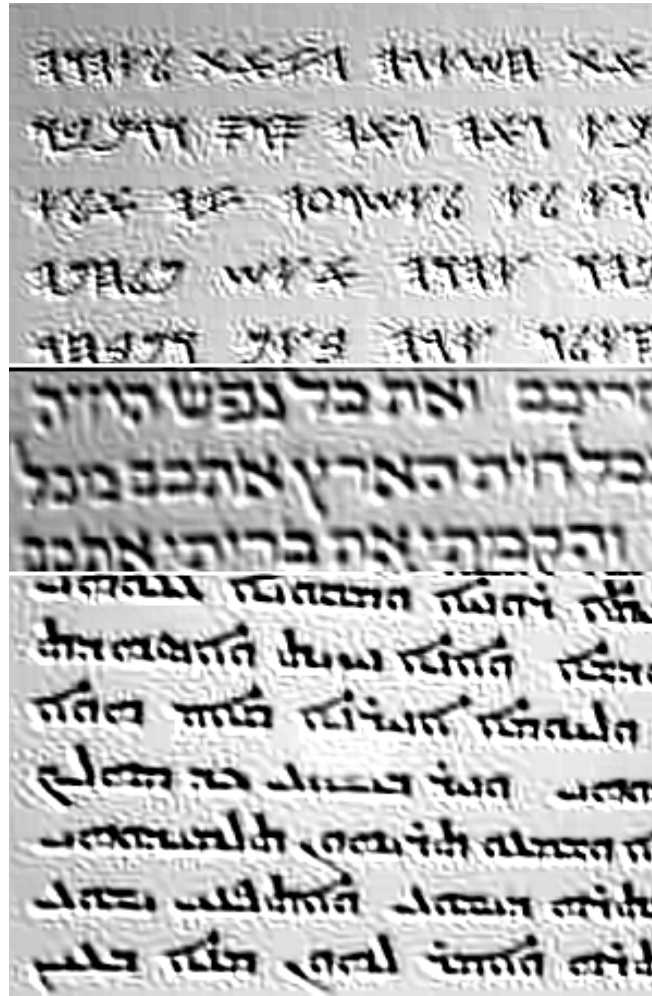


רוח קדִים

RUACH QADIM

RECOVERING THE ARAMAIC ORGINS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE LOST VISION OF THE
NAZARENES



[Standard Electronic Edition]

By Andrew Gabriel Roth

בְּנֵי אֱמִינִים וְבְנֵי שָׁלֹם וְחַיִּים

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Todah rabbah (thank you very much) in advance for your sensitivity and spiritual discernment in this matter, so that His Great Name may be known and revered in all the earth.

Andrew Gabriel Roth
August 17, 2003

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ABOUT THE COVER:

This image is a composite of three separate pieces of calligraphy enhanced with computer graphics. While the texts appear to be a stone inscription, the fact is all three scripts are painted on heavy paper and overlaid with an "emboss" feature courtesy of PhotoShop. The top script represents a paleo-Hebrew version of Exodus 15 followed in descending order by Genesis 6 in Torah style Hebrew (asshuri) letters, and terminated with the bottom Aramaic estrangela style inscription from the Gospel of John.

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|The Letter to the Ephesians

The eye of your hearts

הַעַיִן הַלֵּבָבִית הַזֶּה
הַעַיִן הַלֵּבָבִית הַזֶּה
הַעַיִן הַלֵּבָבִית הַזֶּה

As we saw with the bad idiom transfer of Matthew 23:8 (rabbi = teacher or "my great one"), a frequent problem that the Greek redactor has is in making Semitic idioms flow better in his language. The difference is that while many scholars are ready to acknowledge a strong Aramaic influence (to say the least) in the Gospels, many of these same authorities draw the line at the Epistles. Their reasons for doing so are least partially understandable however, since there are clear cases where Paul refers to himself as a Roman citizen and apparently had the ability to converse with a wide group of Empire officials who surely would have had little fluency in Hebrew or Aramaic.

