

Metatron

Excerpts from Dr James Trimm's book:
The Mystery of the Godhead;
Basic Concepts of Kabbalah

IN ADDITION to the term "Memra" another important technical term for the "other YHWH" in the apparent "multiple YHWH" passages was "Metatron." Scholars are uncertain about what the term "Metatron" actually means. According to Gershom Scholem: The origin of the name Metatron is obscure; it is doubtful whether an etymological explanation can be given. It is possible that the name was intended to be a secret... or as a result of glossolalia

Among numerous etymological derivations given, three should be mentioned:

.. from [Aramaic] matara, keeper of the watch;

.. from [Aramaic] metator, a guide or messenger...

.. from the combination of the two Greek words meta and thronos such as metathronios, in the sense of "one who serves behind the throne."

.. However... the Greek word thronos does not appear in Talmudic literature. (Kabbalah; p. 380)

According to the Zohar, the primary text of Rabbinic Kabbalah, the term "Metatron" points to the "keeper" of Israel from Psalm 121:4:

What shall I do for him [Metatron]? I will commit my whole house into his hand, etc.

Henceforth be you [Metatron] a KEEPER as it is written (Ps. 121:4) "The KEEPER of Israel..." (Zohar; Amsterdam Ed. vol 2 Ex. p. 51)

It is therefore likely that "Metatron" comes from the Aramaic MATARA (keeper) -ON (our) or perhaps even Aramaic METATOR (guide) -ON (our).

Now there are two very different traditions about who METATRON is. One tradition has it that Metatron is "the lesser YHWH"; the "Word" or "Adam Kadmon". The other tradition has it that Metatron is just a name for Enoch.

How did the two become confused? The answer lies in the Book of Enoch. The earliest extra-biblical Ma'aseh Merkavah account is found in the Book of Enoch Chapter 14. Here Enoch comes before the figure on the throne and comes near to the "Holy Word". The set-ting is that Enoch has been attempting to intercede for the fallen angels. Enoch passes through the worlds and comes before the throne and before the Word. Enoch is then given a message of judgment to take back to the fallen angels (1 Enoch 13-15).

Now the "Word" (Memra) is Metatron and it was this Word (Metatron) who gave Enoch a message to take back to the fallen angels. In a much later Rabbinic document the Midrash of Shemichazah and Aza'el we read:

Forthwith Metatron sent a messenger to Shemichaza and said to him: "The Holy One is about to destroy His world and bring upon it a flood.

This parallels 1 Enoch 13-15 exactly, only Enoch has simply become "a messenger" for Metatron, his name (Enoch) has been dropped. (Shemichazah and Aza'el were the leaders of the Fallen angels [1 Enoch 6; 10]).

I think that from this we can see how eventually Metatron (Adam Kadmon; the Lesser YHWH; the Word) became confused with his messenger Enoch.

Metatron was another term for the "Word [Memra] of YHWH" used in ancient Judaism. According to the Talmud (b. Sanedrin 38b) the issue of the multiple YHWHs in the Torah was brought up to Rabbi Idith by one of the Minim (a Rabbinic term for the Nazarenes):

Once a Min [Nazarene] said to R. Idith:

"It is written: And unto Moses He [YHWH] said, "Come up unto YHWHŠ"(Ex. 24:1) But surely it should have stated: "Come up unto Me!"

"It was Metatron [who was speaking,] he replied, "Whose name is similar to that of his Master, for it is written: "For my name is in him" (Exodus 23:21).

According to the Tanakh the speaker here is YHWH (Exodus 20:1) and according to the Targum the speaker is "The Word [Memra] of YHWH" (Targum Ex. 20:1). This is the YHWH which Rabbi Idith identifies in the Talmud as "Metatron." Thus Metatron is the Word of YHWH and the other YHWH in such passages.

Now the Karaite author Kirkisani had a different reading in his copy of this Talmud passage. His copy had R. Idith saying "This is Metatron, who is the Lesser YHWH (YHWH HaQaton)" Thus "The Word of YHWH" or "Metatron" was also known to ancient Judaism as "YHWH HaQaton" the Lesser YHWH. That YHWH the speaker in Exodus 20:1; that 24:1 is Metatron is also discussed as follows:

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our purpose in printing this article certainly is not to promote Kabbala or the Zohar. The sole purpose is to show that concepts such as a second deity in the Godhead are not foreign concepts to Judaism or to the Jewish people. Read Yochanan (John) 1:1-4:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

These concepts are not at all contrary to concepts found in ancient Judaism. These concepts are found in the ancient Jewish concept of "Metatron." However, modern rabbis would have you believe that these ideas are utterly foreign to Judaism. The books of Enoch also add further concept to our understanding of the "Word" and of "Metatron." I was going to write an article on this

myself, but rather than reinvent the wheel, I chose to include this article by James Trimm. I think you will like it! We look forward to comments.

