

The Strange Story of The Mandaeans of Iraq and Iran Compiled By Glen W. Chapman- May 2004

(Compiled from a number of sources)



The Mandaeans today in southern Iraq and Iran and there is a colony in Australia. They have been a distinct people for thousands of years. They claim to be descendants of Abraham Seth and Noah. They have large libraries of their writings and scriptures. Their doctrines are very different from Islam. They practice Immersion baptism and belief in one God. They have always been persecuted by Islam . The persecution is not localized. Mandaeans are being persecuted wherever they are found – Baghdad, Falluja, Basra. The persecution is also frequent and committed with impunity.

The Sabaeen Mandaean Association of Australia believes all governments with troops in Iraq should be required to rescue from Iraq all the Mandaeans and Christians who have been forcibly converted.

“It has also been reported to us that a young Mandaean man went into a restaurant and drank a glass of water. Some Muslims realized that he was Mandaean so they beat him severely, breaking many of his bones so that he needed to be hospitalized. The Muslims then broke the glass he had drunk from because, according to Islam, it had been rendered ritually ‘unclean’. We have been informed that there have been many incidents of this kind.”

“The Sabaeen Mandaean Association of Australia (SMAA) reports that on or about 20 December 2003, Rafid Al-Khamisy, a Mandaean, was confronted by Muslims in front of a number of people in Hay Al-Shurtha suburb in Baghdad. The Muslims demanded that Rafid Al-Khamisy convert to Islam. Rafid Al-Khamisy refused to convert to Islam and the Muslims then killed him in front of the others who were present.”

“The status of Sabaeen Mandaean has varied throughout Islamic history. In early days Sabaeans were regarded as People of the Book and protected. However, by the tenth century the Sabaeans, who were by then living in al-Wasit (Iraq), were officially declared to be “unclean” and not dhimmis (protected people)”

“Mandaeans follow the teachings and practice of John the Baptist. Since Ayatollah Al-Hakeem declared Iraq’s Mandaeans to be “unclean” and not “People of the Book”, the situation for Mandaeans in post war Iraq has become critical. It is not an exaggeration to say that their survival as a people is seriously at risk.”

It is believed that these Sabaeans came from Southern Arabia in what now is Yemen. They were also called the Himyarites or the Yemenites. The Sabaeans were a Semitic people who, at an unknown date, entered Southern Arabia from the north. Sabaeen civilization began as early as the 10th-12th century BC. The Sabaeen rulers are mentioned in Assyrian annals of the late 8th and early 7th centuries BC, but Sabaeen inscriptions are dated to the 6th century BC.

"Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God. " (Isaiah 45:14)

"And a voice of a multitude being at ease was with her: and with the men of the common sort were brought Sabeans from the wilderness, which put bracelets upon their hands, and beautiful crowns upon their heads." (Ezekiel 23:42)

"And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off: for the LORD hath spoken it." (Joel 3:8)

“The best theory so far raised is that the word used by the Arabs was originally Mandaic. In Mandaic the verb sb was developed from the Syriac verb. The ayn of the Syriac is changed into the alaf in Mandaic. The Arabs then borrowed the word root sb from the Mandaeans when describing them.”

“The term Masbuthaeen comes from the same root as the word Sabian. In Mandaic the word Masbuta is the term used for the baptismal rite. The Mandaic word Masbuta also comes from the root SBA (page 388 Mandaic Dictionary) that means to immerse, dip in, or baptize. This is the same root that is used for the word Sabian.”

“This word appears to be used to describe the various baptism sects that may have developed out of Mandaism in either the last century BC or the first century AD. This name remained with the Mandaeans”

“The definition of the word Sabian coming from Sabi'un ("Convert"), meaning one who "converts from the worship of many gods to the worship of the One True God”

“The Mandaean, a still-existing Gnostic sect of ancient origin that Elizabeth Kendall of the World Evangelical Alliance calls the "first cousins to Christians," are being persecuted by Shiite Muslims in Iraq. Few, of course, have noticed. Five Mandaean houses of worship have been closed by Muslims in Iraq in the past few months. Several fatwas by Shiite clergy have been issued against the Mandaeans since the fall of the Hussein regime, stating that they are unclean people. Since they are not technically "People of the Book" — who enjoy a specific (although still inferior) status in Islamic law — they are more vulnerable than even Christians and Jews. There have also been several horrendous murders by Muslim mobs against Mandaean men and a number of rapes of Mandaean women. They are particularly vulnerable while celebrating their liturgy, as it includes frequent baptisms by rivers. So, their mandis (their houses of worship) must always be by rivers and they are visible — and therefore vulnerable — while performing their baptism rituals, wrapped in white cloths with white hoods. Also, their cultural patrimony is being destroyed. Here is a recent firsthand account of their plight, forwarded to me by Fr. Keith Roderick:

