remain faithful (vv. 6-7, 12; compare 13:9b, 10b), so as to avoid the judgement against Babylon the Great (vv. 8-11). They must persevere, observe G-d’s Mitsvoth (commandments) and exercise Yeshuah’s faithfulness (v.12), the same faithfulness Yeshuah had (see Romans 3:22; Galatians 2:16). Note

^o Green, J.B., McKnight, S., & Marshall, I. H. (1992). Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels. Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, p. 283.

^p Stern, D.H. (1992). Jewish New Testament Commentary. Clarksville, Maryland: Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., p. 830.

that works and faith go hand in hand (Romans 3:27-28; Eph. 2:8-10; James 2:14-26), and that the works of the righteous go with them for reward (v.13; compare Romans 2:6-16; 1 Cor. 3:8-15). Verse 13 is a reassurance when any believer dies.”

Most interesting quote indeed, if we translate Stern’s “Yeshuah’s faithfulness” for “Yeshuah’s EMUNAH” or “Yeshuah’s Faithful Obedience.” He even prefaces this EMUNAH of His Majesty with the clause “observe G-d’s Mitsvoth (commandments),” and going at length in the last sentences to explain that “works and faith go hand in hand.” So, then, according to Stern this “Good News Ever-lasting” or the “gospel of eternity” is about “persevering in observing G-d’s Mitsvoth (commandments) and exercising Yeshuah’s faithfulness [in observing the mitzvoth].”

Whilst this may well be true, yet the very text from a P’shat (plain literal meaning) perspective states that the “Good News Ever-lasting” or “gospel of eternity” as proclaimed by this angel to all the Gentiles is about “Fearing G-d and glorifying Him.” Now, Stern⁹ commenting on 2 Luqas (Acts) 10:2, states:

”A “G-d-fearer” – Greek Phoboumenos ton Theon, “one who fears G-d,” is regarded by most scholars as a technical term describing a Gentile who attached himself to Judaism but chose not to undergo formal conversion, which included circumcision and public immersion (proselyte baptism). This class of Gentiles, known in Judaism as “proselytes of the gate,” was quite large at this time. They were attracted to the nobility of Jewish worship and to the truth of the one G-d Who had revealed Himself in the Bible, but for various reasons did not become Jews.”

So now, back to Revelation 14:7, what is the first thing the angel proclaims in Greek to the Gentiles from the “Gospel of Eternity”? The Greek has: “PHOBITHITEN TON THEON.” We see now that the only difference between “PHOBOUMENOS TON THEON” of 2 Luqas 10:2 with the “PHOBITHITEN TON THEON” is a matter of Grammatical accident of the same Greek verb “PHOBEO” – to fear, to reverence. Thus, the command of the angel as contained in the “Gospel of Eternity” to the Gentiles is “Fear/Reverence G-d” = “Become a G-d Fearer,” that is, a Noachite (observing the seven Laws of Noach).

Therefore, according to Yochanan the so called “Gospel” is about “fearing G-d and glorifying Him,” which to Gentiles is translated as observance of the Seven Laws of Noach and for Jews as observance of the 613 Commandments of the Torah as explained and mandated by the Oral Torah. Now, we may ask, is this not what our wise sages of old and our Jewish people of all generations have known as M’SORAH? And have we not established above in 1 Tsefet (Peter) 1:25 that “the Torah Shebeal Peh of Ha-Shem abides forever”?

Please note that we have selected three simple definitions of the term “M’SORAH” and later substituted for the term “EUAGENLION” from three distinct authors of the Nazarean Codicil (reflecting the three distinct Nazarean traditions of the Mishnaic School of Hakham Tsefet and his scribe Mordechai, the Gemarah School of Hakham Shaul and his scribe Dr. Luqas; and the Kabbalistic School of Hakham Yochanan) and whilst we could cite more cases similarly confirming our hypothesis, we are content to follow the venerable and just Torah principle that “at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established” (D’barim 19:15).

However, for the sake of internal validity and internal consistency, seeing that as we have observed, the Nazarean Codicil’s definition of the so called “Gospel” (originally M’SORAH) is in consonance with the Oral Torah (cf. Pirqe Abot), we need to explain what this same Jewish source says is the function of M’SORAH, then go on to review the passage of 1 Cor. 15:1-4 and its relevance or connection to the concept of M’SORAH, and finally offer a possible explanation how M’SORAH became B’SORAH.

THE PURPOSE OF THE MASORAH

In Pirqe Abot 3:17 we read:

⁹ Stern, D.H. (1992). Jewish New Testament Commentary. Clarksville, Maryland: Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., p. 257.

Rabbi Akiba said: jesting and levity accustom a man to lewdness. The transmitted Oral Torah (Heb. MASORAT) is a protective fence (Heb. S'YAG) about the Torah, the tithes are a fence (Heb. S'YAG) for riches; vows are a fence (Heb. S'YAG) for abstinence; a fence (Heb. S'YAG) for wisdom is silence.”

In other words, we find in Pirke Abot that the purpose of the Oral Torah Heb. M'SORAH (and replaced by the Greek EUANGELION/Gospel in the Greek Nazarean Codicil) is to be a protective fence about the Written Torah, in the same way as tithes are a protective fence for wealth. Or, simply put, the Oral Torah prevents the Written Torah from it being misunderstood or misused as well as protecting its practitioners from serious breaches of the Written Torah or even deviating from the Torah. Translating this into a language which novices can understand, the so called “Gospel” prevents the Written Law of the Bible from being misrepresented or misused, as well as protecting its practitioners from serious breaches of the Written Law of the Bible or from deviating from a righteous/generous walk according to Torah, and as understood by THE faith (ie. Judaism). Or more precisely, as Hakham Hirsch^f puts it: “The traditional text of the Written Word of G-d guards the Scriptures against falsification, and the traditional interpretation of the content of the Law protects the latter from distortion.”

Since, the MASORAH is uniquely welded to the Written Torah, then the text of Genesis 1:1 opens us to further understanding. Midrash Tanhuma Yelammedenu^s commenting on the words " :With the beginning "– Geneis 1:1 , states:

This is what Scripture means when it says :*The LORD with wisdom founded the earth*) Proverbs 3:19). That is, when the Holy One, blessed be He, was about to create this world, He consulted the Torah^u before embarking upon the work of creation, as it is said :*Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, power is mine*) Proverbs 8:14.(

Thus we have translated Mark 1:1 as “The chief part of the Masorah (Tradition/Oral Law) is Yeshuah the Messiah, the Son of God (i.e. Ben Elohim = the King/Judge) ". Yet, based upon the above Midrash we could also translate this verse as" :The wisdom (i.e. Resheet is synonymous with Hokhmah = Wisdom) of the Masorah is Yeshuah the Messiah, the Son of God (i.e. Ben Elohim = the King/Judge) ". This does not mean that Chistianity is therefore superior to Judaism, G-d forbid! To the contrary, what it means is that anyone studying the Masorah) Oral Torah) is acquiring the wisdom of Messiah who is the very embodiment of the Torah! It is therefore obvious that the creation of the Messiah as the embodiment of the Torah (Written and Oral) precedes the creation of this world, as the Targum Yerushalmi reads" :Be-Hokhmah (With Wisdom) the LORD created ...” Thus, the Masorah in creation, which was done in strict justice/perfection, kept that strictness and perfection in check so that strict justice/perfection did not exceed the boundaries placed by Wisdom. Much more could be said regarding the purpose of MASORAH but suffice to say that it is a most powerful creative and innovative force which is personified in the person of G-d’s Messiah.