However, what is often overlooked in such an analysis is once again the concept I referred to in my previous book as *commercial fluency versus sacred choice*. By this term I mean the following: That what Jews did to get by as a matter of necessity must be wholly separated out from what they do in terms of sacred ritual and Scripture. As an example of this fact, I pointed out the reality that synagogues in Paris, Warsaw and New York might give sermons in their local vernacular, but they all have Torah scrolls in Hebrew. It is in of course the Jew's connection to his language and culture that has also kept him distinct through thousands of years of wandering without a homeland. Therefore, the level of Paul's ability in Greek is quite beside the point, even though there are clear references that he was not perhaps as fluent as he needed to be in some instances, (2 Peter 3:15-16).

In addition, the evidence discussed in Romans 5:6-8 clearly pointed to a targumming infrastructure which, in keeping with clear Jewish practices for both Aramaic and Greek, would have been most comfortable for Paul himself to engage in. That process would have, by necessity, involved Paul writing his letter in Aramaic and then having the synagogue official in Ephesus, or whatever assembly one was addressed to, translate it into Greek.

Another reason for this assertion rests on the fact that there are two different ancient interpretations of a certain Aramaic idiom in Ephesians 1:18, since it is reasonable to expect that, had Paul done a definitive Greek rendering, that such would have been more effectively passed down.

In this case the idiom in question is *ayna d'lebwatkon*, or "the eye of your hearts", which has no precedence in Greek whatsoever. As a result, Alexandrian and Western manuscripts, which had difficulty with the term, neutralized it into their vernacular as "eye of your hearts may be enlightened", so as to put the meaning into a more acceptable solution in Greek thought. By contrast though the Byzantine manuscripts simply decided to retain the Semiticism as written, proving that there were occasions when Greek redactors understood that Paul was using an Aramaic idiom. Surely then such could not be the case if Paul was writing perfect compositional Greek to a native Greek audience!

Consider this Hope for the Gospel

Here is an amazing wordplay which keys in multiple meanings of the same root:

הַעַיִן הַלֵּבָבִית הַזֶּה
הַעַיִן הַלֵּבָבִית הַזֶּה
הַעַיִן הַלֵּבָבִית הַזֶּה
הַעַיִן הַלֵּבָבִית הַזֶּה
הַעַיִן הַלֵּבָבִית הַזֶּה

That we should become the first to **trust** in Messiah, to his honor and his glory, in whom you also have heard the word of truth, which is the **gospel** of your salvation; in him you have believed, so that you are sealed with the Holy Spirit that was promised.

The Aramaic root *sebar* has multiple meanings. In this case two of those meanings (trust/hope, gospel) are directly tapped at the surface of the text. However, these are far from the only meanings that *sebar* has, since it also can be rendered as the following¹:

מה שהיה תולד מהוא שהיה מתבטא
מהו אלהים אצל כל אחד מהם

לְיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד וְיֵשׁוּעַ אֶחָד וְכִנּוּיָא אֶחָד

There is one YHWH, one faith and one immersion. One Elohim, Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all of us. But to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Messiah.

Ephesians 4:5-7 (my personal translation, cross-referenced to Lamsa and others)

Now keeping in mind that Paul throughout his life also repeatedly proclaimed himself as a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee, and always referred to his status as a Jew in the present tense, the contours of his "one faith" become very clear. There is one YHWH, and He is the One Elohim (God), and for these words Paul uses the closest Aramaic equivalents to the original Tanakh terms. In the Aramaic translation of the Hebrew Bible completed more than 2000 years ago, *MarYah* (Lord Yah--ܡܪܝܬܐ) replaces YHWH almost 7,000 times. As for Elohim, its cognate in Aramaic is *Alaha* (ܐܠܗܐ) which, like the relationship of YHWH to Yah, represents the singular form of the same name, or Eloah.

We also should bear in mind Paul's audience, which is made up of Gentiles who have had little training in matters of Judaic practice, (4:17-32). So, leaving aside the seemingly anti-Torah statements from Ephesians that are rampant at least from the Greek texts and will be dealt with later, direct references from Paul make it clear that his one faith in the one God comes from some vision of Judaism that he views is completed with faith in Y'shua.

