

**The Intermediary God in Early Jewish and Christian Sources**  
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## **The Intermediary God in Early Jewish and Christian Sources**

### **Thesis By, Joshua Louis Burrows**

In the enclosed thesis I explore the intermediary God (ie: Logos) in early Jewish and Christian sources. Hoping to discuss in detail how God works, what God does, and how God interacts with humanity, I broke this thesis into five chapters.

In chapter one I examined the issue as a whole. Framing the issue, I explored some of the ideas of Plato and his Greek contemporaries. Here I compared and contrasted the ideas of the Greek philosophers with the main Jewish thinkers of the time, especially Philo. I also introduced the idea of the Logos in this chapter.

In chapter two I delved more deeply into Philo and the Logos. Here I began by briefly exploring the life and ideas of Philo. I then examined more extensively the writings of Philo regarding the Logos. What is the Logos? How does it work? These questions and more I examined in chapter two.

In chapter three I tackled the use of the word Logos and phrase "word of God" as is found in the New Testament. It is here that we find the most extensive exploration of the Logos regarding what it offers individuals and communities. Chapter three is an extensive New Testament text study on how the Logos influences and transforms people and the communities in which they reside. Chapter three is my largest chapter.

In chapter four I examined the use of the words "מִמְרָא דִּי" as is used in Targums Onkelos and Yerushalmi. My theory, here, is that the מִמְרָא דִּי is the Aramaic rendering of the Logos. Hopefully, through the chapter four text study I was able to show how the מִמְרָא דִּי is related to the concept of Logos and may, in fact, be the Logos.

In my final and fifth chapter I conclude by re-examining my conclusions of chapters one, two, three, and four in order to more extensively understand the Logos and how it works in the Jewish and Christian traditions. My final goal here is to show that the Logos was not a new idea introduced into Christianity. The concept of Logos, in fact, was very much a part of the Jewish theology of the time.

Throughout this thesis I used a number of different sources. They are outlined in the bibliography. Mostly, however, I pulled from the Old Testament and New Testament, the Targums Onkelos and Yerushalmi, and writings on and by Philo.

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## Preface

There are many, many people to thank as I complete and submit this thesis. I want to thank my friends, family, and colleagues. Throughout rabbinic school they have served as a wonderful support network. Truly, I could not have completed my studies at the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion without them.

I especially want to thank my wife, love, and life partner, Gabi Arad Burrows. She is my everything. Everything I do, I do for her. This thesis is, of course, dedicated to her.

Finally, but perhaps most importantly, I want to thank my thesis advisor and mentor Rabbi Martin A. Cohen. Dr. Cohen has been called the gold standard of professors of his generation. Actually, for me and many of my fellow students, he is much, much more.

Many academics consider their scholarly work more important than their teaching. Dr. Cohen is a teacher first, scholar second. He is in the business of educating, mentoring, and indeed creating rabbis. As such he has grown to become one of my most beloved mentors.

We students love Dr. Cohen for many reasons. We love him for his wisdom and knowledge. We love him for his humility. We love him because he clearly loves us. Most importantly, we love him because he truly cares about creating for us a healthy learning environment in which we can grow in our own way into the rabbinate.

This thesis could not have happened without Dr. Cohen. For this and so much more I will be forever grateful to Dr. Cohen's mentorship and inspiration.

## Chapter One

### *Plato, the Philosophical Problem of God, and the Logos*

Philosophy, more than anything else, was born from a growing skepticism held by the masses regarding old traditions and dogmas. A developing class of traveling merchants, having seen too much of the world, were finding it more and more difficult to continue to believe what their cultures taught.

Indeed Socrates spent much of his life and career working to break down unfounded and illogical belief systems. Nothing was off-limits, not even God. The Jews, during the rise of Greek philosophy, were not unaffected by Greek philosophical challenges to religion and the dogmas of the past. Jews, deeply influenced by the writings and teachings of prominent Greek philosophers such as Plato, became Hellenized in their thinking and religious experiences. Though most of these Jews contributed very little to the Greek philosophical world, Harry Wolfson writes,

The single exception was the Jewish population in Alexandria. This Alexandrian Jewish population produced out of its midst a school of philosophers who consciously and deliberately and systematically set about remaking Greek philosophy according to the pattern of a belief and tradition of an entirely different origin.

Wolfson, Philo (Volume I), pg. 4

What was the philosophical problem of God? How did the Jewish and other religious philosophers reconcile the problem? What is the Logos and how does it help with the problem of God? I will thus use this chapter to frame the issue I will examine throughout the rest of this thesis.

## **Part One: The Philosophical Problem of God**

It seems that all those living within the Greek milieu were torn regarding their belief and understanding in God. On one hand they were by nature skeptics. To be a Greek was to question everything. How did one know there was a God? Could they prove it? Any and all reasonable and accepted God-concepts had to stand up to the rules and trials of philosophical logic.

On the other hand, Plato believed that it was better to have a God-concept than not. For Plato, belief in God led to a deeper sense of morality and, indeed, a more moral society. Belief in God was therefore something to be strived for. Yet the religious culture of Greece was one of great flux. Grecians were moving from a polytheistic model to a monotheistic dogma.

Greece was at a cultural crossroads between Asia and Europe. Most merchants, Jew and non-Jew alike, had to pass through Greece as they traveled the world. The major metropolitan centers of Greece became a place of great discourse between the major religions and cultures of the world. Not that these different thinkers met in formal interfaith dialogue. Rather, they were deeply aware of each other, their thoughts, practises, and writings.

Specifically, Wolfson writes, the Jews had been conditioned by a scriptural tradition which gave them an understanding that there were a multitude of different forms of religious expression -- different Gods who could be worshipped to. Jews were taught to believe in one God. They did not necessarily believe that only one God existed.

The similarities between monotheistic Greek worship and pre-existing Jewish practises were many. It was easy for Jews to borrow Greek religious terminology and

practise without much conflict. They were able to do this while, simultaneously, denouncing Greek religious dogma. Wolfson writes,

In the case of all those other peoples [non-Jews], no sooner had they learned Greek than they tried to identify their native gods with the Greek gods; in the case of the Jews, no sooner had they acquired a knowledge of Greek than they began to denounce Greek gods and Greek religious worship with the same zeal with which the prophets had denounced the gods and the religious worship of their own Semitic contemporaries and neighbors.

Wolfson, Philo (Part I), pg. 13

Then the Jews discovered the Greek philosophers. The polytheistic religion of the Greeks were easy to denounce. The philosophers, on the other hand, presented a monotheistic, highly ethical, God-concept with which the Jews could immediately identify. "Not idols did these philosophers worship, but one God, invisible, immaterial, good, and just." (Wolfson, Part I, pg. 17)

Moreover, all the [Greek] philosophers, dissatisfied with existing laws, planned to establish laws for the guidance of individuals and states which, like the laws of Moses, were aimed to establish justice and righteousness so as to assimilate the conduct of man to that of God.

Wolfson, Philo (Part I), pg. 19

There are ways in which the Jews could identify with the God of the philosophers. There are also ways in which the God of the philosophers was very different from the God of the Jews. The one God of the Greeks, thought of as pure idea, must be ultimately transcendent. Wolfson writes, "The Jewish God indeed is incorporeal and free of emotions as is the God of the philosophers, but still He is not without personal relation to man." (Wolfson, Part I, pg. 26) Both Jews and Greeks believe that God created the world and established the order of nature, but for Jews only can God change the order of nature.

The Jews and the Greeks also differed greatly in what esteem they held their texts.



For Greeks, philosophy and writing does not come from divine revelation. Rather, individuals grow in knowledge through the study of science and metaphysics and are then able to access God's wisdom. For Jews, the Torah is divine wisdom given directly from God. Thus the Torah may be considered true and perfect scripture.

What's at issue here is how one believes people can access truth. For Greeks, any and all wisdom gained is attained by the philosopher himself -- by no help of God whatsoever. For most Jews, God must intervene -- must concede the wisdom to those individuals who seek it. All wisdom learned from God in the Jewish construct, therefore, was pre-approved and given from God. While for Greeks only man can reach out to God, for Jews both man and God can interact with each other.

It is in understanding how Greeks and Jews believe that man interacts with God that we find the biggest difference between Jewish and Greek theology. Both Jews and Greeks believe that God is the source of all wisdom. While Greeks believe that man can access God's wisdom through his actions only, Jews believe that God can reach out to humanity -- God can bring providence. The question is how.

We have stumbled upon the challenge that the Jews faced regarding their God-concept. How can God be, at once, transcendent yet providing of providence? How can God be free of emotions yet maintain a personal relationship with man? What are the means by which God, ultimately transcendent, provides providence for mankind? We will see, through this thesis, that the Logos is the means by which God and humanity interact. In the next section of this chapter I will discuss the concept of the Logos as is introduced by these Jewish thinkers, especially Philo.

## **Part Two: God, Logos, and Philo**

These Jewish thinkers believed that the Torah was vastly superior from any of the writings and thinkings of the Greek philosophers. The Torah is, of course, understood as a gift given directly from God -- indeed the words of God Himself comprise the Torah. While the Greeks seek to attain God's wisdom for themselves, Jews believe that God gives them wisdom directly. The level of purity of the Jewish wisdom given by God must be superior to that of the Greeks, for the Greeks must reach the wisdom themselves.