HOW MASORAH FITS INTO 1 COR. 15:1-4

The Literal English Translation Bible by Morris with Strong’s numbers renders this passage as follows:

1. |1107| I make known |1161| And |5213| to you |0080| brothers, |3588| the |2098| Good News |3739| which |2097| I preached |5213| to you, |3739| which |2532| also |3880| you received, |1722| in |3739| which |2532| also |2476| you stand,
2. |1223| by |3739| which |2532| also |4982| you are saved, |5101| to what |3056| word |2097| I preached |5213| to you |1487| if you |2722| hold fast, |1623| unless |1508| - |1500| in vain |4100| you believed.
3. |3860| I delivered |1063| For |5213| to you |1722| among |4413| the first |3739| what |2532| also |3880| I received, |3754| that |5547| Christ |0599| died |5228| for |3588| the |0266| sins |2257| of us |2596| according |3588| to the |1124|

^f Hirsch, S. R. (1967). Chapters of the Fathers: Translation & Commentary, Spring Valley, New York: Phillip Feldheim Inc., p. 52.

^s Berman, A. Samuel (1996). Midrash Tanhuma Yelammedenu, Haboken, New Jersey: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., p.3.

^t “Beginning” and “wisdom” are synonymous for “Torah” in Rabbinic literature. See: Schechter, S. (1998), Aspects of Rabbinic Theology: Major Concepts of the Talmud, Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, p. 129.

^u Seven things were created two thousand years before the creation of heaven and earth, and the Torah was one of them.

Scriptures,4. [2532] and [3754] that [2290] he was buried, [2532] and [3754] has been [1453] raised [3588] the [5154] third [2250] day [2596] according [3588] to the [1124] Scriptures.

And the Catholic New Jerusalem Bible translates this passage:

1. I want to make quite clear to you, brothers, what the message of the gospel that I preached to you is; you accepted it and took your stand on it,
2. and you are saved by it, if you keep to the message I preached to you; otherwise your coming to believe was in vain.
3. The tradition I handed on to you in the first place, a tradition which I had myself received, was that Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the scriptures,
4. and that he was buried; and that on the third day, he was raised to life, in accordance with the scriptures;

Note the connection woven in the tapestry amongst these verses of the following concepts:

EUAGELION – Good News / Gospel (Strong’s # 2098) – Originally in Heb. = M’SORAH

PARALAMBANO – Receive (Strong’s # 3880 – Hebrew = QIBEL

PARADIDOMI (from PARADOSIS) – hand down (Strong’s # 3860) – Hebrew = M’SARAH

This “Gospel” which the New Jerusalem Bible correctly identifies in v.3 as “tradition” (Hebrew: M’SORAH) is the Oral Torah as we described earlier in dealing with the genesis of the Oral Torah as found in Pirque Abot 1:1 – “Mosheh (Moses) Qibel (received) Torah MiSinai (Torah from Sinai) UM’sarah (and handed it down / gossiped it down) to Yehoshuah.” So, what connection is there between a death for sins, being buried, and being raised to life on the third day?

First of all, let us say that Hakham Shaul in this Gemarah treatise of 1 Corinthians is alluding to Pirque Abot 1:1 since the key words in this section as explained above point to this connection. Second, that the significance and explanation of the 1st Akedah (binding of Yitschaq) as pertaining the Jewish peoples and the 2nd Akedah (binding of Mashiach ben Yosef to the tree) by and for the Gentiles can only be found in the MASORAH or Torah Shebeal Peh (Oral Torah). This is not the place to dwell on the parallels between the TWO BINDINGS, but suffice it to say that the ORAL TORAH both in the Talmud and in the Midrash make this abundantly clear.^v

In other words, Hakham Shaul makes a connection between, or more precisely, firmly anchors the Oral Torah in both the Akedah of Isaac (for the Jews) and the Akedah of Mashiach ben Yosef (for the Gentiles). Thus the connection is established between M’SORAH (Oral Torah) and the Akedah.

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS OF HOW M’SORAH BECAME B’SORAH

Two plausible explanations fit this riddle. First from a benign point of view, the error was introduced by an unlearned scribe who read a “Bet” for a “Mem” and thus M’SORAH became B’SORAH, however whilst this may explain the genesis of the error, it does not explain why EUANGELION became so widely adopted in the literature without protest. To answer this question, we need to think of a more sinister scenario, one which combines pagan mythology with Biblical terms. We all know that the “EUCCHARIST” which in the Nazarean Codicil when viewed from a Hebraic perspective is identified readily by the Jewish blessings over bread and wine (HaMotsi & HaGefen) at the beginning of a meal, and the blessings after the meal (Birkat HaMazon), the Gentiles reworked this term to fit the ritual of Mithraism where a “communion” or “mass” was celebrated with water and bread by their priests [please note that

^v For those interested in pursuing this matter see these MUST HAVE books: Mishael Maswari Caspi & Sascha Benjamin Cohen, The Binding (Aqedah) and Its Transformations in Judaism and Islam: The Lambs of God (Mellen Biblical Press Series, Vol 32), Edwin Mellen Press, ISBN # 0773423893; Aharon Ronald E. Agus, The Binding of Isaac and Messiah: Law, Martyrdom and Deliverance in Early Rabbinic Religiosity (SUNY Series in Judaica Hermeneutics And Mysticism), State University of New York Press, ISBN # 0887067352; Louis A. Berman, The Akedah: The Binding of Isaac, Jason Aronson Publishing House, ISBN #: 1568218990; & Shalom Spiegel, Judah Goldin, The Last Trial: On the Legends and Lore of the Command to Abraham to Offer Isaac As a Sacrifice: The Akedah, Jewish Lights Pub, ISBN #: 187904529X.

most of the Roman Legions were followers of the Mithraic cult.]

Similarly, if by error or intention M'SORAH was changed into B'SORAH and B'SORAH being translated into the Greek by EUAGELIUM it would have suited the Roman authorities and pagan priests and finding it relatively easy in accommodating Nazarean Judaism to their pagan beliefs, if we take into account that according to Kittel^w the Greek word EUAGELION was used for "news of victory" which was accompanied by sacrifices to pagans gods, and also the term was used of an "oracular saying" which were accompanied by thank offerings to pagan gods, as well since imperial rulers were held as appearances on earth of a deity in human form, his words and laws were held to be EUAGELION. With this background to the Greek word EUAGELION and its usage among the pagans it is not difficult to see how the accidental or most probably intended mistake of replacing M'SORAH for B'SORAH and weaving a web of deceit whereby this term is translated to the Greek as EUAGELION and illegitimately linking the "good news" spoken by the Prophet Yeshayahu to the pagan concept of EUAGELION from the imperial cult. Thus, we have a clever substitution which allowed them to anchor their pagan religion and concepts camouflaged in respectable Biblical terminology. What is new under the sun?

υιου του θεου - Fiu Tu Theu – this is equivalent to the Hebrew expression "**Ben Elohim**" a title reserved for Jewish Kings Priests and Judges, and according to G-d's Torah a calling/vocation of every single Jew.