"The Mandæans have a vast literature in Aramaic, written in Mandæic script. Much of this literature is very ancient. The man usually thought to be the most ancient Mandæan scribe, Zazai of Gawazta, is datable to around the year AD 270. Recent research in the colophons of Mandæan manuscripts dates a woman scribe, Slama daughter of Qidra, to approximately AD 200. The Mandæan Holy Book, the GINZA (Treasury), contains the teachings of John the Baptist. For two millenia, the Ginza has been transcribed by Mandæan priests, always in the same format. The Ginza is separated into a right and left part, Ginza Right and Ginza Left, and the two parts are organized in such a way that on reaching the end of Right Ginza, a reader must turn the volume upside down to read Ginza Left. The two parts face each other in the manner of two inscribed bowls enclosing the text within. Some scholars think that this may very well be the Ginza's model, for traditional Mandæan inscribed clay bowls are often found buried in this same fashion. The Ginza does not incorporate

the Old Testament but does include much related to it. For example, the Ginza includes an interesting recension of psalm 114, which some scholars have argued preserves the original better than does the Massoretic Text (while other scholars have not accepted that view). On 19 December this year the Mandæan Church will celebrate their Commemoration of Noah. Tractate 8 of Right Ginza is words of wisdom of John the Baptist, a fascinating document which I hope (D.V.) to do some work on next year. The Ginza is always a codex, as is the Drasia d-Iahia, while other Mandæan books are commonly scrolls. Christians early adopted the codex form exclusively for their Scriptures and other books, while Jews continued to use scrolls exclusively. Mandæans continue to use both forms. The Ginza contains significant parallels and points of contact with both the Old Testament and the New Testament, particularly in tractate GR 8, which is made up of words of wisdom from John the Baptist.

"Supplementary to the Ginza is the Drasia d-Iahia, (sometimes called Book of the Angels) which, besides much else, also contains some material attributed to John the Baptist. This appears to be later than the Ginza. The Qolasta is the canonical prayer book of the Mandæans. It includes interesting references to John the Baptist's mother, Elizabeth and her cousin Mary. Most Mandæan manuscripts remain in Mandæan hands in Iraq and Iran. These include many works unknown in the West. We fear that these may now be destroyed by Muslims. Three days ago a heartbroken Mandæan priest was telling me how his beloved library of 20,000 books, including 40 esoteric Mandæan manuscripts with wonderful Mandæan artwork, had been destroyed by Shi'ite Muslims shortly after the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime. The Mandæan Corpus should be seen as part of the cultural inheritance of mankind. Its destruction by ignorant Muslim fanatics would be a loss to all humanity."

Their numbers are dwindling because birthrates among members are dropping, he said. He estimated there are only 100,000 to 150,000 Mandaeans worldwide, mostly concentrated in Iraq and Iran. At its peak before Christianity, it was among the most widely practiced religions in the world, he asserted.

Having been based in a heavily Muslim-dominated region for centuries, the religion has fallen into obscurity. Since the 1979 seizure of power in Iraq by Mr. Hussein and the 1978 Islamic revolution in Iran, foreign researchers have had limited access to the Mandaeans.

Clerics said the last major academic study of the group was done in the 1930s by Elizabeth Drower, a European scholar who spent years living among the Mandaeans in Iraq. After establishing close friendships and a deep understanding of the religion, she asked for permission to convert, said Sheikh Khaldun.

We know something about the very secretive Mandaean religion, a last holdover of the people who came from the Dead Sea. Their traditions and their ancient writings describe them as possibly leaving the Qumran people (the Dead Sea Scroll group) at the fall of Jerusalem. They first went up to Haran, then down the river. Some two thousand or so Mandaean people remain today. They have their own language and preserve the marvelous records they've kept for all this time. The Mandaeans went down to Qumran in the time of Joseph ben Rekha (they call themselves Rekhabites)

(Old Testament and Related Studies By Hugh Nibley

The Mandaean writings relate very closely to the Nag Hammadi, and to the Dead Sea Scrolls people, too, because the Mandaeans came from there. (Old Testament and Related Studies By Hugh Nibley)

And what shall we make of the Mandaean writings, with their ancient doctrines and ordinances that are at once Jewish and Christian? Though discovered far to the east, they are viewed today as representing "perhaps a late version of the North Israelite-Samaritan tradition," a tradition older than the days of Lehi; and part of that tradition, "entirely independent of Christian influence," was the keeping of "Sunday as a holy day." (Since Cumorah by Hugh Nibley)

Some of The Mandaean Religious Beliefs

The Mandaeans had a lot to say about the heavenly garment. When you left the world above, and each time you passed from one state of initiation to another, you changed garments (cf. fig. 50, p. 300). We likewise make some change or alteration in the garment, at each state of initiation. In a wonderful passage in the Mandaean hymn of The Pearl. The hero returns to

heaven. In this old doctrine — which you meet quite often — he, like all of us, left his garment — his spotless garment — there. He yearned to return to it, to be able to wear it again. It is now being kept for us in reserve up there, and one of the great tragedies of messing things up in this life is that we will not be able to go back and wear it. Of course it stands for other things, too. In *The Pearl*, the prince hurries homeward, back to his garment laid up in heaven, the garment and the toga are wrapped and sent down by his parents. He puts them on halfway — he is so eager — and suddenly he says, as if in a mirror, "The garment was my very first. It fitted me; it would fit no one else." All of a sudden it glitters, recalling to his mind all his former glory, because there are signs on it. He returns to his garment. (From *The Temple and The Cosmos* by Hugh Nibley)

The tradition of celestial garments is also present in Mandaeanism and Manichaeism. In the Mandaean *The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaeans*, trans. E. S. Drower (Leiden: Brill, 1959), 30, n. 31, instructions are given concerning Adam: "Let him come and go down to the Jordan [sic], be baptised, receive the pure sign, put on robes of radiant light and set a fresh wreath on his head," which Garber, in "Symbolism of the Heavenly Garments," 217, suggests may indicate that the baptismal ritual "included being clothed in a baptismal robe to signify the present imperishable soul and the clothing in glory after death" and that "there was investiture with a special white robe after one's first baptism," although he also notes Kurt Rudolph's judgment that "the symbolic style of the liturgical speeches probably means primarily that the baptism itself is the clothing with light and eschatological existence, without any definite indication of an investment following the rite (as in the early Christian Church)." References to garments—the garment of Adam, garments for obedience and protection, heavenly garments, and baptismal robes—are frequent in Mandaean literature