Even the word 'philosophy' means 'lover of wisdom', not wisdom in itself. For the Jews, any gift from God must be all-powerful and all-consuming. For Jews, therefore, any gift from God must fill them and, indeed, change their very character. The Greek philosophers did not believe that wisdom drawn from God ever became theirs'. The ultimate goal of the Greek philosopher is to be a 'lover of wisdom', not wise in themselves.

For Jews philosophy is eternally subordinate to Torah.

The reason why, according to Philo, philosophy must be subordinate to Scripture is that human knowledge is limited, and philosophy, which is based on human knowledge, is unable to solve many problems.

Wolfson, Philo (Volume I), pg. 152

The Torah, as wisdom given directly from God, has no limit to its perfection. While the philosophers possess contradictory knowledge, the Torah provides a singular wisdom, unified in the oneness and absolute infallibility of God. Philosophy only offers arguments, often conflicting, rarely offering much in terms of a singular answer to any issue. This more than anything else is proof of the superiority of scripture.

Herein lies the great premise of our task: People are not capable of perfection on

their own. It is only through the providence of God that people can be empowered to achieve personal and communal perfection. Furthermore, if God is omnipotent, any providence given by Him must be awesome and all-consuming.

Yet there remains a great challenge. How can an incorporeal, immaterial, transcendent God logically interact with a material, imperfect world? The Logos is the answer to this question.

We will dedicate much time next chapter discussing what the Logos is and how it works. For now, suffice it to say that the Logos is, primarily, emanations from God and therefore our greatest tool for achieving Godliness and perfection. It's easy to understand now how the Logos became a central theological point for both Jews and Christians. Indeed even the word Logos made its way into Christian Scripture. The Jews had a greater challenge introducing the Logos into their pre-existing Scripture. They could not re-write the Bible, but they could translate it.

Thus we have arrived at the premise of this thesis. I submit here that, as is found in both Targums Onkelos and Yerushalmi, the מִמְרָא דִּי is the Aramaic rendering of Logos.

The rest of this thesis will proceed as follows: I will begin with a discussion of Philo, especially his concept of the Logos, what it is and how it works. I will then discuss the use of the word "Logos" and the phrase "word of God" in the New Testament. I will especially focus on how the Logos transforms both individuals and communities. In my third chapter I will discuss the use of the words מִמְרָא דִּי in the Aramaic translations of the Old Testament -- that is, Targums Onkelos and Yerushalmi. I will do this in order to show the similarities between the Logos and the מִמְרָא דִּי -- hopefully proving that the

מימרא דיי is, in fact, the Aramaic rendering of the Logos. I will thus conclude with a discussion comparing the use of the Logos in the New Testament, and the מימרא דיי in the translations of the Old Testament.

We begin with Philo.

## **Chapter Two**

### *Philo Judaeus and the Word of God*

In this chapter I will begin by briefly describing the life and writings of Philo Judaeus. I will then continue with a discussion of the word of God as is understood by Philo.

#### **Part One: Philo Judaeus**

Philo of Alexandria lived from approximately 20 B.C.E. to 50 C.E. The dates are only approximations as there is only one known document telling of "when as an elderly man he headed a delegation of the Jewish community of Alexandria to the Roman emperor Gaius Caligula." (Yehoshua Amir (Neumark), *Encyclopedia Judaica*)

Philo was a fully assimilated Greek Jew. His writings demonstrate a familiarity with Greek that can only be taught in Greek schools. Though it seems Philo knew either very little or no Hebrew whatsoever, he did grow up in a dedicated Jewish household as he, throughout his life, demonstrated a deep devotion to his Jewish faith and heritage.

At least once in his life he undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and on that occasion he may have gathered from the priests his information about the Temple cult. His acquaintance with earlier Jewish allegorization, to which he refers, may have been acquired orally or through reading. However, he owes his most profound insights to "his own soul, which oftentimes is God-possessed and divines where it does not know." (Cher. 27).

Yehoshua Amir (Neumark), *Encyclopedia Judaica*

It could be argued that Philo was an early Reform Jew. Indeed his personal take on Judaism always informed his ideas and writings.

Early reformer or not, Philo's writings became important to Christianity as well as

Judaism. Amir points out that a "vast range of writings by Philo has been preserved by the Christian Church in the original Greek, others in Armenian translation." (Yehoshua Amir (Neumark), Encyclopedia Judaica) Philo spent much of his time writing biblical exegesis. He also wrote philosophical treatises with little or no connection to Jewish dogma or motif.

Philo's philosophy may be understood as a "stoicism with a strong Platonic bent and some neo-Pythagorean influences, although some scholars see him mainly as an opponent of the stoics." (Yehoshua Amir (Neumark), Encyclopedia Judaica) Any way you cut it, Philo was deeply influenced by Plato. In fact, in many ways Philo takes Plato's ideas and pushes them further. Amir writes, "In discussing God's essence Philo maintains an extreme transcendentalism, surpassing even that of Plato." (Yehoshua Amir (Neumark), Encyclopedia Judaica)

For Philo, God is "transcending virtue, transcending knowledge, transcending the good itself and the beauty itself." (Op. 8) God is beyond all those terms we use to navigate and understand our world. God, unlike the world around us, cannot be understood as good and evil, knowledge and ignorance, beauty and vice. In another place he describes God as "better than the good, more venerable than the monad, purer than the unit." (Praem. 40) In this sense, God is ultimately transcendent. God is sufficiently greater than all things we can know such that He is, essentially, undefinable.

This is not to say that we ought not attempt to understand the nature of God. Indeed Philo recognizes that such studies can bring bliss to those who embark upon them. Yet we must remember, Philo teaches, that no true understanding of God can ever be reached. It is almost as if the nature of God is transcendence -- thus the closer to

understanding we come, the further He pulls away. God requires transcendence in order to maintain that status of greater.

Yet if God is this ultimate transcendence, what is the point of even having a God? If God's greatness requires transcendence, we are left with two choices. Either God is less than what we conceive of Him, and is thus a part of our world; or, God is the ultimate transcendence and is, therefore, irrelevant to our world. God may transcend greatness, but if He has no influence over our lives He is rendered virtually irrelevant. There therefore must be a way in which God can bring His presence to the world -- make Himself known and assert influence. This is where the Logos comes in.

In the next section of this chapter we will discuss Philo's understanding of the Logos. For now, suffice it to say that the Logos functions as intermediary between the transcendent God and humanity. The assorted concepts of this intermediary range from emanations from God (as light from the sun) to angel-like emissaries who carry God's word from Him to man. At times the Logos is considered to be the actual mind of God, and at other times the Logos is likened to a high priest, or, "a midway between man and God." (II Som. 188)

We will discuss the Logos further now.

## **Part Two: Philo and the Logos**

One of the most important things to understand about God as we begin our discussion on Philo and the Logos is that Philo understood God as the primary and greatest cause. Further, "the world is the most beautiful of created things." (Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis Book I) Therefore, if we consider God the greatest

cause of all things on earth (see Philo, Questions and Answers, Exodus II:94), though God is transcendent He must exert influence on all existence. In order for God to function as cause and creator, there must be a way in which God transcends His transcendence -- brings His influence to earth, in other words.

"Symbolically," Philo notes, "wisdom or knowledge of the divine and human and of their causes" (Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis Book I) can be likened to paradise. Philo believes that God uses the earth and rational beings therein as planters for His ideas. The body is the temple for the rational soul which, in turn, is the temple for the Word of God.

Philo understands God as having two primary attributes -- "the creative and the kingly, of which one is called God and the other ... is called Lord." (Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis Book I) God's creative attribute is considered a friendly and loving power. God's kingly attribute is more legislative and judgmental. These two attributes are symbolized by the two *cherubim* tasked with guarding the garden of Eden. Here Philo brings forward a very interesting understanding of how God's essence emanates down to earth. Consider the following:

Moreover "fiery sword" is a symbolic name for heaven, for the ether is flamelike and turns round the world. And as all these have undertaken the guarding of of Paradise, it is evident that they are overseers of wisdom, like a mirror. For in a certain sense the wisdom of the world was a mirror of the powers of God, in accordance with which it became perfect and this universe is governed and managed. But the road to wisdom is called philosophy, for the creative power is a lover of wisdom; so also the kingly power is a lover of wisdom, and the world too is a lover of wisdom.

Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis Book I

Philo considers the Logos the source of these two great powers of God. He writes,

And this the mind conceives somewhat as follows. The divine Logos,



inasmuch as it is appropriately in the middle, leaves nothing in nature empty, but fills all things and becomes a mediator and arbitrator for the two sides which seem to be divided from each other, bringing about friendship and concord, for it is always the cause of community and the artisan of peace.

Philo, Questions and Answers: Exodus II:68

God is one, it is only through the Logos -- or the go-between -- that the power of God is split in two. God is judgmental -- He disciplines the wicked (see Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis III:28, 30, IV:62, Exodus II:101), he judges the world (see Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis III:27, Exodus II:13). Further, from the two powers of God (creative) and Lord (judgmental) other powers spring forth. These powers, or attributes of God, include the beneficent and the punitive aspects of God's nature.

For Philo, philosophical explorations of the Logos can help us understand the nature of God, the structure of the human mind, and indeed the structure of the entire universe. I will thus first discuss how Philo defines the Logos. I will continue by discussing what the Logos teaches us about the nature of God, what the Logos is and can be, and specifically, according to Philo, what the Logos does.

Philo seems to believe that the difference between humanity and God is that, while both people and God have dualistic natures (as in the two powers of God), only within God do the two sides exist harmoniously. This is, of course, because it is only through the Logos that it appears that God has two powers. In actuality, God is one and cannot be understood as having a dualistic nature.