Furthermore the use of the term *baptism* for *maimodyata* (ܡܝܡܕܝܬܐ) is a bit misleading because it assumes a purely Christian outlook, as if the rite had no precedent in the Tanakh. Instead, *immersion* is the better term, because it more accurately reflects the continuity of Jewish practice, such as is the case here:

Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water. He put the tunic on him, girded him with the sash, clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him, girdling him with the decorated band with which he tied it to him. He put the breastpiece on him and put into the breastpiece to Urim and Thummim. And he set the headdress on his head; and on the headdress, in the front, he put the gold frontlet, the holy diadem--as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Leviticus 8:6-9

I will take you from among the nations and gather you from all the countries, and I will bring you back to your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean. I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your fetishes. And I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit into you. I will remove your heart of stone from your body and give you a new heart of flesh; and I will put My spirit into you. Thus I will cause you to follow My laws and faithfully observe my rules.

Ezekiel 36:24-27

Doesn't the last verse especially speak to the idea of John the Baptist performing immersions *for repentance*? Just where could he have gotten the idea from if not from his own Jewish practice? Also notice that Ezekiel talks of a time when Jews will brought back into the land from among the nations, which means that many of them would have abandoned their ancestral ways for pagan practice. Now fast forward almost 700 years and we find that, many of these Jews had blended in with the Gentiles so well that the apostle Paul came to call both them, and the Gentiles they were with, back into the light:

Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their thoughts. They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them and because of the hardness of their hearts. They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity

with a desire for more and more. But that is not how you learned about the Messiah, assuming you heard Him and were taught by Him, because the truth is in Y'shua: you took off your former way of life, the old man that is corrupted by deceitful desires; you are being renewed in the spirit of your minds; you put on the new man, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth. Since you put away lying, Speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another. Be angry and do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger, and don't give the Devil an opportunity. The thief must no longer steal. Instead, he must do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need. No rotten talk should come from your mouth, but only what is good for the building up of someone in need, in order to give grace to those who hear. And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit, who sealed you for the day of redemption. All bitterness, anger and wrath, insult and slander must be removed from you, along with all wickedness. And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Messiah.

Ephesians 4:17-32 (Holman)

Without knowing who among his flock of new believers are pure Gentiles and whom might be returning northern tribes, Paul's attitude here is to bring them all back into proper practice and have God sort them out later. The salient point in either case though is clearly the same: If Paul *is a Jew* then the one faith in the one God and one immersion must all be linked back to Moses and the prophets.

Ephesians 2:15, or Paul vs. the Pharisees Part 2

Perhaps there is no greater misconception among Gentile Christians today that, in spite of clear statements to the contrary (Matthew 5:17-20), the Torah has passed away. In defense also of this position many have turned to the writings of Paul and purported to come back with "indisputable proof" of Torah's lack of relevance to the Gentile Messianic believer.

What Ephesians 2:15 does, like the proof in Galatians 3 and 4 discussed previously, is help preview the evidence we will show later *en masse* that proves the opposite position. We are dealing here with a man (Paul) who kept Shabbat eighty-four times in the book of Acts alone, performed a circumcision, completed a Nazirite vow and fasted on Yom Kippur thirty years after the resurrection of the Messiah allegedly made such activities unnecessary. Furthermore, the passages that Paul writes that appear to go against this behavior can instead be explained in terms of mistranslation into Greek, and this verse in question is one of the most powerful examples of this phenomena that exists in the New Testament. Before showing it directly however, a brief review is needed.

The reader will recall how the New Testament uses two words for "Torah". The first one, *aurayta*, appears only in Matthew 11:3, 12:5 and 22:40. Its one and exclusive meaning is THE TORAH, as in the Law given at Sinai, and its root shares the same meanings as its Hebrew counterpart of "light" and "to shoot straight". The second Aramaic word for Torah, which appears almost 150 times in the Peshitta, is *namusa*. While it is likely *namusa* is a loan word from the Greek *nomos*, this fact is utterly irrelevant to our studies since we are tracking the way a word is used by a group of people as opposed to where it first came from. It is also impossible to have the close cultural contact that Israel and Rome had in the first century and not see a fair amount of loan words result from the process. In many cases also, these two words are synonymous.

However, unlike *aurayta*, *namusa* has a dual meaning of "changeable custom" that manifests during certain grammatical constructions, and this fact is totally lost in the Greek. For example, when *namusa* appears by itself, it means the same thing as *aurayta* does:

Do not think I have come to abolish the *namusa* or the prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Matthew 5:17

In the case we are discussing though, a different construction is used:

Put on the **helmet of salvation** and take the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God.