To make this point clear let us start by saying that the Exodus from Egypt was predicated upon G-d's calling of all of His chosen and noble people Israel to become collectively and individually "MAM'LEKHET (a kingdom) KOHANIM (of priests) V'GOI QADOSH (and a holy people)" (Sh'mot/Exodus 19:6). These same words but interpreted in the P'shat are repeated by Hakham Tsefet (Peter) in 1 Tsefet (Peter) 2:9:

[5210| you [1161| But [1085| a race [1588| chosen, [0934| a royal [2406| priesthood, [1484| a nation [0040| holy, [2992| a people [1519| for [4047| possession, [5620| so as [3588| the [0703| virtues [1804| you may tell [1537| out [3588| of the [1537| {One} from [4655| darkness [5209| you [2564| having called [1519| into [3588| the [2298| wonderful [0846| of Him [5457| light. (Literal English Translation Bible by Morris with Strong's numbers)

Or, as the Catholic New Jerusalem Bible puts it:

But you are a chosen race, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a people to be a personal possession to sing the praises of God who called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

Here, Hakham Tsefet (Peter) wants us to recognise that even today the calling is as fresh, as powerful, as penetrating, as invigorating, and as awe inspiring today as when it was given at Har (Mount) Sinai, three thousand three hundred and something years ago! And it is this context that the Kings of Israel and the Messiah being the embodiments of the calling and aspirations of the noble nation of Israel are called by the title "Ben Elohim" (son of G-d) – see Psalms 2:7. But the Psalmist goes even further and extends this title to all Jewish judges (cf. Psalms 82:1) and renews this calling to all B'ne Yisrael (Psalms 82:6). This again is echoed in the Qabalistic treatise of Hakham Yochanan in Yochanan (John) 10:31-38, particularly in vv.34-36, which again is an echo of Sh'mot/Exodus 21:6. Hakham Yochanan extends this invitation once again in his first epistle Chapter 3 and v. 1 (1 John 3:1) where we read:

[1492| See [4217| what type [0026| of love [1325| has given [2254| us [3588| the [3962| Father, [2443| that [5043| children [2316| of God [2563| we may be called [to be]. [1223| Therefore [5124| - [3588| the [2889| world [3656| not [1097| knows [2248| us, [3754| because [3756| not [1097| it knew [0846| Him.

If we read the above verse in the context of what we have explained to mean the term or title "Ben Elohim" we will start to taste some of the depth of this holy calling (vocation) from a Qabalistic perspective/level. This whole line of reasoning, as we have abundantly demonstrated so far, completely demolishes the Christian interpretation (or sacred cow) that the title "Ben Elohim" = Son of G-d = the third person of a 3nity or the second person of a binity. In fact

^w Kittel, G. (1964). Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, (10 vols.), translated by G. W. Bromiley). Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., vol. II, pp. 721-725.

such a teaching would be utterly repugnant to the teaching of Torah both Written and Oral.

So, let us join all our discoveries so far and see that we should read Mordechai 1:1 as: **The chief part of the Masorah (Tradition/Oral Law) is Yeshuah the Messiah, the Son of God (i.e. Ben Elohim = the King/Judge).** This Masorah, as we have found is both a fence against the transgression or abuses of the Written Torah.

II. MORDECHAI 1:2

v. 2 - as it is written in the prophets, “Behold, I send My messenger before your face, which will prepare your way (Hebrew: Derekh/Halakha) before you” (Exodus 23:30; & Malachi 3:1).

As, any Jewish reader of Rabbinic literature can observe, the phrase “as it is written” is a frequent used Rabbinic phrase. And here Hakham Tsefet (Peter) by the hand of his scribe Mordechai wants to offer justification and clarification for the statement made in the previous verse. That is, in answer to the question, what was the need for the coming Mashiach ben Yosef? The following quote from Malachi 3:1 conflated with Sh’mot (Exodus) 23:20 is offered as a simple yet rich answer.

Now, we may well ask, is this conflation warranted? And did Hakham Tsefet in his Mishnaic treatise have any precedent for this in the deep well of the Oral Torah?

a) Arguing From the Triennial Lectionary:

We note that Hakham Jacob Mann^x lists as Seder 61a (16a) of the Triennial Palestinian Cycle of Torah readings a Torah Seder starting at Sh’mot (Exodus) 23:20ff with a corresponding Ashlamatah (Prophetic reading) from Malachi 3:1ff. Further, the Ashlamatah for Shabbat HaGadol is none other than Malachi 3:4-24. And since, the Torah Seder of Gen. 1:1 – 2:3 is read on Shabbat HaGadol, it is not then surprising to observe the genesis of this conflation and how it came into being, something which antedated Messiah and was well established during that time. Please note, that at that time, there were no Chapter numbers nor verse numbers in the Bible (a latter Christian invention), which meant that everyone would cite the first verse of a given Torah Seder (section of the Torah) and linked to its corresponding Ashlamatah (reading from the Prophets) via verbal tally, and as a way of organising the Bible and quoting from it.

Thus, we can now understand that (1) the verbal tally of “Resheet” in Mark 1:1 with “B’Resheet” in Gen. 1:1 places Mark 1:1-2 as a commentary to our first Torah Seder; (2) the connection with Malachi in Mark 1:2 comes due to this Torah Seder being read in connection with the semi/Festival Ashlamatah for Shabbat HaGadol; and the conflation of Mal. 3:1 with Sh’mot 23:20, comes to be as a consequence of reading on the ordinary Sabbaths in the Septennial cycle the Torah Seder of Sh’mot 23:20 ff. and as its ordinary Ashlamatah the text Mal. 3:1ff via verbal tally of הַגְּדֹלָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, לְפָנֶיךָ, לְפָנֶיךָ, לְפָנֶיךָ (Ex. 23:20) with הַגְּדֹלָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, לְפָנֶיךָ, לְפָנֶיךָ, לְפָנֶיךָ (Mal. 3:1). Thus our Septennial Torah reading cycle explains how the M’Sorah of Mordechai (Gospel of Mark) came to be constructed and organized.

b) Arguing from the Oral Torah:

From Midrash Rabba^y:

BEHOLD, I SEND AN ANGEL. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses: ‘He who guarded the patriarchs will also guard the children’; for so you find in the case of Abraham that when he blessed his son Isaac, he said: The LORD, the God of heaven ... He will send His angel before you (Gen. xxiv, 7). And what did Jacob say to his children?

^x Mann, J. (1971). The Bible As Read And Preached In The Old Synagogue, Vol. I: The Palestinian Triennial Cycle – Genesis and Exodus. New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., pp. 479-80

^y Lehrman, Rabbi Dr. S. M. (1983) Midrash Rabbah: Vol. III: Exodus. London: The Soncino Press., Vol. 3, pp. 412-13)

‘The angel who has redeemed me from all evil, etc. (ibid. xlvi, 16). He has redeemed me from the hand of Esau, from Laban, and he it was who fed and sustained me during the years of famine’ (referring all this to an angel – one sent by God for that particular purpose). God said to Moses: ‘Now also, He who guarded the fathers will protect the children,’ as it says, BEHOLD, I SEND AN ANGEL. Wherever the angel appeared, the Shechinah appeared, as it says, And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire. (Ex. iii, 2), and immediately after, it says, God called unto him (ibid., 4). Moreover, salvation comes to Israel wherever they cry unto Him (whenever Israel cries unto God and the angel appears, he is a herald of salvation); at the thorn-bush – Behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto Me (ibid. V. 9); in the case of Gideon – And the angel of the LORD came ... and the angel of the LORD appeared ... and the LORD ... said: Go in this your might, and save Israel (Judg. vi, 11-14). In the millennium, likewise, when he (the angel; he will be the herald announcing the coming of the LORD and of true salvation) will reveal himself, salvation will come to Israel, as it says, Behold, I send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me (Mal. iii, i).

