

Introduction

Part 7

The Philosophy of Thought and its Effect on Doctrine

The word Philosophy (from Greek: φιλοσοφία, philosophia) means the “*love of wisdom*” and is the study of general and fundamental questions about existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language. Such questions are often posed as problems to be studied or resolved. When studying the Hebrew scriptures, at times one may run across the concept of the “*Hebraic mind-set*” and the “*Greek mind-set*” which are placed in opposition to one another. These are ways of thought and refers to the idea that there is a difference in their respective way of thinking about life, about God, and about Truth. Both the Hebrews and the Greeks were “*set*” in their thinking about what and how they believed. To the Hebrew God was an easy concept; He was their Creator. To Israel, God had revealed Himself to them at Sinai in the deliverance from Egypt and the giving of the Torah, they knew him as their God, Creator, and who He was as holy, righteous, and merciful, and the one who gave us morals and ethics for living as His children. When the Lord God Almighty declared His Name to Moshe, he said the phrase ehyeh asher ehyeh (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה, translated as “I AM THAT I AM”). This is derived from the Qal imperfect first-person form of the verb hayah which means “*I will*

be.” What this reveals to us, there is a connection between the Name of God (YHVH) and the nature of existence itself (*the realization of all life being created and existing in Him*). This is a powerful revelation from God in His nature in the sense that all of life, all that we know is contingent upon Him, and His existence as there being only One God and One Creator! (Monotheism as opposed to a Pantheon of gods, Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:4) These things and more are the reasons why we should seek the Creator God, the One who made us.

The Greeks on the other hand were more prone to be agnostic and polytheistic in their belief systems. This is why Paul used different approaches when speaking to the Greek culture as opposed to his native culture (Jewish) for the purpose of breaching these differences in culture. The Jewish people had studied the Tanakh (תנ"ך) for hundreds of years and understood who He is as the Creator, and what He expects from His people! Throughout the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings, there is a theme that arises (the Rabbis point this out in their commentaries) that the Name of God, the YHVH expresses the mercy, grace, and love of the Almighty God. This is in contrast to the Greek pantheon of gods who were spiteful, unmerciful, and it was never clear how exactly they could appease their gods. These differences are significant, and Paul needed to teach these non-Jewish (Gentile) people who did not know the Lord God Almighty according to His Torah, who He was and is. Paul taught about Yeshua in simple terms such that they could more easily understand who he was as the Messiah of God.

There are many ways in which the Lord God revealed Himself to His people. For example, from the Tanakh, according to *Isaiah 53:1*, Isaiah writes speaking of *מִי הָאֵמִין לְשִׁמְעֵתֵנוּ וְזָרְעַ יְהוָה עַל-מִי נִגְלָתָהּ:* “*the seed/arm of the Lord whom we believed and listened to.*” The arm of the Lord to whom we listen is a Hebraic way of describing the One whom the Creator God had sent to deliver His people. This One whom we are to listen to, the way the text is written, emphasis is placed upon our listening, keeping, and obeying His Words. The Word of God throughout the Scriptures is a fundamental truth the Lord speaks to us concerning who He is and how we are to live our lives. This Word of God is best illustrated in how the Torah describes the Word of God. In the Aramaic Targum, the Targum