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Christian, and Mandaean tradition that earthly prayers are laid up in God's treasure-house. (Johannesbuch der Mand., 10, n. 2; Mandaean Prayerbook)

In the Mandaean economy the ordinances are the Treasure, the knowledge of the proper procedures being the very knowledge by which the elements are controlled and the spirit of man exalted. (Old Testament and Related Studies, By Hugh Nibley)

In the Mandaean religion, there is a similar belief that the garment of Adam was inherited by Noah

Cain, it appears, may have had this garment before Seth, but cast it off when he chose to follow evil

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The helper came and awakened the Lord of Mysteries, who is Adam. For Adam went through all the ordinances, including baptism, washings, and anointings, says the Mandaean Prayerbook. According to the *Ginza*, the Lord and two companions taught Adam and Eve all the ordinances and blessed them. "The Great Light planted us here and gave us helpers who taught us the prayer of Adam in the world." Three angels were sent to teach Adam and Eve the law of chastity, to instruct them to be true and faithful when misfortune came upon them, and to dedicate all of their property to the needy and the poor

Here's an interesting theme from the early Mandaean Christian writings on other worlds. Those in other worlds move with great, almost instantaneous, speed, as quickly as human thought. In a single hour they reach a distant place. Their motion, however, is calm and effortless, like the rays of the sun passing between heaven and earth. In The Father ordered Hibel Ziwa (Abel) to make a world and to place Adam and Eve in it. Then the three angels of glory and light would come down and instruct them and keep them company. God said to the pure Sent One, who was to lead this delegation, "Go call Adam and Eve and all their posterity, and teach them concerning everything about the king of light and the worlds of light. Be friendly with Adam, and give him company, you and the two angels that will be with you, and warn him against Satan." The three angels are also instructed to go down and teach Adam the law of chastity. Adam was also told, "We will also send helpers to those of your progeny who seek further light and knowledge from us." This was the principle given them.

Nibley, Temple And Cosmos, p. 525

But this old Christian writer, who has Mandaean connections, tells us that Zion is a place "without discord or dissent," where angels wise and gentle, without malice or deceit, come and go on cheerful assignments. There is a perfect agreement among the worlds, each having its particular glory, and all the inhabitants share their knowledge freely with each other. The worlds averaged one million parasangs (a parasang is about four miles) apart, and through the people's common knowledge and their common God, the Lord, they share a common glory. They are all incorruptible, without death. They do not grow old or wear out. Their nature is unchanging. They cannot be numbered, and their number is unchanging." (Temple And Cosmos)

"The first man brought the five ordinances with him when he came out of the aeon of light," says a newly discovered Mandaean manuscript; and "having completed his testing [agoRoman he ascended again with these good tokens and was received into the aeons of light." (Temple And Cosmos)

The ordinances are "the treasures that transcend the world." (Ibid., p. 245.) "Ginza" means "a treasure, mystery, sacrament, . . . what is hidden and precious." (Ibid., p. 12.) As guardian of these secrets and mysteries, the Eldest Son is called "the Treasurer." (Ginza, p. 150.) The eldest are they who observe the ordinances secretly in this world (ibid., pp. 153-54), and their highest duty is to transmit and explain these rites to their children (Mandaean Prayerbook)

Adakas "is a 'go-between' between the worlds" (Mandaean Prayerbook, p. 293), and Manda d-Haii, called "the Capable" by his brother uthras, is called "to regulate and to station the uthras in their places" among the worlds (ibid., p. 294)

(Old Testament and Related Studies By Hugh Nibley)

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(Old Testament and Related Studies By Hugh Nibley

The spark is that which comes from one world to another. The spark is also that which animates at a distance. This vitalizing principle is everywhere referred to as the "spark,"

A prayer from the Mandaean Prayer Book reads, "Before this world there were already a thousand thousand mysteries and a myriad myriad planets, each with its own mysteries."

(Old Testament and Related Studies By Hugh Nibley)

But why leave one's heavenly home for a dismal earthly one? To that question, constantly reiterated in the Mandaean writings, but the "Treasure" doctrine was the very opposite—we are here as a reward, enjoying an opportunity to achieve yet greater things by being tried and tested, "that each one might be promoted, according to his intelligence and the perfections of his way, or be retarded according to his wrong-doings."

The "planting" of a world is always from the "House of Light, the shining Home," in other words, the Treasure-house. (Johannesbuch der Mand., p. 218, No. 63.) It is "through the power of the Treasure" that "earths of radiance" are created, "thrones of glory are established and Chiefs of worlds appointed" (ibid., p. 207, No. 59), the Treasure being the source of everything within as well as between the worlds (ibid., No. 57, 203-5). Every world comes into existence by a sort of fission from the Treasure of the Secret Mysteries. (Oxford Mand. Scroll 55-56.) What Adam plants then grows and so increases his Treasure. (Mandaean Prayerbook, p. 285.) (Old Testament and Related Studies By Hugh Nibley)

The faithful are promised "all the glory of Adam" (IQS 4:23). 290). (Old Testament and Related Studies By Hugh Nibley)

He is called "the son of the Treasuries of Radiance" in the Mandaean Prayerbook, No. 379 (CPM,

According to the Mandaean doctrine, three celestial beings assisted at the creation and occasionally visited the earth; these were not the Godhead, however, but three messengers who later lived upon the earth as prophets.(Since Cumorah by Hugh Nibley)

The rulers dispatch "letters from world to world and reveal the truth to each other, and there are some souls that travel like an arrow and cleave through all the worlds." (1012 Questions, p. 192, cf. p. 164.) Adakas "is a 'go-between' between the worlds" (Mandaean Prayerbook, p. 293), and Manda d-Haiiai, called "the Capable" by his brother uthras, is called "to regulate and to station the uthras in their places" among the worlds (ibid., p. 294).

