

# ***Naširuta*: Deep Knowledge and Extraordinary Priestcraft in Mandaean Religion**

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## **Introduction**

The present essay draws largely from a work in progress that is an in depth study of a Našoraean<sup>1</sup> scroll entitled *The Great Creation of the Image/Likeness of Truth (Diuan Qadaha Rba d-Dmuth Kušta)*. This manuscript is both rare and highly treasured in the Mandaean Našoraean libraries.<sup>2</sup> Until now, this scroll's name has been hidden even from Mandaean lay people.<sup>3</sup> Through extraordinary priestcraft of the Našoraean, the scroll generates an appreciation of deep spiritual knowledge or enlightenment (*Naširuta*).<sup>4</sup>

*DQR* also acts as a steppingstone to a broader and deeper understanding of Mandaean hidden mysticism. That is to say, the analytical study of *DQR* reveals previously hidden meaning and symbols that lead to a fuller grasp of the nature of the Mandaean belief system. That is, the text has tremendous religious value regarding the esoteric Mandaean Našoraean teachings. Consequently, it holds a special place in the Našoraean libraries.

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<sup>1</sup> The Našoraean are elect enlightened gnostic Madaeans. Along with deep spiritual knowledge or enlightenment *Naširuta*, the Našoraean will be discussed in some detail below, in the section entitled: An Introduction to the Theatre of *Naširuta* in the Light of *DQR*.

<sup>2</sup> The scroll, hereafter referred to as *DQR*, is translated from the Mandaic language to English for a forthcoming book tentatively entitled *A Critical Edition, with translation and analytical study of the Scroll of the Great Creation of the Image/Likeness of Truth (Diuan Qadaha Rba d-Dmuth Kušta)*. Mandaic is an Aramaic language from the family of Semitic languages.

<sup>3</sup> The manuscript was found in Ahwaz City, Persia Iran, and then sent to Basrah City in Southern Mesopotamia (Iraq). It is now housed in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, by courtesy of Lady E.S. Drower, under the call number MS. Asiat. misc. C.12 (R).

<sup>4</sup> Madaeans consider this as the Path of Truth/Life (*'uhra d- Kušta/hiia*).

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Fieldwork involving not only rational/philosophical analysis, but also direct skilled contemplative appreciation, gained the fullest information about Mandaean secret teachings in *DQR*. This material is informed by religious, cultural, social and academic practices among the Mandaeans as well as the secret teachings of the Naşoraeans. These items are treated initially from the traditional Naşoraeen perspective and also, wherever required, from the modern Naşoraeen understanding.

The research methodology adopts a new principle of translation, which is not based solely on textual words, but relies also on the intuition and experiential understanding of the probable state of mind of the ancient Naşoraeen author, also a priest, who was attempting obviously to illustrate the inner meanings at Naşoraeen thought. In this context, a detailed analysis of the secret Naşoraeen teachings is a valuable source of information. These teachings have been developed by the Naşoraeans through informed and devoted intellectual engagement with the secret scrolls. Such leads to a new level of meaning for concepts such as *Naşiruta*, *Naşoraia*, *Rabuta*, *Kuşja*, *Mana*, etc.

In previous translations of the Mandaean material, especially of the secret documents, leading scholars like Lidezbarski, Drower, K. Rudolph and J.J. Buckley usually gave little attention or explain in any detail the kinds of connections we note above. By analysis of *DQR* this paper suggests links that have been overlooked. The study of this scroll both extends and deepens our understanding of an esoteric aspect of Mandaean theology that is taught and practised by the Mandaean Naşoraeans.

### **The Mandaeans Today**

In 1915, William Brandt states:

The Mandaeans claim our interest not only as being a separate surviving branch of the Semitic stock, but also on account of their religion, their language, and their sacred literature. Besides the records of their religious teaching and their religious poetry, that literature includes fragmentary remains and revisions of ancient Gnostic speculation and myth. Adherents of the Mandaean faith, either as larger communities

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or as distinct family groups, were to be found some forty years ago—and may perhaps still be found—in cities and smaller market-towns on the lower Euphrates, the lower Tigris, and the rivers which water the eastern Iraq al-arabi and the adjacent Persian province of Khuzistan (Arabistan). It is, indeed, necessary for them to live in the neighbourhood of rivers, since immersion in flowing water is an essential, and certainly the most characteristic, feature of their religious practice.<sup>1</sup>

Since Brandt's earlier observations, this picture of Mandaean life has of course undergone considerable change. Today, Mandaeans are often articulate and well-educated, trained in modern professional fields as diverse as engineering, medicine and computer programming. At the same time, it is undeniable that a vast majority of Mandaeans continues to earn their living in traditional artisan trades, such as gold, silver and iron smithing, carpentry and boat building. They live mostly in villages and cities like Suq Al-šuiokh, Jebaieš Našreiah, Maimona, Ĥalfaiiah (Mšarraĥ), Mijar, Mesan, Mdainah and Qurna.

Most Mandaeans today live in the centre of the big cities, especially of the south and the middle regions of Iraq. However, Baghdad, contains the largest number of Mandaeans anywhere. Moreover, most Mandaeans no longer live close to rivers, perhaps because of the availability of tap water, which is now allowed to be used in their daily living and even in important rituals like baptism in instances of high pollution. Despite the strong pollution of the rivers (especially those in Iraq), and the difficulties with fundamental Islamic people in Iran, Iraq and Jordan, Mandaeans, however, still prefer to use fresh water from rivers to perform their rituals.

Many early twentieth century scholars speculated that the Mandaean religion would fade out of existence by the end of the twentieth century. Contrary to their speculations, however, there has been a reinvigoration of religious education and cultural traditions, especially in the late

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<sup>1</sup> W. Brandt, 'Mandaeans', *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1915, p. 380.

nineteen seventies to mid-nineties<sup>1</sup> in Iraq. At that time, the foundations of a new era in the Mandaean modern history were laid, and the implementation of ambitious religious educational programs<sup>2</sup> began. This included the formation of active youth organisations,<sup>3</sup> and the establishment of many Mandaic schools in various cities.

In the context of this paper, the implementation also included the documentation of most of the oral and written Mandaean traditions, especially the rewriting of critical copies of most Mandaic scriptures and documents.<sup>4</sup> Significantly, this led also to the revival of the mystical traditions of deep knowledge *Naširuta*, thus reviving the moribund Našoraean community.<sup>5</sup> The Mandaean religion is now thriving.

According to the author's survey and investigation through local Mandaean channels in 2002,<sup>6</sup> there are around ninety to one hundred thousand practising believers of Mandaicism over the entire world.<sup>7</sup>

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- 1 This period was very critical for the Mandaeans in Iraq. See Našoraia H. Saed, *A Call to Manda*, in *Mandaean Thinker* (Sydney) No. 2, 1996, pp. 3, 18. Also see *ibid*, pp. 9-10.
  - 2 This movement was established and led mainly by Našoraia Hathem Saed, who originated, developed and continued this program despite great danger, persecution, and continuing threat from many political and fundamentalist religious factions.
  - 3 This included three organizations established by Našoraia Saed as follows: 'Ahia d-Kušja' (the Brothers of Kušja - established in the 9th of September 1981), *Brikha Našoraia* (established in the 8th of September 1986), and The Mandaean Youth Movement 'Mandaiia' (established in the 10th of October 1993).
  - 4 Such work included also the release of Arabic translations of many scriptures and various secret scrolls designed strictly for local Mandaean use, and the publishing of books, articles and local magazines in Arabic for the benefit of general readers.
  - 5 Such work includes the preparation of youth and *Āšualias* (novices for priesthood) to enroll in the priesthood to deal with the appalling lack of energy. In 1981 the Mandaeans of Iraq had only five priests, so the present twenty seven Iraqi priests is one of the important fruits of that revolutionary program launched in 1979. Today, there are twenty-seven Iraqi Mandaean priests, but only five Iranian Mandaean priests. The fifth Iranian priest was initiated recently. There is a shortage of Iranian priests because of a lack of growth in the Mandaean community during the last seventy years within that area.
  - 6 J.J. Buckley had mentioned in 1995 that their estimated number vary considerably, and may be close to 100.000. See her, 'Mandaeans in the USA Today: The tenacity of traditions,' *ARAM*, 7 (1995), p. 353. Also see *idem*, *The Mandaeans Ancient Texts and Modern People* (hereafter *M*), Oxford, 2002, p. 6.
  - 7 Many Mandaean migrants are now living separately or in small unstable Mandaean communities in a number of Western cities. This Diaspora to the western world

## **What do Mandaeans believe?**

Gnostic Mandaean religion represents a vast area of study. For the benefit of the present work, there follows a brief overview of Mandaean beliefs.

### **Gnosticism**

Mandaean (ie. *mandaia* adj. from *manda γνωσις* ‘knowledge’) means ‘holder of knowledge’ or ‘knower’ or ‘enlightened one’ *γνωσιός*.<sup>1</sup> Mandaeans understand *manda* as a kind of deep spiritual truth, experienced directly and internally, and viewed as a divine knowledge sought since the earliest human existence. Thus, Mandaeans are Gnostics. That is to say, they believe in spiritual knowledge/enlightenment in the tradition of Gnosticism, which flourished during the later Classical, pre-Christian period, and played an important role in the first centuries after Christ.<sup>2</sup>

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raises new questions about the ongoing survival of the Mandaean culture and religion. It is to be seen whether the dispersed Mandaeans will find a healthy environment in which to continue and develop their long history of unique culture, faith and traditions. This is a question that continues to interest scholars, historians and sociologists today. See Naşoraia Hathem Saed, *ibid*.

- <sup>1</sup> Cf. E.S. Drower, R. Macuch, *A Mandaic Dictionary*, Oxford, 1963. p. 247a-b (hereafter *MD*); Nöldeke, Th., *Mandäische Grammatik*, Halle, 1975, pp. xx: 10f. (hereafter *MG*).
- <sup>2</sup> See Kurt Rudolph, *Mandaeism*, Leiden, 1978, p.1. For a discussion of different views on the early history of Mandaeans, see *idem*, *Problems of a History of the Development of the Mandaean Religion*, *History of Religions* (1969), pp. 216-234.

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It is generally accepted by scholars<sup>1</sup> that the Mandaeans are the last surviving Gnostics.<sup>2</sup> Unlike other Gnostics, however, the Mandaeans abhor asceticism and emphasize fertility.<sup>3</sup> As such, they trace their roots to the ancient Gnostics who preceded John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup> To Mandaeans, John the Baptist is the last Great Teacher, prophet and messenger. They continue to follow his teachings,<sup>5</sup> practising

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- 1 See, for example, Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*, translation edited by R. McL. Wilson (trs. R. McL. Wilson, P.W. Coxon & K H. Kuhn), New York, 1983, p. 344 and also pp. 366, 367; Edwin M. Yamauchi, *A Mandaic Magic Bowl from the Yale Babylonian Collection, Berytus*, 17 (1967-68), p. 49; Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Gnostic Ethics and Mandaean Origins*, (Harvard Theological Studies, XXIV), Cambridge, 1970, p. 1; Şinasi Gündüz, *The Knowledge of Life: The Origins and Early History of the Mandaeans and Their Relation to the Sabians of the Qur'an and to the Harranians* (hereafter *KL*), *Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 3*, Oxford, 1994, p. 1.
  - 2 See Edmondo F. Lupieri, *The Mandaeans: The Last Gnostics*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich., 2002, translated by Charles Hindley (Italian original, 1993), pp. 38 ff. (hereafter *MLG*); J. J. Buckley, *Mandaean Religion*, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. M. Eliade, Macmillan, New York, 1987, p. 150; *ibid.*, *KL*, *ibid.*; E. S. Drower, *Nymen*, *International Review for the History of Religions*, International Association for the History of Religions, Volume II, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1955, p. 68; Drower, *The Secret Adam: A Study of Nasoraean Gnosis* (hereafter *SA*), Oxford, 1960, xvff. See also: William D. Halsey, et. al (eds.), *Collier's Encyclopedia*, Vol. 15, Crowell Collier, 1968, p. 327; E. Segelberg, 'The Mandaean Week and the Problem of Jewish Christianity and Mandaean Relationship,' in *Judéo-christianisme: recherches historiques et théologique offerts en hommage au Cardinal Jean Daniélou*, eds. B. Gerhardsson, et. al., Paris, 1972, pp. 273f, 284; Gilles Quispel, 'Jewish Gnosis and Mandaean Gnosticism: Some Reflections on the Writing Bronté', in *Les Textes de nag Hammadi*, ed. J. É. Ménard (Nag Hammadi Studies, eds. M. Krause, J. M. Robinson & F. Wisse, VII), Leiden, 1975, pp. 82-122ff.
  - 3 *Columbia Encyclopedia*, sixth edition, 2004, (Mandaeans).
  - 4 K. Rudolph, *Die Mandaer I. Prolegomena: Das Mandäerproblem* (Forshungen sur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, n.F.56), Göttingen, 1960, pp. 77f.; Segelberg, E., 'Old and New Testament Figures in Mandaean Version', in *Syncretism*, ed. S. S. Hartman (Scripta Instituti Donneriana Aboensis III), Stockholm Uppsala, 1969, pp. 236f.; *SA* pp. 101 and n.1.
  - 5 Some non-Mandaean sources seem to confirm that John the Baptist left disciples to follow his path. See for example Acts xviii. 25, xix. 2 and Matt. xiv. 12. Also consult Abraham A. Neuman, *A Note on John the Baptist and Jesus in Josippon*, Hebrew Union College Annual, Volume XXIII, part II, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1950-1951, pp. 137-49. For the Mandaeans, John is called *Yahia Yuhana -br 'Nišbai Qinta-* (e.g. E. S. Drower, *The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaeans* (hereafter *CP*), Leiden, 1959, No. 199b: 12f; or *Yahia br Zakria* (e.g. *Ginza Yamina* (hereafter *GY*) (tr. M.

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‘mysticism’ and ‘majesty’ from the written and oral Gnostic tradition. Many elements of their practice are based on inherited ancient wisdom from both Western and Eastern cultural and mystical traditions, especially from the pre-Christian period.

Mandaeans possess a revealed religion and a divinely inspired code of laws and traditions. They have developed a definite body of knowledge and they have put forward their own theories to explain nature and the universe. For this reason, scholars like Kurt Rudolph consider this religion as ‘a self-contained, unique system belonging to the general stratum of the Gnosticism of the late antiquity’.<sup>1</sup> Kurt Rudolph comments:

[It is] a completely independent gnostic tradition, although one which also belongs to oriental and Semitic culture [and] is preserved by the communities of the Mandaeans.<sup>2</sup>

*DQR* significantly captures the doctrines of the Mandaic gnostic system through frequent use of specific terms and expressions, which convey various theological, cosmological and theosophical concepts, including the dualisms of good and evil, truth and falsehood, spiritual and material, life and death, and light and darkness.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Elect/Chosen/Proven of Righteous Ones**

Mandaeans believe that they constitute the true and ideal congregation of the Earthly ‘Sons of Light’ as direct and continuing descendants of

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Lidzbarski, *Ginzá Der Schatz oder das grosse Buch der Mandäer übersetzt und erklärt* (hereafter *Ginza*), Göttingen, 1925, pp. 5-419, 231: 10, 218: 23; *Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer* (hereafter *JB*), (tr.) M. Lidzbarski, Giessen, 1915, often. He is considered *nbiha ušliha* ‘prophet and messenger’ and *nbiha d-kušta* ‘the prophet of *Kušta* (Truth)’ (of the last age after Sam of the Flood). When he was born he was called *yalda nbiha d-aba rba d-‘qara* ‘a boy, an offspring/a prophet of the Great Father of Glory’, and also he was a great healer. See E.S. Drower, *The Haran Gawaita and the Baptism of Hibil-Ziwa* (hereafter *HG*), Studi e Testi, 176, Vatican City, 1953, pp. 5ff., p. 5 n. 7; and cf. *MD*, p. 288a.