Philo writes, "Human life is like a smoking furnace ... which produces fog and darkness and veiling of the eyes ... which prevents them from seeing clearly outwards until the Savior God lights the heavenly torches." (Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis III:15) Indeed later in Questions and Answers Philo writes, "The sweet, good

and humane word of God gives a share of salvation to him who is able to save himself, and it accepts his decision as true and inexorable when he promises to progress so far as possible." (Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis IV:49). The Logos, like a seed, is planted within individuals giving them the power to balance their two opposing powers. (see also Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis IV:51, 59, 108, 196, 223, Exodus I:14, 15, II:13, 68, 111)

Throughout Questions and Answers, Philo presents for us his own thirteen attributes of God. I will now take some time to discuss these attributes as Philo presents them.

First, though perhaps not foremost, God is all-powerful. In Questions and Answers Philo refers to the Logos as an angel who, "has so great a power, [he] must necessarily be filled with all-powerful wisdom." (Philo, Questions and Answers, Exodus II:13)

Though God may be understood as having many attributes, He is one. Thus the unity of God is another attribute Philo describes God as possessing. Indeed Philo describes God as possessing an "abundant fullness" (Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis III:60) only truly understood as complete oneness.

Philo also describes God as eternal. Consider the following: "The head of all things is the eternal Logos of the eternal God, under which, as if it were his feet or his limbs, is placed the whole world, over which he passes and firmly stands." (Philo, Questions and Answers, Exodus II:117) The Logos is the means by which we mortals can link with the eternal God. Further, the Logos is the means by which God links with us.

For God is the form of all forms. When Philo is asked, "Why is the leaf placed

over the double hyacinthine (robe)?" he answers,

For this reason it was in the front of the principle and sovereign (part) of the soul, to which the mind and the reason have been allotted, that the leaf was placed (as) a symbol of intelligible substance (and as) a likeness of the divine Logos and (as) an expressed seal-impression, (namely) the form of forms.

Philo, Questions and Answers, Exodus II:124

The Logos, when planted within, links one directly to God. This linkage is not as with a substance, or place. God is, as considered by Philo, immaterial. He writes, "But the divine Logos, which is established over all things, is immaterial, being, as it were, not impressed upon them but expressed, for it is external to all substances and to all corporeal and incorporeal elements." (Philo, Questions and Answers, Exodus II:122) The Logos is, in essence, the thought of God.

Thus the Logos must be invisible. Philo describes all movement as direct result of the invisible force of the Logos. "For nothing sublunary (stands) by itself, but everything small or large is wont to be elastic, as if effected by the wonderful artificer, the invisible Logos in heaven." ((Philo, Questions and Answers, Exodus II:81)

We see clearly here that the Logos serves as the ultimate intercessor. Indeed in many places Philo describes the Logos as an angel (see Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis IV:90, 91, Exodus II:13, 16) and mediator (Philo, Questions and Answers, Exodus II:13, 68, 94, 118). Philo notes that they who have the Logos planted within are not considered a servant of God but rather an attendant to the intercessor -- or the Logos itself. (Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis IV:114) Those who serve as attendant to the intercessor may be known as ministers of God (see Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis III:34, IV:114, Exodus II 39).

Further, we know the Logos must be the thought of God for Philo considers God to be the head of all things (as we saw earlier in Exodus II:117; see also Exodus II:53, 81, 90, 122). The Logos is God's instrument of creation (see Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis II:62, Genesis III:23, Exodus II:42, 94). Indeed the entire universe, as a creation of God, is held together by the Logos. For not only did God create the world through the Logos, He continues to measure, balance, and hold together the world using the Logos (see Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis I:4, IV:23). Philo writes, "the Logos [is] ascribed to necessity, which in heaven above tends toward heavenly things. For by these everything is held together by an indissoluble bond." (Philo, Questions and Answers, Exodus II:89; see also Exodus II:118)

This 'indissoluble bond' is likened by Philo to a seminal substance. It is the source of all things. It can be planted within a person, creating within him a deep and meaningful connection to the eternal God. For being within the Logos is not likened to having an experience, but dwelling within a space -- the space of God. When serving as attendant of the Logos, one is enabled to see God with a clarity impossible otherwise. (Philo, Questions and Answers, Exodus II:39)

This is, of course, the ultimate goal of a whole life -- serving the Logos. The last two attributes Philo ascribes to God are as wisdom and teacher. Earlier when we described God as all-powerful, we mentioned that God was all-powerful in wisdom. (Philo, Questions and Answers, Exodus II:13) God thinks and the Logos is emanated down to earth. The Logos teaches us how to marry the two powers within -- the divine with the mortal -- using self-taught reason. (Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis IV:91) The Logos is the ultimate harmonizer of the world (see Philo, Questions and

Answers, Genesis IV:110, 196, Exodus II:68, 81, 90, 120). This learned harmony creates a God-like harmony within the human soul. We learn from the Logos because it is, in essence, a model of the human mind. Philo writes, "For it was right that the rational (part) of the human soul should be formed as an impression by the divine Logos, since the pre-Logos God is superior to every rational nature." (Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis II:62)

Besides serving as creator and bond of all existence, Philo recognizes that the Logos of God does very specific things as well. For example, the Logos is the guardian, overseer, and curator of God's power. In Exodus II:83, Philo compares the Logos to the tabernacle -- a portable dwelling place for the essence of God. It is through the tabernacle that God, "in need of nothing, dwelt together, so far as one might believe, with those who were in need of a tabernacle, to receive piety and worthy holiness." (Philo, Questions and Answers, Exodus II:83) The Logos is thus the essential ingredient for all existence.

Specifically, the Logos empowers those who have it sown within with, often, supernatural powers. Consider the ability to bless food. Philo writes that since the mouth is the place from which food and speech comes forth, those who have the Logos sown within ought to really take care what passes through their lips (see Philo, Questions and Answers, Exodus II:89, 118).

Indeed (and this is will be very important as we turn to the Logos as is found in the New Testament), the Logos may be considered the ultimate instrument of healing used by the ultimate healer. Those who understand how may use the Logos as an instrument of healing (see Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis II:29).

The two most important things the Logos does is profit the mind and work to

create prophets of God. The reasoning here makes sense. The Logos teaches one how to unify the logical and the illogical within their minds -- the mortal and the eternal. Thus the Logos has the effect of greatly increasing the potential of the human mind (see Philo, Questions and Answers, Genesis IV:215).

Further, to connect to the eternal through the Logos is to connect to God beyond time and space. This allows those who serve the Logos to act as angels -- divine beings ministering the word of God (see Philo, Questions and Answers, Exodus II:16).

For Philo the Logos is the ultimate go-between for God and all existence as we know it. Logos, as God's instrument of creation, is not only the bond that holds together all existence, but is the source of all godliness in humanity and the world as well.

But how do Christianity and Judaism bring Logos into their respective theologies? If the Logos is the means through which God interacts with the world, the way in which the text understands the Logos can teach us a lot regarding how it works.

In the Christian text the task is easy -- many of the books found in the New Testament actually use the word Logos in the text. We will spend a chapter talking about the use and functions of the Logos as is represented in the New Testament.

In the Jewish text the task is more difficult. This is because the Jewish text has no word that can be directly understood as "Logos". We will thus look at the translations of the Old Testament for a word, or words, that function as a Logos-like concept. What we will find, I think, is that though the concept of Logos seems more developed in the New Testament, it not only fits easily into Old Testament text and theology, but was already utilized to understand the relationship between God and the world.

### **Chapter Three**

#### *The Logos in the New Testament*

In this chapter I will examine the effect of the Logos on individuals and their communities as is discussed in different places in the New Testament. Individual people and their communities encountered the word and were transformed by it. How were they transformed? What did the logos do for them?

#### **Part One: "Logos and the Individual"**

We begin with the most important parable used by Jesus in his teachings -- that is, the parable of the sower.

#### **Matthew 13:18-23**

18 Hear then ye the parable of the sower. 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the evil one, and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart. This is he that was sown by the way side. 20 And he that was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that heareth the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it; 21 yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth. 22 And he that was sown among the thorns, this is he that heareth the word; and the care of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23 And he that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; who verily beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

The word is like a seed, it can be planted in a person. However not everyone can receive the word. Indeed according to the text above, it seems only a quarter of those who receive the word are able to cultivate it successfully.

The word is essentially transformative and good for those transformed by it. Yet the word is not relieved without some difficulty. Planting the word in those who cannot

understand it brings difficulty to that person and ends in naught.

What allows for the word to be successfully planted into a person? According to the text above, there are four types of situations in which one receives the word -- only one of which is eternally successful. There are those who hear the word but do not understand it; those who understand the word but are not self-disciplined enough to keep the word; and those who hear and understand the word but corrupt the word with greed for power or money. "And he that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; who verily beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." (Matthew 13:23)

The word is not powerful enough to transform a person completely. Only when one is "sown upon the good ground" may the word bring fruit. This parable is in the Gospels of Mark and Luke as well. Consider the following:

**Mark 4:13-20**

13 And he saith unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how shall ye know all the parables? 14 The sower soweth the word. 15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; and when they have heard, straightway cometh Satan, and taketh away the word which hath been sown in them. 16 And these in like manner are they that are sown upon the rocky places, who, when they have heard the word, straightway receive it with joy; 17 and they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway they stumble. 18 And others are they that are sown among the thorns; these are they that have heard the word, 19 and the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20 And those are they that were sown upon the good ground; such as hear the word, and accept it, and bear fruit, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

The message is the same, only here "the word of the kingdom" as is written in Matthew is referred to simply as "the word" in Mark. Indeed in Luke the word is referred to as "the word of God" (Luke 8:11).



