

# The Memra of YHVH

**The Targums were authoritative Aramaic paraphrases of the books of the Tenach which were read in the synagogues along with the Hebrew of the Torah and Haftorah readings. Often when the Targums come to passages where YHVH is anthropomorphised or seen, or where two or more YHVHs are indicated by the text, the Targums will substitute "The MEMRA [Memra] of YHVH" for YHVH.**

# Hebrews 1:1

Elohim, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

## THE ANGEL OF YHVH

The angel according to Jewish theology, was he who discoursed with Moses and the angel in whom G-d placed His Name. The following from the Zohar is of interest in this case:

There is a man, if a Man He is, Who is an Angel. This Angel is Metatron, the Keeper of Israel; He is a man in the image of the Holy One, blessed be He, Who is an Emanation from Him [from G-d]; yea, He [the Metatron] is YHVH. Of Him cannot be said, He is created, formed or made; but He is the Emanation from G-d.

## Colossians 1:16

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

## Colossians 1:15

Who is the image of the invisible  
Elohim, the firstborn of every  
creature:

Colossians 1:17

And he is before all things, and  
by him all things consist.

*RABBI -Kimchi*

*The L-rd is the King Messiah; He is also the  
Angel of the  
Covenant.*

**RABBI Aben Ezra**

The L-rd is both the Divine Majesty, and the  
Angel of the  
Covenant, for the sentence is doubled.

*(De Plant Noe) Philo Judaeus*

*For those who cannot look upon the Son Himself,  
behold  
Him in His reflected light, even thus do they  
regard the  
image of G-d, Who is His Angel, the MEMRA  
[Logos], as ELOHIM  
Himself.*

Yochanan 1:1 (John 1:1):  
In the beginning was the MEMRA,  
and the MEMRA was with Elohim,  
and the MEMRA was Elohim.

**Gen. 19:4 the Tenach has:**

**And YHVH rained brimstone and fire  
upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah,  
from YHVH,  
from the heavens.**

**(Original Bible Project preliminary edition)**

# **Targum Gen. 19:4**

**And the MEMRA (Word) of YHVH  
caused to descend upon the peoples  
of Sodom and Gomorrah,  
brimstone and fire from YHVH in  
heaven.**

**According to Targum Onkelos, this MEMRA  
of YHVH that Abraham  
trusted in:**

**And Abraham trusted in  
the MEMRA of YHVH,  
and He counted it to him for  
righteousness.**

**(Targum Onkelos Gen. 15:6)**

# Midrash Rabbah - Genesis XLIV:1

1. **AFTER THESE THINGS THE MEMRA OF THE LORD CAME UNTO ABRAM IN A VISION, etc. (XV, 1). It is written, As for Elohim, His,-way is perfect; the MEMRA of the Lord is tried (II Sam. XXII, 31) if His way is perfect, how much the more He Himself! Rab said: The precepts were given only in order that man might be refined' by them. For what does the Holy One, blessed be He, care whether a man kills an animal by the throat or by the nape of its neck;? Hence its purpose is to refine [try] man.2 Another interpretation: 'His way is perfect' alludes to Abraham,3 for it is written, And thou foundest his [sc. Abraham's] way faithful before Thee, etc. (Neh. IX, 8). ' The MEMRA of the Lord is tried' intimates that the Holy One, blessed be He, tried him in a fiery furnace. He is a shield unto all them that take refuge in Him (II Sam. loc. cit.); hence, FEAR NOT. ABRAM, I AM THY SHIELD, etc.**

**Abraham prayed in the name of the  
MEMRA of YHVH:**

**And Abraham worshipped and prayed  
in the name of the MEMRA [Memra] of  
YHVH,  
and said, "You are YHVH who does see,  
but You cannot be seen."  
(Jerusalem Targum Gen. 22:14)**

**And Hagar praised and prayed  
in the name of  
the MEMRA [Memra] Of YHVH  
who had revealed Himself to  
her**

**(Jerusalem Targum Gen. 16:3)**

**It was this MEMRA of YHVH that Jacob also trusted in:**

**And Jacob vowed a vow, saying,  
"If the MEMRA [word] of YHVH  
will be my support, and will keep me  
in the way that I go, and will give me  
bread to eat, and raiment to put on,  
so that I come again to my father's house in  
peace;  
then shall the MEMRA of YHVH  
be my Elohim.**