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 1987, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis*, *op cit.*, p. 30. Cf. *Mandaeism*, *idem*, p. 4f.

<sup>3</sup> See for example, *DQR*, folio 3 (o, q), 42 ff.

‘*utria bnia nhura*’, ‘the *’Utras*, (Heavenly) Sons of Light’ (and the Great Life).<sup>1</sup> Their lives are destined to the perpetual light, which is called *Malka (Rama) d-Nhura*, ‘the (High) King of Light’.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, Mandaeans describe themselves as *Bhiria (Zidqa)*<sup>3</sup> or *Bahiraia (d-) Zidqa*<sup>4</sup> (the Elect/Chosen of Righteous[ness] Ones), which is parallel to another important title, that is, ‘*Bhiria Kušṭa*’<sup>5</sup> (the Chosen/Elect of Kusta [Truth]). In addition, Mandaeans know themselves as *Šalmania* (the “Perfect Ones”),<sup>6</sup> as *Bhiria u-Šalmania* (Elect and Perfect Ones),<sup>7</sup> and as *Šitlia Taba* the (Good Plantation/Plantation of the Pious).<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, in the scriptures, the practicing faithful perfected

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1 The term ‘(a)bnia nhura ‘Sons of Light’ is used in various ways and Mandaean sources; *Ginza*, II 13, 246; *idem*, *Mandäische Liturgien mitgeteilt, übersetzt und erklärt* (hereafter *ML*) Berlin, 1920, 17-18, 24-5, 36-7, 41-2, 71; Euting, J., *Qolasta oder Gesänge von der Taufe und dem Ausgang der Seete* (hereafter *Qolasta*), Stuttgart, 1867, 25: 24.

2 For instance see *GY*, 5: 11, 6: 9; *Ginza*, II 31; *MD*, p. 244b f.; *HG* p. 3.

3 See for example *DQR*, 14. ; J. de Morgan, *Études Linguistiques. Deuxième Partie, Textes Mandäites* (with notice of C. Huart), Paris, 1904, 10: 1. Also frequently in *GY*, I, II. for instance, *GY*, 24: 10 ff. For many examples and references, see *MD*, p. 53a-b. Also consult, W. Brandt, *Mandäische Schriften*, Göttingen, 1893, p. 27 n. 4.

4 *JB*, p. 50.

5 *GY*, 299:14.

6 See for example *GY*, 367: 2; *JB*, 180: 13. Also see *MD*, p. 442b; Brandt, *Mandäische Schriften*, *op. cit.* pp. 8 n.5, 36 n. 1.

7 *Ginza*, II 35-45; *CP*, (No. 43, 71) = *ML*, pp. 75, 106-7.

8 *Ginza*, II 61-2; *CP*, 124: 11ff. (No. 83) = *ML*, pp. 149-50 (No. LXXXIII); *JB*, 219-20. The Covenanters also represent themselves as the ‘Elect of Righteousness’ and as the ‘Perfect’ (T ii 13) and as ‘Eternal Plantations’. (D viii 5, ix 10; Z 17) In addition, we find later, that the Christians also designate themselves as the ‘Elect’ (Cp. *Odes of Solomon* XXXIII 13.) and as the ‘Perfect’, (P p. 520.), while they regard the Church itself as the ‘Planting of God’s Vineyard’. (Connolly *Apostolic Constitution* 2-3 § This may indicate a connection with some Jewish traditions. K. Rudolph defined the importance of the Mandaean religion to the other Gnostic movements. See: K. Rudolph, *Mandaeism, op. cit.*, p. 16. Furthermore, Rudolph continues, in his long introduction on Mandaism, to attach importance to the Mandaean gnostic community and its roots. *Ibid.* Lady Drower suggests earlier in *SA*, that this gnostic sect may have spread into places like the Jordan Valley, Galilee and Juadea, and had further divided into sub-sects which developed into Christianity, which ‘recognized in Jesus its crowned and anointed king’. *SA*, p. xi.



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Mandaeans are called ‘*Bhiria Zidqa Bnia Nhura*’<sup>1</sup> (The Chosen Elect Beings, Sons of Light).<sup>2</sup>

### **Mandaean View of Human Nature: The Great Mind, Knowledge and Wisdom**

Mandaean teaching emphatically stresses the centrality and primacy of the Great Mind, Knowledge and Wisdom. ‘*Mana Rba*’, the Great (Perfect) Mind, is held to be the source of all things. It works with the soul ‘*Nišimta*’ on one side, while the spirit ‘*Ruha*’ and the human body stand on the other side. Their union contains the possibility of enlightenment and immortality. Mandaean teaching also views the Great Mind as the purest enlightened Being, as is found in *DQR*, especially its art work depicting various illustrated figures. Such images are exclusive to *DQR*. That is, no illustrated figures can be found in other illustrated Mandaean scrolls, as far as we can tell.

*Mana Rba*, the Great Mind, is viewed as a Divine Helper, Saviour and Baptizer. *Mana Rba* is also an intelligent mysterious Power.<sup>3</sup> *Mana* can associate with the human life and soul and still retain its purest form. This primordial mind precedes all manifestations of human lives and embodies the meaning and substance of reality. In terms of other aspects of the mind, this primordial mind remains buried, deep within human beings. Most of the time, it is unnoticed and unseen.

According to Mandaean teachings, both positive and negative attributes are present in the Earthly mind, because of the influence of evil which devitalizes material forces. The mind consists of positive attributes like insight, compassion, and tolerance. These positive characteristics are ascribed usually to the secret effective power of *Nišimta*, ‘the soul’. The mind also consists of negative tendencies that can cause sinful thoughts and actions, like hatred, sadness, anger, fighting, killing, impurity, adultery. The negative aspects are attributed to *Ruha* (and its followers) as well as *ruha* ‘spirit’, the vile and evil

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance, *CP*, (no. 23, pp. 30: 19 f.).

<sup>2</sup> See also, *ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> For references to and images of *Mana Rba* in *DQR*, see *DQR*, 17f., 22, 38, 100, folio 3, y, folio 6, u4, v4, c5, folio 7, f5, i5. Also see Naşoraia Hathem Saed, ‘The Image of the Dark Side *Ruha*’ in *Humanity*, to be published in December, 2004.

influential powers, ie. World of Darkness.<sup>1</sup> These negative influences include the zodiacal and planetary effects. Thus, dualism (eg. Worlds of Light and Worlds of Darkness; Good and Evil; Male and Female; Father and Mother; Heavens and Earth; Soul and Spirit; Adam and Eve, etc.) is well represented in Mandaicism, especially in the work of *DQR*.

True Mandaeans (including the true lay Mandaeans, priests and Naşoraeans), practise numerous techniques for awakening, for eliminating negative thoughts, and for revealing the hidden *Mana*. Various teachings offer contemplative practices, such as prayers, enlightened teaching, philanthropy, and rituals, including baptism, in order to reduce the pollution of darkness or negative energies, while enhancing the positive aspects of the human earthly nature.

Through these practices, Mandaeans act correctly to heal themselves and direct themselves so that they can connect with '*Mana Rba*' the Great Mind, '*Hiia Rbia*' the Great Life, and '*Almia d-Nhura*' the Worlds of Light. The Mandaean Naşoraeon teaching indicates that by hearing, reading and knowing these instructions, and by fully internalizing them, all human beings will be able eventually to throw off impurities, sadness and painful uncertainties. They will be empowered to transform by replacing the misery of the average human being's condition with a clarified and purified mind, heart, soul and spirit. Such will allow human beings to be at peace, as well as be filled with knowledge and understanding. Mandaeans are usually encouraged to engage frequently in these practices, especially to undertake frequent baptism, with the assistance of enlightened beings.<sup>2</sup>

These teachings also show Mandaeans the means to search and to recognise their pure primordial mind and soul; thereby to gain knowledge to enlighten their thoughts and understanding. The following example is from the opening of one of the chapters of *CP*.

In the name of the Great Life!

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, *CP*, 10:14; *GY*, 226:24, 381:20 f; *ML*, 12n.1; *Ginza*, pp. 189 n.2, 227 n. 4; S.A. Pallis, *Mandaean Studies*, London, 1926, pp. 79 f. Also consult *MD*, pp. 428b f.

<sup>2</sup> Such practices and teachings are often repeated in various ways in most of the Mandaean sources. In *DQR*, important inner Mandaean Naşoraeon teachings are depicted in many passages and illustrations.

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May my thoughts, my knowledge and my understanding  
Enlighten me, Adam-Yuhana son of Mahnuš,  
By means of these responses and homilies for baptism and the  
masiqta.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, these teachings guide Mandaeans in the means to know and to experience a contented life, the right way of knowing the path, and the way to live as enlightened Lightworld beings with the Great Life and Light.

The Naşoraean, as enlightened people, hold the power of destiny (*Hiia* 'Life'). They find their own way towards the 'Ziua' radiance of 'Nhura' the clear Light of 'Kušṭa' Truth, because they already see this light of truth from within. The clear Light of 'Kušṭa' exists in 'Manda (*d-Hiia*)' the True Knowledge of Life, in the person's *Nišimta* (soul) and in their *Mana* (Mind). Other important fundamental features of the Mandaean religion are listed below.<sup>2</sup>

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1 CP, p. 88 (No. 78).

2 \* Belief in a supreme, formless Entity. The idea of *Hiia Rbia* the (Absolute) Great Living One(s) is the basic idea of the Mandaean religion, especially in its early form.

\* Mandaeanism is monotheistic. *Hiia* 'the Living One(s)', God, created *Hiia (Rbia Qadmaia)* 'the First Great Life (/Living Ones)'. He also created the Divine Environment Primordial Fertilising Elements of creation, manifestation and emanation systems in the universal existence.

\* The Mandaean religion is found initially in the World(s) of Light and the Ethereal Beings, like *Uria* and *Malki*, understood as the first believers who practised this religion.

\* The radical idea of dualism, contrasting a transcendent realm of pure spirit with the world of gross matter. Other forms of dualism include: Father and Mother, Light and Darkness, Right and Left, syzygy in cosmic and microcosmic form. /(macrocosm and microcosm).

\* Belief that the human spirit originates in the higher realm, but is imprisoned now in the form of a soul within the human body. The human spirit has two levels, the higher/divine level, which comes from *hiia* 'the Divine Life', and *ruha* the lower spirit. Mandaeans aim to liberate their spirits from all attachment to material things, and thereby return the elected minority to ultimate happiness.

\* Belief that *Nišimta* (the human soul), has its origin in an extensive upper and mysterious World of Light created and inhabited by *Hiia*, the (Great) Living Lives/One(s).

\* Belief that there are no earthly founder(s) of the religion; rather, there are Great Teachers, such as *Adam*, *Štil* (Seth), *Ram*, *Šurbai*, *Šum* (Sam, son of Noah) and *Yahia Yunaha* (John the Baptist) who are great preservers or keepers of the Divine

Word of Hiia (God) and 'the Knowledge of the Holy Wisdom of Life', *Manda d-Hiia*, which they received from *Hiia* and the World(s) of Light. These are passed on to the Mandaean generations, who are in turn inspired by the life and work of these Great Teachers.

\* A set of beliefs, ethics and morals which are enshrined in a cult-language of symbol and metaphor. The centre of these traditions is *Hiia Rbia*, the Great Living One(s), the Absolute Eternal Supernatural Power, the Creator, who has total power and influence over the destiny of everything in the whole universe, including the destiny of human beings and earthly events.

\* The main Holy Book is named *Ginza Rba*. There are also secret writings containing the main teachings of the religion.

\* Special people are consecrated to be religious leaders. They are blessed in special ceremonies; their main duties include teaching, performing rituals and leading the world on the path of enlightenment.

\* A set of strict rules and precepts prescribing the ways in which the Mandaean people should behave in both general and in specific situations. There are also strong taboos against some modes of behaviour and particular actions, including murder, adultery, rape, etc.. Most Mandaeans adopt a puritan ethic.

\* Rites of passage and ceremonies that mark important events in the lives of Mandaeans, including the transition from one stage of pure life and enlightenment to another; such ceremonies comprise the *Maşbuta* (Baptism), *Masiqta* (Ascendant, Rising).

\* Belief in the importance of Living Water (*iardna d- mia hiia*). As a tool of baptism, Living Water symbolizes the Light and Great Life. Respect for the sanctity of rivers is such that Mandaeans always try to live near their banks.

\* Belief in the continuation of life after the death of the material body. There is belief in a system of rewards and punishments, usually received after a person's earthly life, for the beliefs, actions and behaviours of the individual during their lifetime. The punishments for the sinners are, for various purification purposes, held in special cosmic places named *Maşarata* (purgatories). There is no reincarnation or resurrection of the material body for Mandaeans; they consider themselves as enlightened beings already. However, there is a belief in the obstruction for the great sinners until 'the judgement day', *Yuma d-Dina*.

\* Belief in divine healing and victory, ie. *asuta uzakuta*, over Darkness and any injuries that may be caused by Darkness. Believers can recover their power and fulfil their enlightenment. This is one of the factors that strengthens the Mandaean faith in *Hiia Rbia*.

\* Belief in the integrity of the physical body.

\* There is no earthly redeemer, but rather the divine Ones, Lightworld Being(s), such as *Manda d-Hiia* (the Knowledge/Gnosis of Life). The Redeemer or Saviour or Helper frees the souls of the believers from *Maşarata*.

\* The need for a special place where Mandaeans gather for prayer, worship and perform other religious activities. This area is termed *Manda*, *Bith Manda*, or *Bimanda* (the House of Knowledge). Today, the laity call it *Mandi*. Consult *SA*, p. xvi.

**Perspectives on the Mandaean Religion revealed in *DQR* through its use of central terms**

*DQR*, through its mystical contents, directs the Mandaean religion and its followers to the thoughts of Transformation and Enlightenment of the Primordial Perfect Divine Teacher (*Mara d-Rabuta* [Master/Lord of Greatness]),<sup>1</sup> and the Perfect Mind *Mana Rba*.<sup>2</sup> In another words, Mandaism is *Mandaiutha* or Gnosticism.