Among ten thousand times ten thousand worlds, says the Ginza, you will find no two alike. A prayer from the Mandaean Prayer Book reads, "Before this world there were already a thousand thousand mysteries and a myriad myriad planets, each with its own mysteries." The multiplicity of worlds, as taught by the Early Church, formed a perfect unity as do the strings of a lyre. Each plays a different note; together they make marvelous harmony. If two strings play the same note, there is not much point to that. There must be a great orchestration. This is a common idea among the ancients. (Nibley, Old Testament and Related Studies)

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Temple And Cosmos, p. 525

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Idrisi being usually identified with Enoch himself, but in this Mandaean source is called "the first after Enoch son of Seth son of Adam to write with a reed."

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(Old Testament and Related Studies By Hugh Nibley)

The Mandaean faithful are urged to "be informed about all worlds" as far as possible. (1012 Questions, p. 289.) The worlds of darkness also communicate, but on another level. (Berlin Manich. Hs. 1:32.)

(Old Testament and Related Studies By Hugh Nibley)

Before the creation of the world, "the souls still sat in the Kanna, without pain and without defect." (Johannesbuch der Mand., 55, No. 13.) (Old Testament and Related Studies By Hugh Nibley)

The souls of the righteous, like the Treasure itself, are beneath the throne of God. (Sabbath, fol. 152b.; cf. Rev. 7:9.) The "planting" of a world is always from the "House of Light, the shining Home," in other words, the Treasure-house. (Johannesbuch der Mand., p. 218, No. 63.) It is "through the power of the Treasure" that "earths of radiance" are created, "thrones of glory are established and Chiefs of worlds appointed" (ibid., p. 207, No. 59), the Treasure being the source of everything within as well as between the worlds (ibid., No. 57, 203-5). Every world comes into existence by a sort of fission from the Treasure of the Secret Mysteries. (Oxford Mand. Scroll 55-

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Prayerbook of the Mandaeans

"When Adam was placed on earth, three messengers were sent to oversee him with myself at their head... I taught Adam and Eve the hymns, and the order of prayer, and the ordinances by which would now help one to return to the presence of the Father." In sending three, God says to them, giving them instructions. He said to the pure sent one, His Son, 'Go call Adam and Eve and all their posterity and teach them concerning everything about the Kingdom of Light and the Worlds of Light. Be friendly with Adam and keep him company, you and the two angels which will be with you. Warn them against Satan; also, teach them chastity'.

The helper came and awakened the Lord of Mysteries, who is Adam. For Adam went through all the ordinances, including baptism, washings' and anointings,"

The Mandeans of Southern Mesopotamia (Israelites)

*"Go down to that place where there is no occupied place, where there is no world, and create for us another world after the fashion of the Sons of Salvation" –
Mandaean Sakinaa*

"God started out by creating a topoa where His children could settle, there to recognize and to serve Him as their Father."

"Adam, this is the place where you are going to live; your wife Eve will come and join you here, and here your progeny will thrive."

"The Father taught me about the worlds. Of the Lord and the Glory that abides in them. The Adam of Light treads upon the earth's trembling foundation which is laid in the midst of the worlds."

"There is no rivalry or competition among them but they are glorious in their firmaments, and there is agreement among thee, fitting together like the lashes to the eye. All rejoice in each other. each being more glorious and bright than the other."

"No words can describe Thy power over all Thy worlds. The Father taught me about the worlds of the Lord and the glory that abides therein. The atom of light treads upon the earth's foundation that is laid in the midst of the worlds."

"When beings from different worlds meet, they exchange garments and treasures as an identification a sign of mutual esteem. For 'the creation of endless worlds follows a single pattern – that laid down by God the creator. The planets say, 'Come Lord of the gods, Lord of the entire cosmos.' 'Come be our head, be the head of our whole world.'"

"In the millions of worlds that God has made for his sons every world is different from the other and wonderful in its own radiance."

"Among ten thousand times ten thousand worlds you will find no two alike. Before this world, there had already been a thousand thousand mysteries and a myriad of planets each with their own mysteries or ordinances... He who has fulfilled all the ordinances and has done good work cannot be held back. We are taught the principles of salvation , so that we cannot be held back in this world. Those who receive certain teachings and carry their instructions in this world cannot be held back in this world or the next" – Ginza (Lidzbarski)

"Christ sounded with a trumpet in the worlds far and near alike. He roused them all alike, For He is the Saviour of the worlds. The worlds will come before Him in order and in shining oath... Those who shut the doors against me will be held back in the abode of darkness. Those that open the doors to me will advance in the place of light... Adam thou shalt have progress onward." – Manichaeon Psalm-Book

"He determines the number of stars and calls them each by name. Great is our Lord and mighty in power; His understanding has no limit." – Psalms 147:4-5, NIV