But note, that the same Midrash^z states:

The Holy One, blessed be He, told Israel: ‘Take heed of the messenger, for he cannot retract aught of My mission; BE NOT REBELLIOUS AGAINST HIM (ibid.), for he represents strict justice (the messenger, unlike the sender, cannot make allowances, but must faithfully fulfil his errand, therefore if he is sent to punish he cannot forgive). Heretofore one could say, You have been rebellious against the LORD (Deut. ix, 24), yet I could accept [penitence] from you, but now BE NOT REBELLIOUS AGAINST HIM, FOR HE WILL NOT PARDON YOUR TRANSGRESSION.’ Another interpretation of BE NOT REBELLIOUS (TAMMER) AGAINST HIM. Do not exchange (temirani) Me for him, nor treat Me as his substitute (by ranking him as His substitute). Do not say: ‘Since he is our guardian angel, we will worship him and he will forgive our sins,’ FOR HE WILL NOT PARDON YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS. He is not like Me, of whom it is written, That pardons the iniquity/lawlessness, and passes by the transgression, etc. (Micah vii, 18), FOR HE WILL NOT PARDON YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS. Moreover, you will be the cause of My Name being removed from within him, for it says, FOR MY NAME IS IN HIM (xxiii, 21) [for his greatness and glory lie in the fact that he is My Messenger, but if you worship him, you desecrate My Name and thereby deprive him of his true glory]. Another interpretation of FOR MY NAME IS IN HIM. The angels are sustained only by the splendour of the Shechinah (that is, their only source of existence), as it says, And You preserve them all, and the host of heaven worshipped You (Neh. ix, 6). Why is this expression used? Because, said R. Haggai, ‘You are their means of sustenance.’ Moreover, he will ever be held guilty on their account (for not only is the worshipper punished, but even the thing worshipped is held guilty – Sanh. 93a). BUT IF YOU WILL INDEED HEARKEN UNTO HIS VOICE, AND DO ALL THAT I SPEAK (xxiii, 22). It does not say ‘that he speaks’, but THAT I SPEAK, implying that if you receive his words it will be like listening to Me. If you will do this, THEN I WILL BE AN ENEMY UNTO YOUR ENEMIES (ibid.). Hence, BEHOLD, I SEND AN ANGEL.

And from Midrash Tanchuma^{aa} we have:

The Holy One said: In this world I sent an angel before them, and he destroyed the peoples of the world; but in the world to come, I am sending you Elijah, may his memory be blessed. It is so stated (in Mal. 3:34 [4:5]): LO, I AM SENDING YOU THE PROPHET ELIJAH BEFORE THE COMING OF THE GREAT AND AWESOME DAY OF HA-SHEM.

So, then, having shown that the conflation of Sh’mot 23:20 with Mal’akhi 3:1, was well established from antiquity amongst our people, it only remains to ask, what is the meaning of this verse, and what is the role of this angel, which this document attributes to Mashiach?

In Mal’akhi 3:1 we read that this angel (messenger) of G-d is to: “Upinah-Derekh L’Panai” – “and he (the angel) will clear the way before Me (G-d),” and in Sh’mot 23:20 we likewise read: “LiSh’mar’kha BaDarekh V’Lahaviakha El-

^z ibid. pp. 408-9

^{aa} Townsend, J. T. (1997). Midrash Tanchuma: Translated into English with Indices and Brief Notes (S.Buber Recension) – Vol. II: Exodus And Leviticus. Hoboken, New Jersey: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., p. 125)

Ha-Maqom Asher Havinoti” - “ to guard you in the way, and to bring you to the place which I have prepared.” In this regard, the Ramban^{bb} comments:

BEHOLD, I SEND AN ANGEL BEFORE YOU.” Here they were informed that they would sin [by worshipping the golden calf] and that the Divine Glory would be saying to them, For I will not go up in the midst of you (cf. 33:3). FOR MY NAME IS IN HIM. This is connected with the beginning of this verse: Take heed of him, for My Name is associated with him. Our Rabbis explained (Sanhedrin 38b) that the angel referred to is Metatron [This is the great angel whose meaning of the word being “the guide of the way.” Thus the Rabbis have said in Sifre (Ha’azinu, 338): “The Holy One, blessed be He, was the metatron (guide) for Moses, and He showed him the entire land of Israel.”] whose name in numerical value is equal to that of his Master, for the sum of the letter-numbers of the name Metatron is equal to that of Sha-dai (Almighty) – the number of each being 314. All this is the language of Rashi. In Eileh Shemoth Rabbah (32:7) I have likewise seen that one of the Sages interprets the verse in this way, referring to the worshipping of the calf.

But one must ask that [we find that] this decree of “I send an angel before you” did not actually take place, for the Holy One, blessed be He, had said to Moses, And I will send an angel before you ... for I will not go up in the midst of you, (33:2-3) but Moses pleaded for mercy on this and said, If Your presence go not, carry us not up hence. For wherein now will it be known that I have found grace in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not in that You go with us? And the Holy One, blessed be He, consented to him and told him, I will do also this thing that you have spoken. Thus, also did the Rabbis interpret it (Sanhedrin 38b): “Even as a guide we refused to accept him, as it is written, If Your presence go not, carry us not up hence.”

The answer according to this opinion of the Rabbis is that this decree was not fulfilled in the days of Moses, and it is with reference to this that Moses said, So that we are distinguished, I and Your people, and G-d answered him, For you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name, and He further said, And all the people among which you are will see the work of the Eternal [that I am about to do] however, after the death of Moses our Teacher He did send with them the angel. It is with reference to this that Scripture states: And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him: Are you for us, or for our adversaries? 'And he said: 'Nay, but I am captain of the host of the Eternal; I am now come (Joshua 5:13-14). And there you will see that Joshua asked him, What says my lord unto his servant? Now the angel did not command Joshua anything in connection with his appearance to him, but merely told him, Put off your shoe from off your foot (5:15), nor did he explain why he came. But the vision was for the purpose of informing Joshua that from now on there would be an angel sent before them to go out in the host in battle. It is with reference to this that he said, I am now come. And so did the Sages say in the Tanchuma (Mishpatim, 18): "The angel said to Joshua: 'I am he who came in the days of Moses your master, and he pushed me away and did not want me to go with him.' " The Rabbis have also said expressly (Shemoth Rabba 32:4): "The promise that Israel would not be turned over to 'a captain' all the days of Moses now became void; thus as soon as Moses died 'the captain' returned to his position, for Joshua saw him, as it is said, And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho ... And he said, 'Nay, but I am captain of the host of the Eternal; I am now come.' This is why it is said, Behold, I send an angel before you."

By way of the Truth, [the mystic teachings of the Cabala], this angel they were promised here is the redeeming angel in whom is the Great Name, for in Y-a-h the Eternal is an everlasting Rock (Isaiah 26:4). This is [what He meant when] He said, I am the G-d of Beth-el (Genesis 31:13), for it is the custom of the King to dwell in His Palace. He is called mal'ach (angel) because the whole conduct of this world is by that attribute. And our Rabbis have said that this is Metatron, a name which signifies "the guide of the road/way" – I have already explained this in Seder Bo - and this is the sense of the phrase here, [Behold, I send an angel before you,] to keep you in the way. - And to bring you into the place which I have prepared, referring to the Sanctuary, as it is written, the Sanctuary, O Eternal, which Your hands have established (15:17). The meaning of the expression: which I have prepared, is "for Myself, to be My holy and beautiful house" (Isaiah 64:10), for there the Throne is perfect. I will yet mention the Rabbis' meaning in saying

^{bb} Chavel, Rabbi Dr. C. B. (1973). Ramban (Nachmanides) Commentary on the Torah (5 vols), New York: Shilo Publishing House, Inc. Vol. II, pp. 410-11.