Further, *DQR* presents Mandaism both as *almia udaria* (the worlds and generations), and as a religious faith that dictates the perpetual

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<sup>1</sup> In the other scrolls and commentaries, the name *Mara d-Rabuta* as a title stands for 'the Lord of Heavenly Knowledge (gnosis) who imparts it to an initiate'. See E.S. Drower, *A Pair of Nasoraean Commentaries (Two Priestly documents). The Great 'First World' and the Lesser 'First World'* (hereafter *PNC*), Leiden, 1962, p. ix. In addition, as Drower notes, the name also occurs in the Qumran text, while in the Coptic-Manichaean texts it could be equate with the 'Father of Greatness'. See *ibid.*, n. 1. Please note, according to *DQR*, 14 and some other Mandaean scrolls like *ATŠ*, *Mara d-Rabuta* is considered also as the First Elect Righteousness '*Bhir Zidqa*', who obviously carries the figure of the 'First Divine (Elect) Teacher of Righteousness'. In Mandaism, this Divine Teacher becomes the Ideal Universal One. He is the model for the other Lightworld Beings and for the earthly figure of the 'Teacher of Righteousness'. The figure of this 'Teacher' is passed on through the generations through 'Great Fathers' like *Adam*, *Hibil* (Abel), *Šitil* (Seth), *Anuš* (Enock), *Ram*, *Šurbai*, *Nu* (Noah), *Sam*, *Yahia* (John the Baptist). It is possible that this figure matches with the historical Teacher of Righteousness, who appears in the Qumran texts among the Essenes, to whom, some Biblical scholars like Barbara Thiering, choose to identify with John the Baptist. Consult B. Thiering, 'Redating the Teacher of Righteousness', *Australian and New Zealand Studies in Religion*, No. 1, Theological Explorations, Sydney, 1979, p. 148. Cf. Garry W. Trompf, 'Introduction I: The long History of the Dead Sea Scrolls Scholarship,' *The Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 26, No. 2, June 2002, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance, *DQR*, 22-3. Also see *DQR*, h, 4ff. Theologically, *Mana (Rba Kabir)*: the (Great Powerful) *mana*, was considered a mysterious creative, powerful and intelligent power, which is described as the Great Perfect Powerful Mind. It is, therefore, usually identified with the Divinity and Deity. As far as we know, no previous scholars have referred to the identification of *Mana* and *Mara d-Rabuta* before. Thus, this reference is considered a good example of the value of *DQR* and the importance of this study.

Interestingly, in Rabbaic theology, a similar picture is illustrated by which the name of the deity is invested with power and mystery, ie. *mana*. See Samuel S. Cohan, 'The Name of God, A Study in Rabbinic Theology', in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, Vol. XX, iii, part I, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1950-1951, p. 579.

evolution towards *Rabuta* (Greatness), *Nhura* (Light), *Kušta* (the Divine or Enlightenment of Truth/Truth of Enlightenment),<sup>1</sup> *Manda* (Knowledge/Enlightenment) and *Hiia* (Life).<sup>2</sup> *DQR* also shows that the Mandaean rituals of purification and spiritual growth are parts of an endless process that aims to unify Mandaeans with the Worlds of Light and everlasting *Hiia-Rbai*,<sup>3</sup> the Great Living One(s)/the Great Life.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, *DQR* seems to promote meditation, transformation and wisdom, ie. the eye of *Naširuta*, to bring a Universal Light to the earthly plane of the true knower and elected one.<sup>5</sup>

The basic gnostic principle in Mandaeism is the teaching of knowledge, ie. *Manda*, which is conceived of as a supernatural power, a direct internal vision of *Kušta*, Enlightenment of Truth/Truth of Enlightenment. *Manda* is divine in origin and is visualized through immediate revelation, rather than through the intellect or the sciences.

*Manda* appears in the form of *Manda d-Hiia*, Knowledge of Life, because He (It) is described as a Divine Power of Redeeming Knowledge.<sup>6</sup> He carries the main features of the mythological saviour (or Redeemer, who is imbued with the Great Life) to the 'worlds and generations'. Thus, Mandaeism does not believe in an earthly/historical redeemer(s) as does Christianity, but rather, in a spiritual mythological one(s).<sup>7</sup>

*Manda d-Hiia* is the Enlightened One, who descended from the Heavens to the Earthly World, transcending space and time and inspiring the essence of Life, ie. *Nišimta* (the Soul), to perform and enlighten the earthly, decaying body of Adam. *Manda d-Hiia* says:

*ana arhatH briha d-rurbia*<sup>8</sup>

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1 *Kušta* has wide meanings, most of them connected with divinity and Lightword Beings. See *MD*, p. 209b-11a.

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Hiia*, the names of the creator, are considered to be Divine and embody His attributes and conceptions. The meanings of these names are usually obscure. In addition, the divinity and deity are referred to carefully, in a metaphorical theological language.

4 In *DQR*, a good example is Folio 2. (*DQR*, 1-33).

5 See *DQR* Folio 1, and *ibid.* Also consult *CP*, No. 63.

6 See K. Rudolph, *Mandaeism, op cit.*, p. 14.

7 See K. Rudolph, *Gnosis, op cit.*, pp. 358f.

8 *GY*, 102:16.

## *Esotericism and the Control of Knowledge*

I perfume (inspire) him by the perfume of the Mighties<sup>1</sup> (i.e. the soul/life/mind).

*Riha d-rurbia* is a metaphor for ‘Scent of Life’ and it is obviously the ‘Scent of *Manda d-Hiia* and the other Lightworld Beings’.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, Adam is considered to be the first human, who received the *Manda* and is thus Mandaean.

Often in Mandaean theology and mythology, *Manda d-Hiia* is mentioned most reverentially, as a powerful figure, both in the written and oral traditions of Mandaean sources. Mandaean always search for the Great Life through the Knowledge of Life and *Kušta*. In this way, they seek spiritual fulfilment and transcendence.

*Manda d-Hiia* is mentioned only twice in *DQR* in the traditional Colophon.<sup>3</sup> This reflects a hitherto ignored aspect of Mandaeanism — the greater importance of the ‘Lord of Greatness’ (*Mara d-Rabutha*) who is central to *DQR* and to the belief system. *Manda d-Hiia* is frequently identified with important aspects of *Mara d-Rabutha*, such as a Divine Teacher and Saviour, and in close connection with *Hiia* and (*Dmut*) *Kušta*. In spite of this identification, he is hardly mentioned in *DQR* and in other secret scrolls, even in long and important ones like *ATŠ*.<sup>4</sup>

To explain further, some important scholarly thoughts about Mandaeanism over the last few decades must be traced. Generally, scholars have paid little attention to the relationships inherent in what is called here ‘the Divine aspects of *Dmut-Manda*’; that is (*Dmut-*) *Kušta*/*(Dmut-)Hiia*, or the relationship between *Kušta* and *Mara d-Rabutha*.

Waldemar Sundberg, addressed this matter in 1953, but his efforts were largely ignored. Forty-one years after the publication of the first

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<sup>1</sup> *Rurbia* plural of *rba*, literally means ‘great’. Here it is used as an attribute of *Hiia* - (the First Great) Life. *Hiia* in this case is omitted, as well as in other instances. See for example, *GY*, 219: 8, 234: 15, 299: 9; *MD*, pp. 422b, 431b. Interestingly, Lidzaski also translates the quote as: ‘liess ich ihn den Duft desgewaltigen (Lebens) riechen’ *Ginza*, p. 110, 20. See also *ibid.*, p. 110 n.4. Cf. Sundberg, W. *Kušta: A Monograph on a Principal Word in Mandaean Texts, I. The Descending Knowledge*, Lund, 1953, pp. 11f.

<sup>2</sup> Which is also the ‘Scent’ of the other Lightworld Beings.

<sup>3</sup> See *DQR*, 151, 161.

<sup>4</sup> See *SA*, p. 63f.

part of his work on 'Kušta',<sup>1</sup> Sundberg retraced his initial investigation and completed writing the second part of his work, which, however, was not warmly welcomed by other scholars, probably because they were stung by his vitriolic criticism in the 1953 publication. At the same time, Sundberg made a significant contribution in the second part of his work on *Kušta*, published in 1994.<sup>2</sup>

In both parts of his investigations, Sundberg successfully identifies the important link between the central figure in Mandaeanism, *Manda d-Hiia*, and the principle word 'Kušta'. He states:

The step from *manda d-hiia* to *kušta* is a very short one: the latter is a teacher, as is the former. And *kušta* is not only a teacher in gnosis but also the gnosis itself, just as *manda d-hiia* is merely by his name – *kushṭa* is preached to *kushṭa*. Indeed, I even suggested the identity of *kushṭa* and *manda d-hiia* in some passages.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, Sundberg mentions that the secret name of *Manda d-Hiia* is 'revealed in the gnosis called *kushṭa*',<sup>4</sup> and as *Manda d-Hiia* plays the role of the male teacher, *Kušta* is identical to *Manda d-Hiia* and plays the same role of the male teacher. This is why he refers to *Kušta* as a male, ie 'he'.<sup>5</sup>

In her 'Book Reviews' of 1994, J. J. Buckley seems to agree with Sundberg only on some issues, while disagreeing with him on many others. She supports the findings of most scholars, like M. Lidzbarski, in arguing that *Kušta* is female.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Buckley disagrees with Sundberg's interpretation of the change of the 'gender issue' as a reason for the interchangeability of genders that occurs in other parts of Mandaean mythology and esoteric exegesis. She states firmly that the

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<sup>1</sup> W. Sundberg, *Kushṭa I*, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Sundberg W, *Kushṭa: A Monograph on a Principal Word in Mandaean Texts II, The Ascending Soul*, Lund, 1994.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11. See also W. Sundberg, *Kushṭa I*, p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>5</sup> See J.J. Buckley, 'W. Sundberg's *Kushṭa: A Monograph on a Principal Word in Mandaean Texts II*', *Book Reviews*, p. 207; Sundberg, *Kushṭa I*, p. 54, p. 111; *idem*, *Kushṭa II*, pp. 4, 11, 41ff, 41 n. 141, 154.

<sup>6</sup> See J.J. Buckley, *ibid*.



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interchangeability of genders ‘is out of place in the case of *Kušṭa*, who remains female, both grammatically and mythologically” and further elaborates: ‘One might even go so far as to see her as a possible counterpart to—and not identical with!—the high rank male *’utra* and revealer *Manda d-Hiia* (“Knowledge of Life”).’<sup>1</sup>

In spite of what Buckley and other scholars have said about the gender of the word *Kušṭa*, this study finds many cases in *DQR*, especially in some central passages, which show that *Kušṭa* is grammatically and mythologically male. For instance, it can be seen in the following examples:

- *tum apriš lkuṣṭia uqabnan d-niṣubta bgauaiun mitniṣba* (*DQR*, 30, 41-2)
- *taga kuṣṭa hu* (*DQR*, folio. 5, g4)
- *ulkuṣṭa haka laqablui* (*DQR*, 41-2)
- *kuṣṭa haka qabin* (*DQR*, folio. 3, w, 47, 48, 83-84)
- *d-kuṣṭa trin razia hu* (*DQR*, 42)
- ... *mamla d-hu kuṣṭa u kuṣṭa d-hu mn mamla praš* (*DQR*, 47)
- ... *uhaizak kuṣṭa mn aina hazin nabiṭ usaliq...* (*DQR*, 48)
  
- ... [83] ... *d-kuṣṭa `tbun* [84] *aminṭul d-kul mazruta d-kaṣṭa bgauH lahauia briša unaṭra d-kuṣṭa ...* (*DQR*, 83-4)

*Kušṭa* appears also in several names of male Lightworld Beings, such as:

- *Haiāšum Kuṣṭa* (*DQR*, folio. 7, g5)<sup>2</sup>
- *Kušṭa Mana* (*DQR*, folio. 7, i5, line 5)
- *Kušṭa Yaqra*, (*DQR*, 130)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The Scroll of Exalted Kingship: Diwan Malkuta 'Laita*, translated by Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley, (American Oriental Society Translation Series), Vol. 3, New Haven, 1993, pp. 55-66 (hereafter *DM'L*); *CP*, (No. 15). Also there is another name such as *iukabar Kuṣṭa*, see *CP*, 451: 3, 5 (No. 379).

<sup>3</sup> See also, *CP*, (No. 316); Drower, *The Coronation of the Great Šišlam: Being a Description of the Rite of the, Coronation of a Mandaean Priest According to the Ancient Canon*, Leiden, 1962, p. 17. Also *CP*, 440: 6f., 455: 15, 460: 9 (No. 379).

Furthermore, the ceremonial handclasp between the Lightworld (Heavenly or Earthly) Beings, ie. *kušta*, does not only 'mark a ritual stage' as Buckley states in agreement with both Sundberg and Drower.<sup>1</sup> This gesture is also understood by the Mandaean Našoraean as meaning that *kušta* acts as 'male' on two levels:

i) As a personification of the act itself that identifies with the male/father Lightworld Being, ie. *Kušta*, who himself identifies with the Divine Male/Father Powers, ie. *Hiia, Mara (d-Rabuta), Mana* etc. In this case, the personification is also notified as a "Divine Witness" in the ritual stage.

ii) As an additional supreme force that gains the power to make the cycle of the holy communion or unification (ie. *laupa*) and transformation. This empowerment occurred and succeeded in the ritual stage, between the original elements of male and female. The *laufa* through this act of *Kušta* make a constructive building, rebirth, fulfilment or healing of the 'divine union' as a necessary step of reaching the Mysteries of the Father.

There are also some examples in *DQR* that refer to the universal positive constructive exchanging of *Kušta*. For instance, the following passages state:

[37] ... *hazin aina d-razia* [38] *qirbat uligʔat ukulhun minH praš d-dmuta ʔIH umara d-rabuta hu d-hu mana udmuH minH ʔšarariun*  
[39] *ukušta mn hdadia pšaʔiun ukt kušta pšaʔ mn hdadia nhariun razaiun bihdadia utqun luat hdadia.* (*DQR*, 37-9).

58. *utaga mina hua d-hu a hu lišana d-liba hu uhaizak hua b d-hu trin malkia luat hdadia kušta pašʔia*

[37] ... This source (wellspring or eye) of mysteries drew together and held and all emanated from him (the one). So that an image/likeness appeared to him, who is *Mara d-Rabuta* (Lord of Greatness from whom came for the Mana and his counterpart and they performed

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* and p. 207 nn. 2,3 . See also Sundberg, *Kušta II*, p. 123 ?; *MII*, (e.g. pp. 33, 45, 102, 112, 114). Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 200 n.1.

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[39] the *kušťa* (truth, pact) with one another, and when they performed the *kušťa* with one another, they enlightened one another with their mysteries and they confirmed one another, ....

[58] *utaga mina hua d-hu a hu lišana d-liba hu uhaizak hua b d-hu trin malkia luat hdadia kušťa pašťa* [59] *d-hinun spihata d-hinun d-kt hazin pugdama lišana amar spihata mn hdadia mistirkin unašqin hdadia bhazin* [60] *hugiana qarbin*. (DQR, 58-60).

[58] And the *Taga* (crown came into being from her, which is A. He (A) is the tongue, which is the heart.

There after B came into being. He (B) is the two (2) *Malkas* who together perform the *kušťa*. [59] Further, they (the two *Malkas*) are the lips. For when the tongue said this word, they the lips, adhere together and they make contact with one another. Through this [60] Syllable (or letter) they approach [each other].

A strong masculine gender is presented both grammatically and theologically in many passages in the documents, especially when *kušťa* is personified as a Celestial Lightworld Being.<sup>1</sup> Two selected examples are given here. The first is from *GR*:

*kušťa d-mn rbia ata*<sup>2</sup>

*Kušťa* who came from the Great (Life)

The second example reveals a mystical relationship between the letter *A* and *Kušťa*:

*A ata btabu kušťa*,<sup>3</sup>

A. Come, *Kušťa*, in kindness,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For many examples see *MD*, pp. 209b ff.,

<sup>2</sup> *GY*, 301: 22. Also *MD*, *ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> *CP*, 200: 2 (No. 179), 218: 14 (No. 206); *ML*, 250: 2f.; *GY*, 274: 8f., note that the latter number in *MD*, p. 210a, mistakenly written as *Gy*, 274: 10.