Onkelos, translates the Torah to say in *Genesis / Bereshit 3:8* וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ ית קל מִימְרָא דִּי אֱלֹהִים דְּמַהֲלָךְ בְּגַנְתָּא לְמַנַּח יוֹמָא וְאַטְמַר אָדָם וְאַתְתִּיהָ מִן קָדָם יִי אֱלֹהִים בְּגוּ אֵילָן גְּנָתָא “they heard the sound of the word of the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the day.” The Memra (מִימְרָא , Word) is understood as the creative work of God, and is the term that is used in the Targum as a reference for the Lord according to *Bereshit / Genesis 3:8* (see also *Devarim / Deuteronomy 18:19*). In the Tanakh, the Word of the Lord is a phrase that denotes the power of God through His mitzvot being given to Israel (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 5:5*, ה אָנֹכִי עֹמֵד בֵּין-יְהוָה וּבֵינֵיכֶם בָּעֵת הַהִוא לְהַגִּיד לָכֶם אֶת-: (דְּבַר יְהוָה כִּי יִרְאֶתֶם מִפְּנֵי הָאֵשׁ וְלֹא-עֲלִיתֶם בָּהָר לֵאמֹר: We are taught in the Torah that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:3*, ג וַיַּעֲבֹד וַיִּרְעַב וַיִּאֲכַל אֶת-הַמֶּן אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִדְעֶתָ וְלֹא יִדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ, לְמַעַן הוֹדִיעֶנָּה כִּי לֹא עַל-הַלֶּחֶם לְבַדּוֹ יַחְיֶה הָאָדָם כִּי עַל-כָּל-מוֹצֵא פִי-יְהוָה : (יַחְיֶה הָאָדָם: denoting speech addressed to the Patriarchs (*Bereshit / Genesis 15:1*, א אַחַר | הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הִנֵּה דְבַר-יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם בַּמָּוֶה, אוּ וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמָעוּ-נָא דְבָרַי אִם-יְהִי, Bamidbar / Numbers 12:6, הַיְהוָה בְּמִרְאָה אֱלֹוֹ אֶתְוַדַּע בְּחִלּוֹם אֲדָבָר-בוֹ: (נְבִיאָכֶם יְהוָה בְּמִרְאָה אֱלֹוֹ אֶתְוַדַּע בְּחִלּוֹם אֲדָבָר-בוֹ: The Word of the Lord also refers to the creative Word such as in *Tehilim / Psalms 33:6* (וַיִּבְרָא הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה וְרוּחַ יְהוָה מְעִשׂוֹ) By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.). The way God spoke to Abraham and to His people is distinctly different than the Greeks were able to understand. The people of Israel experienced the presence of God and God Himself speaking to them by the power of His Word! Because of these differences in cultural experiences, Paul’s approach to the Greek (non-Jew) instruction in the Lord needed to be carefully crafted. Paul’s need to carefully explain who God is, can be further illustrated while comparing the Hebrew text with the Aramaic Targum in the Torah. What we observe in the Aramaic text is that “The Word” (מִימְרָא , Memra) functions as the angel or messenger of God. This drives forth the concept of how God has revealed himself in various ways and specifically though the Memra (מִימְרָא), His Word.

In the Masoretic text on *Bamidbar / Numbers 14:35* states “*I the Lord have spoken,*” (אָנִי יְהוָה דִּבַּרְתִּי) comparing the Aramaic text it says “*I the Lord decreed through my Word*” (אֲנָא יִ גְזַרִית בְּמִימְרֵי). Notice the use of the personal pronoun (pronominal suffix) in the Aramaic text illustrates the divine nature of the Memra (מִימְרָא , Word) of God. The Targum text indicates that God does everything through His Word. The Lord God doing everything through the Memra is consistent with what is written “*in the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and was God*” in *John 1:1*.

Another way the Word of God is used in the Aramaic Text is when comparing *Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:26-27*. (see highlighted text)

ספר דברים פרק א פסוק כו-כו

כו וְלֹא אָבִיתֶם לְעֹלֹת וּתְמָרוּ אֶת - פִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: כו
וּתְרַגְּנוּ בְּאֵהָלֵיכֶם וּתְאָמְרוּ בְּשׁ נָאֵת יְהוָה אֲתָנוּ הוֹצִיאָנוּ
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְתַת אֲתָנוּ בְּיַד הָאֲמָרִי לְהַשְׁמִידֵנוּ:

תרגום אונקלוס ספר דברים פרק א פסוק כו-כו

כו וְלֹא אָבִיתוֹן לְמַסַּק וְסַרְבְּתוֹן עַל מִימְרָא דִּי אֱלֹהֵכוֹן:
כו וְאֲתַרְעַמְתוֹן בְּמַשְׁכְּנֵיכוֹן וְאֲמַרְתוֹן בְּדִסְנֵי י י יְתָנָא
אֶפְקֵנָא מֵאֶרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם לְמַמְסַר יְתָנָא בְּיַדָּא דְּאֲמָרָא
לְשִׁיפְיוֹתָנָא:

Comparing the Hebrew and Aramaic translations on *Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:26*, we read “*you rebelled against the mouth of the Lord*” (וּתְמָרוּ אֶת - פִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם) in Hebrew and “*you rebelled against the Word of the Lord*” (וְסַרְבְּתוֹן עַל מִימְרָא דִּי אֱלֹהֵכוֹן) in Aramaic. A few other examples include the following:

Bamidbar / Numbers 14:35

Hebrew: I the Lord have spoken

Aramaic: I the Lord decreed through my word.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:26

Hebrew: And you rebelled against the mouth of the Lord your God

Aramaic: And you rebelled against the Word of the Lord your God.

Note there are many more examples in the Torah and how these few examples illustrate the significance of the Word of God. The Word itself proceeds from our Father in heaven with authority and power! Based upon the comparison between the Hebrew and Aramaic texts, the Word of God takes on the attributes of the divine nature of God Himself. This is illustrated in what we had discussed the personal pronominal suffix of *בְּמִימְרָי* in the Aramaic text of how God decrees through His Word, or as it is written saying that the people rebelled against the Memra (*מִמְרָא*, Word) as being synonymous to rebelling against God.

When studying the NT account from the Apostle John according to *John 12:41-50*, Yeshua makes a very significant statement on who gives him the authority and the power to do what he does, i.e. to raise the dead *John 5:21*, to render divine judgment *John 5:22*, and to forgive sins *Luke 5:24*. The most significant statement Yeshua says in Greek is “*the one who disregards me and receives not my words has the thing judging him the word which I have spoken that shall judge him in the later day.*” (ὁ ἀθετῶν ἐμὲ καὶ μὴ λαμβάνων τὰ ῥήματά μου ἔχει τὸν κρίνοντα αὐτόν: ὁ λόγος ὃν ἐλάλησα ἐκεῖνος κρινεῖ αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ) Notice how Yeshua says the Word will be the judge. Based upon our understanding of the Word (*מִמְרָא*, Memra) of the Lord and the parallel that is drawn in the eschatological statement of what will occur in the last days, there should be no doubt as to what Yeshua is saying! The Word of God comes to us in the Power of God to save us from our sins. This Word of God according to *John 1:1-14* is God’s Messiah. Yeshua says “*My Words*” (ῥήματά μου), the “*Words that I have spoken*” (ὃν ἐλάλησα) “*shall judge him*” (κρινεῖ αὐτόν). Interestingly, according to *Hitgalut / Revelation 20:11-15*, the Word of God is the one who is set before us were our lives will be judged on the sins we have committed. This is the fulfillment of what Yeshua said in *John 12:47-48*.

Revelation 20:11-15

Καὶ εἶδον θρόνον μέγαν λευκὸν καὶ τὸν καθήμενον ἐπ' αὐτόν, οὗ ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου ἔφυγεν ἡ γῆ καὶ ὁ οὐρανός, καὶ τόπος οὐχ εὐρέθη αὐτοῖς. καὶ εἶδον τοὺς νεκρούς, τοὺς μεγάλους καὶ τοὺς μικρούς, ἑστῶτας ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου, καὶ βιβλία ἠνοίχθησαν: καὶ ἄλλο βιβλίον ἠνοίχθη, ὃ ἐστὶν τῆς ζωῆς: καὶ ἐκρίθησαν οἱ νεκροὶ ἐκ τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν. καὶ ἔδωκεν ἡ θάλασσα τοὺς νεκρούς τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ, καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ἅιδης ἔδωκαν τοὺς νεκρούς τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐκρίθησαν ἕκαστος κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν. καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ἅιδης ἐβλήθησαν εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός. οὗτος ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερός ἐστιν, ἡ λίμνη τοῦ πυρός. καὶ εἴ τις οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ τῆς ζωῆς γεγραμμένος ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός.