"And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to the rest in parables; that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand." (Luke 8:10) The word is powerful here, but not powerful enough to transform everyone. In Matthew and Mark it is not clear what transformation the word brings. Indeed this particular narrative in Matthew and Mark are virtually identical. Luke differs somewhat with the previous two Gospels. Consider the following:

**Luke 8:10-21**

10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to the rest in parables; that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. 11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 And those by the way side are they that have heard; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved. 13 And those on the rock are they who, when they have heard, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And that which fell among the thorns, these are they that have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 15 And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience. 16 And no man, when he hath lighted a lamp, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but putteth it on a stand, that they that enter in may see the light. 17 For nothing is hid, that shall not be made manifest; nor anything secret, that shall not be known and come to light. 18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he thinketh he hath. 19 And there came to him his mother and brethren, and they could not come at him for the crowd. 20 And it was told him, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. 21 But he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these that hear the word of God, and do it.

What is clear is that there are two ways in which the individual is transformed and relieves benefit from the logos -- that for those who use the word in some form of ministry and that for those whose lives are simply benefited by the logos. We will begin with ministers.

The logos as is represented in the New Testament is indeed extraordinarily

powerful. Minimally, ministers who only preach the word are very effective in convincing their listeners of their message. Often ministers and disciples are even given supernatural powers by the word -- such as the power of healing or the power of prophesy and miracle worker. These traveling ministers defined and, in many ways, created early Christianity. The effect that their activities had on the Jewish and non-Jewish world was great and complicated. We will thus begin with the more simple (if not more mysterious) discussion of how the logos was used to heal people.

Jesus is, of course, the greatest healer, prophet, and miracle worker found in the New Testament. But even Jesus understood that the power of the word as miracle worker would not be what influences people the most. We read:

**Matthew 4:1-4**

1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered. 3 And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. 4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Though he may have been able to turn the stones in bread, Jesus above is unwilling to perform miracles unordained by the word of God. This did not preclude Jesus from using the word to serve as healer or miracle worker. Indeed in the below passage Jesus uses the word to heal the sick as well as cast out spirits and demons.

**Matthew 8:14-17**

14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lying sick of a fever. 15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she arose, and ministered unto him. 16 And when even was come, they brought unto him many possessed with demons: and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were sick: 17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying: Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases.

We find other examples in Gospel sources of Jesus using the word to minister to the needy in this manner (including Matthew 8:5-8, Luke 4:33-36, Luke 7:6-8). Notice above that Jesus was able to heal with both a word and a touch. In fact, as we see in the below passage, often Jesus need not even see or meet the needy in order to heal using the word. Consider the below:

**John 4:46-53**

46 He came therefore again unto Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. 48 Jesus therefore said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe. 49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. 50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. The man believed the word that Jesus spake unto him, and he went his way. 51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, saying, that his son lived. 52 So he inquired of them the hour when he began to amend. They said therefore unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. 53 So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

These signs and wonders Jesus performed with the word or a deed were very convincing to those who witnessed his power (See also Luke 7:6-8).

Jesus also used the word for less miraculous activities, such as preaching.

**Mark 4:33-34**

33 And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it; 34 and without a parable spake he not unto them: but privately to his own disciples he expounded all things.

Jesus used the word to perform miracles, divine prophecy, and indoctrinate disciples to his movement. How did the word as represented in the Gospels effect the lives of ordinary people? We read:

**Matthew 12:33-37**

33 Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit

corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. 35 The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. 36 And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Even those who can not use the word to perform miracles are defined by their words. That is, the eternal fate of the spirit is decided by the words that are used during a lifetime -- even those words used on trivial matters as the text says, "every idle word that men shall speak" (Matthew 12:33-37). These words are not fleeting -- for positive or negative, words are eternal (see also Matthew 12:30-32).

Further, in the texts we have examined thus far the word is not impenetrable to harm. As we saw in the parable of the seed, the word is not powerful enough to overcome challenges on its own within a person's spirit. Consider even the following:

#### **Matthew 15:1-6**

1 Then there come to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes, saying, 2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. 3 And he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? 4 For God said, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But ye say, whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is given to God; 6 he shall not honor his father. And ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition.

Or,

#### **Mark 7:5-13**

5 And the Pharisees and the scribes ask him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands? 6 And he said unto them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoreth me with their lips, But their heart is far from me. 7 But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men. 8 Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. 9 And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death: 11 but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have

been profited by me is Corban, that is to say, Given to God; 12 ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother; 13 making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do.

Above the traditions of the rabbis actually "make void the word of God" (Mark 7:13). Clearly here the word of God does not stand powerful on its own. It requires cultivation and protection. Yet we also read the following:

**Luke 1:34-38**

34 And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God. 36 And behold, Elisabeth thy kinswoman, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that was called barren. 37 For no word from God shall be void of power. 38 And Mary said, Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

In Mark the tradition of rabbis can void the word of God, but in Luke "no word from God shall be void of power." (Luke 1: 37) Though Luke is, like Matthew and Mark, a Synoptic Gospel, there some very interesting differences in the word as is described in Luke verses that of Matthew and Mark. Even in the parable of the seed Luke adds a very interesting description of what it means when the word is sown successfully.

**Luke 8:15-21**

15 And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience. 16 And no man, when he hath lighted a lamp, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but putteth it on a stand, that they that enter in may see the light. 17 For nothing is hid, that shall not be made manifest; nor anything secret, that shall not be known and come to light. 18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he thinketh he hath. 19 And there came to him his mother and brethren, and they could not come at him for the crowd. 20 And it was told him, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. 21 But he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these that hear the word of God, and do it.

The word of God connects people and makes them family. When one is filled with the word of God, they are not in need of parables or teaching. When the word is sown within a person it ought not be hidden -- rather, like a lamp on a bed-stand, it is to be displayed. As Jesus' mother and brethren attempted to get close to Jesus to hear his teaching, he admitted to those who surrounded him that they were not in need. They already hear the word and are moved to action by it.

We also read in Luke:

**Luke 4:31-32**

31 And he came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the sabbath day: 32 and they were astonished at his teaching; for his word was with authority.

In Luke more than Matthew and Mark, the word is the source of Jesus' authority and success (as well as his tribulations). We read:

**Luke 11:27-28**

27 And it came to pass, as he said these things, a certain woman out of the multitude lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts which thou didst suck. 28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

In hearing and following the word of God all credit for any power a person may possess must be given solely to God. Above a woman praises Jesus' mother for what he had become, but Jesus only credits the word of God for what he does. The word of God is the source of all individual power.

The word of God also guides people -- it tells them where to go, what to do.

**Luke 3:2-4**

2. ...the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. 3 And he came into all the region round about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins; 4 as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, The

voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight.

The Gospel of John presents an interesting understanding of the word. Similar to the Synoptic Gospels, the word in John enables prophecy (see also John 12:37-40, Luke 22:60-62)

#### **John 2:19-22**

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 The Jews therefore said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake this; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

as well as miracle healing.

#### **John 4:45-51**

46. ...And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son; for he was at the point of death. 48 Jesus therefore said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe. 49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. 50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. The man believed the word that Jesus spake unto him, and he went his way. 51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, saying, that his son lived.

These signs and wonders as in the texts above functioned as proof of the validity of the Logos and the Christian covenant. Miracles never stand on their own in this tradition. They are coupled with coercion and often conversion.

In the Gospel of John the word also transforms people into disciples. That is, when the Logos frees one from the bondage of sin, they enter a kind of 'life-debt' to the Logos, dedicating themselves to the spreading of the Logos. Consider the following:

#### **John 8:31-37**

31 Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then ye are truly my disciples; 32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33 They answered unto him, We are Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in

bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin. 35 And the bondservant abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth for ever. 36 If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed: yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath not free course in you.

The passage above makes a very interesting comparison between inherited power and the power that is obtained through the word. Being of the seed of Abraham is not enough to guarantee freedom from bondage. The word is not only for preachers and disciples. It transforms all who encounter it.

#### **John 8:51-59**

51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my word, he shall never see death. 52 The Jews said unto him, Now we know that thou hast a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my word, he shall never taste of death. 53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who died? and the prophets died: whom makest thou thyself? 54 Jesus answered, If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing: it is my Father that glorifieth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God; 55 and ye have not known him: but I know him; and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be like unto you, a liar: but I know him, and keep his word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad. 57 The Jews therefore said unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? 58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am. 59 They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.

The word of God enables average people to almost become deities. All things human such as sin are to be considered bondage. Perfection can be achieved through the word of God.

#### **John 10:32-38**

32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from the Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods? 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken), 36 say ye of him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? 37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.



The word of God is established above as not only a way in which one can become closer with God, but as *the* way in which people can access God. It is here that we begin to encounter the idea that the only way to the Father is through the Son. Consider the below (see also John 14:21-24):

**John 15:1-4**

1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me.

Once the word is sown within a person, a relationship is established between that person and God through Jesus. The success of the word can be measured by the works of the person within whom the word was sown. The word cleanses, as we read, "Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you." (John 15:3), but what the word really does is establish a relationship between God and man through Jesus. These bonds unite the lives of all those who have had the word of God sown within them.