Mandaean mysticism places the letter 'a' in a very high position. It represents *Mara d-Rabuta*, and is clearly confirmed and depicted in *DM'L*: "'a' is the Lord of Greatness".<sup>2</sup> *DQR* and some other documents consider 'a' as a symbol for the Divine Father 'aba', the Divine Crown,<sup>3</sup> the Divine First Word 'bšuma' and the Tongue<sup>4</sup>. The letter 'A', also is an important symbol for the Universal Mother, Womb, Wellspring, Source of life, light and radiance, Naširuta etc.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the letter A (and in particular its male aspect) in *Kušta* and *Mara d-Rabuta* are parallel and even identifiable with each other. In addition, they exist in strong affinity and are enclosed in one mystical identity, one mystery and one divine circle or universe, ie 'A'.

Returning to both of the above examples, one can conclude that if *Kušta* really is female, then the verb *ata* should be written as *ata*<sup>6</sup>. Many more similar examples can be cited under this linguistic and theological umbrella,<sup>7</sup> including *Kušta* as the central and essential part in the marriage ceremony. Here it is referred to as masculine gender, and it conjugates with the word *Qabin*.<sup>8</sup> For example, in *DQR* the following text is found:

- *kušta haka qabin* (*DQR* folio. 3, w)--.

(Here is the *Kušta*(Pact) of *Qabin* (marriage))

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<sup>1</sup> *CP*, p. 161; *Ginza*, p. 271. Curiously, Drower mistakenly added a sentence to the translation of this prayer. She inserted 'Kušta strengthen thee!'. See *ibid.* and cf. the formula of *CP*, (No. 179. I think she was confused with the frequent complete formula 'mšaba marai - kušta asinkun', for the copyists sometimes omit the second part or exchange it with '-bliba dakia' or '...- Bliba d-mšalam' etc., or omit the whole formula, as happened with the same prayer when it was repeated in another place (*CP*, No. 206). In any case, *Kušta* in 'kušta asinkun' is also personified as a Divine or a celestial Lightworld (male) Being. Also see *MD*, *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *DM'L*, p. 59. Also compare with Buckley's commentary, see *ibid.* p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> See for instance, *DQR*, 4, 15, 58, 62, 66, 80.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 53 ff.

<sup>5</sup> See *DQR*, 55ff., 79f.

<sup>6</sup> See *MD*, p. 41b; *MG*, 257: 6.

<sup>7</sup> See *MD*, pp. 209b ff.; Sundeborg, *Kušta* I, p. 40 ff.

<sup>8</sup> *Qabin* means marriage (-contract/ceremony). See *MD*, p. 398b; *MII*, pp. 59-72.

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- *tum apriš lkušṭia uqabnan d-nišubta bgauaiun mitnišba* (*DQR*, line 30).

(Then he explained about the *Kušṭas* (Covenants) and *Qabins* (Marriage(s) (or marriage contracts) in which a wife is taken.)

- *kušṭa d-taga ukušṭa d-naṭarta d-hu malkuta mn `dH pšaṭ* (*DQR*, folio. 5, o4)

(By then *Kušṭa* of the Crown and the *Kušṭa* of protection the Kingdom was given/flourished in his hand.)

- ... *nhur nhura hdadia pšaṭ uqabin rba psaq* (*DQR*, folio 7, i5, 3-4)

(And therein the Light shone and they stretched out (their hands) to one another.)

In the last example, which concerns most of the rituals including the *Qabin*, '*nhur nhura*' (Let there be light), there is an important parallel to *Kušṭa*. It is used metaphorically in this syntax to refer to *Kušṭa*. '*Nhur nhura*' is considered also as a mystical name for *Kušṭa*. This is part of the Naṣoraean play on words. In addition, '*nhur nhura*' is a title of *CP*, (no. 5), which is used for the consecration of the crown and turban, which are necessary for performing the priestly rituals including the marriage ceremony. Both the crown and turban are masculine gender and symbolize the Divine *Kušṭa*, Light and Father. Another metaphor, '*nhar nhura*' (The Light shone)<sup>1</sup> - the title of *CP*, no. 46, which, in its turn, is parallel to *CP*, no. 5, is used mainly in the *Masiqta*. Thus, the emanation of both *Kušṭa* and the Light seems to be in the same stage, or the two faces of the same coin. This evidence suggests that there is a strong relationship or parallelism between *Kušṭa* and the Light. To summarise, *Kušṭa* occurs as both feminine and masculine.

On the one hand, the expression *Dmut Kušṭa* in *DQR*, as it appears in the title and some other places, (*DQR*, 5, 11, 12, 40, 127,151), as well as in the scroll of *Alp Trisar Suialia*, I: 18,<sup>2</sup> is personified as a female

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *CP*, pp. 41, and n. 1; *DM'L*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E.S. Drower (tr), *The Thousand and Twelve Questions* (hereafter *ATŠ*), Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Institut für Orientforschung,

Lightworld Being who identifies with the other female Lightworld Beings like *Dmuth Hiia*, *Aina* ‘Wellspring’, *Niṭubta*, *Naširuta*, *A B G D* ‘Alphabet’, *Simat Hiia*, *Zlat Rabtai*, *Kanat Niṭupta* and others.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, in *DQR*, there is another expression that contains *kušṭa*; this is coupled with female attributes or names, such as *Aina d-Kušṭa* (*DQR*, 40) ‘the *Kušṭa* Wellspring or the Wellspring of *Kušṭa*’, and *Simat Kušṭa*, (*DQR*, folio. 7, i5, 3). This is also the case in an expression such as *Mazruta d-Kušṭa* (*DQR*, 84) meaning ‘the seeds of *Kušṭa*’ and refers to the Lightworld Beings. On the other hand, *Kušṭa*, as a masculine gender, especially according to *DQR*, fits better in his identification with *Mara d-Rabutha*, the First Being who produces the Divine (Living) Seeds, that is, ‘*Mazruta (Haita)*’.<sup>2</sup> This gender identification may also apply to expressions including *Riš Ama d-kušṭa* (*DQR*, 9), which refers to *Mara d-Rabuta*, for he is the first Divine *Riš Ama*.<sup>3</sup> However, the identification of *Manda d-Hiia* with *Mara d-Rabuta* seems entirely plausible in the passage of *Mara d-Rabuta*’s Five Manifestations during the *Paruanaiia* ‘the (days of) Commemorations’.<sup>4</sup> Regarding the third Manifestation, ie. *Manda d-hiia*, the following text, states:

*yuma tlitaia d mara d rabuta d hu manda d hiia bgauh 'štarar*<sup>5</sup>

The third day is *Mara-d-Rabutha*’s, he who is *Manda-d-Hiia* (Knowledge of Life); in it he created himself.<sup>6</sup>

To explain the puzzle of the gender of *Kušṭa* further, the issue may be looked at from a different angle:

*Dmuth Kušṭa* is believed to play the same role of female/wife/ counterpart to *Mara d-Rautha* ‘Lord of Greatness’.<sup>7</sup> Because of this (*heros gamos*) relationship between them, the “Great Creation” *qadaha*

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Veröffentlichung Nr.32, Berlin, 1960, p. 116 (I:18). Apart from *DQR*, this seems to be the only place that this expression is found in the available Mandaean literature.

1 See *DQR*, folio 7, i4, i5. Also see *ATS*, pp. 18, 111ff. (I No. 4ff.).

2 See *DQR*, 5.

3 Read the passage in *DQR*, 4-10.

4 See *MD*, p. 363b.

5 *ATS*, p. 20 (I No. 18).

6 *Ibid.* p. 116.

7 See *ibid.*

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*rba*' is depicted in the whole scroll of *DQR* as a way of capturing this relationship. In the title of the scroll the Great Creation is ascribed to *Dmuth Kušta*, the Mother, the 'Secret Mystery' '*raza kasia*,'<sup>1</sup> (of *Mara d-Rabuta*) who bears the 'Fruit'<sup>2</sup> of that 'Creation' (through the intervention of the Father, *Aba Rba d-Qara/Gabra/Mara d-Rabuta*).<sup>3</sup> For this reason, in the first passages in *DQR*, the following line can be read:

[4] *gabra d-šumH haka `šarar bhazin raza kasia utapsir d-dmut kušta šumH d-hu aba rba qadmaia* [5] *abīninun Irazia bazaruta haita.*(*DQR*, 4-5)

[4] The Being, whose name was formed in this, sacred mystery, and Explanation, whose name is *Dmuth Kušta* (the Likeness of Truth) who is *Aba Rba Qadmaia* (the First Great Father, [5] conceived mysteries in the Living Seed ....

[11]@ *hazin hu diuan d-qadaha rba šumH d-mara d-rabuta udmu Kušta bgauH šarara upalginun Irazia* [12] *Kulhun.* (*DQR*, 11-2)

[11] This *Diwan*'s name is *Qadaha Rba* (the Great Creation or Emanation) who is *Mara d-Rabuta* and *Dmut Kušta* (the Likeness of Truth) who were formed in it, and they divided all the mysteries ....

By contrast, in *ATS*, I no. 18, *Dmuth Kušta* is the Divine Manifestation of *Mara d-Rabuta*, in the Fourth day of the '*Paruanaita*'. Accordingly, *Dmuth Kušta* is treated as a male Manifestation, one of the five Kings and Mysteries of the Beginning.<sup>4</sup> However, Mandaean believe that, in this Fourth Manifestation, the elements of the Divine Male and Female emanate and are gathered in the form of *Dmuth Kušta*. They are necessary for the creation on three levels: 1) as part of the preparation for the following Fifth Manifestation, in which the 'Running Streams' are distributed by the Divider, *Mara d-Rabuta*; 2) as the first step in the

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1 See *DQR*, 4, 12f.

2 See the story of creation in *GR* regarding '*Pira-Rba*' (the Great Fruit).

3 And even *Manda d-Hiia*.

4 See *ATS*, pp. 116 f.

creations emanated from the self creation of *Mara d-Rabuta* through these Five Divine Manifestations, 3) as a parallel or another name of *Dmut Hiia* (the Counterparts of Life), who are also a 'divine male and female' from whom the world was called into being,<sup>1</sup> and both of whom are necessary for the creation because of their female/motherhood aspect in addition to their existing male/fatherhood aspect.<sup>2</sup>

For the above reasons, *Kušta* alone cannot possibly be a counterpart to *Manda d-Hiia*, as Buckley has argued in her further speculation.<sup>3</sup> In this case, the stronger possibility points towards *Dmut Kušta*. It is argued here that *Dmut Kušta* is, in fact, the *Dmuta* or counterpart of *Mara (d-Rabuta)*, since the possibility of the identification of *Kušta* with *Mara (d-Rabuta)* is strongly suggested in this work. The notion is that the *Dmut(a)* of *Kušta* is in parallel position with the *Rabuta* of *Mara*. This is very similar to that of *Mana* and *DmutH*, his counterpart.<sup>4</sup>

The following diagram summarizes these divine manifestations:<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See *SA*, p. 43 f.; *ATS*, p. 168 (II No. 229); *DQR*, 11 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Also see *ATS*, pp. 116 f., 117 n.1.

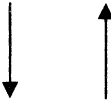
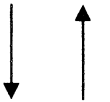
<sup>3</sup> See Buckley, Book Reviews, p. 207.

<sup>4</sup> See *DQR*, 22-23.

<sup>5</sup> For some references to this diagram, consult *DQR*, folio 2, folio 7, (esp. h5, i5); *ATS*, I No. 4-19.



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<b><u>Male &amp; Female (Counterpart)</u></b>	=	<b><u>Male &amp; Female (Counterpart)</u></b>
<i>mana udmuH</i>	=	<i>mara d-rabuta</i>
<i>[mana + (his counterpart) dmuta]</i>	=	<i>[mara + (his counterpart) rabuta]</i>
<i>dmuH hiia</i>	=	<i>dmuH kušta</i>
<i>[hiia + (his counterpart) dmuta]</i>	=	<i>[kušta + (his counterpart) dmuta]</i>
<i>dmuH kušta</i>	=	<i>dmuH rbia (The Great)<sup>1</sup></i>
<i>[kušta + (his counterpart) dmuta]</i>	=	<i>[rbia + (his counterpart) dmuta]</i>
<i>dmuH kušta</i>	=	<i>dmuH Manda (d-Hiia)</i>
<i>[kušta + (his counterpart) dmuta]</i>	=	<i>[Manda (d-Hiia) + (his counterpart) dmuta]</i>
		
<i>simat kušta</i>	=	<i>dmuH kušta</i>
<i>[kušta + (his counterpart) simat]</i>	=	<i>[kušta + (his counterpart) dmuta]</i>
<i>simat hiia</i>	=	<i>dmuH kušta</i>
<i>[hiia + (his counterpart) simat]</i>	=	<i>[kušta + (his counterpart) dmuta]</i>

For practising Mandaeans, as opposed to non-practising scholars, *kušta* as a word is understood usually as one of the male attributes of the

<sup>1</sup> See CP, 453: 2, consult the important prayer: CP, (No. 379).

Divinity. It is interpreted as a Divine Faith, Absolute Truth and Justice.<sup>1</sup> For example, it is often read in *GR*, '*d-kulH kušťa*', meaning 'who (he) is full of Truth'.

For the Našoraean, *Kušťa* represents the most important principle in their theological and mythological teachings. It is the key or the path to all of the Našoraean treasures, while at the same time, it is personified as the special divine Guardian Lightworld Being,<sup>2</sup> who is associated with the counterpart, *dmuta*. This divine Being leads them to the 'Path(s) of *Kušťa*', ie. *dirk(i)a d- kušťa*, '*uhra d- kušťa*, that is the 'Path of *Hiia*' - *dirkia d-hiia*,<sup>3</sup> '*uhra d-hiia*, that is, to the Path of *Naširuta*, the World of Light and eternal Life.<sup>4</sup> Thus, *Kušťa* plays the central rôle in the secret side of Mandaean lives, while the official rôle is still centred on *Hiia*, *Mara drabuta* and *Manda d-Hiia*.

As a consequence of the Našoraean belief system, this essay agrees with Sundeborg's statement that 'the step from *manda d-hiia* to *kušťa* is a very short one',<sup>5</sup> and that the secret name of *Manda d-Hiia* is 'revealed in the gnosis called *kushťa*'.<sup>6</sup> However, *kušťa*, as a principle, is revealed in the first instance, as a secret identification of *Mara d-Rabuta*, the First Divine Male Teacher and then *Manda d-Hiia* is revealed. But the *dmuta* that corresponds with *Kušťa* acts as a counterpart of *Mara d-Rabuta* and possibly of *Manda d-Hiia*. The reason for this is that *Manda d-Hiia* is identifiable with *Mara d-Rabuta*,<sup>7</sup> and that all of them are found in the same upper hierarchy of the Divine Manifestations, as we have mentioned before.<sup>8</sup>

Two examples from *DQR* explain how the Našoraean understand and explore this rôle of *Kušťa*. The first example reads as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Also see *MD*, pp. 209b ff.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, see *DM'L*, pp. 69f. (especially, lines 1312ff.).

<sup>3</sup> See *CP*, 87: 4.

<sup>4</sup> See *ATŠ*, pp. 19, 113 (I No. 9).

<sup>5</sup> Sundeborg, *Kushťa II*, p. 11, See also *idem*, *Kushťa I*, p. 42.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Both *Mara d-Rabuta* and *Manda d-Hiia* could compare with the Hermes of the *Poimandres*. In some Hermetic writings the identification, of both of them, with Hermes might be possible. Consult *SA*, p 112.

<sup>8</sup> See *ATŠ*, I No. 18. Also see *SA*, pp. 63 ff.

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*taga kušta hu*<sup>1</sup>

*Taga* (the Divine Crown), it is *Kušta*.