HaShem said to Moses, "Come up unto YHWH"; 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 (Adon) and emissary (Shaliach).

There is also a third idea implied in the name Metatron: it signifies a "keeper" for in the Aramaic language a keeper (or watchman) is called "Materat;" and because He is keeper (or preserver of the world, He is called "The Keeper of Israel" (Psalm 121:4).

From the signification of His name, we learn that He is Lord (Adon) over all which is below; because all the hosts of heaven, and all things upon the earth, are put in His headship and his hand.

(p. 114, Col. 1, Amsterdam Edition)

Note here that Metatron is the "keeper of Israel" who in Ps. 121:4 is YHWH. He is Lord (Adon) and Emissary (Shaliach) and Lord (Adon) over all which is below; because all the hosts of heaven, and all things upon the earth, are put in His headship and his hand. Now the Torah tells us:

You cannot see My [YHWH's] face;

For no man shall see Me [YHWH] and live.

(Exodus 33:20)

However, as previously discussed, there were several occasions in which someone was reported in the Tanakh as having seen YHWH. The Targums resolved the problem by substituting the phrase "the Word [Memra] of YHWH" in such passages. The Zohar maintains this indicating that such passages refer to Metatron:

The great and exalted HaShem is speaking to Moses; He said unto him, that he should come up to YHWH, which is Metatron, who is often called with the name of Elohim, alluding to the Shekhinah which is thus called. And the reason why he said "Come up" is as if he had said: Ascend to the place of glory, where here is the Angel, the Redeemer; Because no one can come to the great HaShem: For it is written: "For no man shall see Me [YHWH] and live." (Exodus 33:20)

The Zohar also tells us that Metatron is the "Middle Pillar of the godhead" and that this "Middle Pillar" is "the Son of Yah":

The Middle Pillar [of the godhead] is Metatron, Who has accomplished peace above, According to the glorious state there.

(Zohar, vol. 3., p. 227, Amsterdam Edition)

Better is a neighbor that is near, than a brother far off. This neighbor is the Middle Pillar in the godhead, which is the Son of Yah.

(Zohar, vol. ii, p. 115, Amsterdam Edition)

Moreover the Zohar teaches that Metatron is not just the Son of Yah, but that he is "first begotten of all the creatures of Elohim": "And Abraham said to his oldest servant of his house" (Gen. 24:2). Who is this of whom it said "his servant?" In what sense must this be understood? Who is this servant? R. Nehori answered:

"It is in no other sense to be understood than expressed in the word "His servant,"

His servant, the servant of Elohim, the chief to His service. And who is he?

Metatron, as is said, "He is appointed to glorify the bodies which are in the grave." This is the meaning of the words "Abraham said to His servant" that is to the servant of Elohim. The servant is Metatron, the eldest of His [YHWH's] House, who is the first-begotten of all creatures of Elohim, who is the ruler of all He has; because Elohim has committed to Him the government over all His hosts.

(Zohar, Gen. P. 126 Amsterdam Edition)

Not only does the Zohar teach that Metatron is the Son of Yah, the Middle Pillar of the Godhead and the first-begotten one, but the Zohar also presents Metatron as the only mediator between Elohim and man:

"To keep the way of the tree of life." (Genesis 3:24) 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. Thus it is written, "The Angel of Elohim, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them." (Exodus 14:19) And Metatron is called the Angel of Elohim. 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. Every petition sent to the King, must be through Metatron.

Every message and petition from here below, must first go to Metatron, and from thence to the king. Metatron is the Mediator of all that comes from heaven down to the earth, or from the earth up to heaven. And because he is the mediator of all, it is written: "And the Angel of Elohim, which went before the camp of Israel, removed; that is, before Israel which is above." (Exodus 14:19) This Angel of Elohim is the same of whom it is written, "And YHWH went before them" (Exodus 13:21) to go by day and by night as the ancients have expounded it. Whoever will speak to me [says Elohim] shall not be able to do so, till he has made it known to Metatron. Thus the holy One, blessed be He, on account of the great love to and mercy with which He has over the Assembly of Israel, commits her (the Assembly) to Metatron's care.

What shall I do for Him (Metatron)? I will commit my Whole house into His hand, etc. Henceforth be you a Keeper As it is written "The Keeper of Israel" (Psalm 121:4)

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