"Before this world, there had already been a thousand thousand mysteries and a myriad myriad of planets each with their own mysteries or ordinances. He who has fulfilled all the ordinances and has done good work cannot be held back. We are taught the principles of salvation, so that we cannot be held back in this world...'Go down into the world, Adam, and grow up in the body, in that garment which has been assigned to you. Go down and grow up in the ordinances, that the ordinances may be magnified by you, that your progeny may thereby be firmly established. The Man that taught the elect righteous and the Nazoreans, who were to exist upon the earth in the preexistence, said, 'When you beget generations, and when you teach them their knowledge, explain to them, show them, and tell them about the rites which you have performed.' The wholesome things were transplanted from the world above' will assist you throughout your life until you are ready to leave earth'...When Adam was created, he was found in a deep sleep, from which he was awakene

When Adam stood praying for light and knowledge, a helper came to him and gave to him a garment and told him 'Those men who gave you the garment d by the helper who forthwith began to instruct him. And at his death also, the Sent Ones came to take Adam back to the great first Paternal House and to the place in which he formerly dwelt.. Second when Adam awoke, he faced the light and called for help. The Lord Himself approached him, in glory, and took him by the palm of the right hand instructed him and calmed him and Then he comforted Eve.' In this way, I have brought joy and aid to his descendants.

When Adam called upon God, the Great Spirit sent them from the land brightness, those who would belong to the twelve... The Lord and two companions taught Adam and Eve all the ordinances and blessed them. 'The Great Light planted us here and gave us helpers who taught us the prayer of Adam in the world.' Three angels were sent to teach Adam and Eve the law of chastity, and to instruct them to be true and faithful when misfortune came upon them, and to dedicate all of their property to the needy and the poor -- the rule which is binding upon all the elect. They were to call upon God without ceasing, In the name of the Son, and not to trust in the things of this world. "

(Nibley: Temple and Cosmos – Apocryphal Writings pp. 264-335, 491-528)

Old Testament and Related Studies- (Unrolling the Scrolls pp. 115-170)

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When Adam was created, he was found in a deep sleep, from which he was awakened by the helper who forthwith began to instruct him. And at his death also, the Sent Ones came to take Adam back to the great first Paternal House and to the places in which he formerly dwelt.

Second-- when Adam awoke, he faced the light and called for help. The Lord Himself approached him, in glory, and took him by the palm of the right hand instructed him and calmed him and Then he comforted Eve. 'In this way, I have brought joy and aid to his descendants.' The Sent Ones came to bring hope to Adam, who was in, the image of God...

At the creation, God gave orders that the angels should come to keep Adam company. At the beginning, it was the Lord Himself and two companions who instructed Adam and Eve in everything.

'Go down into the world, Adam, and grow up in the body, in that garment which has been assigned to you. Go down and grow up in the ordinances, that the ordinances may be magnified by you, that your progeny may thereby be firmly established. The Man that taught the elect righteous and the Nazoreans, who were to exist upon the earth in the preexistence, said, 'When you beget generations, and when you teach them their knowledge, explain to them, show them, and tell them about the rites which you have performed.' The wholesome things were transplanted

from the world above"

The evil spirits, who claim this world for their own, resent the Sent One's instruction. 'These three men are in the world,' they say, 'but they were not really men. They are light and glory, and they have come down to little 'Enosh' [that's physical man -- Adam] who is helpless and alone in the world. They are intruding on our world. The children of men have taken over the earth. They are really strangers who speak the language of the three men. They have

accepted the teachings of the three men, and rejected in our own world. They refuse to acknowledge our kingdom and our glory '

Thus, the evil ones plotted to overthrow Adam, who was hoping for Mandadihaya (Teacher of Life), the messenger from the Father, to come-and give him aid and support.

When; Adam called upon God, the Great Spirit sent them from the land...

The Lord and two companions taught Adam and Eve all the ordinances and blessed them. 'The Great Light planted us here and gave us helpers who taught us the prayer of Adam in the world.' Three angels were sent to teach Adam and Eve the law of chastity, and to instruct them to be true and faithful when misfortune came upon them, and to dedicate all of their property to the needy and the poor -- the rule which is binding upon all the elect. They were to call upon God without ceasing, in the name of the Son, and not to trust in the things of this world. "

Adams Baptism from the Ginza. (Mandean)

*They washed him and protected him in the Jordan ;
they placed their right hand on him.
They baptized him with their baptism
and strengthened him with their pure words.*

*From the Place of Light I have come forth,
from you, everlasting dwelling-place,
From the Place of Light I have come forth,
and an uthra from the House of Life accompanied me.
The uthraa who accompanied me from the House of the Great Life
held a staff of living water in his hand.*

Mandaean Legends

Noah and Flood

When Hiwel Ziwa told Noh that the world would be destroyed by water, Noh brought wood from the Harran and built his ark, called in our tongue a kawila or anana. Noh asked a sign, so he might know when it was to begin.

(The story here follows F until. . .)

Noh arose, took two of all beasts and put them into the ark through a hole in the top, then he and his family entered and closed the hole, all excepting Sam, for Sam was in the wilds, tending his flock. The thunder came, the sky split, the hail descended, and the waters rose. Sam fled and his

sheep followed him but the water came and surrounded them and all were drowned. Sam reached the ark, seized it, clambered up its side and remained on the top. There he stayed and was fed daily by Hiwel Ziwa. Before eating he washed his arms and did all that it is commanded that a tarmida should do, performing his ablutions daily.

