

Mandaean Texts:

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Mandaean literature has an antiquity of at least 1800 years. Mandaean language and characters are branches of Aramic, which were current throughout the ancient Mesopotamia during the reign of the Parthian and all Parthian correspondences were written in this language.

Mandaean literature has never been published and they didn't have any interest in this affair. That caused the Parthian, Sasanian, Ommaydes and Abbasides governments' ignorance of the profundity of their beliefs as well as middle ages Christ researchers and Moslem scientists. Only during the last two decades the European researchers such as Noldkeh, Lidzbarski and Drower showed ambition in translating Mandaean texts and introduced them to the world.

The main book (called the chiefly book) or Mandaean bible named Genza-rabba (the great treasure) is written in two sections, the right and the left, and is also called Sidra rabba (the great book). Madaeans believe that Hibil Ziva (the same Gabriel in Islam) has inspired them to the first man (Adam Goara Qadmai) from Haii.

The second group is the six-fold books:

*The book Edrasha ed Yahya with the meaning of Yahya's teachings, which some of its parts are coordinated with evangelical literature.

** Qolesta with the meaning of the laws or marriage book contains hymns praising the world of light and marriage and baptismal laws.

*** Enyani with the meaning of prayer (or endowment), is the book of daily prayers together with hymns on creation of man and praising the living waters. All high – ranking priests are bound to learn it by heart.

**** Sidra- ed- Neshmatha means the book of souls. There have come hymns on praising the pure souls of faithful people after death.

***** The book Esfar Malvashi has religious (or astronomical) meaning. It describes how to choose a religious name according to the month and time of birth and mother's name. Some astronomical and philosophical thoughts have been explained in it. This book can be considered among scrolls.

***** Sidra-ed- Masveta means the book of baptism. It describes all the hymns of baptism and the related laws, and each high -ranking priest (Ganzebra and Tarmida) has to learn it by heart so as to perform baptism correctly.

The third group is descriptive scrolls containing histories and especial prayers. These scrolls are in roll shape with 15 to 20 cm width and 1 to 3 m length. Divan is a detailed literature thesis, which presents exact and formal explanations about history and / or description of formal manners.

Qumaha with the meaning of being knotted, is a prayer which gives man an extraordinary spiritual, through which man can draw other's attention to, throw away the jinni and, protect houses and passengers from misfortunes.

Zarezta means to arm and to protect. Zareztas are prayers with smaller volume than Qumaha and are used only for retaining; from evil eye of wicked men and the curse of hag etc.

List of Divans, Qumaha and Zareztas :

3/1Harran Koveitha : Mandaean life history

3/2Avathar Rabba : ascending of soul

3/3- Tafsir Paghra : body commandments

3/4-T Alf Tarisar Siiala: 1012 different questions

3/5- Malkoutha Eleiatha: the quality of the superior world

3/6-Nahrvata: living waters and rivers

3/7- Alma Elaya: the superior world

3/8-Alma Riisha ya Rabba: the great first life

3/9- Alma Riisha ya Zota: the great little life

3/10- Damot Koshta: the world of truth

3/11- Asotha Emhaytha: ceremonies

3/12- Zahron Raza Kesya: ceremonies

3/13-Kanna ed Rabba: ritual verses

3/14- Pashar Harshia: the invalidity of magic

3/15- Pishra ed Ayni: the invalidity of evil eye

3/16-Zarazta ed Epthahil: magic and request for help

3/17-Zarazta ed Manda ed Haii: request from Manda ed Haii and magic

3/18-Zarazta ed Hibel Ziwa: magic and request for help

3/19-Zarazta Avathar Rabba: magic and request for help

3/20-Tarasa Ehva ed Mani: priestly ceremonies

3/21- Tarasa Zedqa Ebrikha: priestly ceremonies

3/22- Tarasa ed Beyt Manda: priestly ceremonies

3/23- Tarasa ed Tagha: priestly ceremonies

3/24- Tarasa ed Sharah ed Qabin Shishlam Rabba : priestly ceremonies

Introduction and inspection of Mandai texts

1-Genza Rabba

Genza Rabba is Mandaean bible with the meaning of the great treasure and has been written in two sections, the right and the left, with about 700 pages.