On the one hand, *Taga*, as part of the First Divine (priestly ritual) Clothes, ie. *Rasta*, here represents *Kušta*.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, *Taga* represents *Mara d-Rabuta*.<sup>3</sup> In addition, we have already revealed many aspects of the close relationship between *Kušta* and *Mara d-Rabuta*. As *Taga* may be identified with *Rasta* and *Mara d-Rabuta*, and as there is a close relationship between *Kušta* and *Mara d-Rabuta*, it can be argued that *Taga*, *Kušta* and *Mara d-Rabuta* seem identical.

Similar effects can be found in the second example. In the present example, however, *Našipa mamla* are connected and identified with *Kušta* and *Mara d-Rabuta*:

‘*Našipa mamla hu*’ (*DQR*, folio. 5, f4)

*Našipa*<sup>4</sup> (the Divine ...), it is *Mamla* (Divine Word).

On the one hand, *Našipa* here represents *Mamla*. On the other hand, *Mamla* represents *Kušta*, as in *DQR*, 47-8:<sup>5</sup>

[47] ... *mamla d-hu kušta ukušta d-hu mn mamla praš amințul d-mamla lišana hu lgițibH* [48] *briša uhaizak kušta mn ain hazin nbiț usaliq uatia lriša*

[47] ... For (because) *Mamla* is the tongue which is held in the head.  
[48] And then *Kušta* from this wellspring (source) springs upwards, rises and comes to the head ....

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<sup>1</sup> (*DQR*, folio 5, g4)

<sup>2</sup> Also, other supporting evidence is found in *DQR*, folio 5, 04, in which we read: ‘*kušta d-tagă ukušta d-națarta d-hu malkuta mn `dH pșaf`*’

<sup>3</sup> See, *DQR*, 22-3. Also see *DQR*, 58.

<sup>4</sup> *Našipa*, ritually, is a strip of long white linen worn by the priest around the neck. As such, it serves to hold the *Margna* staff in place when his hands are occupied and he is standing in water. *MD*, pp. 285b f. In the Nașoraean secret teaching, it refers to *Ziua d-Mana* (the Divine Radiance of the (Great) Mind).

<sup>5</sup> Also see *DQR*, 44ff.

In addition, because *Mamla* is the Divine Word from which everything emanates,<sup>1</sup> we read in *DQR*, 51-4, that the (first) Nine Divine alphabet letters emanate from this Divine Word.

Furthermore, *Mamla* represents *Mara d-Rabuta*, for He is the First Universal Being.<sup>2</sup> *Taga* and *Našipa* are also considered part of the First Divine<sup>3</sup> Clothes of *Mara d-Rabuta*. Thus, once again, *Kušta* identifies with *Mara d-Rabuta*.<sup>4</sup>

From the above, it can be seen how critically important understanding word play in Našoraean writing is for textual interpretation. More attention and care should be devoted to reconsidering the Našoraean philology and the importance of word play usage. Scholars must consider the secret Našoraean documents and their inner meanings, which are interconnected and interdependent. *DQR* is an excellent example of this.

Based on the preceding discussion, we may now modify the suggestion of Sundberg and conclude that the secret name of *Mara d-Rabutha*, as revealed in the Gnosis, Teacher and Saviour, is called *kušta*. His secret name is revealed also in the other, well-known Gnosis, Teacher and Saviour, as *Manda d-Hiia*. As a secret male aspect sharing its (female) Counterpart, *kušta* is revealed in *Dmut kušta*, *Dmut Manda (d-Hiia)*, *Dmut Hiia* and even in *Mna u-DmutH*.

By way of concluding this segment, Sundberg comments on Mandaean thought and speech:

The senses merge into each other. The living waters are knowledge and a staff of these waters becomes a tree covered with leaves turning into leaves in books. The waters running from above become light,

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1 See *SA*, pp. 17, 26.

2 See *Ginza I*.

3 See earlier, priestly ritual.

4 Interestingly, when the parts of the Divine Clothes are represented in the form of Lightword Beings, *Taga* remain in its top regards, as always represent *Mara d-Rabuta*, while *Našipa* represents and identifies with *Manda d-Hiia*, such as depicted in the scroll of *Alma Risaia Rba*, translated by E.S. Drower as *A Pair of Nasoraean Commentaries (Two Priestly documents). The Great 'First World' and the Lesser 'First World'* (hereafter *ARR*), Leiden, 1962.

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the light becomes fragrance, the fragrance becomes knowledge and the knowledge turns into an ascending soul. A wheel is an excellent symbolic representation of the principal world. When turning round it moves from above downwards and then ascends to its initial position, as *kušta* also does. The song of praise is sent from above and returns to the senders. The teacher who is put as a drawer before a heavenly plough turns into a waterbearer on earth, acting as a teacher. The transition from an earth-dweller to a saviour, or conversely, happens speedily, almost imperceptibly, in the middle of a sentence, perhaps in the middle of a word.<sup>1</sup>

As correct and elegant as Sundberg's description is, however, it is not sufficiently thorough. Neither part of Sundberg's study reveals clearly the idea of the 'First Divine Teacher' or discusses the relationship between *kušta* and *Mara d-Rabuta* or *Hiia* or *Dmuta* or *Mana*. This seems to be the most important missing link in Sundberg's studies. He directs too much effort to exploring the relationship with *manda d-Hiia* and not enough to the more significant issues.<sup>2</sup> No doubt, this is because his sources are mostly secondary or pre-published texts, and not original sources, which explore the relationship between *kušta* and *Mara d-Rabuta*, the Divine Primal Teacher.

One of the aims of the present work is to supply this missing link — as only academically trained initiation can do — via investigation of *DQR* and thus reveal the significance of this relationship, as well as the significance of the First Teacher in the context of the theatre of *Naširuta*, that is, deep knowledge or enlightenment.

### **An Introduction to the Theatre of *Naširuta* in the Light of *DQR***

The theatre in which the story of creation and its characters is enacted and re-enacted can be regarded as the basis of every aspect of Mandaean theology and philosophy. For the Našoraicans, i.e. Mandaeans enlightened with the Divine *Naširuta*, the story of creation is used to explain more than the birth of a religion or enlightenment. It covers

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> See Sundberg, *Kušta* II, pp. 41ff.; *idem*, *Kušta* I, pp 9 ff.

most of the wonders of the Cosmos, which are difficult to understand. But the Mandaean literature and traditions go further. They attempt to explain not only the Cosmos around us but also to show that there is a Cosmos within us, that is far greater than anything we sense with our physical faculties.

The Naṣoraean idea is as follows: the Cosmos within us holds the cosmic dualistic elements, eg. life and death, *Ruḥa* and *Nišimta*, good and evil, angels and demons, and so on. All are connected to the essence of the Heart and Mind, and spread to the physical and spiritual actions of humans. These cosmos without and within are represented as the source of mysteries and powers from which all knowledge and wisdom spring. Linguistically, *Naṣiruta* is from the root of *NṢR* II 'to keep secret' which is mentioned by Drower and Macuch as an older form of *NTR* 'to keep' or 'keep back'.<sup>1</sup> It is a Mandaean term with various meanings, such as: 'Divine Wisdom and Knowledge'; 'Naṣoraean Wisdom'; 'Redeeming Knowledge'; 'Esoteric (Naṣoraean and Mandaean) Knowledge'; 'Divine Teachings'; 'priestly teachings'; 'secret teaching'; 'secret knowledge'; 'priestly wisdom'; 'priestly arts'; 'secret doctrine'. Sometimes it is personified and used metaphorically as a female Lightworld Being/Power; it also provides many adjectives related to Mandaicism.<sup>2</sup>

The Mandaean term '*Naṣoraia*' ('Naṣoraean') is derived from the same root of *Naṣiruta*. It contains various meanings, such as 'the guardians, the enlightened people who received the Divine Knowledge and Wisdom of Life', and is usually used in reference to those who are devoted to their faiths; those who guard *Ginza d-Hiia* (the Treasures of Life); and those who are skilled in esoteric Knowledge. In addition, it refers to the Mandaean people who have attained *Naṣiruta* the True Enlightenment or the Enlightenment of the Truth, i.e. '*Kuṣṭa*', who becomes a '*Kṣiṭia*' Naṣoraean. Furthermore, it refers to the highest (religious) class in the Mandaean nation (or society).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *MD*, p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> See *MD*, p. 286a, 285b; W. Brandt, *Die mandäische Religion, ihre Entwicklung und geschichtliche Bedeutung*, Leipzig, 1889, 140: bottom; *MII* 4; *DM'L*, p. 7 n. 54; *SA* xiv (n.4), I, xv etc.

<sup>3</sup> See *MII*, p. 4; Consult *SA*, Brandt, *Die Mandäische Religion, ibid.*, p.14, n.1, 140; *MD*, pp. 285b, 306a.

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As stated earlier, Mandaean Naṣōraeans regard *Naṣiruta* as a great source of hidden knowledge and wisdom. It is that kind of Naṣōraean spiritual science that is discovered, experienced and developed by the Mandaean Naṣōraeans through their long existence. As we noted, the difficulties of the task are increased because of the use of many Mandaic terms and expressions.

Furthermore, the Naṣōraeans searched, wrote and illustrated the mysteries of existence, and through the various “arts of *Naṣiruta*”, especially through the strict enlightenment and priesthood systems. They were able to create a real world of wonders and to keep in a more intimate contact with the Divine Powers that govern the universe. Their research is the eternal quest for the purpose of life and living beings. The sacred symbols and mysteries that they developed not only reveal meanings but also provide comfort through the teachings that these symbols and mysteries signify the promise of the Ultimate Truth(s) that human beings seek.

The sacred mysteries ‘*Razia kasiia*’ of existence could not be communicated by ordinarily available means. The Divine Presence manifests itself through an infinite variety of symbolic devices and figures. Every form in nature is an expression of the universal energy which sustains all. The Mandaean Naṣōraean religion has developed its own unique language of symbolism and mysteries and a variety of sacred emblems,<sup>1</sup> images, myths and artistries, so that ordinary believers can become more easily convinced of the reality of the hidden things. Many of these symbols and mysteries remain unsolved. As indicated earlier, the proper way of knowing the essential nature of such symbols may lie in the correct interpretation of crude figures and devices of the first Naṣōraeans, which they inherit from the remote past.

The tradition of Mandaean Naṣōraean wisdom was ruled mainly by the ‘*Naṣiruta*’ influence, which obviously appears in other classic Mandaean literature, especially *GR* and *Q*. In *DQR*, *Naṣiruta* is understood as the third element associated with *Malkia* (Kings/Lightworld-Beings/Divine Powers) and *Razia* (Divine Mysteries). Such forms the Divine triangle of Knowledge and Wisdom (of the Universal Divine Pyramid),<sup>2</sup> and to establish the ‘Great

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<sup>1</sup> Consult *SA*, section IX (pp. 81-87).

<sup>2</sup> See *DQR*, folio1 and its commentaries and notes.

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Creation', ie. *Qadaha Rba* of the *Dmut Kušša*, by *Mara d-Rabuta*, who give them the (necessary) Power, Light and Life to establish/construct the Universe.

*hazin šišlam`il drabša d-nigdH*  
*mara d-rabuta haka d-kulhun malkia*  
*urazia unasiruta nahribH*  
*umitqaimibH*<sup>1</sup>

This is the banner, *Šišlam`il* (or: *Šišlam`il* the banner) which is unfurled by *Mara d Rabuta* (The Lord of Greatness) through whom all the Kings,<sup>2</sup> Mysteries<sup>3</sup> and *Naširoism*<sup>4</sup> shall shine and be established.

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<sup>1</sup> *DQR*, h.

<sup>2</sup> The term *malkia* here it means 'the Kings of Light'. These kings play a major role in every aspect of the (spiritual entity of the) Mandaean religion (especially in the story of creation). They are called 'the Angelic Beings' or, in other words, 'Lightworld (Enlightened) Beings' who are understood as an enthronement of spirits crowned through 'Divine Radiance' and 'Enlightened Knowledge'. They are known as 'Sons of the (Great) Life and Light' who dwell in their (Exalted) Kingdoms (i.e. the Worlds of Light). Thus the Mandaean (crowned) people are known by the same name and they are considered as their sons and representatives kings in this world. See *MD*, p. 244b, 243b, see also: M. Lidzbarski, 'Uthra and malakha,' in *Orientalische Studien, Theodor Nöldeke zum siebzigsten Geburtstag gewidmet*, Gissen, 1906, 537-45. *OST*, pp. 537-545; *MII*, 94 n.2; *ML*, xvi; E. D. Drower, *Coronation of Šišlam Rba*, Brill, Leiden, 1962), pp. VIII. ff. ; *GY*, 194:19, 372:2, 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Razia* has a wide range of meanings and uses (see *MD*, p. 420a). Here it refers to a multiple meaning of both "Divine Fundamental Elements" and 'symbolic secret organs of the Divine Cosmic Body' of the Universal Beig/Man. When both terms—'*malkia*' and '*razia*'—combine (esp. in the secret scrolls) they usually give a metaphorical meaning referring to the parallels of the creation and building the universe (worlds) (i.e. Cosmic (Universal) and Earthly Man; Cosmic and Earthly Embryo; Worlds of Light and Darkness).

<sup>4</sup> As variously noted above, the term *naširuta*, is normally used for: 'Divine Wisdom and Knowledge'; 'Našoraean Wisdom'; 'Redeeming Knowledge'; 'Esoteric (Našoraean and Mandaean) Knowledge'; 'Divine Teachings'; 'priestly teachings'; 'secret teaching'; 'secret knowledge'; 'priestly wisdom'; 'priestly arts'; 'secret doctrine'. Sometimes it is personified and used metaphorically as a female spirit as well as many adjectives in Mandaeanism. Also see *MD*, pp. 286a, 285b; W. Brandt, *Die mandäische Religion, ihre Entwicklung und geschichtliche Bedeutung, op cit.*, 140: bottom; *MII* 4; *DM'L* p. 7 n. 54; *S4* xiv (n.4), I, xv etc.



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The *Naşiruta* and the inner sanctum of the Mandaean priesthood are deliberately written in allegorical, obscure and symbolic forms to keep secret the great truths from the lay masses. This was probably done in order to protect the Naşoraean wisdom and the Great Teachings from falling into the wrong hands. The Naşoraicans especially the (Naşoraean) priests (who represented the majority of Naşoraean society)<sup>1</sup> were fearful that great wisdom and knowledge would be misused. They concealed their knowledge from the uninitiated, but revealed it to the enlightened of the Lightworld eings, who proved to be good and practical fellows of teaching. Like the evolution of the Great Creation '*Qadaha Rba*', teaching takes place mostly in every subject of Mandaean Naşoraean culture. Madaeans/Naşoreans learned, from the traditional system, that the Great Wisdom, Knowledge and Teachings could be articulated and understood. Through the method of mysteries, symbols, parable and analogy, and — in many cases — art, especially as in the work of *DQR*, the physical, mythological, theological, historical and philosophical ideas have been woven together and displayed as a wonderful and splendid sacred work of spiritual learning taught by Mandaean and Naşoraean schools throughout the generations.

The main purpose of *Naşiruta* is to know the Divine Truth of Life '*Kuşta d-Hii*'; to live in it and with it through Eternity. *Naşiruta* also helps the Mandaean person to experience the 'Divine Universal Revelation'. In order to achieve these Ultimate goals, Madaeism, that is to say, Naşoraicism, bases its philosophy on the story of creation. Through this, *Naşiruta* demonstrates the Divinity of Life and Enlightenment that is revealed during the earthly life of that person/being to create everlasting life and world of compassion and peace.