**(Targum Onkelos on Gen. 28:20-21)**

**King David also urged Israel to trust in the  
MEMRA of Yah as the Targum of  
Psalm 62 reads:**

**Trust in the MEMRA of Yah at all  
times,**

**O people of the house of Israel!  
Pour out before Him the sighings of  
your heart;**

**Say, Elohim is our trust forever.  
(Targum on Psalm 62:9)**

**The "MEMRA of YHVH" was, according  
to Targum Jonathan, the Creator:**

**And the MEMRA of YHVH  
created man in his likeness,  
in the likeness of YHVH,  
YHVH created,  
male and female created He them.  
(Targ. Jonathan Gen. 1:27)**

**(Jerusalem Targum Ex. 3:14)**

**And the MEMRA [Memra] of YHVH  
said to Moses: "I am He who said  
unto the world 'Be!' and it was:  
and who in the future shall say to it 'Be!'  
and it shall be." And He said:  
"Thus you shall say to the children of  
Israel:  
'I Am' has sent me to you."**

**The Fragmentary Targum of the Torah also expresses  
that the MEMRA of YHVH  
was the Creator:**

**The first night, when the "MEMRA of YHVH"  
was revealed to the world in order to create it,  
the world was desolate and void,  
and darkness spread over the face of the abyss  
and the "MEMRA (Memra) of the Lord" was bright and  
illuminating and He called it the first night.  
(Fragmentary Targum Ex. 12:42)**

**That the MEMRA of YHVH was the  
Creator can also be seen in the  
Tenach itself:**

**By the MEMRA of YHVH  
were the heavens made,  
And all the hosts of them  
by the Spirit of His mouth.**

## **(Targum Onkelos Gen. 9:17)**

**The MEMRA (Memra) was also the covenant maker. For example the Noachdic covenant was between the MEMRA and all mankind:**

**And YHVH said to Noah,  
"This is the token of the covenant  
which I have established between  
My MEMRA [Memra] and between all flesh  
that is upon the earth.**

**The MEMRA also made the Abrahamic covenant as Targum Onkelos also paraphrases:**

**(Targum Onkelos Gen. 17:7)**

**And I will establish my covenant  
between My MEMRA [Memra]  
and between you**

**The MEMRA of YHVH is the savior is  
expressed elsewhere:**

**(Targum Jonathan Is. 45:17, 25)**

**But Israel shall be saved  
by the MEMRA of YHVH  
with an everlasting salvation  
By the MEMRA of YHVH  
shall all the seed of Israel be justified**

## **Zechariah 12:5**

**And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem *shall be* my strength in (the Memra of) the LORD of hosts their Elohim.**

**(targum of the small prophets)**

# The Ruach Elohim is explained as being Melek HaMoshiach.

□ AND THE SPIRIT OF ELOHIM HOVERED: this alludes to **the spirit of Messiah**, as you read, and the spirit of YHWH shall rest upon him (Isa. XI, 2). In the merit of what will [this spirit] eventually come? [For the sake of that which] HOVERED OVER THE FACE OF THE WATERS, i.e. in the merit of repentance which is likened to water, as it is written, Pour out thy heart like water (Lam. II, 19). R. Haggai said in the name of R. Pedath: A covenant was made with water<sup>6</sup> that even in the hot season a breeze stirs over it. Bereshith Rabbah 2:4

**Speaking of the Memra Gershom Scholem states:**

**...the memra-- the paraphrase used in the Targumim, the Aramaic Bible translations, to refer to Elohim's MEMRA. The memra is not merely a linguistic device for overcoming the problem of biblical anthropomorphisms; it has theological significance in its own right. The memra....is.... a world-permeating force, a reality in the world of matter or mind, the emmanent aspect of Elohim, holding all things under its omnipresent sway.**

**On the Mystical Shape of the Elohimhead:by Gershom Scholem pg 181-182:**

**The MEMRA of the Lord, is the  
Creator of man and of the world.**

**"And the MEMRA of YHVH created man in  
His likeness, in the likeness of YHVH,  
YHVH created, male and female created  
He them."**

**You clearly perceive that the MEMRA is called YHVH,  
and that through Him (the uncreated, self-existing  
MEMRA) all things, visible and invisible, were  
created.**