Its narrator (according to Mandaean) is Hibel Ziva (Gabriel). This book is attributed to his highness Adam. Although John the Baptist is Mandaean prophet and religious leader, the connection between him and the book is weak. A book entitled Edrasha-Yahya (Yahya's teachings) belongs to John the Baptist.

Madaeans take keeping and copying Genza rabba as a heavenly and religious duty. Every Mandaean family has a Genza rabba written by father or the family ancestor. Number of those Madaeans who have got the ability of reciting and commenting thesis of Genza rabba is less than 10 in Iran. The reason is difficulty of the prose and of the theological and cosmological subjects. Repetitious and contradictory narratives confront commentary to many difficulties. For example the place of Epthahil, the angel, is not definitely known. Circumstance of creation of the earth and heaven is unintelligible (there have come 7 narratives for that). The role of Epthahil and Gabriel are occasionally interchanged.

A section of world is created by Epthahil with the command of Avathar , and by disability of Epthahil , Hibel- Ziva come to help him ,finishing the creation of world.

The narratives about the creation of the first, second and third worlds are also unintelligible. It's not definitely known whether the first, second and third worlds are also unintelligible. It's not definitely known whether the first life is the same Haii (God) and / or the first creature.

Circumstance of genesis of life is also difficulty comprehensible. What Haii as God did created first hasn't been known! Water or light and the first life or the divine throne?

The whole subjects the western researches have deduced about Mandai, are beyond a halo of ambiguity due to the several literary and narrative problems of Genza-rabba. Referring to Mandaean priests, I saw that they, themselves have various commentaries of Genza-rabba and there is no consensus among them. In the right section of Genza-rabba, theology, circumstance of creation, ethics and historical and mythical narratives have been discussed. The left section of Genza-rabba deals with circumstance of man's soul position in limbo or after life world. The first thesis of Genza-rabba talks about attributes of God, and

historical events in Jerusalem. The last thesis of this section is entitled the book of the king. The thesis has probably been placed in the book by lapse of time. This Mandaean's claim which the main narrator of Genza-rabba i.e Hibel- Ziva, the angel, has presented the book to Adam is thinkable, based on the historical events written in Genza-rabba and its edition. Because, the events of Jerusalem period and before it, that is, the contemporary events of Moses and older than that, the contemporary events of Noah, haven' t been composed with predictive prose.

The verbs of the sentences belonging to Noah and Moses period are third person of the past tense, while some have the aspect of prediction and religious tiding:

... Thou, Adam, thou and thy wife and all thy races will ascend to the high throne and Ram and Rod just remain and the world will be extended from them. In Ram and Rod era all by one word and then in one time say one prayer and one praise, then in Ram and Rod era, the whole world will be set on fire....

Although these sentences don't have predictive form definitely, however are religious tidings with description of the events. The prose of the religious thesis is based on future in the past. The narrator of the past time announces of the future time, the future, which may be an ancient bygone for us. The mentioned part is probably words of Haii or Hibel Ziva which were told to Adam long ago contemporary with him, the same has been placed in Genza-rabba without taking the time into consideration. Now, note a part which follows the previous one, some lines later.

An example of predictive and descriptive prose in past tense:

...and hath been passed six ages by the prophecy of Moses and making Jerusalem .Then after these six ages , king Soleiman , son of Davoud ,is becoming the prince of the Jews and is building Jerusalem . Demons and jinni obey his order and the world declined. He (Soleiman) praised himself and denied blessing of God... (4)

The above sentences end with past verbs and indicate that the narrator is talking about the past. The next sentences shows that the narrator is contemporary with Moses and Yahya.

2-Qolesta (collection of religious laws)

Qolesta is considered as one of the oldest Mandaean texts after Genza-rabba. Qolesta means the religious laws. It's about death and marriage ceremony and rite of praying and praising the world of light. Its author is unknown. Definitely John the Baptist couldn't have composed this anthology with its Gnostic contents. The priests of the 1st century to the 3rd century A.D have shown ambition in composing it. Mrs. Drower has translated Qolesta to English. Her Qolesta has got 414 verses. Both Enyani (prayers) and Sidra – ed- Neshmatha (book of souls) have been contained in Mrs. Drower's Qolesta and even some verses of Genza-rabba have also been chosen and placed in it. Hymns of Qolesta are of the most beautiful Mandaean literature pieces. Hymns about light and living waters and praising the souls of pure men.