**John 15:20-25**

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. 21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also. 24 If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 But this cometh to pass, that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

Of course the word of God is or enables prophecy, as we read above, "But this cometh to pass, that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause." (John 15:25) (see also John 18:6-9, John 18:28-32). Above we see that

the word ties the fate of those within whom it was sown to the life of Jesus. The word can free people from sin, but also brings trouble. (see also Luke 24:17-20, Revelation 6:9-10, Revelation 20:1-4)

It is clear that the word of God gives powers to preachers and disciples -- indeed the word of God guides these early Christian ministers. What is unique in John, though, is how the word of God effected the lives of those who were not ministers or disciples. Essentially, the word of God makes one a disciple. The word of God ties the lives of all those within whom the word abides together.

The book of Acts follows very much in the tradition of John in this manner. Consider the following:

**Acts 2:38-41**

38 And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. 40 And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. 41 They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.

Again, the word of God brings supernatural powers, including prophecy and ministry (see Acts 8:4-8, Acts 13:6-13). Like the Gospels, in Acts the word of God connects people with God and to each other. For the first time, though, we begin to see that those within whom the word was sown were forming an exclusive club as we read above, "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:41) It is almost as if the word of God is putting together an international sub-community. Beyond cultural, continental, and national lines, the word of God ties souls together. A special emphasis was placed on the

ability of non-Jews to be brought into this international community (see also Acts 11:16-19).

#### **Acts 10:44-48**

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

In several places the New Testament recognizes the number of souls being influenced by the word of God -- almost as if a census was being taken (see also Acts 4:1-4). The ministers who preached the word of God made special effort here to travel to distant lands (see also Acts 14:24-26).

#### **Acts 13:4-13**

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their attendant.

Using acts of righteousness (see Acts 16:25-34, Colossians 1:24-29), sound preaching (see John 2:19-22, Acts 18:7-11, Acts 22:22-24, Philippians 1:12-14, Colossians 1:3-8, 2 Timothy 4:1-2, Titus 1:1-4, Titus 1:5-9, Hebrews 5:12-14), miracle working (Luke 4:33-36), and prophecy (2 Peter 1:16-21) they were able to convert many Jews and non-Jews alike (Hebrews 13:6-8). Their strength would have been extraordinary.

#### **Hebrews 6:1-6**

1 Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit. 4 For as

touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Their words and deeds would be dedicated entirely to the sowing of the word of God into others. Yet as the word begins to influence more people, structure is needed to govern those who are influenced by the word.

#### **Romans 15:17-21**

17 I have therefore my glorifying in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God. 18 For I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, 19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit; so that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ; 20 yea, making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation; 21 but, as it is written, They shall see, to whom no tidings of him came, And they who have not heard shall understand.

Indeed we have encountered a very important difficulty here. That is, how can we tell the difference between those who are truly filled with the word of God verses those who only seem to be filled with the word of God?

#### **1 Corinthians 14:26-40**

26 What is it then, brethren? When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. 27 If any man speaketh in a tongue, let it be by two, or at the most three, and that in turn; and let one interpret: 28 but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. 29 And let the prophets speak by two or three, and let the others discern. 30 But if a revelation be made to another sitting by, let the first keep silence. 31 For ye all can prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be exhorted; 32 and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; 33 for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, 34 let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law. 35 And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church. 36 What? was it from you that the word of God went forth? or came it unto you alone? 37 If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord. 38 But if any man is ignorant, let him be ignorant. 39 Wherefore, my brethren,

desire earnestly to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. 40 But let all things be done decently and in order.

What was once a movement of personal freedom now has built a structure of checks and balances to give the word of God a semblance of order. To be filled with the word of God is to make yourself extraordinary. A community of the extraordinary requires a political structure in order to maintain order.

#### **2 Corinthians 2:15-17**

15 For we are a sweet savor of Christ unto God, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; 16 to the one a savor from death unto death; to the other a savor from life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not as the many, corrupting the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.

Furthermore,

#### **2 Corinthians 4:1-2**

1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, even as we obtained mercy, we faint not: 2 but we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Power is intoxicating. As the word of God is sown within individuals, they are made to understand that the word is not to be used for their benefit alone. Even if they do not become traveling ministers or missionaries, those who have the word sown within them possess a special responsibility to the world and those around them. In this sense they must take care to make sure that they are not corrupted by their power. Consider the following:

#### **Galatians 6:1-10**

1 Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. 3 For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. 4 But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his

neighbor. 5 For each man shall bear his own burden. 6 But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. 7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.

Those who have the word sown within them can serve the community in a way that is extraordinarily beneficial. In the next section of this chapter we will discuss how the word of God can influence communities. For now, consider the following:

**Ephesians 5:25-27**

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; 26 that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, 27 that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Individuals can possess extraordinary power over a community. Above the word empowers spousal care, which in turn cleanses the entire church. It is clear that to have the word sown within you means taking a special role in your community -- be it messiah or pariah. Regardless of how the community regards you, when used correctly the word of God insures that one will be blameless in the eyes of God.

**Philippians 2:14-16**

14 Do all things without murmurings and questionings: 15 that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, 16 holding forth the word of life; that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain neither labor in vain.

For in the end, the word of God must lead to a more perfect reality, a more perfect community.

**Colossians 3:12-17**

12 Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; 13 forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: 14 and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God. 17 And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

There is a theological end to the idea that God's word can be sown within a person. That is, it must become all consuming. The word of God as guidance counselor must guide one's every move. The word of God must become the singular focus of all within whom it is sown.

**2 Thessalonians 3:1-5**

1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as also it is with you; 2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men; for all have not faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and guard you from the evil one. 4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command. 5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ.

Those who have the word of God sown within them must dedicate their lives to it.

They are called. (see also 1 John 2:14)

**1 Peter 1:22-25**

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: 23 having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth. 24 For, All flesh is as grass, And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: 25 But the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you.

The word of God, when taken to its extreme, must become the word of life.

**1 John 1:1-10**

1 That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have

seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life 2 (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us).

And in turn the word of life perfects the lives of all within whom it is sown.

#### **1 John 2:1-6**

1 My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. 3 And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him: 6 he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.

We have seen that the word of God, as is represented in the Christian Bible, can influence both the minister and the receiver of the word. The word enables prophecy, miracle working, and sound preaching. This prophecy, miracle working, and sound preaching in turn sows the word into those that witness its power. The word frees people from the bondage of sin. As the concept of the logos progresses in the Christian Bible, it becomes all consuming. The word brings difficulty into people's lives. Yet, despite the difficulty, the word perfects their lives.

Just as the word can transform the lives of individuals, it can transform the nature of communities. In the next section we will examine how the word can influence communities.

#### **Part Two: The Logos and the Community**

As we have seen above, one of the most important things the word of God does is establish a brotherhood between those who have it sown within them. Indeed in many of



the passages we have examined above the ministers of the word -- the disciples of Jesus and Paul -- travelled around the world spreading the Logos in far off places.

Of course, many sections of the new testament consider the word of God to be the source of all things that exist (see also James 1:17-24, 1 John 1:1-10).

#### **John 1:1-4**

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

If the word of God is the source of all things that exist, community could be no exception. But the word of God also influences the community in numerous ways.

First and foremost, the word of God instills a sense of responsibility in those who possess it (see also 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, Ephesians 5:25-27, Titus 2:1-10).

#### **Matthew 18:15-16**

15 And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established.

Jesus' purity creates almost a slippery slope towards communal perfection and purity. Like a pebble dropped in a lake totally void of waves, his influence ripples out, eventually creating a global community sown with the word of God.

#### **John 1:9-14**

9 There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.

Much like the conversion practises for individuals, entire communities were converted with the word of God. (see Acts 13:4-13)

This community, clearly close-knit and self protecting, extends well beyond national and cultural lines. Consider the following:

**Luke 2:25-32**

25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, that they might do concerning him after the custom of the law, 28 then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29 Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord, According to thy word, in peace; 30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, 31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; 32 A light for revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of thy people Israel.

In the passage above the word of God is understood as "a light for revelation" for both Jews and non-Jews (see also Acts 11:1-3, Acts 15:6-7, Acts 17:10-15, 1 Peter 2:6-10). As the story is told, a light of revelation it was (see also Acts 4:26-31).

Jesus and his disciples, through their preaching and miracle working, facilitated mass conversions -- often creating entire Christian communities at once (see also John 4:27-42, Acts 4:1-4, Acts 8:4-8, Acts 8:14-19, Acts 10:44-48, Acts 14:24-26, Acts 16:6-8, Acts 19:13-20, 2 Corinthians 2:12-17).

**Luke 5:1-11**

1 Now it came to pass, while the multitude pressed upon him and heard the word of God, that he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; 2 and he saw two boats standing by the lake: but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were washing their nets. 3 And he entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the multitudes out of the boat. 4 And when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5 And Simon answered and said, Master, we toiled all night, and took nothing: but at thy word I will let down the nets. 6 And when they had done this, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their nets were breaking; 7 and they beckoned unto their

partners in the other boat, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But Simon Peter, when he saw it, fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. 9 For he was amazed, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken; 10 and so were also James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left all, and followed him.

More than anything else, the word of God unites all who have it sown within. None are brought into this community because of the stock from which they descend. Rather, they are brought together through the word of God. Below an onlooker compliments Jesus' mother for his achievements. Jesus corrects her, pointing out that all who possess the word of God within are blessed.