**Thus I read in the Jerusalem Targum  
(Exo 3:14):**

**"And the MEMRA of the Lord said unto Moses: I am He who said unto the world, Be! and it was: and who in the future shall say to it, Be! and it shall be. And He said: Thus thou shalt say to the children of Israel: I Am hath sent me unto you."**

# **The Patriarchs believed in the MEMRA of YHVH**

**(Gen 28:20,21): "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If Elohim will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my Elohim."**

**Onkelos, in his Chaldee Paraphrase, renders the vow of father Jacob in the following manner:**

**"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If the MEMRA of YHVH will be my support, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the MEMRA of YHVH be my Elohim."**

**Jonathan ben Uziel wrote the Jerusalem Paraphrase, in which I find it written on**

**Deuteronomy 26:17:**

**"This day, you have made the MEMRA of YHVH to be King over you, to be your Elohim. And the MEMRA of YHVH shall rule over you, having a right ('In His own name') hereto, over a people beloved, as His peculiar people; as He has spoken unto you, that you should keep all His commandments."**

# **Who was the Lawgiver?**

**The ancient faith of my nation was that the MEMRA of the Lord was the Lawgiver. That no other than the MEMRA of YHVH has been their Lawgiver, is proved from the MEMRAs of the Jerusalem Targum, on Exodus 20:1, in which we read as follows:**

**"And the MEMRA of the Lord spake all these glorious words."**

# Father Abraham's faith

**we see our father Abraham's faith in the Memra, the uncreated MEMRA, at the offering up of his son Isaac. Upon Isaac asking (Gen 22:7), "Where is the Lamb for a burnt-offering?" our father Abraham replied, according to the Jerusalem Targum:**

**"The MEMRA of the Lord will provide me a lamb; and if not, then thou, my son, shalt be the burnt-offering."**

# **Whom did Moses, our Teacher, worship?**

**Jonathan ben Uziel, in his Jerusalem Targum, said that our great Teacher, Moses, our master of blessed memory, never worshiped any other but the MEMRA of the Lord (Num 10:35,36):**

**"It came to pass when the ark was lifted up, Moses stood with his hands lifted up in prayer, and said; Stand up now, O MEMRA of the Lord, in the strength of Thy might, and let the enemies of Thy people be scattered, and those that hate Thee, flee from before Thee. And when the ark came to rest, Moses lifted up his hands in prayer, and said: Return now, O MEMRA of the Lord, from the might of Thine anger, and come to us in Thy mercies, which are so good, and bless the ten thousands, and multiply the thousands of the children of Israel."**

**We find the children of Israel, having been brought in safety through the Red Sea, obtained the testimony In Exodus 14:31, we read, "They believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses."**

**Onkelos, in order to preserve the true faith of the children of Israel, paraphrases these MEMRAs thus:**

**"And they believed in the MEMRA of the Lord, and in the prophecy of Moses, His servant."**

**No oath was valid amongst my ancestors,  
except by the MEMRA of the Lord**

Moses says (Deut 6:13), "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy Elohim, and serve Him, and shalt swear by His name." This passage,

Jonathan ben Uziel paraphrases:

"Ye shall fear before the presence of the Lord your Elohim, and before Him ye shall worship, and by the name of the MEMRA of the Lord ye shall swear in truth."

I find Rahab saying to the spies of Joshua (2:12): "Now therefore swear unto me by the Lord, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token."

This passage is thus paraphrased by Jonathan ben Uziel:

"Now therefore swear unto me by the MEMRA of the Lord, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token."

The elders swore by no other than  
the MEMRA of the Lord,

according to the Paraphrase of Jonathan ben  
Uziel on Joshua 9:19:

"But all the princes said unto all the congregation,  
We have sworn unto them by the MEMRA of the  
Lord, the Elohim of Israel; and now, therefore, we  
dare not injure them."

**Even the Heathen knew that Israel swore by no other than by the MEMRA of the Lord; hence the elders of Gilead**

According to the Paraphrase of Jonathan ben Uziel (Judges 11:10), said:

**"And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah: The MEMRA of the Lord be witness between us, if we do not according to thy MEMRA."**

# **The reason why my ancestors swore by the MEMRA of the Lord.**

They believed in the MEMRA of the Lord as being truly Elohim.