20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 20:12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 20:15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The Apostle John said according to the book of Revelation, “*Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.*”

(Καὶ εἶδον θρόνον μέγαν λευκὸν καὶ τὸν καθήμενον ἐπ' αὐτόν, οὗ ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου ἔφυγεν ἡ γῆ καὶ ὁ οὐρανός, καὶ τόπος οὐχ εὐρέθη

αὐτοῖς) This verse shows us that in the presence of the Lord God Almighty no one can stand, in fact, heaven and earth flee from His presence. The awesome might and power of the Lord God Almighty, even the solid nature of heaven and earth itself, nothing and no one can hide in His presence.

Comparing these examples from the Tanakh and the Targum Onkelos we discover that Jacob believes the Lord's Memra (מִימְרָה , Word) will be his God, and God says I will save them through My Memra (מִימְרָה , Word), Abraham was justified through the Memra (מִימְרָה , Word) of God, the Memra (מִימְרָה , Word) gave Israel the Torah, Moshe prayed to the Memra (מִימְרָה , Word), the Memra (מִימְרָה , Word) spoke from the burning bush, and the Memra (מִימְרָה , Word) of the Lord created the World, it is difficult to honestly interpret the Memra (מִימְרָה , Word) as simply an element of speech or writing. According to early traditions (i.e. Targum Neofiti) man was created in the image of the Memra (מִימְרָה , Word) of the Lord. The Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, a Targum printed in the Rabbinic bibles called Mikra'ot Gedolot, *Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:7* in the Hebrew reads “*What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we call unto him?*” ז כִּי מִי-גוֹי גָדוֹל אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ אֱלֹהִים קְרִבִים אֵלָיו כִּי הוּא אֵלֵינוּ בְּכָל-קְרָא׃ (נו אֵלָיו׃) The Targum tates “*The Memra of Lord God sits upon His throne high and lifted up ...*” ז אֲאָרוֹם הִיָּדָא אֹמָא רְבָא דְאִית לִיה אֱלֹהָא) קְרִיב לְנִתְיָה בְּשׁוֹם מִימְרָא דְנִי אֱלֹהֵן אֹרְחִיָּהוֹן דְּעַמְמָא נְטְלִין דְּחִלְתָּהוֹן עַל פְּתִיָּהוֹן וְנִמְיִן קְרִיבִין לְהוֹן וְהִינּוּן רְחִיקִין מְטוּל דְּלָא שְׁמַעִין בְּאוּדְנִיָּהוֹן בְּרַם מִימְרָא דְנִי יְתִיב עַל כּוּרְסִיָּה רַם וּמְנַטְל וְשְׁמַע צְלוֹתְנָא בְּכָל עֵידוֹן דְּאַנּוּן׃ (מְצַלְיִין קַמִּיה וְעֵבִיד בְּעוֹתָן׃) The concept of the power of “*the Word*” obtained from the Jewish translation of the Torah into Aramaic reveals profound truths that open up our understanding of the verses in the book of John chapter 1. These are reasons why Paul needed to take a slightly different approach to teach the Greek speaking people about Yeshua as the Word of the living God. Paul needed to teach them about Yeshua in simple terms they were able to understand Yeshua the Messiah, as the one who had been revealed in *Isaiah 53:1* as the “*arm of YHVH*” and as “*the Word of God*” that proceeds from

the Father according to *John 1:1* and *1:14* who, while on Earth, was addressed in human terms.