**Luke 11:27-28**

27 And it came to pass, as he said these things, a certain woman out of the multitude lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts which thou didst suck. 28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

This is not the case in all New Testament sources. In many sources the word of God is not for Jews at all -- indeed the Jews have, in many of the sources, been dropped from the covenant completely. Consider the passage from John below:

**John 8:31-37**

31 Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; 32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33 They answered unto him, We are Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin. 35 And the bondservant abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth for ever. 36 If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed: yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath not free course in you.

The Gospel of John takes a pronounced hard line stance towards the Jews and the word of God. Indeed the passage above continues by asserting that the Jews may even

function as a natural enemy to the word of God. They could not understand the word.

They could only work against the word. Consider the following (see also John 4:27-42,

Acts 13:43-49):

**John 8:38-45**

38 I speak the things which I have seen with my Father: and ye also do the things which ye heard from your father. 39 They answered and said unto him, Our father is Abraham. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God: this did not Abraham. 41 Ye do the works of your father. They said unto him, We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. 42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. 45 But because I say the truth, ye believe me not.

What is more, those who do not have the word of God sown within them will eventually be met with eternal judgement and, perhaps, damnation.

**John 12:44-50**

44 And Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. 45 And he that beholdeth me beholdeth him that sent me. 46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness. 47 And if any man hear my sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day. 49 For I spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. 50 And I know that his commandment is life eternal: the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak.

And those who successfully have the word sown with will eventually be rewarded.

**John 14:21-24**

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that

loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him. 22 Judas (not Iscariot) saith unto him, Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? 23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.

In this sense the word of God created two great global communities -- that of the converted and the non-converted. The sowing of the word is the beginning of a generational conflict, a great war between good and evil (see also Acts 6:1-7, Acts 10:34-38, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4).

#### **Acts 2:37-41**

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? 38 And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. 40 And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. 41 They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.

Indeed those who cannot have the word sown within will meet difficulty.

Consider the following:

#### **Acts 19:8-12**

8 And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10 And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. 11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the evil spirits went out.

According to the above, the miracles that the word of God enables preachers to enact are only for those who have the word sown within. When groups of people react

vehemently to the word of God, the preachers simply get up and leave. That is, they left when they could. Often communities rose up against the word and rebelled against it.

#### **Acts 22:22-24**

22 And they gave him audience unto this word; and they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. 23 And as they cried out, and threw off their garments, and cast dust into the air, 24 the chief captain commanded him be brought into the castle, bidding that he should be examined by scourging, that he might know for what cause they so shouted against him.

Preachers who are killed for the word of God are not to worry, however, for their work shall not come to naught. Those who have the word of God sown within and work to sow it within others will be protected and rewarded (see also 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5, Hebrews 13:6-8, 2 Peter 3:1-7, Revelation 6:9-10).

#### **Romans 15:17-21**

17 I have therefore my glorifying in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God. 18 For I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, 19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit; so that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ; 20 yea, making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation; 21 but, as it is written, They shall see, to whom no tidings of him came, And they who have not heard shall understand.

In the end the word of God is an almost essentially communal -- that is, it happens primarily in and to communities.

#### **2 Peter 1:16-21**

16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: 18 and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount. 19 And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the

day-star arise in your hearts: 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. 21 For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.

Individuals cannot bring prophecy on their own. Prophecy requires group work, group effort. For when sown correctly, the word of God brings perfect community.

**Revelation 20:1-4**

1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

In early Christian theology, therefore, the Logos has become everything. It is the means by which we connect to God and do His work. It is the glue that binds together our world and community. All greatness is realized through the Logos. All prophesy is fulfilled through the Logos. The Logos is, in essence, God's only way of connecting to humanity, our only way of connecting to God, and the ultimate tool by which we interact with ourselves, each other, and the world around us.

The Logos is everywhere, the question is whether or not one allows it in and gives it the power to inform one's life. To not allow the Logos in is to bring disharmony to the world. Allowing the Logos to be sown within purifies the soul and brings harmony to humanity.

Is this a new concept? Does the Logos mark the break between Judaism and Christianity? Whether or not Jesus is the Logos, or if it is through Jesus that one can receive the Logos is beside the point. In early Christian theology the Logos was the

reason to understand and believe in Jesus as messiah. The Logos purifies the soul, gives one the powers of prophecy and healing -- who wouldn't want such a gift? Yet in Judaism it is very clear that God creates by speaking, that it is through God that one succeeds and is made extraordinary. How prevalent is the Logos in the Jewish tradition? This issue and more we will examine in the chapter to follow.



## Chapter Four

### *The מִימְרָא דִּי in the Old Testament*

R. Hananel b. Papa said: What is meant by, Hear, for I will speak princely things: why are the words of the Torah compared to a prince? To tell you: just as a prince has power of life and death, so have the words of the Torah [potentialities] of life and death. Thus Raba said; To those who go to the right hand thereof it is a medicine of life; to those who go to the left hand thereof it is a deadly poison. Another interpretation: princely [denotes] that on every word which went forth from the mouth of the Holy One [מִימְרָא דִּי], blessed be He, two crowns were set.

Babylonian Talmud, Mas. Shabbath 88b

Unlike much of the Logos in Christian theology, the word of God as intercessor in Jewish theology had to be fit into a pre-existing Scriptural tradition. Not that this was too difficult. Even in the Torah God's creative power is attributed to speaking. We read, "And God said, Let there be light; and there was light." (Genesis 1:3) The Logos fits naturally into a theological rubric in which God creates by speaking.

What's particularly interesting is how the Logos is understood in the translations of the Old Testament. I'd like to submit, in this chapter, that "מִימְרָא דִּי" is an Aramaic rendering of the Logos. I will thus spend the rest of this chapter discussing the Word of God as is represented in Old Testament literature and translations thereof.

First and foremost, the מִימְרָא דִּי connotes a connection with God. We read in Genesis,

#### **Genesis 28:20-21**

כ וַיִּדָּר יַעֲקֹב נָדָר לֵאמֹר אִם-יְהִיָּה אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וְשָׁמְרָנִי בְּדַרְדָּר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן-לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וְיָגֵד לִלְבָּשׁ: כֹּא וְשָׁבְתִי בְּשָׁלוֹם אֶל-בֵּית אָבִי וְהָיָה יְהוָה לִי לֵאלֹהִים:

20. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and garment to put on, 21. So that I come

back to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God.

Here Onkelos translates the above as,

כ וקיים יעקוב קים למימר אם יהא מימרא דיי בסעדי ויתרינני בורחא הדא דאנא אדל ויתן לי לחמא למיכל וכסו למלבש. כא ואתוב בלשם לבית אבא ויהי מימרא דיי לי לאלהא.

The *מימרא דיי* is how Onkelos translates God being 'with' someone. If the Logos is God's ultimate and only intercessor, it is therefore the only way which one can experience the presence of God. Indeed the Targum Yerushalmi uses the *מימרא דיי* in the same way for the same passage. The *מימרא דיי* is invoked to both protect and curse someone.

The Targum Yerushalmi refers to the *מימרא דיי* throughout the translation. In Parshat Bo the Targum Yerushalmi believes that the *מימרא דיי* facilitated the plagues. It's almost as if the Targum Yerushalmi considers, "And Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt..." (Exodus 10:13) an invocation of the Logos. Ironical that we read earlier in the same passage the Pharaoh frees Moses and the Israelite people, saying, "Let the Lord be with you, if I will let you go, and your little ones..." (Exodus 10:10) Pharaoh blesses Moses with the very same *מימרא דיי* that facilitated the plagues.

The *מימרא דיי* shows up again in Leviticus, Parshat Vayikra. The Targum Yerushalmi writes,

וקרא דברא דיי למשה וכל מימרא דיי הוה עמיה מן משכן זמנא למימר.

I translate the above as follows: "And the voice of God spoke to Moses saying, all *מימרא דיי* will be darkened from the Tabernacle at the time of the speaking." The Targum Yerushalmi does not translate the text word for word. It is thus difficult to know which

passage the targum is paraphrasing. I believe the Targum Yerushalmi above is paraphrasing,

#### **Leviticus 4:1-3**

1. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2. Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them; 3. If the priest who is anointed sins according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he has sinned, a young bull without blemish to the Lord for a sin offering.

Again, the **מימרא דיי** represents any and all relationship between man and God.

The passage above describes the maintenance of that relationship. When one sins against the commandments of God, the **מימרא דיי** is darkened within one's soul. This darkening lasts until their sins are ritually cleansed with an offering to God.

Here we have begun to understand how the **מימרא דיי** works in the Jewish tradition. The above passage has made clear to us that the **מימרא דיי** requires a certain purity in the soul of all who possess it. When the purity diminishes, so too does the **מימרא דיי**.

For Onkelos, the **מימרא דיי** is most literally the voice of God. What is especially interesting, though, is the way in which Onkelos uses the **מימרא דיי** in his translation.

Consider the following:

Onkelos translates the following text from Genesis 3,

#### **Genesis 3:8**

ח וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת-קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מְתַהַלֵּךְ בְּגֵן לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם וַיִּתְחַבֵּא הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים בְּתוֹךְ עֵץ הַנָּחַל

8. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

as,

ח ושמעו ית קל מימרא דיי אלהים דמהלך בגנתא למנח יומה ואטמר אדם ואתתה מן קדם יי אלהים בגו  
אילן גנתא.

Here the **מימרא דיי** is added when **קל אלהים** would have been enough. Note that, in comparing the two texts, Onkelos replaces the tetragrammaton with **מימרא דיי**. Usually Onkelos changes the tetragrammaton to the **יי** construct, but here he uses **מימרא דיי**. Indeed when the voice of God is heard, there must be something transformative about the experience.