The signs of this story are found everywhere in Madaeism. In Mandaean literature, many parts, chapter, sections, prayers, religious explanations, arts and illustrations, and even some of the exercises, are designated for this purpose. The portion of the Mandaean oral literature that serves this purpose is not less so; i.e. details of the story are marked

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<sup>1</sup> See the first part of the ongoing project Naşoraia Hatem Saed, *The Mandaean Society*, to be published by International Mandaean Naşoraean Supreme Council in 2005.

and connected to all rituals, ceremonies, holidays, culture and tradition, as well as many aspects/sides of life, such as religion, society, economy and politics. Furthermore, the Našoraeans, through *Naširuta*, look at the Embryo and consider its Mysteries and Elements that form it, as another (Inner) Cosmos. They use it as a Mystical Connection or as a Cosmic Bridge between all the existing Worlds and the two Cosmos mentioned above.

*DQR* strongly confirms this story and its mysteries. In particular, it emphasizes the mystical side of the narrative. The most extensive idea in this mystical aspect of the story expresses the idea of the emanation of the Universal Divine/Perfect Being/Man and his Cosmos. There follows a brief descriptive sketch of the Universal Divine Being/Man in the work of *DQR*.

The attributes and deeds belonging to Him (and to His various Divine Organs) and His Divinity are included not only from the work of *DQR* but also from many passages of various Mandaean works and literature.<sup>1</sup> These texts yield many descriptions, of greater or lesser length, of this Universal Being/Man as a great force of creation as well as a universal model for the Heavenly and Earthly Enlightened Beings. This spiritual cosmic Being/Man has control over the whole universe. He is the Divine Primordial (Primal) Being/Man, that is '*Gabra*' (literally, 'man, person'). However, in the Mandaean literature, it is used widely as a term referring to various supernatural beings. As Drower states:

The word *gabra*, 'man', applied to any non-material being does not mean a human being, but a being anthropomorphically visualized, whenever the term *gabra* is applied to such a being in Mandaean literature it must be understood in this way.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, it is used also metaphorically here, and has the sense of the supernatural supreme Lightworld Being, who carries a Divine cosmic figure, which is revealed in many mystical, cosmic emanations (e.g. *Dmut Kušja*, *Dmuta*, *Aba Rba Qadmaia*, etc). These emanations are

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, *ATS*, *GR*, *Q*, *ARR*, *DM'L*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *SA*, p. 56.

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reflected especially in the Universal Divine Being/Man, and later, in his reflection and/or identification, as we will discuss below, as the Cosmic Adam, *Adam Kasia*, which is found also in the Rabbinic literature.<sup>1</sup> His material reflection, is *Adam Gabra Qadmaia*, (Adam the First [Earthly] Man/Being). This idea is found in many Gnostic sects. Also, it is encountered later, in the Qabbalistic Man (i.e. *Adam Qadmon*) and many other mystic traditions.<sup>2</sup>

In the Mandaean creation terminology, the Divine Primordial (Primal) Man is ‘*Gabra*’,<sup>3</sup> “Being” or ‘*Gabra Qadmia*’,<sup>4</sup> ‘the First (or, Primal) Being’ who emanated and emerged as a great Divine attribute ‘*Hiia Rbia*’ ‘The Great Life’. He is described in an important liturgical prayer named ‘*Qašaš*’, as the Eldest Emanation that preceded all Universal things. The Creation came about by his Divine Cry and Words. Consequently, the ‘First Life’ (*Hiia Qadmaia*) was established. Thereafter, other Lives emanated and all the Worlds in the Universe existed and were formed:

In the name of the Life and in the name of Knowledge-of-Life (*Manda-d-Hiia*) and in the name of that Primal Being who was Eldest and preceded water, radiance, light and glory, the Being who cried with His voice and uttered words. By means of his voice and His words Vine grew and came into being, and the First Life was established in its Abode.

And He spoke and said, “The First Life is anterior to the Second Life by six thousand myriad years and the Second Life anterior to the Third Life by six thousand myriad years and the Third Life more ancient than any ‘uthra by six thousand myriad years. And any

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1 For more details on *Adam Kasia*, consult *SA*; Also see *ATSŠ*, pp. 161 ff; *KL*, pp. 86,89.

2 *CP*, p. 1 (No.1: 11), *ATSŠ*, p. 180 n. 5; S. A. Pallis, *Mandaean Studies* (tr. E. H. Pallis), London, Copenhagen, 1926, pp. 202-203; *SA*; W. Brandt, *Die mandaische Religion, ihre Entwicklung und geschichtliche Bedeutung*, op. cit., p.199. See also *KL*, pp. 86, p. 86, n. 90.

3 *SA*, p. 56; see also *MD*, *ibid.*, p. 72a f. See also Naşoraia Hathem Saed, ‘The Creation in Mandaeanism’, *Studies in Mandaeanism*, ed. Majid Fandi Al-Mubarak, Sydney, 2000, pp. 101-120.

4 Note that this term is used also in another meaning referring to the Earthly First Man ‘Adam’. For some examples and references that discussed this term, see *MD*, p. 73a.

'uthra is older than the whole earth and older than the Seven Lords of the House by seven hundred and seventy thousand myriad years. There is that which is infinite.

At that time there was no solid earth and no inhabitants in the black waters. From them, from these black waters, Evil was formed and emerged, One from whom a thousand thousand mysteries proceeded and a myriad myriad planets with their own mysteries.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, *Gabra*, a Divine and Supernatural Being, His Nature and Mysteries, are unknown to any of other beings; thus, He is also sometimes called '*Gabra Nukraia*' 'the Incomprehensible/ Supreme/ Alien/Ineffable Being'<sup>2</sup> or only '*Nukraia*', especially in the frequent form of the opening prayer that begins most of the books, scrolls, chapter, prayers, etc. In this kind of prayer, the plural form '*Nukraiaa*' is used and it refers directly to the Great First Life '*Hiia Rbia*'. It usually deals with the '*Hiia (Rbia)*' in plural forms, probably because of its 'Divine Qualities', that is, One and Many at the same time. However, it may also refer to *Hiia (Rbia)* as 'the Great Living One(s)'/ 'God'.<sup>3</sup> But this again refers metaphorically to the '*Gabra Nukraia*' who is identified also with the Great (First) Life in an alternative/ reciprocal way.<sup>4</sup>

If we turn our attention to the work of *DQR*, we find many references to that Divine Being/Man '*Gabra*' and His concepts and functions. After the opening vocational prayer (lines 1-3), we notice the word '*Gabra*', which is the real textual beginning of *DQR*. Here, it reveals the nature of its subject; that is, the Divine Universal Being/Man and His Creations. It begins thus:

[4] The Being, whose name was formed in this, sacred mystery, and Explanation, whose name is *Dmuth Kuşta* (the Likeness of (the

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<sup>1</sup> CP, (no, 1). Also, cf. other translations which appear in *CP*, p. 1; *SA*, p. 4, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'strange', 'foreign'. In addition the above, it refers theologically to the Divine Power that is removed and transcends space and time. See *MD*, p. 293b; *ARR*, p. 1, n.1.

<sup>3</sup> See K. Rudolph, *Mandeism*, p. 13; *MD*, p. 143a-b.

<sup>4</sup> See *CP*, (No. 1); *ARR*, p. 1; R. Macuch, *Handbook of Classical and Modern Mandaic*, Berlin, 1965, p. 30; *AM*, p. 1.

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Divine) Truth) who is *Aba Rba Qadmaia* (the First Great Father), [5] conceived mysteries in the Living Seed.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, we discover the beginning of the above mentioned in the ‘*Qašaš*’ prayer, CP, no.1. Some of its details are copied and explained in Naṣoraean mystical and symbolic ways in several places in *DQR*.<sup>2</sup> The significance of the story is realized when it identifies the Universal Being/Man ‘*Gabra*’ as *Mara d-Rabuta* (Lord of Greatness) with ‘*Mamla*’ the Divine “Word” as a creation method, used by the Creator Universal Being/Man. That “Word” passes through a continuing and unlimited Divine Life System within the Divine Body of the Universal Being/Man.

*DQR* simplifies that System and declares, in mystical and metaphorical language, that it works dynamically. The ‘Word’ is emanated as ‘*Andašata*’—‘Thoughts’ which creates the ‘Divine Will’. The Will begins in that system like the ‘Primal Word’ has begun and flourished from the ‘Essence’ (*Liba*), which is held by the ‘Head’ (*Riša*) and developed by the ‘Brain System’ (*Muqra*). From the ‘*Muqra*’, the ‘Word’ emanates and is hold fast in the ‘Tongue’ (*Lišana*) which makes ‘Speech’. The ‘Image/Likeness’ (*Dmuta*) of the ‘Word’ is formed in the ‘Ear’ and becomes housed in the ‘Mind’. The ‘Word’ at this stage decides what to create and the kind of result that is to follow. The ‘(Divine) Truth’ (*Kušṭa*), emanates from the ‘Word’. The ‘Word’ (*Mamla*) becomes equivalent to ‘*Kušṭa*’ and ‘*Lišana*’. At certain stage, from the ‘Word’, as a Divine Wellspring and Source of Creation, Nine Divine Words ‘*Pugdamas*’ emanated, each representing a letter; they are the first nine Mandaic Alphabet letters as listed in the following passage of *DQR*, 53-54:

<i>bšuma</i>	<i>d-hiia</i>	<i>ubšumH</i>	<i>d-manda</i>	<i>d-hiia</i>	<i>ubšuma</i>	<i>d-hahu</i>	<i>gabra</i>	<i>qadmaia</i>
a	b	g	d	h	u	z	H	ṭ

A- In the name

B- of *Hiia*

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<sup>1</sup> *DQR*, 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> For example, as in folio 2.

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**G-** and in the name

**D-** of *Manda*

**H-** *d-Hiia*

**U-** and in the name

**Z-** of the (this)

**H-** *Gabra*

**Ṭ**<sup>1</sup>- *Qadmaia*

In the name of *Hiia* ‘Life’ and in the name of *Manda d-Hiia* ‘Knowledge of Life’ and in the name of *Gabra Qadmaia* ‘the/(this) First Being’.

These words are exactly the same first nine words in the prayer of ‘*Qašiš*’, ie. *CP*, no. 1 (I: 9 ff.), mentioned above.

In regard to both of the passages in *CP* and *DQR*, the following points are confirmed:

1. The Divine Father is the Divine Word that represents the following Divinities:

The Word = Wellspring = *Dmuta* (Likeness/Shape) = *Kušta* (Truth) = Mother = Womb = *Naširuta* (the Source of Enlightenment/ Knowledge/ Wisdom) = Head (and its Organs: eg Tongue, Eye, Ear, Mouth, Lips, etc.) = Body (and its Organs: eg. Heart) = Universal Perfect Being/Man, that is, *Mara d-Rabuta* (the Lord of Greatness).

2. From the Father, as this Divine Word (= the Divine Truth, ‘*Kušta*’), the first Nine Divine Words emanate. That is exactly what emerged in the Divine Wellspring of the Alphabet (= *Naširuta*) from which the first Nine Wellsprings emanate. Each one of these Wellsprings represents the Divine Letter that emanates and forms it. The First Wellspring ‘□’ is like a Fertile Divine Egg, or Fertile Embryo, that divides and multiplies until the Birth from the Embryo as Universal Adam, that is, *Adam Kasia*, who becomes also a Father and Archetype of the Earthly Embryo, that is, Adam (*Pagria*).

3. The First Divine (Mandaic) Letter ‘O’ ‘A’ = not only the First Father, but also = Divine Wellspring (the Mother) = The First Divine Word = The Divine Universal Being/Man.

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<sup>1</sup> These are the first 9 letters of the Mandaic alphabet and each one represents one box containing one word from the first prayer of *CP* (No. I), that talks about creation.

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4. In spite of the mystical shape that framed each one of these Nine Divine Words, the original shape is unlimited, enclosed inner and outer Circles/Wellsprings.<sup>1</sup> This applies also to the other Mandaic Divine Words and Letters.<sup>2</sup>

5. It is important to connect these Nine Words, Wellsprings, Letters and other emanations with the appropriate equivalent texts, fragmentary texts, symbols, illustrations, and with each other, not only in the same work as found in many examples of *DQR*, but also in the other Mandaean and Naṣōraean works and traditions.

*DQR*, by its mystical forms of explanation, connects and merges together two main kinds of Mandaean creation stories: the standard, official one as recorded in *GR*, *Q*, *JB*, etc, and the mystical ones in the secret scrolls. As indicated above, such suggests that the reader of *DQR* must be proficient in the Mandaean Naṣōraean theology as well as being versed in the Naṣōraean esoteric teaching as well as the symbolism of *Naṣiruta*. Regarding the significance of *Naṣiruta* and *Malalia*, the Divine Words (of *Kuṣṭa*), that is preserved by a special highly respected group of Naṣōraeans named ‘*Kṣiṭia*’, we may conclude this part of the work by viewing three examples from *GR*, which instruct the faithful Mandaean to equip themselves with the ‘Divine Weapons’. In the first two, the ‘Divine Weapons’ are *Naṣiruta* and *Malalia d-Kṣiṭia*:

*zariz napṣaikun bzaina d-lahua mn parzla zainaikun naṣiruta  
umalalia kṣiṭia*<sup>3</sup>

Equip/strengthen yourselves with Weapon(s) that is not of Iron.  
Your Armour is *Naṣiruta* (Naṣōraean Divine Wisdom) and the True  
(Divine) Words<sup>4</sup>

These ‘Divine Weapons’ are brought from the Realm/Place of Light. They are the ‘Divine Weapons/Arms’ that offered to help *Niṣimta* (the soul):

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see *DQR*, folios. 1, folio 7.

<sup>2</sup> For example, see *DQR*, 58 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *GY*, 25: 20 f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ginza*, p. 27; *MD*, pp. 170b, 286a.

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*zainik naširuta [u]malalia kšīṭia d-atulik nm atar nhur<sup>1</sup>*

Your Armour is *Naširuta* (Našoraean Divine Wisdom) and the True (Divine) Words that are brought to you (i.e. *Nišimta*) from the Realm/Place of Light.<sup>2</sup>

The ‘Divine Weapons’ in the third example are *Naširuta* and *Haimanut Kušṭa*:

*zariz napšaikun bzainia d-lau mn parzla hua zainaikun naširuta uhaimanut kušṭa<sup>3</sup>*

Your Armour is *Naširuta* (Naširoism) and faith in *Kušṭa* (the Divine (Words) Truth)<sup>4</sup>

From examining all the above points, we find that the Universal Primal Being/Man, ‘*Gabra*’, as *Mara d-Rabuta*, is well presented in the work of *DQR*. In order to know more about the Mandaean Našoraean Universal Being/Man, we should discuss some views presented in various texts. In doing so, we may explain the important concepts concerning Him that appear in connection with *DQR*. He appears at the beginning as Self-Emanation, ‘*d-min napših apriš*’, ‘*Rba u’Laia*’ ([absolute] of Greatness and Loftiness). In some Mandaean literary sources, the Našoraean Teachings describe His appearance in multiple ways and from different angles. The best example, which describes the united and true nature of the complex aspects of the (original) Universal Being/Man ‘*Mara d-Rabuta*’ (Lord of Greatness) as five manifestations in one, is the following dedication to Him on the five commemoration days, the ‘*Paruanaiia*’:

For the first day belongeth to the King of kings, Father of all the worlds: in it He who is great and lofty created Himself. The second day is that in which the Lord of Celestial Majesty created himself. The third day is *Mara-d-Rabutha*’s, he who is *Manda-d-Hiia*

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1 *GS*, 76: 7.