According to the Paraphrase of Jonathan ben Uziel, Jonathan saying to David (1 Sam 20:23):

**"And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the MEMRA of the Lord be witness between me and thee for ever."**

According to the Chaldee Paraphrase, Jonathan,  
on parting with David, says (verse 42):

"And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace,  
forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in  
the name of the Lord, saying, The MEMRA  
of the Lord be witness between me and  
thee, and between my son and thy son for  
ever."

# The MEMRA of the Lord must be obeyed as Elohim

The children of Israel the strictest obedience to the MEMRA of the Lord

Deuteronomy 28:1, 2:

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy Elohim, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy Elohim will set thee on high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy Elohim."

Onkelos has this paraphrase upon these  
MEMRAs:

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently to the MEMRA of the Lord thy Elohim, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, the Lord thy Elohim will set thee on high above all nations on the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken to the MEMRA of the Lord thy Elohim."

**In case of disobedience to the MEMRA of the Lord, Moses threatens that all the curses of the Law should come upon the people**

as Onkelos paraphrases in Deuteronomy 28:15:

"But it shall come to pass, if ye will not hearken to the MEMRA of the Lord thy Elohim, to observe and to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake (or cleave unto) thee."

**YHVH never made a covenant with any of the Patriarchs except through the mediation of the MEMRA of the Lord.**

We read in Genesis 9:17: "And Elohim said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which, I have established between Me and all flesh that is upon the earth." Which Onkelos thus paraphrases:

**"And the Lord said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between My MEMRA, and between all flesh that is upon the earth."**

Genesis 17:7: "And I will establish my covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a Elohim unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

Paraphrased by Onkelos:

"And I will establish my covenant between My MEMRA and between thee,"

# **There is no salvation but in the MEMRA of the Lord.**

**In Isaiah 45:17, 25, I read:**

**"But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation...In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."**

**Jonathan ben Uziel renders this passage thus:**

**"Israel shall be saved in the MEMRA of the Lord with an everlasting salvation...In the MEMRA of the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and (in the MEMRA of the Lord) they shall glory."**

**Hosea 1:7:**

**"But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah,  
and will save them by the Lord their Elohim."**

**This Jonathan ben Uziel  
paraphrases:**

**"But I will have mercy upon the  
house of Judah, and I will save  
them by the MEMRA of the Lord  
their Elohim."**

# Signification of the Name, Metatron

I read in Exodus 24:1, "And He said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord," &c. R. Bechai taught me, p. 114, col. 1, Amsterdam Edition:

"Elohim said to Moses, Come up unto the Lord; this is Metatron. He is called by this name Metatron, because in this name are implied two significations, which indicate His character, He is Lord and Messenger. There is also a third idea implied in the name Metatron: it signifies a KEEPER; for in the Chaldee language, a keeper (or watchman) is called "Matherath"; and because He is the KEEPER (preserver) of the world, He is called (Psa 121:4) "The KEEPER of Israel." From the signification of His name, we learn that He is the Lord over all which is below; because all the hosts of heaven, and all things upon the earth, are put under His power and might."

**The MEMRA of the Lord is not only called the ANGEL of the Covenant, but also the Metatron.**

Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai taught me (Zohar, vol. iii., p. 227, Amsterdam Edition):

"The Middle Pillar (in the Elohimhead) is the Metatron, who has accomplished peace above, according to the glorious state there."

**No one, not even Moses, has ever seen  
Elohim, but he saw the Metatron, who  
appeared unto him**

R. Menachem, of Recanati, on this passages (Exo 24:1),  
"And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord," and  
found his explanation:

"The great and exalted Elohim is speaking to Moses; He saith unto him, that he should come up to YHVH, which is Metatron, who is oftentimes called with the name of Elohim, alluding to the Shechinah, the glory of the Lord, which is thus called. And the reason why he saith Come up, is as if he had said: Ascend to the place of glory, where there is the Angel, the Redeemer; because no one can come to the great Elohim: for (it is written in Exo 33:20) 'There shall no men see Me and live.'"