that Metatron's name [in the sum of letter-numbers] is even as the Name of his Master. His voice is thus the voice of the living G-d, and it is mandatory upon us to hearken to His voice by the mouth of the prophets. Or the meaning may be that "they should not mutilate the shoots" of faith (seeking to undermine the principle of the Unity) and thus come to abandon the Oral Torah, just as the Rabbis have interpreted (P'sichta Eichah Rabbati, 2): "And they have spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel (Isaiah 5:24) - this refers to the Oral Torah." Thus the explanation of the expression, and hearken unto his voice, (v.21) is "to My words." Similarly He said, But if you will indeed hearken unto his voice, and do all that I speak (v.22). Onkelos hinted at this, for he translated ['ki sh'mi b'kirbo' - for My Name is in him]: "for in My Name is his word," as he speaks with it. He said, Then I will be an enemy unto your enemies (v.22), for even with the attribute of mercy I will be an enemy to them; and an adversary unto your adversaries - through him, [the angel], through the attribute of justice. Hence He explained, For Mine angel will go before you, and bring you in unto the Amorite etc. and the Canaanite etc. and I will cut him off, when he will bring you to them, that we may know that it is He [through the attribute of justice] that will cut them off. He mentioned them in the singular ["and I will cut him off], for He will cut them all off as if they were one man. Now when this angel dwelled in the midst of Israel, the Holy One, blessed be He, would not have said, For I will not go up in the midst of you - [for He said] for My Name is in him, so He was in the midst of Israel! But when they sinned by worshipping the golden calf He wanted to remove His Divine Glory from their midst, and that one of His angels should go before them as His messenger, and Moses pleaded for mercy, and He again caused His Divine Glory to dwell amongst them as before. There I will explain the verses, with the help of G-d.

The Rabbis have also hinted to this in Midrash Rabbah (Shemoth Rabbah 32:8) in that section. Thus they said: "Behold, I send an angel The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses: 'The one who guarded the fathers will guard the children.' And thus you find with Abraham, that when he blessed Isaac he said, He will send His angel before you (Genesis 24:7). In the case of Jacob we find [that he blessed Joseph's sons by saying], The angel who has redeemed me etc (Genesis 48:16. He said to them: 'He redeemed me from the hand of Esau; He redeemed me from the hand of Laban; He fed me and sustained me in the years of famine.' Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to Moses: 'Now too, the one who guarded the fathers will guard the children,' as it is said, Behold, I send an angel before you. Again the Rabbis have said there clearly (Shemoth Rabba 32:4): "The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel: 'Be heedful of the messenger, for he does not go back on his mission; he is the attribute of justice, be not rebellious against him, etc."

In any case, according to all authorities the Midrash I have mentioned is true, that as long as Moses lived the angel who was captain of the host did not go with them, for Moses filled his place, similarly to that which is said, And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed. And in the days of Joshua it was necessary that the angel captain of the host of the Eternal come to him to fight their battles, this being Gabriel who fights for them, and this was why Joshua saw him with his sword drawn in his hand (Joshua 5:13), because he came to execute vengeance upon the nations, and chastisements upon the peoples (Psalms 149:7).

For he will not pardon your transgression; for My Name is in him. He is saying: "Be not rebellious against him, for he will not pardon your transgression if you rebel against his word, for he who rebels against him, rebels against the Great Name which is in him, and he deserves to be cut off by the attribute of justice." It is possible that the expression My Name is in Him, is connected to the above verses: hearken to his voice, for My Name is in him, and his voice is the voice of the Supreme One."

Interestingly, before being murdered by the then corrupt priests in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem), Stephen states in his last address (2 Luqas (Acts) 7:30-38)

30. And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

31. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

32. Saying, I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

33. Then said the Lord to him, Put off your shoes from your feet: for the place where you stand is holy ground.

34. I have seen the affliction of My people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you into Egypt.

35. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made you a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

36. He brought them out, after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

37. This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet will the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him will you hear.

38. This is he, that was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel which spoke to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:” (Authorised Version)

This angel (Metatron) – the Chief of the Host of the Eternal is no other than the Adam Kadmon (Prototype Man), the very Mashiach himself who has no authority of himself to forgive sins, and whose role it is to: (1) “LiSh’mar’kha BaDarekh” – “to guard (keep) you in the way,” and (2) “V’Lahaviakha El-Ha-Maqom Asher Havinoti” - “and to bring you to the place which I have prepared.” [For a Nazarean perspective on this identification, see Messiah’s discourse on the signs of the end (Mordechai 13:26-27); his statement to Hakham Tsefet in Matityahu 26:53; and Revelation 19:1-16, particularly v.14.]

No matter how much we Jews complain, and how many crimes have been perpetrated against us by the hands of the Goyim, which G-d, most blessed be He, one day will punish most severely, still this Metatron in whom G-d’s Name is on him, the guardian of Yisrael, through many chastisements and sufferings (since he cannot forgive but only meets tempered justice) has surely kept us (the noble people of Yisrael) “BaDarekh Ha-Shem” [in the way (Halakha) of Ha-Shem] faithful to the Written and Oral Torah. Thus, we can say, that the bitter and painful sufferings of the past inflicted upon our people by the Gentiles, shows us that the Shekhinah has always remained amongst the noble people of Yisrael and with no one else! Thus the crimes committed against Yisrael and the Jewish people are in reality crimes against Ha-Shem’s Shekhinah (Divine Presence) for which there is no forgiveness (the unpardonable sin mentioned by Mashiach – Matityahu 12:30-32) and no apologies are accepted.

Another interpretation on “to prepare the way before you” (Malachi 3:1) is that offered by the Rambam (Rabbi Mosheh Maimonides) in his “Mishneh Torah: Hilchot Melachim U’Milchamoteihem” (The Laws of Kings and Their Wars)^{cc} where he states:

Can there be a greater stumbling block than [Christianity]? All the prophets spoke of the Messiah as the redeemer of Israel and its savior, who would gather their dispersed and strengthen their [observance of] the Mitzvoth. [By contrast, Christianity] caused the Jews to be slain by the sword, their remnants to be scattered and humbled, the Torah to be altered, and the majority of the world to err and serve a god other than the L-rd.

Nevertheless, the intent of the Creator of the world is not within the power of man to comprehend, for His ways are not our ways, nor are His thoughts, our thoughts. [Ultimately,] all the deeds of Jesus of Nazareth and that Ishmaelite who arose after him will only serve to prepare the way for the Messiah’s coming and the improvement of the entire world, [motivating the nations] to serve G-d together, as [Zephaniah 3:9] states: “I will make the peoples pure of speech that they will all call upon the Name of G-d and serve Him with one purpose.”

In other words, despite his justified rhetoric (Maimonides is writing this in the midst of a horrendous Catholic persecution against the Jews in Spain) the Rambam is saying that His Majesty King Yeshuah, even when the Gentiles have twisted his words, yet he has been, despite the evil of man towards man, “preparing the way [Halakha] before you” (Malachi 3:1), that is, preparing the Gentiles for the receiving of the truth of the Torah (Written and Oral), and preparing the Halakha for our final redemption. Nevertheless, a question may be asked as to how does this apply to us who confess without shame to be disciples of the Jewish Mashiach?