(The story again follows F. After the return of the dove ...)

Then Noh cursed the crow and said, 'Henceforward at the time of the ripening of fruit, thou shalt not eat of it!' But he blessed the dove, which is called mana 'soul', and is purer and better than all birds.

He brought a pair of all animals, even the wild ones, the lions and the hares, and drove them into the ark, and he and his daughter-in-law entered the ark. But Sam was outside in the chol (wilderness) herding his sheep. The heavens became dark, and for forty-two days and forty-two nights it rained, and water came down from Heaven and the waters of the earth rose. Sam drove his sheep to the mountains, but they were drowned with all living things. He managed to reach the ark and, as it was shut, he climbed on to the roof of it. There Hiwel Ziwa gave him food at the times appointed for eating. The ark was carried to and fro on the water for eleven months. There was nothing but water and the only thing to be seen on the waters was the ark. The mountains, countries, and cities were all covered. At last the wind brought the ark near Egypt, and there it stopped. Noh, understanding that the water had lowered, sent off the crow, saying to him, 'Go, fly about, and bring me news of the world'. The crow flew off, but, seeing a decaying corpse in the water, he forgot the words of Noh and began to eat of it. Noh waited and then, as the crow did not return, he set a dove (yauna) free. She flew and saw the crow eating the carrion, and also an olive-tree growing green above the water. She took a piece of the green olive-tree in her beak, returned to Noh and gave it to him. He kissed her, opened the door, and went forth from the ark, together with his daughter-in-law, and they saw Sam, sitting on the roof of the ark.

Noh called to him, 'Descend! I am your father and here is your wife!' Sam descended and embraced his wife and father and praised the House of Life for their safety and health. Then he went out and built a house of clay in which to live, while Noh went forth to amuse himself on the earth, to walk abroad and recover. Ruha came forth and saw Noh and assumed the appearance of his wife. She greeted him saying 'I am Anhuraita, your wife!' and he took her and she became pregnant and brought forth three sons, Ham, Yam, and Yafet. These were the fathers of the human race, Ham becoming father of the blacks, the 'abid or slaves; Yam of the white nations, Abraham and the Jews; and Yafet of the gypsies (Kauliyah). But Sam and his wife Anhar are the progenitors of the Mandai.

Then Yahia went into 'Urshalam. He opened the eyes of the blind, cured the sick, and made the lame to walk. The priests were angry and came to Yahia and ordered him to leave 'Urshalam immediately. Yahia refused to go and defied them, saying, 'Bring swords and cut me, bring fire and burn me, or water and drown me!' And the priests replied, 'Yahia, we know that swords will not cut thee, nor fire burn thee, nor water drown thee'. When Yahia began to read in his Ginza Rabba, the birds of the air spoke, praising God, and the fishes opened their mouths and glorified the Life.

Nebuchadnezzar's daughter

Once on a time the Mandai, the Nasurai, and the Tarmidi had their dwellings in Jerusalem. The Nasurai there had a place apart, a building in which they worshipped and practised their rites, so secluded that no one could overlook them and no one might enter it. The daughter of

Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon (and she was a Jewess) went to Jerusalem and hired a house next to the building belonging to the Nasurai. Then she made a hole in the wall, covering it with something transparent, so that she could see through it and overhear what was said, and what was read, and so learn their secret doctrine. She was very learned and quick of understanding, and after she had remained at the hole morning, noon, and night, always listening and studying, she arrived at understanding and learning what they read and their secret knowledge. Their writings, the Ta'alum as-Sirani, she learnt by heart. When they read from the Ginza Rabba she wrote down the words and conned them, until she had learnt and understood all. She remained in Jerusalem, studying thus, and did not return to her people.

Now the Nasurai have some secret knowledge ('ilm) which they only repeat softly, whispering, and they meet to practice this on the first and fifth days (Sunday and Thursday). She perceived that when they were engaged in this secret rite a light descended upon them, coming and going, giving and taking, between them and Heaven.

In this secret ritual they (the initiates) conversed with the world of light: with Adam Kasya, the Occult Adam who is of Mshuni Kushta, and with the spirits of Light. For we say that there are two Adams, Adam Paghra, the physical Adam, and Adam Kasya, the secret Adam who is of the world of Mshuni Kushta. The people of Mshuni Kushta are pure and perfect, and only the pure and perfect see them. They converse freely with the 'uthri and the melki.

Once on a time there was only one religion in the world. All the children of Adam were Mandai. Of these, there were twenty-four 'ulemf', twenty-four learned men, but one wise man, whose name was Dana Nuk, who was greater than them all. They came to him for advice, and he had all the sacred books which Hiwel Ziwa gave to Adam, and knew them by heart, no doubt. Among these books were the Ginza Rabba.

Dana Nuk, he had knowledge of them all. Each planet had especial power over its votaries and those who loved and served it, but Dana Nuk, he had knowledge of them all. He had a room in his house in which he kept the writings which Hiwel Ziwa gave to Adam, and they were piled one upon the other. He always kept this room locked. One day, when he entered this room, he found a book placed above the others.

The heart of Dana Nuk went out to that book, and he read it and believed what was written in it, and saw that it contained the perfection of the knowledge of God. When he read it, his spirit was glad, and all fear left him. God gave him and all who read in it power. So he took this one for his Way.