2 Cf. *Ginza*, p. 508.

3 *GY*, 48: 8 ff.

4 Cf. *Ginza*, p. 45; *MD*, *ibid*.



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(Knowledge of Life); in it he created himself. The fourth day is Mara-d-Rabutha's, he who is Dmuth-Kušṭa; he created himself therein. On the fifth day, which is the day of Commemorations, running streams were distributed, for he, Mara-d-Rabutha, Divider of running-streams, created himself therein.

For they are five Kings, in them they created themselves, and they are the five mysteries of the Beginning in which spirit and soul rejoice (for?) the seven crowns that are placed upon them.<sup>1</sup>

Lady Drower comments extensively on this text. She explains that '[a]s a *Mara-d-Rabutha* created himself on each of the five days the meaning appears to be that there were five manifestations of one *Mara-d-Rabutha*.'<sup>2</sup>

On the one hand, we can look at this description of the creation of the Universal Divine Being/Man (ie. *Mara d-Rabuta*) as a first stage of His emanation, which thereafter formed the First Cosmic (Universal) Embryo. This Embryo appears later as a Cosmic Being/Man called 'Adam Kasia' or 'Adakas', 'the (Divine) Secret, or Hidden Adam' or, in other words, 'the (Divine) Cosmic Adam'.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the creation of the Universal Divine Being/Man in Mandaeism can be regarded as the original and primary stage that maps out the manifestation of Archetype Heavenly or Cosmic Being/Man, 'Adam Kasia'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *ATS*, p. 116 (I:18).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, n.8, see also *ibid.*, n.10 and p. 117, n.1.

<sup>3</sup> For further information on *Adam Kasia* and *Adakas*, see, *MD*, p. 7a; *SA*, pp. 21-38; W. Brandt, *Die mandäische Religion, ihre Entwicklung und geschichtliche Bedeutung*, *op. cit.*, pp. 36 f., n. 2; W. Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, Göttingen (1907), pp. 34, 218; *MII*, pp. 54, 73, 253; Pallis, *Mandaean Studies*, p. 108 No. 3; W. Brandt, *Mandäische Schriften*, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>4</sup> Esoteric inner realms beyond the senses, accessible only through purification and extraordinary meditative practices, as well as the Archetypal Being/Person, have their counterparts in other religious traditions such as Buddhism as it developed, and is found in contemporary practice. Other work in progress anticipates the cross-fertilisation of such esoteric ideas and related practices; see Naṣoraia Hatham Saed and Edward F. Crangle, *To Know the Great Mind: The Origin and Development of the Mandaean Means to Enlightenment*, forthcoming.

***Adam Kasia***

Thus, from this information, we understand that there is an exchange in the role that identifies *Adam Kasia* with *Mara d-Rabuta*. Further, this enables him to play the same role as the Universal or Cosmic Divine Being/Man, who later becomes an archetype of ‘the First (completed) Earthly Man’, ‘*Adam*’, ‘*Adam (Gabra) Qadmaia/Pagria*’.<sup>1</sup>

The symbolism of the Alphabet in this story of creation is mentioned in many of these passages as well. Consider the following example:

And the great and lofty one who is the Soul that sitteth in the celestial firmament spoke (and said) “Praised be the First Great Radiance! I am *Mara-d-Rabutha*, Father of ‘uthras. Praised be the Great First Light, the Wellspring (or Cloud) of Light, mother of the twenty-four letters of the alphabet, who is my Spouse. Praised be the great first Wellspring and Datepalm; for the Datepalm is the Father and I, *Mara-d-Rabutha* was created by Him. Praised is the occult *Tanna* which dwelleth within the great occult first Wellspring, for from that mystery of Seed placed within the Jordan proceed all worlds and generations—fruit-trees, vines, trees, fish, winged birds, swarming creatures and sprouting growth. They drink thereof and are male and female: they become pregnant, increase and are multiplied. Praised be *Šišlam-Rba* who sitteth on the bank of the Wellspring and Datepalm.<sup>2</sup>

Lady Drower recognizes this point. She mentions it on several occasions, especially in her book *The Secret Adam*, where she performs many comparative studies to explain the idea of the Cosmic Mystical Man, *Adam Kasia*, and his ideal world of the Archetypes, named ‘*Mšunia*

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<sup>1</sup> See *MD*, *ibid*; *KL*, p. 86. This point appears clearly in the Mandaean literature, especially in the secret scrolls such as *ATŠ*, *DQR*, *ARR*, *Diwan Mašbuta d-Hibil-Ziwa*, *DM’L*, etc, and particularly in many mystical passages that appear in both *ATŠ* and *DQR*.

<sup>2</sup> *ATŠ*, pp. 110-111 (1:3-5). It is also quoted with some changes in *SA*, p. 18. Verses of this type refer to, and are connected to, the main prayer as a source, that is the prayer named ‘*Mšaba Ziwa*’. *CP*, 171. See *SA*, pp. 11, 18.

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*Kušta*,<sup>1</sup> in Mandaeanism and other beliefs. We will identify some key points in her important work and consider some of her commentaries in order to highlight the key issues in Mandaean theology. For example, she comments on the ‘Great and Lofty One’ (ie. *Mara d-Rabuta*) in the recent prayer of *ATS* and confirms that ‘the secret teaching explains this as Adam Kasia’.<sup>2</sup> On the same page, she continues her comment by introducing another mystical passage. She writes:

In the description of the first assumption of the crown of priesthood in the ether word, Adam-Kasia—as *Mara-d-Rabutha*—had none to initiate him or teach him, since He Himself is Initiator and Teacher.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, in an important passage at the first book of *ATS*,<sup>4</sup> she explains that:

... [t]he First Adam is a vast shape embracing all that is to exist in the future cosmos. As the First Priest he is identified in one fragment of *ATS* with *Mara-d-Rabutha*, and he sets on himself the crown of priesthood, which is the crown of intermediation between the worlds of light and those of matter, himself. The ecclesiastical test for literacy and knowledge of the holy books is pre-figured; he “enunciated the alphabet and recited the Book of Souls.”<sup>5</sup>

In order to clarify the idea of the ‘identification’ and personification of the Supreme Manifestations (or Emanations), Drower devotes a separate chapter in her book to this important subject. This chapter is entitled ‘Personified Emanations and “Uthras”’.<sup>6</sup> Regarding *Mara d-Rabuta*, she writes:

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1 ‘Roughly, “the sublimated of Truth” – a world of ideals in which the prototypes of all earthly things and beings exist’. *MD*, p. 280a. For further information see also, W. Brandt, *Die mandäische Religion*, *op. cit.*, pp. 38 n. 1, 53 n. 1, 60, 154, 160 n. 1; *MII*, pp. 54 ff.; *SA*, pp. 39-46; Pallis, *Mandaean Studies*, pp. 101-104.

2 *SA*, p. 18, n.1.

3 *Ibid.*

4 See *ATS*, pp. 117ff: (I:19ff),

5 *SA*, pp. 26-27. See also p. 26, n.3.

6 *SA*, pp. 56-65.

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This identification of one 'uthra with another often happens with *Mara-d-Rabutha* (Lord of Greatness) .... It is extremely difficult to detect when *Mara-d-Rabutha* is mentioned in a text, whether the allusion is to the priestly teacher or to the divine Teacher, Adam Kasia.<sup>1</sup>

However, in regards to the creation story and with respect to her analysis, she does not explain how this identification comes about between *Mara-d-Rabuta* and *Adam Kasia*. It is arguable that Lady Drower has not gone far enough. She mentions the identification of *Mara-d-Rabuta* with *Adam Kasia*, but fails to understand that there is a transferring and adopting of these qualities of *Mara-d-Rabuta* to *Adam Kasia*. As we can see in the mystical secret teachings, the mystical Divine Being/Man, *Adam Kasia*, as identified with *Mara d-Rabuta*, receives and adopts all the concepts of the Universal Being/Man from *Mara d-Rabuta*. He is found in the literature to be also the Father of 'Uthras, the Teacher and the Initiator, exactly like *Mara d-Rabuta*. Furthermore, *Adam Kasia* appears in the mystical Naşoraean creation story not only as the Universal Being/Man but also as the 'Universal Womb', 'Universal Embryo' and 'Universal Body', through which all the souls of the Earthly (human) Adams (the born, living and dying) are formed and reconstructed in a Universal Body; finally, they are able to contact and touch, raise, enter and unite with the Ideal World '*Msunia Kuşta*' and with the Worlds of Light.

To understand this point and the dynamic way in which this transference works, we might turn to the Mandaean Naşoraean rituals and their mystical acts, and illustrate their search for the most fitting interpretation of this mystical story of creation. On this subject, the *Masiqta* is the best example to look at. Once again, we may turn to Drower's brief view on that matter:

Adam Kasia, the Mystic or Secret Adam who preceded the human Adam called *Adam pagria* (physical man) by many myriads of years, for the macrocosm preceded the microcosm and the Idea of the cosmos was formed in human shape, so that through the creation of the one the creation of the other ensued. In like manner, according to

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

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the secret doctrine, as we shall see in a later chapter, it is through and because of Adam Kasia that a disembodied soul obtains its spiritual body. The detailed description of the construction of Adam Kasia's Body is understood when the ritual manuscripts are read, for every act in the *masiqta* is represented as part of the process by which the new and spiritual body is built up for the departed soul from plasma to perfection within the cosmic Womb.<sup>1</sup>

Based on the above discussion, we can specify three parallel and corresponding models in the Naṣoraean mystical story of creation:

1. The Universal Divine Perfect Being/Man, *Mara d-Rabuta*, and His reflection, Cosmic mystical Adam, ie. *Adam Kasia*.
2. The Earthly First Man (Adam), '*Adam Gabra Qadmaia*' or '*Adam Pagria*'.
3. The Cosmic and Earthly Embryo which they represent repeatedly as mediator or as a bridging of the vast upper and lower worlds (ie. Worlds of Light and Worlds of Darkness) which are so far from and so utterly different to each other.

Interestingly, the mystical Naṣoraean story of creation in *DQR* purposefully neglects to mention anything about *Adam Kasia* and his Ideal World, '*Msunia Kuṣṭa*'. This is noted in similar passages in *ATŠ* (*DTP*), where *Adam Kasia* and his world are referred to also in numerous other passages.<sup>2</sup> However, *DQR* indeed recognises them, but does so in hidden and metaphorical ways. Examples of these ways are apparent if we look at the way *DQR* talks about *Mara d-Rabuta*, and the creation of the '*Biniana*'<sup>3</sup> (the Construction [of the Universe])". This is especially so in conjunction with the Alphabet, Wellspring and *Naṣiruta* as instruments in forming the Universal Primal Being/Man in the Ether-World, *Mara d-Rabuta*, which implies an indirect reference to *Adam Kasia*, or *Adakas* (*Mana/ziwa*) as he is identified with *Mara d-Rabuta* in this kind of story.<sup>4</sup> To clarify, we can follow and compare the same story

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1 *SA*, p. 22.

2 See for example, *ATŠ*, *Msunia Kuṣṭa*, appears in I: 283 (3 times); I:284 (once); I: 286 (3 times).

3 See, for example *DQR*, folios 1, 2.

4 See, for example, the passage in *DQR*, 84 ff., 93.

with other similar passages in *ATŠ*.<sup>1</sup> Drower describes this passage of *ATŠ* (I: 260) as mystically obscure, but she also notes that it concerns the forming of the Primal Man, *Adam Kasia* who, in her view, is something like ‘the cosmos in the shape of physical man’.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, there are two figures of Lightworld Beings in the illustrated work of *DQR*.<sup>3</sup>

1) The first figure is called ‘*dmuta d- nišimta d-mana niha*’ (the Image/Likeness of the Soul of *Mana* the Gentle).<sup>4</sup>

2) The second figure is in folio 6 and is called ‘*mana rba kabira*’ (The Great Majesty [or: Mighty] *Mana*).<sup>5</sup>

Both figures could be identified with *Adakas*. In order to confirm the relationship between *Adam Kasia* (or *Adakas: Mana/Ziwa*), *Nišimta*, *Mana (Niha/Rba (Kabira))* and *Mara d-Rabuta*, we should evaluate some other Mandaean literary sources. In *Ginza Rba* and other literature, *Adakas (Adam Kasia)* appears as the metaphysical Adam, ‘the wholly spiritual humanity ... the microcosm conceived not only as an Idea but as an Ideal’. *Adakas* is ‘Adam the microcosm’s guardian, his soul, his *mana*, a messenger sent to him, a “youthful boy”’.<sup>6</sup>

He appears in *GY*, 245:13ff as *Adakas Mana/Kasia*,<sup>7</sup> who proclaims himself to be “the Head, *Adakas*, the occult *mana* who came from Its place. Our name is ‘Offspring’, the ‘World of Law’ they call me. Our name is Resurrection of Life, our name is Tanna, our name is ‘living flames’. And I, my name is secret: it came from the House of Life. I am *Adakas*, the Radiance [i.e. *Ziua*] which came from the Secret Place”.<sup>8</sup>

To clarify further, we might read Drower’s comments on the useful passage in *GY*, 243 ff, which contains the references to ‘*Adakas-Ziwa*,

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1 See *ATŠ*, pp. 181f., I: 260f.

2 *SA*, p. 19; see also *ibid.*, p. 19, n.6 and p. 20.

3 See *DQR* folio 3.

4 See *MD*, pp. 246b-247a.

5 See *MD*, *ibid.*

6 *SA*, 35. See also *GY*, pp. 243 ff.; *SA*, pp. 35-36.

7 *Adakas* is a contraction of *Adam Kasia*. See *SA*, p. 35; *MD*, p. 7

8 *SA*, pp. 35, 36.

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the Secret Adam, as over-soul of humanity'. He is said to fall into Adam and Eve, the parents of mankind, after twins have been born to them.<sup>1</sup> Lady Drower goes further in this passage and refers to the same context,<sup>2</sup> describing in a short and precise way, *Adakas* and his function in the cosmic figure:

... Adakas claims to be chief of all mysteries, protector of the race of mankind over the earth, guardian of the human foetus in the womb of human mothers, and president over its birth. In short, Adakas is the guardian-spirit, the *dmuta*, the Over-soul of the human race, of all the descendants of *Adam Pagria*—his small reflection on the material earth.<sup>3</sup>

At the end of her book, Drower again tries to sum up the mystery of the Hidden Adam as an intermediary between the Worlds of Light and the Earthly world through the rituals, especially the '*Masiqta*'. She states:

To sum up this mystery once again: the Hidden or Secret Adam is an emanation from the Great Life which appeared in the shape of Man and of material man who appeared later on earth. In this highest aspect, *Adakas-Ziwa*, the mystic Light-Adam, he is re-created at every *masiqta*, for he represents sublimated humanity, a state in which the souls of the departed who no longer 'stand in the body' pass after they have been provided by this re-creation with a new and spiritual body. In and by him they pass upward into 'worlds of light' and eventually, with him, into the final union with the Absolute which is above human imagination.<sup>4</sup>

Although the writer of *DQR* did not compose a detailed creation story in his text, he was apparently satisfied with concentrating on and emphasizing the original larger figure of the Universal Being/Man, that is, *Mara d-Rabuta* and the other details of the Mystical Creation story in a succinct way that is proportional to the illustrated creation map in the

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1 *SA*, p. 36

2 *GY*, 244:14.

3 *SA*, p. 38.

4 *SA*, p. 105.

work of *DQR*.<sup>1</sup> The Naṣoraean story of creation in the secret scrolls offers the essential details and substantiates the main source of the story which appears in *GR*, *Q*, *JB*, giving a powerful mystical essence to the story of creation in general, and to the Mandaean Naṣoraean rituals, which are considered holy and essential to Mandaean and Naroreans' lives.