^{cc} Touger, Rabbi E. (1987). Maimonides Mnishneh Torah: Hilchot Melachim U’Milchamoteihem – The Laws of Kings and Their Wars, Jerusalem, Israel: Moznaim Publishing Corp., pp. 236-39

This text of Mal'akhi, in fact, outlines and delineates clearly our mission:

- a) "LiSh'mar'kha BaDarekh" – "to guard (keep) you (Yisrael) in the way [Halakha]," – that is, it behoves every Nazarean Jew to make sure to render all possible assistance so that our Nazarean communities and all Yisrael remains BaDerekh Ha-Shem (within the lawful constraints of the Written and Oral Torah).
- b) "LiSh'mar'kha BaDarekh" – "to guard (keep) you (Yisrael) in the way [Halakha]," – that is by bringing "the many" (ie. the Goyim/Gentiles) "near to the Torah" we hasten the coming of the Mashiach, as it is said in Pirqe Abot 1:12 – "Hillel and Shammai received the tradition (Oral Torah) from them. Hillel says: Be of the disciples of Aharon, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving your fellow creatures and bringing them nearer to the Torah."
- c) "V'Lahaviakha El-Ha-Maqom Asher Havinoti" - "and to bring you (Yisrael) to the place which I have prepared." This is none other than the heavenly Bet HaMiqdash, which one day will descend upon Yerushalayim after the 2nd coming of Mashiach. This point is critical, since we are not looking forward to the rebuilding of any Temple by human hands, but our goal is to bring every man be he Jew or Gentile (each in their own covenant relationship) to this Holy Place which will descend down from the heavens as our Sages teach. This heavenly Temple is the proto-type or model of which Mosheh Rabbenu was shown, and from which he produced a copy here on earth. And of this Temple, the prophet says: "Khi Veiti (for My house) Bet-Tefilah (a house of prayer) Yiqare (will be called) LiKhol HaAmim (for all peoples)" – Yeshayahu 56:7!

III. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MORDECHAI 1:1 AND MORDECHAI 1:2

Apart from providing reinforcement and delineating the task of Messiah as presented in Mordechai 1:1 and as indicated at the beginning of v.2 – "as it is written", that is, offering support and/or structure for the claims made in the previous statement of Mordechai 1:1, we can still find further evidence for this intimate nexus of these two p'sukim (verses).

If we compare the mission of the angel captain of the host, that would lead Israel into the land: "LiSh'mar'kha BaDarekh" – "to guard (keep) you (Yisrael) in the way [Halakha]," with the role of the M'SORAH – being identified in Pirqe Abot 3:17 as a "S'YAG" (fence) to protect the Written Torah from being desecrated and misused, as well as protecting Yisrael [that is, "to guard (keep) you (Yisrael) in the way [Halakha]"], we find indeed a complete harmonious overlap of roles.

This overlap is only possible if as Hakham Yochanan (John) teaches, that this Mashiach is none other than the Torah (Written and Oral) made flesh (tabernacling in the flesh) – cf. Yochanan 1:14. And it is this theme of the M'SORAH being identified with the Mashiach that is the parting point of the Mishnaic treatise of Mordechai as elucidated in the first two introductory verses. Further, then v.2 is stating that just as the angel's mission is "to guard (keep) you (Yisrael) in the way [Halakha]," so too is the role of the M'SORAH! Equally as well, the role of the angel is said to be that of "and to bring you (Yisrael) to the place which I have prepared," and the same could be said of the role of the M'SORAH.

Behold, then with what reverence does the author of this Mishnaic treatise holds the Oral Torah of the Jewish people which it equates with Mashiach himself, and with the angel captain of the host of Heaven, and further intimating quite clearly that this Oral Torah in Israel's possession will "guard (keep) you (Yisrael) in the way [Halakha]" and will ultimately bring its adherents, students and practitioners to "the place which I (G-d) have prepared" (compare with Yochanan 14:2-4)! It is, therefore with a great sense of disgust and shame that we see false teachers instructing and demanding that Mashiach's true disciples throw off the Heavenly yoke of the Oral Torah, or replace it with some other foreign (aka pagan) Oral Torah that our people never received by the disposition of G-d's angels.

On this wise, His Eminence Hakham Ya'aqov Culi (Turkey 1689-1732) of blessed memory, in the MeAm Lo'ez

(Pueblo Ladinador) Sephardi Commentary on the Tanakh^{dd}, on Sh'mot (Exodus) 23:2-22 writes:

Sh'mot 23:20

"Behold, I will send a Messenger before you, to safeguard you on the way, and to bring you to the place that I have prepared."

G-d now told the Israelites that He would send an angel before them. This angel would watch them as they traveled, and bring them to the place that He prepared. G-d is referring to a definite place, where the Holy Temple (Beth HaMikdash) would be built. The place is prepared by G-d, since the lower Temple is directly opposite the Temple on high (cf. Rashi, Tanchuma).

Sh'mot 23:21

Be careful before him and listen to his voice. Do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your disobedience; My Name is in him."

The angel that G-d would send before the Israelites would be the angel Metatron. The name Metatron has [a numerical value of 314, which is the same as] the numerical value of G-d's Name, Shaddai.

Since this angel is merely a messenger, he does not have the authority to forgive any sin. He cannot change in any way what he has been appointed to do (cf. Rashi, Tanchuma). Anyone who speaks against him is counted as if he spoke against G-d. Anything that the angel says, he says in G-d's Name, for G-d's Name is in him. The Hebrew word for angel is malakh, which literally means an agent or messenger. This is because an angel is nothing more than a messenger of G-d.

Sh'mot 23:22

For if you obey him, and do all that I say, then I will hate those who hate you, and attack those who attack you."

The Torah speaks of both a hater and an attacker. There is one person who merely hates in his heart, but does not bring his hatred to action. When an enemy actually acts upon his hatred, he is an attacker. Since he is willing to do something, it is evident that his hatred is stronger.

G-d is thus saying, "There is an angel ready to go before you, to help you and show you the way. But you must realize that he is not doing this on his own, of his own good will. Any good he does is as My agent, since he cannot do anything that I do not command him. If you derive benefit from him, do not give him credit for it; he has no power to do anything.

"Still, you must be careful before him, to listen to him and not rebel against him. Although I have said that he has no power to do good or bad on his own, and all that he does is My bidding, you have no right to rebel against him. My Name is in him. Since he is My agent, you must respect him, as it is taught, 'I will respect those who respect Me' (1 Samuel 2:30)."

Therefore, whoever respects others will himself be respected. Whenever a person respects his peers, he is also showing respect for Me. Man is the work of My hands, and should not be dishonored. If this is true of man, who is flesh and blood, it is certainly true of an angel."

Although this is speaking of an angel, the word for angel (malakh) denotes a messenger. It can refer to a prophet or a rabbi, who are also G-d's messengers. We are also forbidden to rebel against them, since this is considered disrespect

^{dd} Rabbi Ya'akov Culi (1980). The Torah Anthology Vol. 8: MeAm Lo'Ez, Translated by Rabbi A. Kaplan, Jerusalem, Israel: Moznaim Publishing Corp., pp. 177-179.

for the Torah.

Here, we see that with regard to an angel, G-d says, "If you obey him, and do all that I say." You must obey the agent, and do all that G-d commands.

However, if any prophet or rabbi says something that goes against the Torah, he should not be obeyed. G-d therefore did not say, "do all that he says." If G-d had said that, we would think that if an angel, prophet or rabbi tells us to do anything at all, we must obey. But G-d said, "do all that I say," so we see that there are limits (cf. Ramban, HaEmunah VeHaBitachon 19)."