# **Titles of Metatron (keeper)**

**Otiot deRabbi Akiba gives us some of Metatron's titles, which reveal His nature**

**Metatron is:**

**the Angel, the Prince of Elohim's countenance;**

**the Angel, the Prince of the Law;**

**the Angel, the Prince of might;**

**the Angel, the Prince of glory;**

**the Angel, the Prince of the temple;**

**the Angel, the Prince of kings;**

**the Angel, the Prince of lords;**

**the Angel, the Prince of the high, exalted, mighty**

**Princes in the heavens and on the earth.**

# **Metatron is the only mediator between Elohim and man**

Exodus 20:19,

it is written: "And they said unto Moses,  
Speak thou with us and we will hear; but  
let not Elohim speak with us, lest we die."

Reading this passage and knowing that my nation, the  
children of Israel, never approached Elohim without the  
mediation of a priest, or of the High Priest

**R. Simeon ben Jochai, to inquire whether any mortal and sinful man dare approach Elohim without a mediator, and I received the following instruction (Zohar, vol. ii., Exodus, p. 51, Amsterdam Edition):**

**1. (Gen 3:24), "To keep the way of the tree of life."**

**2. Who is the way to the tree of life? It is the great Metatron,\* for He is the way to that great Tree, to that mighty Tree of life.**

\* In the Hebrew, and its cognate dialects, the feminine form expresses tender love. R. Simeon ben Jochai speaks here, and in other places in his works, of Metatron in the feminine form, in order to express the great love our heavenly Father has to Metatron.

**3. Thus it is written, Exodus 14:19: "The Angel of Elohim, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them."**

**4. And Metatron is called the Angel of Elohim.**

**5. Come and see, thus says R. Simeon. The holy One, blessed be He, has prepared for Himself a holy temple above in the heavens, a holy city, a city in the heavens, and called it Jerusalem, the holy city.\***

**\* All the ancients believed in such a heavenly and spiritual Jerusalem; thus the Chaldee paraphrase, Psalm 122:3, "Jerusalem is builded in the firmament (in heaven), as a city that is compact together, as the one on the earth."**

**6. Every petition sent to the king, must be through Metatron.**

**7. Every message and petition from here below, must first go to Metatron, and from thence to the king.**

**8. Metatron is the Mediator of all that cometh from heaven down to the earth, or from the earth up to heaven.**

**9. And because he is the Mediator of all, it is written, Exodus 14:19: "And the Angel of Elohim, which went before the camp of Israel, removed; that is, before Israel which is above."**

- **10. This Angel of Elohim is the same of whom it is written, Exodus 13:21: "And YHVH went before them," &c., to go by day and by night, as the ancients have expounded it.**
- **11. Whoever will speak to me (says Elohim) shall not be able to do so, till he has made it known to Metatron.**
- **12. Thus the holy One, blessed be He, on account of the great love to, and mercy which He has over, the congregation of Israel, commits her (the congregation) to Metatron's care.\***

- **Ephesians 1:22, 23, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all";**
- **Colossians 2:10, "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power."**

**13. What shall I do for Him (Metatron)? I will commit my whole house into His hand, \* Hence-forward be thou a KEEPER, as it is written, Psalm 121:4: "The KEEPER of Israel**

Matthew 11:27, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him";

Matthew 28:18, "And Yahshua came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth";

Ephesians 1:20-23, "Which he wrought in Messiah, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all";

Philippians 2:8-11, "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore Elohim also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Yahshua every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Yahshua Messiah is Lord, to the glory of Elohim the Father,"

**The Almighty (שדי) has revealed Himself in no other than in  
the Metatron, the KEEPER of Israel**

**It follows that if God has revealed Himself in the  
uncreated, self-existing WORD (Memra), which is  
also called the ANGEL of the Covenant, who is  
the Metatron, that the Almighty has revealed  
Himself in the KEEPER of Israel. This was also  
the faith of our ancestors:**

**Zohar, vol. iii. p. 231, the following passage:**

**The garment of the Almighty is the  
Metatron.\***

**2 Corinthians 5:19, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation";**

**1 Timothy 3:16, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.:"**

# **Metatron is called the Son of God**

**R. Moses Butarili on the Book of Creation, I  
read these words:**

**"The Cabbalists call the second Sefhira Metatron, the KEEPER, which is an inferior name to his name *the Son of God*." When Joshua said, (5:13-15): "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? He said, Nay, as a prince of the host of the Lord, I am come," &c. Metatron appeared unto Joshua**