It is impossible to overstate one's appreciation of the amount of ground covered by the author of *DQR*. With great skill, *DQR* seems to deal with these important and complex ideas of the story of creation in all aspects, sometimes even from different angles, in a precise, concise and elegant way, citing many references which are based on other Mandaean writings.<sup>2</sup>

The author skilfully adopts a typical metaphorical Naṣoraean style: i.e. one which makes full use of terms, expressions, idioms, codes, metaphors, and figures of speech, and presents ideas clearly while citing many examples throughout the whole scroll. A good example of this is the following references to water in *DQR*.

In a number of Mandaic expressions, water is used in connection with life. Because of this connection, there are special terms for Water of Life, eg. *mia* (*Hiia*). In Mandaean thought, the Water of Life first springs forth in the World of Light as the fifth emanation of *Mara d-Rabuta* (the Lord of Greatness)<sup>3</sup> in the form of 'Rhaṭas' (Running Streams) that are distributed by the Divider of running-streams 'Rhaṭia' immediately after the emanation of *Dmut Kuṣṭa* (the fourth emanation of *Mara d-Rabuta*) as we mentioned earlier.<sup>4</sup>

In various documents, these streams are also called 'Rhaṭia d-Mia Hiia' (Streams of Living Water).<sup>5</sup> At other times, they are named

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<sup>1</sup> The reader can find the full details in *ATS* and the other secret texts, which might also be read in connection with other important additions to the significant fundamental text, especially in *GR*, *Q* and *JB*.

<sup>2</sup> Especially *ATS* (particularly *DTP*), *GR*, *Q*, *JB*, etc.

<sup>3</sup> A kind of "running stream" which were distributed by the "Divider of running streams" "*Mara d-Rba*".

<sup>4</sup> *ATS*, 116-117 (I:118), p. 117, n.1.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, *GY*, p. 308:4, *ML*, p. 7: *Paen*. See also the individual stream 'Rhatia' of Living Water which appears in many other prayers and passages in several Mandaean works such as *CP*, p. 6:11 and the scroll of *DM'L*, line 185. Also see *MD*, p. 419a.



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'*Rhaṭia d-Mia Hiuarua*' (Streams of White Water).<sup>1</sup> Both of these are connected with their Wellsprings '*Aina d-Mia Hiia*' (The Wellspring of Living Water), and '*Aina d-Mia Hiuarua*' (the Wellspring of White Waters) respectively.<sup>2</sup> They also appear in many other Mandaean works.<sup>3</sup> All the aforementioned streams and wellsprings are from one original Divine Source that is '*Rhaṭia*' of the Beginning, because they are from the Divine Source of One Emanation of the Lord of Greatness '*Mara d-Rabuta*' in His Five Manifestations.<sup>4</sup>

These manifestations represent five kings in One King; that is, the King of Kings, and they have been assembled and their mysteries of creation revealed in the fifth day called the 'Day of Commemorations'. Therefore, the First Divine Water appears in the form of 'Running-Streams' on the fifth day as the Universal 'Womb' that produces and nourishes Life. Consequently, the Kingdom of the Lord (of Greatness) combines five Divine Mysteries — Kingship, Celestial Majesty, Knowledge of Life, Image/Likeness of Truth, and Running Streams. They may all be referred to as the mysteries of the 'Water of Life'. They are the Mysteries of Beginning, or, in other words, the Mysteries of the 'Head',<sup>5</sup> the first part in the dynasty of the Divine Universal Being/Man '*Mara d-Rabuta*', on which the Divine Crown is set.<sup>6</sup>

In addition,<sup>7</sup> according to the Naṣoraean mystical teachings, the 'Head' is considered as a World as well as the other Organs in the 'Divine Cosmic Body' of '*Štuna*' of the Universal Being/Man.<sup>8</sup> The references to the Divine 'Head' of the Universal Being/Man appear in other places of the extensive mystical secret scroll, *ATŠ*.

In the case of *DQR*, many different references to the Divine 'Head' are mentioned. Some of these references appear for the first time and

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1 For example, see *DC*, 34, line 115; *MD*, *ibid*.

2 Interestingly, both of these Wellsprings are illustrated and appear in parallel in *DQR*, folio 1.

3 *MD*, pp. 15 a-b, 142a, 143a, 265a f. have already mentioned some of these works that they appeared in.

4 *ATŠ*, 116-117 (I:18), *ibid*.

5 *ATŠ*, *ibid.*, and p. 117, n.2.

6 *Ibid.*, and (I:19f).

7 At this point, it would be useful to explore this concept deeper. We will later return to continue with the main example regarding the water and life.

8 Consult, for example, the passage in *ATŠ*, pp. 163 ff.; *SA*, pp. 27ff.

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come in a new form of description.<sup>1</sup> A few others are similar to that in *ATŠ*, particularly in *DTP*, as we can see in the following passages quoted from these scrolls.

*DQR*, 22-23 states:

*ana hu mara d-rabuta d-taga rba šumia urabuta riša hu d-rušumia uklilia umalalia bgauH lgiš.*

I am *Mara* [23] *d Rabuta*. ‘The Great Crown’ is My Name, and *Rabuta* (Greatness or Majesty) is the Head which holds *Rušumas* (the Signs), *Klilas* (the Wreaths or Crowns) and *Malalas* (the Words).

*DQR* translates the expression as ‘Signs, Words and Wreaths’ in plural form, probably to indicate a universal meaning. A phrase similar to this phrase but produced in singular form reads:

*mara d-rabuta taga d-razia hu urabuta d-riša hu d- rušuma umamla uklila bgauH lgiš*

*Mara-d-Rabutha* is the Crown of mysteries and teaching. He is Majesty; he is the Head to which the Sign, Word and Wreath (crown) pertain.<sup>2</sup>

Lady Drower appears to have mistranslated and experienced difficulties in clarifying what is here argued to be the accurate meaning. The major difficulty is to discern who is/are the speaker(s), not just in this phrase but in the whole passage. An examination of another example, also from *ATŠ*,<sup>3</sup> clarifies this matter further.

*Umara d-rabuta asiq lnapšiH d-hu riša* (DC.6 has: *riš*) *urušuma utaga uklila umamla bgauH škin umahzita riha basima u’udna d-šama kul* (DC.6 has: *ukul*) *mindam*’

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<sup>1</sup> Several examples are connected generally to these references; e.g. *Riša d-Ama* and *Riša d-Dara*, in *DQR* line 9.

<sup>2</sup> *ATŠ*, p. 174 (I: 245).

<sup>3</sup> See *ATŠ*, pp. 232-233 (II: 114): (DC.36).

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And Mara d-Rabutha set Himself above all, for He is the Head, the Sign, the Crown and the Wreath. The Word dwelleth in Him and Vision, fragrant perfume and the Ear which heareth all things.<sup>1</sup>

These examples reveal the important role of *Mara d-Rabuta* as a Divine Teacher and Initiator. Herein, Drower comments on this text and we are again reminded of the identification and the hidden exchanging in the names of the Universal Man as a Arch-priest and *Rba (Rbai)*. She says that:

The name ‘Mara-d-Rabutha’ is given to Adam Kasia in his aspect of Arch-priest and Initiator into the higher rites. A priest who initiates a novice is a rba (vulgar *rbai*) and the office of teacher of intending priests is called *rabutha*.<sup>2</sup>

This comment confirms our previous statement about the transferring of the qualities of *Mara d-Rabuta* to *Adam Kasia*.

From this evidence, we conclude that the passages of *DQR* clarify the meaning of the passages in *ATŠ*. They explain it in a simple way that the speaker is ‘We’. ‘Us’ = ‘I’, who is *Mara d-Rabuta*, and whose name embraces all the Divine Universal Being’s/Man’s Aspects and concepts which are then transferred to *Adam Kasia*. Consequently, we assert that, from *Mara d-Rabuta*, *Adam Kasia* (as a Primal Being/Man) becomes the Representative Divine Universal Archetype Being/Man; i.e. the Universal Adam in the form of Cosmic Being/Man. Adam, as the Cosmic Being/Man, appears later as *Mana*, which enters the physical shape of the Earthly Being/Man, namely Adam, in his various representations. In addition to *Adam Kasia*, *Mia Hiia*, the ‘Water of Life’, plays an important role in *DQR*.

### ***Mia Hiia* ‘Water of Life’**

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<sup>1</sup> *ATŠ*, p. 233 and *SA*, p. 80. For the translation of this text, Drower’s later translation in *SA* is preferred. However, both of them have slight differences. Drower mistakenly refers to the translation of the text as *ATŠ*, p. 232, No.14. *ATŠ*, No. 114 started at p. 232. But this phrase, in fact, is in p. 233. Cf. *SA*, p. 80 n.1, pp. xvi, 26 n.3, 27; *ATŠ*, pp. 118ff.

<sup>2</sup> *SA*, p.80, n. 1.

*Mia Hiia*, the ‘Water of Life’/‘Living Water’, appears frequently in both the ideas and physical shape of the continents. For example, the often use of the various kind of ‘wellsprings’, in both text and illustrations, bear a clear witness of such a role. *DQR*’s creation story reveals this role. *DQR*, presents a strong connection between the Water and Life.<sup>1</sup> Here, *Mia Hiia* is considered not only as a ‘Water of Life’ but sometimes also as ‘Life’ itself.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, Water of Life is represented in Mandaean theology as a kind of ‘radiance’ or ‘light’. Interestingly, this ‘light’ comes into existence even before what we normally regard as radiance and light. The divine water is brought forth in many forms such as Streams (*Rhaṭia*) and Wellsprings (*Ainaniata*) and Holy Rivers (*Yardnia*) all over the worlds.

The Lightworld Beings normally use Water to baptize, purify, transform and give birth to all beings, from the most enlightened Lightworld Beings to the lowest *homo sapiens*. In the cosmic hierarchy, *Mšunia Kušṭa* (the Ideal World) is created as a prototype for the Earthly World. It emanated from the Perfect Divine Cosmic World; that is, the World of the Universal Being/Man ‘*Mara d-Rabuta*’. In that Ideal World, the concept of the Universal Being/Man produces *Adam Kasia* as a Sacred (Cosmic) Adam and a Mystical Universal Being/Man. He is formed as an extensive universal power. The womb of this power is obviously the Divine Cosmic Water which descends and flourishes from the Fifth emanation, namely, ‘*Rhaṭia*’.

Thus, through the Water of Life, Paradises are formed and the everlasting generations of Worlds and Enlightened Beings are established in all kinds in the Worlds of Light through the Universal Being/Man. Through *Adam Kasia*, the World of *Mšunia Kušṭa* is established and becomes the Ideal World of the prototypes for the Earthly world.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, *DQR*, folios 8 and 9.

<sup>2</sup> For a significance of *Mia Hiia*, see for example Majella Franzmann ‘Living Water Mediating Element in Mandaean Myth and Ritual,’ *Numen*, Vol. 36, 1989, 156-172, also consult *CP*; *GR*; *MII*

<sup>3</sup> Consult *SA*, pp. 23-25.

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In opposition to the Worlds of Light, *Mia 'Kumia* (Black Waters) emanate in the Worlds of Darkness and seem to play similar roles to the Water of Life as a 'Womb and Source of Life' and Creation to the 'Beings of the Worlds of Darkness'.

In the Creation story of *DQR*, the sudden appearance of *Hibil Ziwa* (the angel Gabriel) is identified not only with the 'Water of Life' *Mia Hiia*, but becomes also the 'Water of Life' Itself, as indicated in the following phrase:<sup>1</sup>

*Hibil Ziwa Mia Hiia Hinun, ...*

And Hibil-Ziwa, is the water of Life which went to the World of Darkness; and by that all the worlds (or beings) in them are set in order and established.<sup>2</sup>

It is remarkable that the writer of the scroll is able to address this central and complex idea of Mandaeism so thoroughly, and in such a short passage.

To conclude, *Mara d-Rabuta*, in transferring some of his aspects as a Universal Perfect Being/Man to *Adam Kasia*, must have sacrificed/invested also part of his unlimited power to create.

When *Adam Kasia* becomes the chief of the Ideal World of the Archetypes '*Msunia Kušʿa*', it is natural that He also becomes a cosmic supreme Power and the practical prototype (Archetype) of Adam. The Earthly Adam is the monster form of the Universal or Heavenly Adam, who is subject to transferring, modifying and garnishing with '*Mana Kasia*' (Secret *Mana*), '*Nišimta*' (the Soul) through *Adaka s— Adam Kasi a— (Mana/Ziwa)* and other Lightworld Beings. In the written and oral Mandaean stories of the creation, this fall and transfer are enacted dramatically. The task of *Adam Kasia* naturally belongs to *Mara d-*

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<sup>1</sup> For the early stages of the creation of the Under World, it is the Great '*Rbia*' [Probably *Mara d-Rabuta* or *Hiia*] who speaks and sends *Manda d-Hiia* down to the Under World. The sprinkles of Black-Water '*mia siauia*' created the first formation of that World, and seem also to be an active creative Power or a Womb in the World of Darkness. The Wellspring of Black Waters contains also the *Gimra Umrara*, that appear as the core of that creative Power. This is found also in *DQR* in the same manner that appears in *ATŠ*, *GR* and *Q*.

<sup>2</sup> See *DQR*, 112.

*Rabuta*. However, when the creation is extended and the plan of creation, i.e. the Earthly Being 'Adam' and his world, is agreed upon and granted, the need for a suitable model is found in the perfect secret Being/Man, *Adam Kasia*, and his world transforms from the Ideal emanated World to the Earthly created World.

Therefore, we conclude with the conviction that the early Mandaean Naşōraeans look upon *Mara d-Rabuta* as sole creator and the primordial form of the Universal Perfect Being/Man, and that, through Him, the other Lightworld Forces and Beings emanated. They are activated to work, construct and erect details in His unlimited Universe or Universal Divine Model.

The cosmogony of *DQR* starts with the Being 'Gabra', that is *Mara d-Rabuta* (the Lord/Master of Greatness), who seems to manifest the full aspects of the Creator's features. It is natural at that point that *DQR*, being a bilingual account of the Creation, should give a short statement and explanation of the creations that appear in different parts of the Universe; and refer also to the worlds of the Universal Perfect Being/Man as well as some of His (Worldly) Parts (Organs).<sup>1</sup> This brevity is enhanced by Naşōraean terms and expressions, in addition to illustrations, which represent an extensive presentation of mystical images and symbols. Generally, however, the divinity that planned and perfected the Universal Order seems to be remote.

According to the way and the language of the cosmogony presented in *DQR*, we state confidently that it is a mystical presentation of the main Mandaean story of creation which appears in most of the Mandaean literature. This aspect of the story becomes the real and practical centre of all Mandaean and Naşōraean thought, belief, and rituals. This information, together with the symbolic illustrations, is what gives the work of *DQR* a unique and incomparable importance in the field of Mandaean and Naşōraean esoteric studies.

In accordance with the form of First covenants, the Great King of Light/Lord of Greatness grants Adam and his Enlightened People a covenant-treaty. Consequently, Adam and his Enlightened People entered into parity-treaties with contemporary powers. The same divine covenant promised reaffirmation to the pure Mandaeans as a family and

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-33.

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nation or successors. As well, the promise extends to the True Mandaean and the Naṣoraean, who carries the True Figure of the Universal Perfect Being/Man, while knowing the extraordinary means to play dramatically in the 'Theatre of *Naṣiruta*'.