Indeed Onkelos uses the **מימרא דיי** to translate **קול אֱלֹהִים** Deuteronomy 4:33, and then again in Deuteronomy 5:23. God speaking to you is the ultimate “with God” experience one can have. In Genesis 21:20 Onkelos translates, “And God was with the lad; and he grew, and lived in the wilderness, and became an archer.” as,

כ והוה **מימרא דיי** בסעדה דרביא ורבא ויתב במדברא והוה רבי קשתא.

Interesting here, also, that Onkelos attributes the **מימרא דיי** to Ishmael (see also Targum Onkelos Genesis 21:22, 23). In Exodus 18:19 Onkelos also translates, “...God shall be with you...” as **מימרא דיי** only this time it is a blessing upon Moses invoked by Jethro. What’s interesting, though, is what Moses is being blessed to do.

#### **Exodus 18:19-20**

19. Listen now to my voice, I will give you counsel, and God shall be with you; Represent the people before God, that you may bring the causes to God; 20. And you shall teach them ordinances and laws, and shall show them the way where they must walk, and the work that they must do.

Here the **מימרא דיי** gives Moses the ability to lead. This suggests that Jethro

somehow blessed Moses such that the מימרא דיי was implanted in his soul. Otherwise Moses would have certainly 'wore away both him and his people', as Jethro taught.

Perhaps the best verse connecting the מימרא דיי with the Logos is Genesis 9:16. "And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." (Genesis 9:16) Here, in describing the covenant, Onkelos translates,

טז ותהי קשתא בעננא ואחזונה למדבר קים עלם בין מימרא דיי ובין כל נפשא חיתא בכל בשרא דעל  
ארעא

If the מימרא דיי is the intercessor between man and God, then regarding the covenant Onkelos *would* translate אלהים as מימרא דיי. Indeed later in Genesis 15:6, Onkelos translates, "And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness."

י והימין במימרא דיי וחשבה לה לזכו.

Believing in God is a relationship with the מימרא דיי, as Onkelos points out here. Further, the result of having the מימרא דיי counts one for righteousness with God. One who acts in God's name must invoke the מימרא דיי. It seems that Onkelos, whenever describing belief in God or swearing by God, translates God as מימרא דיי (see Targum Onkelos Genesis 24:3).

We've already said that the מימרא דיי empowers leaders and inspires purity within all whom it is sown. It also serves as a protective force. Minimally, those who have the מימרא דיי sown within have a look about them that tell others to be careful around them.

We read in Genesis:

### Genesis 26:27-29

27. And Isaac said to them, Why do you come to me, seeing you hate me, and have sent me away from you? 28. And they said, We saw certainly that the Lord was with you; and we said, Let there be now an oath between us, between us and you, and let us make a covenant with you; 29. That you will do us no hurt, as we have not touched you, and as we have done to you nothing but good, and have sent you away in peace; you are now the blessed of the Lord.

Onkelos translates 'the Lord was with you' as מימרא דיי. Abimelech and his constituents recognized that Isaac had the מימרא sown inside and were thus unwilling to harm him. Indeed this is the same מימרא that protected Ishmael in the wilderness, as we discussed earlier.

The מימרא provides food to eat when needed. We read,

### Genesis 28:20

כ וַיֹּדֶר יַעֲקֹב נֶדֶר לֵאמֹר אִם-יְהִיָּה אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וְשָׁמְרֵנִי בְּדַרְךָ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן-לִי לֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבְגָד לִלְבָּשׁ:

Onkelos translates אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי here as מימרא דיי. Here the מימרא provides a material substance -- that is bread -- essential for survival. We read later in the same passage,

### Genesis 28:21

כא וְשָׁבְתִי בְּשָׁלוֹם אֶל-בֵּית אָבִי וְהָיָה יְהוָה לִי לֵאלֹהִים:

translated by Onkelos as,

כא ואיתוב בשלם לבית אבא ויהי מימרא דיי לי לאלהא:

Both passages together translate the text, "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and garment to put on, / so that I come back to my father's house in peace; then shall

the Lord be my God.” (Genesis 28:20-21) The contractual relationship is simple, God provides the **מימרא דיי** and those who have it sown within keep it.

The **מימרא דיי** also mediates contractual relationships between people. We read in Genesis 31, “And Mizpah; for he said, The Lord watch between me and you, when we are absent one from another. / If you shall afflict my daughters, or if you shall take other wives beside my daughters, although no man is with us, God is witness between me and you.” (Genesis 31:49-50) Onkelos translates Lord here as **מימרא דיי**. It’s almost as if the **מימרא דיי** has the power to facilitate small tasks here and there in order help those whom it is sown within.

Indeed the **מימרא דיי** brings prosperous times. Onkelos renders the **מימרא דיי** from the text, “And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. / And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand.” (Genesis 39:2-3) It is the **מימרא דיי** that was with Joseph (in both verses 2 and 3), making him prosper (see also Genesis 39:23).

In Deuteronomy Onkelos describes the **מימרא דיי** as the Word of God. Onkelos considers the following, “And he humbled you, and let you hunger, and fed you with manna, which you knew not, neither did your fathers know; that he might make you know that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live.” (Deuteronomy 8:3) Here Onkelos translates, “every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live” as,

ג ... כל אפקות מימרא דיי יתקים אנשא:

The **מימרא דיי** proceeds from the mouth of God so that man will live. The similarity between the **מימרא דיי** and the Logos here is striking. Philo understands the Logos as the ultimate go-between for God and all existence as we know it. Logos, as God's instrument of creation, is not only the bond that holds together all existence, but is the source of all godliness found in the world. The more we examine the **מימרא דיי**, the more it seems like the Logos.

We read, "And in the morning, then you shall see the glory of the Lord; when he hears your murmurings against the Lord; and what are we, that you murmur against us? / And Moses said, This shall be, when the Lord shall give you in the evening meat to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the Lord hears your murmurings which you murmur against him; and what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord." (Exodus 16:7-8) Onkelos understands the murmurings here as against the **מימרא דיי** (in both verses 7 and 8). Are we to understand here that the **מימרא דיי** is vulnerable against people? Are we to understand that the **מימרא דיי** can be murmured against?

Make no mistake about it, both Onkelos and the Targum Yerushalmi understand the **מימרא דיי** as any and all relationship between man and God. We read in Exodus,

#### **Exodus 17:1**

And all the congregation of the people of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped in Rephidim; and there was no water for the people to drink.

Both Onkelos and Yerushalmi translate 'according to the commandment of the Lord', literally **על-פי ה'קוה**, as **על מימרא דיי**. If the **מימרא דיי** may be considered the bond



that holds together all existence, the entire *mitzvah* system may be included. Further, anything from the mouth of God, as an emanating force, must be a Logos-like substance.

The **מימרא דיי** serves as an instructional force. We read in Numbers, "And Moses counted them according to the word of the Lord, as he was commanded." (Numbers 3:16) Both Yerushalmi and Onkelos translates 'the word of the Lord' here as **מימרא דיי** (see also Targum Onkelos, Numbers 3:51). Indeed much of the work Moses and Aaron do for God is, according to Onkelos and Yerushalmi, through the **מימרא דיי** (see also Targum Onkelos, Numbers 4:37).

In all cases where the words **על-פי דקוה** are used in the Biblical text, both Targums Yerushalmi and Onkelos translate **על-פי דקוה** as the **מימרא דיי** (see Targum Onkelos Numbers 3:16, 39, 51, 4:37, 41, 45, 49, 9:18, 20, and 23). What's interesting here is that the **מימרא דיי** empowers or commands Moses and Aaron to do something very specific -- that is, take the census.

We read,

#### **Numbers 4:37**

These were those who were counted of the families of the Kohathites, all who might do service in the Tent of Meeting, which Moses and Aaron counted according to the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

Here the **מימרא דיי** is understood as being 'by the hand of Moses'. Just as the **מימרא דיי** commands and empowers those who have it sown within, those who have it sown within can use its power to complete the task.

We have thus begun to complete the picture here regarding how the **מימרא דיי** can be understood as the Logos. It is, at once, something which emanates from God and can

be utilized by man.

As we have seen above, the *די מימרא* refers to anything emanating from the mouth of God. Certainly both Onkelos and Yerushalmi translate *על-פי יְהוָה* as *מימרא די*. Clearly God's words are instructive and full of wisdom. Yet there is a way in which the *די מימרא* functions in the metaphysical reality of the world that is very interesting. That is, like the Logos as is understood by Philo, the *די מימרא* serves as a bond of the world. The word of God and all things therein are the glue by which the world is held together.

This makes sense. If God's creative power is through words, then any and all connection between the created and the creator must be through the *די מימרא* -- through words. We have found this sentiment throughout Onkelos and Yerushalmi. Often, when trying to describe a connection with God (ie: God being 'with me'), both Onkelos and Yerushalmi use the *די מימרא*. Any and all connections with God must be through the *די מימרא*. Even when we hear the voice of God, it is often made clear that what we hear is not, directly, the voice of God but rather the voice of the *די מימרא*.

The *די מימרא* gives us instruction, informs us of what to do and when to do it. The instruction can be general (ie: Be a good person.) or specific (ie: Take a census.). When *על-פי יְהוָה* is understood as a commanding act -- that is, an command from God -- the *די מימרא* is brought in to explain further what the command is. It's not that Yerushalmi or Onkelos did not have the words to explain commands emanating from the voice of God, it's that something more had to be understood.