There are a wide variety of things going on in this brief little passage! First let's look at the phrase "sword of the Spirit". Now earlier we looked at a phenomenon called the "implied wordplay", or when the sound of one word is reflected in the synonym of another word alluded to elsewhere, yet described in the same manner. For example, in the Gospel of John Y'shua does this by using the rare word *makultha* for "food" so that it will remind the reader of the implied concept of *kingdom* (*malkutha*) which he has given the exact same definitions to. In this case, Paul is using the word *sipa* for sword, but the "sprit" that is the sword (*rukha*) is reminiscent of another word that can mean "lance" or "spear". That other word is *rumkha*, and so the implied wordplay beneath the text is another gorgeous alliteration of *rumkha d'rukha*--lance/spear of the (sword) of the Spirit! It is also clearly drawing a comparison from here:

w'ba-**nap-sha-ki** den dee-la-ki ta-bar **rum-kha**
and in your **soul** will pass through a **spear**

מסגרת המחקר / שאלות מחקר / מטרות המחקר

Arise therefore, gird up your loins with **truth** and put on the **breastplate of righteousness**. And have your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Ephesians 6:14-15 (Lamsa)

The Aramaic word for "truth" (qoshta--e.g. John 17:19) has a common synonym, *shrara*. Now look at this:

ܩܫܬܐ (shrara) = truth

ܫܪܪܐ (shrina) = breastplate

Next though we have *tzedekaya* (righteousness) to consider. This word has a very interesting synonym in the form of *qadishta* (holy), in this manner:

ܩܕܝܫܐ (qoshta) = truth

ܩܕܝܫܬܐ (qadishta) = holy

In the end then the image could not be more powerful as Paul is clearly making word choices that speak to a deeper message well established in Hebrew tradition:

He will cover thee with His pinions, and under His wings shalt thou take refuge; His truth is a shield and buckler.

Psalms 91:4 (1955 Jewish Publication Society translation of the Holy Scriptures)

And, most remarkably of them all, we have this:

And he put on righteousness (*tzedekah*) like a coat of mail (or "breastplate"-- *shiryone*). And a helmet of salvation (*kova d'yeshoowa*) upon his head. And he put on the garments of vengeance for his clothing, and he was clad in zeal as a cloak.

Isaiah 59:17 (1955 Jewish Publication Society translation of the Holy Scriptures)

Now let's see how the Hebrew Tanakh and the Aramaic New Testament match up in word choices and terminology:

Shiryone/Breastplate (Isaiah)

Shrina/Breastplate (Paul)

Tzedekah/Righteousness (Isaiah)

Tzedekaya/Righteousness (Paul)

These are, with very minor dialectical differences aside, the exact same words! An interesting departure though is with this term:

Kova d'yeshoowa/Helmet of Salvation (Isaiah)

Sonorta d'porqana/Helmet of Salvation (Paul)

Why does Paul do this? The answer is for two very special reasons. First, *kova* (helmet) is an exclusively Hebrew word that has no direct cognate in Aramaic. Paul therefore substitutes in the only two places that the word *helmet* appears in the New Testament (1 Thessalonians 5:8 is the other) with the more familiar *sonorta*. It is the second reason though that is the true mindblower:

Yeshoowa (Isaiah) = Y'shua Ha Moshiakh (New Testament)

Porqana (Isaiah) = *Paroqa* (Aramaic for "The Savior"--New Testament)

Therefore, in the final analysis, Paul is well aware that the Tanakh verse he is alluding to contains his Master's name, and the Aramaic equivalents he uses in Ephesians contain his title! Now honestly, given all this evidence, is a reasonable person expected to believe that all these deep Aramaic and Hebrew patterns arrived wholly by accident, only through Greek translation, and even then at least half a millennia after the fact? As I hope I have demonstrated well by now, poetry, especially of the Semitic variety, simply does not translate well into a western language like Greek. However, I leave it to the reader's best judgment to decide for themselves which scenario is more likely given the fact that Paul was a native Aramaic speaker.

¹ According to the SEDRA Aramaic Lexicon compiled by the Way International and Dr. George A. Kiraz of the Syriac Computing Institute. Additional interfaces in the online version of this lexicon were programmed by Paul Younan at www.peshitta.org. All such root studies will come from this source unless otherwise stated.