Thus, rejecting the Oral Torah of Yisrael as expressed by our Jewish Sages who whether they acknowledge him or not has strictly supervised them, amounts to rebellion against the angels (Rabbis) of G-d, rebellion against the Mashiah (in whom G-d's Name is in Him), and what is more important rebellion against Ha-Shem Himself and His G-dly rule. This Mishnaic treatise of Mordechai alerts us in these two introductory verses in no uncertain terms against such despicable behaviour, and the more coming from anyone who advertises to be a follower of the Mashiah, be he a Jew or a Gentile.

Finally, according to simple logic, if $a = b$, then it follows that $b = a$. And if the M'SORAH itself and its teachers = the angel captain of the heavenly host, at least in roles, then the M'SORAH itself and its teachers are also the embodiment, no matter how imperfect, of the angel captain of the heavenly host, and the same M'SORAH and its teachers too have G-d's Name in them. For, as we have just read "Anything that the angel says, he says in G-d's Name, for G-d's Name is in him." Thus equally, anything that the M'SORAH says and teaches or its Hakhamim (Rabbis) say and teach so they do in G-d's Name, for G-d's Name is in the M'SORAH and its saintly teachers. Again, we observe the connection here between v.2 and "son of G-d" (Ben Elohim) of v.1.

It is vital that we understand that whether Jewish Rabbis acknowledge or not Yeshuah as the Messiah, it is this same Yeshuah as Metatron that has been guiding and superintending the production of Halakha as taught by our Sages. Either Messiah superintends the affairs of men from the heavens as we most certainly believe to be the case, or he is not doing so.

IV. MORDECHAI 1:3

And as it is said: "Mosheh received the Torah from Sinai and gossiped it down to Yehoshua, and Yehoshua gossiped it down to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets gossiped it down to the Men of the Great Assembly. They (the Men of the Great Assembly) emphasized three things; Be deliberate in judgment, make stand many disciples, and make a fence around the Torah" (P. Abot 1:1).

Now, you may notice that no edition of the New Testament has this statement as verse 3. So then the question immediately arises as to why have we added this statement of Mishnah Pirque Abot 1:1 here as Mordechai (Mark) 1:3? We have added this statement for the following three reasons:

1. **"at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, will a matter be established"** (Deut. 19:15). Hakham Tsefet (Peter) through his scribe Mordechai (Mark) has presented us in v.2 with one witness in the conflation of Exodus 23:30 with Malachi 3:1 as shown above. We therefore are in need of a second witness in order to "establish the matter." It is our sincere belief that this statement of Pirque Abot 1:1 originally was part of Mark but at a later time in order to purge the writings of the Apostles from any Jewishness, this statement was struck out or purged from the original version.
2. **"Without father, without mother, without a genealogy"** (Hebrews 7:3). Surely a servant is without a genealogy, since servants are bought and sold. And since the Master, i.e. the Messiah is presented in this composition as the servant of Ha-Shem, we find no genealogy of the Master in the book of Mordechai

(Mark).^{ee} But since verse one states that the Master is the “chief part” or “wisdom” of the MASORAH, a genealogy of the Torah since Sinai is required. In verse 1, the genealogy of the Torah is traced before creation, in verse 2, from creation to Sinai, and in our present verse from Sinai to the present day.

3. **“That which has been is that which will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done; and there is nothing new under the sun”** (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Verse 3 serves to emphasize the point that the MASORAH of the Master is the same MASORAH that Mosheh Rabbenu (Moses our Master) received at Sinai and gossiped it down to Yehoshua, and down to this very day through our Sages. There is indeed no other Gospel except than the one delivered to Moses by G-d at Mt. Sinai! And further, as verse one intimates it is with this Gospel that G-d, most blessed be He, created the universe – as it is stated: “For the sake of Resheet G-d created,” etc. (Gen. 1:1)

It is clear then that the statement of Pirque Abot 1:1 fits perfectly after verse 2. Not only does it fit perfectly, but it explains verse one and two in a very succinct and elegant form.

V. LECTIONARY CONCERNS OF MORDECHAI 1:1 AND MORDECHAI 1:3

We have already argued the fact that verses one and three of Mordechai chapter one form an organic unit /whole as shown above in the intimate interrelationship between the three verses. Therefore, the three verses constitute by themselves the first paragraph of this work. This does not detract from the Rabbinic rule that matters dealt in two adjoining paragraphs overlap and are related to each other.

Some have argued, that the organisation of any Mishnaic treatise is thematic rather than framed around any chronological scheme such as the ancient Jewish Septennial Lectionary of Torah readings. We do concede that such is the scheme for the Mishnah as we have received it, arranged around six orders. Nevertheless, this Mishnaic treatise is somewhat different, since it is arranged around the life and teachings of the Messiah, whom we identified above as being the embodiment of the Written and Oral Torah. And thus alike with the unrolling of the Torah Scroll week by week we expect the arrangement to be somewhat chronologically related to the Torah readings, and alluded to in each paragraph of the Mishnaic treatise of Mordechai.

Others have also argued that the ministry of Yochanan the Immerser was one whose main subject was that of “TESHUVAH” – repentance, as we shall see in our next paragraph and lecture, G-d willing. And that such a message would be better suited for the season of “repentance” in our calendar known as the “Yomim HaNoraim” (the 10 days of repentance from Rosh HaShanah (New Year) to Yom HaKippurim (Day of Atonements) in the autumn month of Tishri. However a closer look at our calendar also shows that the days from the beginning of the month of Nisan in Spring, and exemplified with house cleaning before Nisan 14, the search for leaven at the beginning of the Nisan 14, the eating of Matsah (un-leavened bread) for seven days and the counting day by day of the Omer till the festival of Shabuot (Pentecost – the commemoration of the giving of the Torah at Sinai) in Sivan 6 are also a season of preparation and repentance.

The problem has been a perception in Judaism that with the over-emphasis of Christianity on the spring festivals at the expense of the autumn festivals that they do not celebrate, has forced Judaism to place a greater emphasis on the autumn festivals. Also, the perception, that since the festival of Rosh Ha-Shanah depicts the resurrection of the dead and the initiation of the millennial kingdom that the autumn festivals seem to be more relevant for us from the perspective of time than the spring ones. However, the Talmud teaches that in Nisan we were redeemed and in Nisan we will be redeemed again, as it is said in Talmud Babli, Rosh Hashanah 11a:

It has been taught: R. Eliezer says: In Tishri the world was created; in Tishri the Patriarchs were born; in Tishri the

^{ee} Luke presents us with a genealogy of the Master because Luke portrays the Master as a nobleman, and all noblemen have genealogies. Matityahu (Matthew) presents us with another genealogy of the Master, because in Matityahu the Master is presented as the King of all Israel, and kings do have a genealogy. Luke and Matthew differ in their genealogies due to the rules and needs of the genre they are writing – Luke in Remes and Matthew in Drash.

Patriarchs died; on Passover Isaac was born; on New Year Sarah, Rachel and Hannah were visited; on New Year Joseph went forth from prison; on New Year the bondage of our ancestors in Egypt ceased; in Nisan they were redeemed and in Nisan they will be redeemed in the time to come. R. Joshua says: In Nisan the world was created; in Nisan the Patriarchs were born; in Nisan the Patriarchs died; on Passover Isaac was born; on New Year Sarah, Rachel and Hannah were visited; on New Year Joseph went forth from prison; on New Year the bondage of our ancestors ceased in Egypt; and in Nisan they will be redeemed in time to come.

The Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 11b) in fact, lays down the chronology of our future redemption as follows:

On New Year the bondage of our ancestors ceased in Egypt. It is written in one place, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and it is written in another place, I removed his shoulder from the burden. ‘In Nisan they were delivered’, as Scripture recounts. ‘In Tishri they will be delivered in time to come’. This is learnt from the two occurrences of the word ‘horn’. It is written in one place, Blow the horn on the new moon, and it is written in another place, In that day a great horn shall be blown. ‘R. Joshua says, In Nisan they were delivered, in Nisan they will be delivered in the time to come’. Whence do we know this? — Scripture calls [the Passover] ‘a night of watchings’, [which means], a night, which has been continuously watched for from the six days of the creation. What says the other to this? — [He says it means], a night which is under constant protection against evil spirits.

This Talmudic description of our future redemption is explained in terms of a process which starts in Rosh Ha-Shanah (in the month of Tishri) but alike in the former redemption in Egypt culminates on Pesach (in the month of Nisan).

Perhaps a “hint” on this topic is provided to us in the words of the Mishnah of Pirque Abot 1:1 – Mosheh Qibel Torah MiSinai UM’sarah LiYehoshuah (Moses received the Torah from Sinai and gossiped it down to Yehoshuah). This “Yehoshuah” firstly refers to the saintly Yehoshuah (Joshuah), the brave and most faithful disciple of Mosheh Rabbenu. However, this “Yehoshuah” can also be allegorically interpreted to mean His Majesty King Yeshuah (Hebrew abbreviation for Yehoshuah) the Messiah. In doing this, the first clause of Abot 1:1 is to be taken as a description of a transition (ie. from Metatron (Messiah) to Mosheh Rabbenu and from Mosheh Rabbenu to His Majesty King Yeshuah), and the next clauses outlining this process with the final clause describing that the aims of both Mosheh and Yeshuah are identical. Moreover, this Mishnah would also be reinforcing the fact that the Torah received by Mosheh and gossiped down to His Majesty King Yeshuah the Messiah is the same Written and Oral Torah which he (Mashiach) handed down to us and being communicated through our extremely faithful Hakhamim since 70 c.e. up to this very day.

VII. SUMMARY OF TEACHINGS OF MORDECHAI 1:1 AND MORDECHAI 1:3

Any Mishnaic treatise, as was/is the custom amongst our noble people of Yisrael throughout the ages, is basically understood as a catechetical work with material selectively arranged for didactic purposes. Catechumens, be they the young or the un-initiated adult or neophyte were, and still are subjected to a period of intensive training and in which they are asked to memorise that which systematically organises the faith. In the case of Christianity, it is a series of dogma and in Judaism our basic Laws and appointments with G-d. The style of this literature is therefore straight to the point, and bereft of any fanciful explanations since it is intended to be committed to memory and provide the skeleton of schemata which through time will be elaborated upon by the human mind as further and deeper studies on the subject matter are pursued.

The Mishnah then, offers to us the most ancient and basic program of study for converts and Jewish children alike before their Bar/Bat Mitzvah examination and or conversion procedures take place. However, as we progress through human history different flavours of didactic endeavours and styles become the flavour of the month. Yet, Judaism is not shaped or governed by the exigencies of passing fads or what may be secularly in vogue. In the Mishle (Proverbs) we read: “My son, if you will receive my words and treasure (conceal) my commandments within you.” Now, how can a person “conceal G-d’s commandments within him/her”? It becomes obvious then that the author meant to say “memorise G-d’s commandments” for in doing so, one conceals G-d’s words within the self. And the Midrash on

Proverbs^{ff} comments:

"My son, if you accept my words (Prov. 2:1) – on Mount Sinai G-d said: My children, if you succeed in accepting My Torah and doing what is in it, I will save you from three punishments: the war of Gog and Magog, the pangs of the Messiah's advent, and the torment of Gehenna. And treasure up my commandments (Prov. 2:1) – if you succeed in storing away words of Torah in your hearts (minds), I will satiate you with the stored-up goodness which I have laid away for the future, as it is said, How abundant is the goodness that You have in store for those that fear You (Psalm 31:20). G-d said: In the future I will make known to all the nations of the world that goodness with which I will benefit you, on the condition that your ears continually listen to the words of Torah, as it is said, If you make your ear attentive to wisdom, and your mind open to discernment (Prov. 2:2). How so? If you call to understanding and cry aloud for discernment" (Prov.2:3).

And in Pirke Abot 3:10, we read:

"Rabbi Dostai ben Yannai said in the name of Rabbi Meir: 'Whosoever forgets even one word of his study (Torah learning) Scripture regards him as though he has sinned against his soul, for it is said: 'Only take heed of yourself and guard your soul diligently, that you may not forget the things you saw (at the time of the revelation at Sinai) with your own eyes.' Now one might suppose that the same result would follow even if the retention of what he has studied has been too hard for him. To guard against such an inference, the Torah adds 'and lest they be removed from your heart (mind) your entire lifetime, and you will inform your children and grandchildren of them, the day you stood before G-d, your God at Choreb ...' Accordingly, he is guilty of sinning against his soul only if he sits down idly and deliberately removes (these teachings) from his heart (mind)."

So, then, the task of the Mishnah is to provide an organised skeleton of knowledge about the Torah as a means of "concealing G-d's commandments within us" and enabling for apt repetition, recall and memorisation of them which is the meaning of the Hebrew root term "SHANAH" from which the word Mishnah is derived. Therefore, we should ask, what then does Mordechai 1:1-3 wants us to memorise? Simple:

¶ The chief part of the Masorah (Tradition/Oral Law) is Yeshuah the Messiah, the Son of God (i.e. Ben Elohim = the King/Judge); as it is written in the prophets, "Behold, I send My messenger before your face, which will prepare your way (Hebrew: Derekh/Halakha) before you" (Exodus 23:30; & Malachi 3:1).

▢ And as it is said: "Mosheh received the Torah from Sinai and gossiped it down to Yehoshua, and Yehoshua gossiped it down to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets gossiped it down to the Men of the Great Assembly. They (the Men of the Great Assembly) emphasized three things; Be deliberate in judgment, make stand many disciples, and make a fence around the Torah" (P. Abot 1:1).

FURTHER NOTES

1) As can be seen above we have welded Mark 1:1 with verse 2, as presented in Christian Bibles. The separation of verses is really modern (1551 c.e.)^{gg} and we are of the opinion that verse 1 and two should not be separated at all. As regarding our verse 2 we think it should be separate since it presents another but complementary train of thought.

2) Contrary to Christian teaching we believe that vv.1-2 as presented above is a pericope by itself which deals with the introduction to this Mishnaic treatise and not to be joined with the next pericope (of vv. 3-8 in the Christian Bibles), as this later pericope refers and deals with the subject of Yochanan the Immerser. Therefore we propose that the above vv. 1-2 of the first Chapter of the Mishnah of Mordechai (containing the Christian verses 1 and 2, plus the statement of Pirke Abot 1:1) constitute a separate pericope distinct from the Christian vv.3-8.

^{ff} Visotzky, B.L. (1992). The Midrash on Proverbs Translated from the Hebrew with an Introduction and Annotations. London: Yale University Press, p.29

^{gg} Cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapters_and_verses_of_the_Bible

2) Whilst most modern versions of this treatise include the phrase “Isaiah the Prophet” in v.2, this is completely erroneous and shows a lack of understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures, the lectionary framework of this treatise, let alone the Rabbinic perspective from which this Mishnaic treatise was written.

Here therefore ends our commentary on the first paragraph of the Mishnah of Mordechai. May the Creator, Most Blessed be He, grant us strength to continue our studies and comment on further paragraphs of this important Mishnaic treatise, and may He bless and comfort all Yisrael, and grant Wisdom to all who study the Written and Oral Torah.

אמן ואמן סלה