If we have a closer look at the NT scriptures according to *Matthew 24:35*, *Mark 8:38*, *13:31*, *Luke 6:47*, *9:26*, *21:33*, *24:44*, *John 5:47*, *14:24*, and *15:7*, we find all of these references Yeshua speaks of the significance of “*my (his) words*” in these verses. Yeshua being the Memra (מִימְרָהּ , Word), the living Word of God, how much more important are these words Yeshua is telling us? The Memra (מִימְרָהּ , Word) is the creative work of God, the agent by which God created the world and even more importantly the agent through whom we are saved and redeemed from the curse of sin. Throughout the Apostolic Writings (NT) over and over again Yeshua is portrayed as the one whom the world was created and in whom all things consist (see *Colossians 1:12-29*). Examining the Targumim, the theology of the Memra (מִימְרָהּ) (Word) of God being God was fully developed in the first century. Therefore the idea that Yeshua is the living Word of God was understood by John to not contradict the Tanakh. We can confidently conclude that “*the Word become flesh*” was an expression that was fully developed from the tradition of Judaism and from the solid foundation of the Torah. The Hebrew and Aramaic texts provide evidence for the origin of this doctrine as being a thoroughly backed and supported by the Torah and all of the biblical texts. God has spoken to us in these last days by His Son, Yeshua the Messiah, (*Hebrews 1*) the living Word of God! The Lord has provided atonement in Yeshua according to His Word. The significance of what we have studied today is that in order to be forgiven of our sins, we must believe in the one God had sent to save us from our sins, we must believe in Yeshua! God has provided atonement in blood in His Son Yeshua. These things reveal to us how believe in God’s Word, is to place our faith in Yeshua God’s only begotten Son to receive atonement for your soul. This is a creative work of God, the very function of the Memra (מִימְרָהּ, Word) to create and to make new, the agent by which God creates all things and most importantly the agent through whom we are saved and redeemed from the curse of sin. Throughout the Apostolic Writings (NT) over and over again Yeshua is portrayed as the one whom the world was created and in whom all things consist (*Colossians 1:12-29*). Examining the Aramaic Targumim, the

theology of the Memra (מִימְרָה, Word) of God being God was fully developed in the first century. Therefore the idea that Yeshua is the living Word of God was understood by John to not contradict the Tanakh. We can confidently conclude that “*the Word become flesh*” is an expression that was developed on the solid foundation based on the Torah. The Hebrew and Aramaic texts provide evidence for the origin of John’s statements as being a thoroughly backed and supported by the Torah and all of the biblical texts. God has spoken to us in these last days by His Son, Yeshua the Messiah. Believing in the Word of God directs us to believe in the one God had sent to save us from our sins! The Word of God is the power of YHVH who saved Israel with “*a mighty hand and an outstretched arm!*” (see also *Shemot / Exodus 3:19-20, 6:6, 15:16 and 32:11, Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:34, 5:15, 7:19, 9:26,-29, 11:2, 26:8, Tehillim / Psalm 40, 136:12, Isaiah 59:16 and 63:5, Hebrews 10:5, and other verses.*)

These very concepts are why Paul presented YHVH to the Greeks in the way that he did, He explained that Yeshua was YHVH’s chosen messenger, the Anointed One of God having the power to forgive sins. In addition, he had the power and authority of God to overcome the world, and to send the Spirit of God into those who believe! Paul’s teachings were presented in simple terms and whose concepts even Peter said were hard or difficult to understand. (*2 Peter 3:15-16*) The reason being he had to help the Greeks understand the Hebraic concepts that are taught in both the Hebrew and Aramaic Scriptures. The Greek ways of thinking about life, God, truth, and righteousness, differed, and so Paul took these concepts and presented them as they are presented in the Hebrew and Aramaic texts so that salvation could come to both the Jew and the non-Jew all for the Glory of God