Yet, because this is about God's relationship with humanity, the *די מימרא* has to be something which can be used by man as well. Certainly we have seen above that

humanity lives by the *מימרא דיי*. But the last text discussed in this chapter is what I think is most interesting. That Moses hears the *מימרא דיי* and then fulfills God's commands by using the *מימרא דיי* is strikingly similar to the Logos as is understood in the New Testament.

Let us liken the *מימרא דיי* to the Torah and all its functions. As both book and symbol, the Torah is instructional, contemplative, commanding, and unifying. We can read the Torah for ethical and practical guidelines for how to conduct our daily lives. We can read the Torah for more esoteric connections and wonderings about the nature of spirituality and human existence. We can also hold the Torah up on high and unify the Jewish people.

As such the *מימרא דיי*, like the Torah (or, word of God), gives us instruction and moral balance. It also creates and sustains us, provides us with spiritual sustenance. It is through the *מימרא דיי* that we are unified not just as a people, but as a world as well.

The *מימרא דיי*, like the Logos, is about taking a God concept to its theological end. We could not conceive of a world without the influence of God in every nook and cranny. Yet, we could not conceive of a God so particular as to be in every nook and cranny. The Logos and the *מימרא דיי* become the way in which God's power can emanate from Him, filling the world with His presence. The *מימרא דיי* can, thus, be found in all things, great and small. Most importantly, though, it is through the *מימרא דיי* that we connect with God, with each other, and with the world around us. It tells us what to do, and we use it to complete our tasks. It is our connection with God, it is the Logos.

## Chapter Five

### *The Logos and the מֵימְרָא דֵּי*

In this final chapter I will briefly re-examine the ideas of Philo as well as both the New Testament use of the Logos and the Aramaic use of the מֵימְרָא דֵּי. I will use these discussions to demonstrate the similarities between the Logos and the מֵימְרָא דֵּי.

This thesis, more than anything else, is about taking a theological concept to its logical end. Both Jewish and Christian thinkers were met with a great challenge given by the popularity of Greek philosophy. These philosophers presented an understanding of God and humanity that was very attractive. That is, all knowledge and wisdom attained is attained on the merit of the attainer.

The Jews loathed this concept. Though much of what the Greek philosophers believed resonated with the Jews of the time, they could not allow their laity to conceive of God in this manner. The Jewish God had to be personal. The Jewish God had to interact with the Jewish people, if not all of humanity.

But how? Philo writes,

The divine Logos, inasmuch as it is appropriately in the middle, leaves nothing in nature empty, but fills all things and becomes a mediator and arbitrator for the two sides which seem to be divided from each other, bringing about friendship and concord, for it is always the cause of community and the artisan of peace.

Philo, Questions and Answers: Exodus II:68

Any and all interaction with God must be, essentially, all-consuming. But consider the words of Philo above. The Logos, as emanations from God, functions as the middle of everything -- it is the bond of the word. It connects humanity and the world with God the Creator. As emanations from the eternal and immaterial Creator, the Logos

is therefore the only way humanity can bring godliness into their lives, both personal and communal. For the Logos is "always the cause of community and the artisan of peace."

(Questions and Answers: Exodus II:68)

More than that, the Logos is the primary cause of all things. We read in the Gospel of Mark,

**Matthew 4:1-4**

1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered. 3 And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. 4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

The religious polemic against the Greek philosophers is immediately obvious. Philosophy is likened to bread, a man-made object of sustenance. Though both bread and philosophy do provide, they do not hold together humanity and the world. Only the word of God can hold together the world.

**Hebrews 6:1-6**

1 Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit. 4 For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

God is the only source of perfection. The Logos is the only emanation from God, and therefore the only way to connect with God and achieve perfection. The Logos is the primary intercessor between man and God. Indeed God introduces Himself to humanity through the Logos. We read,

### Genesis 3:8

8. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Onkelos translates the above as follows:

ח ושמעו ית קל מימרא דיי אלהים דמהלך בגנתא למנח יומה ואטמר אדם ואתנה מן קדם יי אלהים בגו אילן גנתא.

As I pointed out in my fourth chapter, Onkelos did not have to use the words מימרא דיי here -- "קל אלהים" would have been enough. Onkelos had to add the מימרא דיי because the voice of God has to be much more than a regular voice heard. קל אלהים is not like קל בני אדם. It is transformative, all-consuming. The מימרא דיי fills those within whom it is sown.

The מימרא דיי, like the Logos, transforms both individuals and community. We read in Genesis,

### Genesis 26:27-29

27. And Isaac said to them, Why do you come to me, seeing you hate me, and have sent me away from you? 28. And they said, We saw certainly that the Lord was with you; and we said, Let there be now an oath between us, between us and you, and let us make a covenant with you; 29. That you will do us no hurt, as we have not touched you, and as we have done to you nothing but good, and have sent you away in peace; you are now the blessed of the Lord.

Onkelos translates the above passage as follows:

כו ואמר לחון יצחק מה דין אתיתון לותי ואתון סנייתון יתי ושלחתוני מלותכו; כז ואמרו מחוזה חזינא ארי הוה מימרא דיי בסעדך ואמרנא תתקים כען מומתא דהוה בין אבהתנא בינא ובינך וגזר קים עמך; כט אם תעבד עמנא בישא כמא די לא אניקנך וכמא די עבדנא עמך לחוד טוב ונשלחנך בשלם את כען בריכא דיי.

Again, הוה בסעדך would have been enough, but instead Onkelos adds the מימרא

די here. Indeed the only way to be with God is through the מִימְרָא דִּי. What's most interesting here, though, is what the מִימְרָא דִּי gives to Isaac.

First, the מִימְרָא דִּי in him is immediately recognized by the strangers. The Logos does the same for those within whom it is sown. We read in Luke, "And he came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the sabbath day: / and they were astonished at his teaching; for **his word** was with authority." (Luke 4:31-32) Being filled with the Logos is extraordinarily transformative and would be recognizable by others. Seeing others who are filled with the Logos would have been a humbling experience -- these people would have brought either feelings of great reverence or jealousy and loathing. Indeed in the New Testament the Logos both saves and condemns. In the end of days, of course, those who have been persecuted for the Logos will be exonerated. Until then they are persecuted for their righteousness.

The Logos perfects individuals within whom it is sown. The מִימְרָא דִּי also perfects those within whom it is sown. Most importantly, the Logos is the bond of the world, and therefore everything in it. It is the source of all community. Those who have the Logos sown within become part of the symbiotic, harmonious relationship between God and the world.

We read,

#### **Numbers 4:37**

These were those who were counted of the families of the Kohathites, all who might do service in the Tent of Meeting, which Moses and Aaron counted according to the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

Both Onkelos and Yerushalmi translate the commandment of the Lord here as

מימרא דיי. In Numbers we find the first complete and thorough taking of the census in Israelite history. This census, essentially, marks the final completion of the Israelite community before entering the Promised Land. What's interesting here is that Moses works with his own hands according to the מימרא דיי. Indeed, in the Jewish tradition, Moses is our greatest example of a man having the מימרא דיי sown within. We read in Exodus,

**Exodus 34:33-35**

33. And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. 34. But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spoke to the people of Israel that which he was commanded. 35. And the people of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone; and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

It is through the מימרא דיי of Moses that the Israelite community is initially united.

It is through the Logos of Jesus Christ that the Christian community is founded. We read,

**Colossians 3:12-17**

12 Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; 13 forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: 14 and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God. 17 And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Communal unity in the Christian world is founded on the Logos of Christ. This community, like the post-exilic Jewish community, crossed national and cultural borders. They were bonded not by language or culture, but by the Logos of God. The Jewish community, too, was bonded and held together by the מימרא דיי.



We return again to Philo.

The divine Logos, inasmuch as it is appropriately in the middle, leaves nothing in nature empty, but fills all things and becomes a mediator and arbitrator for the two sides which seem to be divided from each other, bringing about friendship and concord, for it is always the cause of community and the artisan of peace.

Philo, Questions and Answers: Exodus II:68

Again, this thesis, more than anything else, is about taking a theology to its logical end. God is creator, and it is through His emanations that the world was created and is sustained. The Logos emanates from God and bonds together all of reality as we know it.

We have found that the Logos as is described in the New Testament is the source of all connection between man, God, and the world as a whole. The Logos emanates from God and unites all whom within it is sown. It is the balancer of nature, the essential middle uniting all existence.

We have found the same in the **מימרא דיי**. Like the Logos, the **מימרא דיי** unites man with God as well as man with community. Like the Logos, the **מימרא דיי** is the only tool by which Jews can connect with God and achieve perfection. Like the Logos, the **מימרא דיי** is a perfect response to the Greek philosophers who believed that God could not bring about providence for mankind. This is because the Logos is the **מימרא דיי**, and the **מימרא דיי** is the Logos. Jewish Scripture had already been canonized, but the translations could insert an Aramaic rendering of the Logos.

Certainly the **מימרא דיי** is found less in the Targums Onkelos and Yerushalmi than the Logos is found in the New Testament. But the idea of a Logos emanating from God down to earth was not new in the Christian Scripture. Along with Philo, Jewish thinkers

had already conceived of the word of God having this binding force. In the Aramaic text it is the **מִמְרָא דִּי**, in the Christian text it is the Logos, in both cases they are the intermediary God in early Jewish and Christian sources.

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