Those who read that book will understand [all things]. Have you read it to others ?' Dana Nuk replied, 'Only my family and I have read it.' Then the being said, 'I must take your soul to the World of Light, so that you may understand the truth of matters, and then return to this world to tell others of what you have seen.'

Then they took him to Shamish, a place all of light, in the World of Light, and of a radiance past description. Then they bore him upwards-up, up, up ! until he reached Paradise, the place of God, and that was yet lovelier than all he had seen hitherto. Dana Nuk cried to them, 'I want to stay in this place and never leave it !' But they took him higher yet, to the place where the Four Great Ones abide.

Hiwel Ziwa said to him, 'Did I not say that you must return to tell men what you have seen, so that they will know the Way and believe and not deny?' So Dana Nuk returned, but he wept. The other said to him, 'You shall return here one day, but now your place is in the world.'

He descended into his body on Sunday. Now the Nasurai and learned men had foreseen his return in a dream, and when each person rose in the morning and told his dream to his fellows, women as well as men, all said, 'It cannot be deception ! He must return to-day.' His soul returned into Dana Nuk's body, and he sat up and kissed Hiwel Ziwa's hand.

God gave Adam bul Faraj the power of transporting himself to the place to which he desired to go. He read a spell, and he was there! As a bird flies whither it wills, so he went whither he wished-to Shuster, to Amarah, or elsewhere. Once he came thus with his wife from Mendeli to Shuster. God had taught him the spell, which enabled him to travel so quickly, like darawish who fly in an instant where they would be. In a single day they went, and arrived at Shuster at the time of evening prayer. Both of them wore white clothing like darawish, for they had put on the rasta.

THE MILLENNIUM

At the end of the world the King of Darkness will be strong, and there will be great wars.

The world will be all but destroyed by something which puts death into the air and into the water-people will breathe and drink and will die.

Then seven great rulers will meet together in one place and will say to each other, "Why fight any longer! Why should all human beings die?" and they will make a solemn pact to share all knowledge and secrets with each other.

When they are gathered together in conclave, a spirit will descend and talk to one of them.

Hail to the First Life before Whom none existed, the Sublime from worlds of light, the Ineffable which is above all works; to the Ancient Radiance and the Great Primal Light, the Life which emanated from Life and the Truth that was of old, from the beginning. Hail the ancient, lofty, esoteric and guarded father of 'uthras. Hail Yuzataq, Gnosis of Life, Source of Life; He who unveileth the silence , giveth hope and keepeth the prayers of the spirits and souls of righteous and believing men into the Place of Light. Hail to the life of sincere and believing men who have come to their end and departed the body, and hail to those who are stiff alive in the body. May the gate of sin be barred to them and the gate of light be open for them. May they be knit together in the communion of Life in which there is no separation.

Pray ye from there for us and we will pray from here for you. All fruits wither: all sweet odours pass away, but not the fragrance of Gnosis of Life, which cometh not to an end nor passeth away for an age of ages and for world without end. May the souls of this masiqta rise up without sin, trespass, folly, stumbling and mistake unto the Place of Light and to the Enduring Abode.

I sought to lift my eyes, shoulders and arms towards the Place which is all life, radiance and glory, the place where which is all life, radiance, light and glory; a place where they who seek of it find, those who speak of it are heard and to those who ask of it, it is given them, day by day and hour by hour. This hour I address to thee, my Lord, Manda-d-Hiia, a vital petition, large and not small, for this congregation of people who have bent their knees to the ground and stretched forth their hands to the intermediate and upper (worlds). They have forsaken images, pictures and idols of clay, gods (made) of blocks of wood , and vain rites, and have testified to the name of the great, strange (sublime) Life. To them the gate of sin is closed and for them the gate of life is open. May our request, our prayer and our humble submission rise before the supreme Life which is above all works.

Those who seek of Him find, and to those who ask of Him it will be given. For to him that standeth at a closed door Thou wilt open the closed door. In the Place of Light Thou wilt wipe away and remove from us our sins, trespasses, follies, stumblings and mistakes and wilt cast them into the hells of the earth and the nethermost limbos of darkness. Thou wilt raise us up as sinless and not as guilty, as virtuous and not as vicious before thee, Manda-d-Hiia.

We beseech thee to let some of thy radiance, thy light and thy glory rest upon us. Thou art the Healer above all means of healing, a Raiser-up above (all) that raiseth up, a Radiance above all radiancies and a light above all lights. For thou openest doors of truth and revealest mysteries and wisdom and showest forth mighty deeds in Jerusalem. Thou confinest demons and devils and frightenest away the gods from their high places. Great is thy name and praised is thy name! Thou art the counterpart of the Life, for thou wast in existence before all. Thou art the Vine, for thou wast in the Ether above heaven and above the earth. When worlds came into being and creations were called forth, thou didst hold in thy grasp the worlds and generations. Thou hast laid down a road for sincere and believing men to the Place of Life. (Though) spirits and souls sit (here) as guilty, (yet) by thy name they shall rise as innocent, (thy name of) Yuzataq-Manda-d-Hiia. To support the hands of good people, thou wilt be (bring?) healing of life to the souls of this masiqta Life is established in its indwellings and Life is victorious.

I worship, laud and praise that first secret Word which Yawar imparted in secret. He expounded and explained it and established therein that which is living, Rays (of his light). And Yawar said "Enlightenment and praise have come to pass". And Yawar came and his glory rested upon his own shkinta. Radiance and Light came and were established before him : Glory and Enlightenment came and dwelt at his right hand. And the 'uthras ask the Life to behold the appearance of Yawar-Ziwa in their (its?) radiance, and to commend the prayer and praise which they pronounced to Shilmai and Nidbai, the 'uthras who are the two messengers of Manda-d-Hiia

Thou art enduring, First Life before Whom no being had existence, Unearthly One from worlds of light, Supreme Being that art above all works, above the Ancient Radiance and above the First Light; above the life which emanated from Life and above the Truth (kushta) which was of old in the Beginning!

Thou, Manda-d-Hiia, hast established for thy chosen that which thou hast revealed to us from the book Nhur (Be light) and front Pta usra (They revealed treasure from the first treasure and from 'Usar Nhura (Treasure of Light), a solace, a great support of life, that which shineth in light, the light of which enlighteneth.

For thou hast chosen (us), hast taken us out of the world of hatred, envy and disputes and hast set us firmly on paths of truth and faith, so that we stand and praise the holy and guarded place. And he who partaketh of this bread (pihta), put out (for him) will be sinless in the Place of Light, the Everlasting Abode.

And Life is victorious.

Thou hast shown us that which the eye of man hath not seen, and caused us to hear that which human ear has not heard. Thou hast freed us from death and united us with life, released us from darkness and united us with light, led us out of evil and joined us to good. Thou hast shown us the Way of Life and hast guided our feet into ways of truth and faith so that Life cometh and expelleth darkness and goodness cometh and casteth out evil. (Like) the mingling of wine with water, so may Thy truth, thy righteousness and thy faith be added to those who love Thy name of Truth,

And Life be praised.

Manda-d-Hiia went to the stars. His appearance loosed the bound (souls): he knit (them into?) the communion that is without parting and without limit or number, by his word which issued from him in that place. All the worlds were confounded: the works of the House were destroyed and there was security for sons of the Great Family of Life.

He planted his planting and descended to the earth, (where) the hand of Evil, of the Lord of the House, lay heavy upon them. And when wickedness oppressed them, they beheld his radiance, and some of the celestial fruits appeared to them, the strength and name of the Ineffable One Who is all light was revealed to them and some of His glory was communicated to them and Knowledge of Life (Manda-d-hiia) was revealed to all who love his name of Truth at the place which is wholly (inhabited by) those convicted of sin. And when they beheld him, the lords of the worlds were con- founded but did not, from their thrones, loose (the bonds of) the captives.

He passed by: the captives were freed. He loosed them from their sins and trespasses: yea, release from their bodies was made possible to them. And (as for) the lords of the House who looked on, their ranks were discomfited and they were unable to reach him. Yea, the name of Abathur was (set) over them and the name of Yuzataq-Manda-d-Hiia was fulfilled and revealed to those who love his name. And his name shall (aid) the souls of this masiqta: it will be his name. And Life is victorious.

[This is the recitation appointed for the masiqta. Read it over pure oil in something (pure ?) and place it before thee and then read the masiqta.]

Just as it was written, I wrote it and all the mysteries of the Oil were therein. As far as Jerusalem, the city of the Jews, their mysteries (sacramental ceremonies) are like these.

And Life is victorious.

*In the name of the Life!
Go in peace, chosen, pure and guiltless one;
Thou art without spot.
Thou hast proven thyself by (thy sojourn on) earth
And thy destiny leapt upward from its struggles
From its struggles thy destiny leapt upward.
Above all the world thou hast spoken.
Chosen and pure one (saying),
"I am a seer, a diviner;
A seer am I and a diviner!"*

The worlds assembled for judgement, For judgement the worlds assembled And judgement was pronounced on them, On them was judgement pronounced, On those who did not perform the works Of right-dealing Man. But thou alone, Chosen and Pure One, Fair mana, that art burnished bright, Thou goest not to the judgement hall. Judgement will not be pronounced over thee, Over thee judgement will not be pronounced; Because thou didst perform the works Of right-dealing mankind. This , that they endure and bear, Thou (O) Chosen One, wilt not find before thee. Escape the clutch of the planets And the forces of this wworld! Take, put on thy garment of radiance, Set on thy living wreath! Bow thyself! and worship! Prostrate (thyself) and praise the Great Life. Praise the Place of Life To which thy fathers go. Thou (O) Chosen One,

Wast not from here; From this place thou wast not transplanted Thy planting, thy place was the Place of Life, Thy home the Everlasting Abode. They have set up for thee a throne of rest In which there is no heat or wrath. There is kept for thee a girdle In which there is no trouble or fault . Good one! Rise to the House of Life! And go to the Everlasting Abode !

*The being who brought me hither,
who brought me that which was beautiful,
put on me a robe, clothed me in a robe of radiance,
in a wrapping of light he covered me.
he set on (my head) a wreath of ether
and (gave me) of that which life bestoweth on the 'uthras.
he set me up amongst 'uthras
and stood me up amidst the perfected (souls).
a wreath of ether he set on my head,
and gloriously he brought me forth from the world.
life supported life,
life found its own,
its own did life find,
and my soul found that for which it had looked.
renowned is life and victorious,
and victorious the man who went thither.*

*Ye are set up and raised up, my chosen ones,
by the word and certitude that came to you
the word and the certitude that came to the good,
the true word which came to believers.
my chosen, ye sought and ye found,
moreover ye shall seek and ye shall find.
ye sought and found, my chosen ones,
as the first (souls?) sought and found.
thou art victorious, manda-d-hiia.
and thou bringest to victory all who love thee.
and life is victorious.*