3-Edrasha-Yahya (Yahya's teachings)

The book of Yahya's teachings is about individual life struggle between light and darkness and also biography of John the Baptist. There, in the beginning pages of Edrasha-Yahya , is an anthology of questions and answers excerpted from Alf Tarisar Shiiala (1012 questions).

In the biography of John the Baptist, there has been expressed a deep hostility toward Jesus Christ. He, the dove who is the bearer of the holy spirit, is to be hated and introduced as the representative of Ruha. The dove is a messenger from the world of darkness. The description of Ruha and her son, Or, seen in Edrasha-Yahya is like the teachings in the right section of Genza-rabba.

From page 5 to 40, the narratives of Or and Yushamen have been described. From page 41 to 52, teachings of Sam, son of Noah, have been written. Sam requests God commandments and religion in order to judge, and God answers him:

"Thou, Sam, teaching is thy merely business. Punishment and judgement are not thy business and punishments are of that world. Thou, Sam, don't destroy the natural manner.

From page 52 to 101 is about the appearance of Yahya . The narratives of Jewish priest's

dreams and Yahya 's birth and his teachings are all described in this section.

From page 101 to 113 is the narrative of Merei , a Jewish girl , who were inclined to Yahya 's teachings . Jews resolved to reprimand and turn her back, A gigantic bird called Nishra (nasr in Arabic) saves the girl and stays with Mandaean.

From page 113 to 129 is the narrative of the righteous hunter. A religious and kind hunter whose flock he loves. This narrative is probably an allegory of John the Baptist's apostles. It has been written impressing with Christian literature. From page 129 to 131, fornication, theft, robbery and falsehood have been reproached.

From page 131 to 157, a few teachings of Yahya are expounded. In page 158, bothering and persecution of sun toward Sabean has been described and reproached.

From page 159 to 168 precepts are described. From page 180 an explanation is given about the sun, water and trees.

From page 180 to 216 good act, kindness, friendship with people and doing religious rites have been emphasized.

From page 223 to 226, some works of Anush uthra are mentioned. To inspect that which section of this book belongs to John the Baptist, would be a vain intolerable task without any religious and historical indexes.

Considering the four gospels related to Jesus Christ and the apostles letters and thesis and the last books of Jewish prophets such as Habquq Nabi and Zakaria Nabi as index for religious culture and appearance time of Jesus and Yahya in the geographical territory of Jerusalem to al - Jalil, we can attribute the narrative of the loving shepherd and of the righteous hunter and Sam's teachings and the story of Jewish priest's dream and the last part of the book to John the Baptist . The themes about Or, Ruha, the world of darkness and the fighter angels on the track of annihilating the world of darkness, are more close to Babylonian or Assyrian custom and civilization rather than the general custom of al-Jalil, Naserieh and Jerusalem.

4-Enyani

Enyani means prayer or replying. This book is in small pieces (half anA4) and in 260 pages. Prayers for ablution, prayer, Maseqta (burial and ascension of man's soul) and praising the living water form the book of Enyani.

Prose of Enyani is fluent and facile. There are seen a lot of short sentences. Some of its prayers are in the form of beautiful and pleasant religious hymns which are said intensively, Gnostic and truthfully. Prayers of morning, noon and evening have each five verses. There isn't night prayer in Mandaean Sabie religion. However, nightly praise is performed. Mandaean kiblah is toward the north star.

Table of prayers in Enyani is as follows:

- 1- ed Qashesh: grown up
- 2- Haii Qarivi: caller, creator
- 3- Enhor Enhor: bright bright
- 4-Manda Eghran: God created
- 5-Riha ed Basem: sweat fragrance
- 6-Hal Haii Qadmaii: the eternal and old Lord
- 7-Drapsha: Mandaean Sabean banner is called Drapsha
- 8- Days of the weak
- 9- Pehtha: holy (Pehtha) verse
- 10- Pure ancestor verse
- 11- Glory and pomp of the Lord verse
- 12- Mambuha: holly water verse
- 13- The distinct verse of the Baptized who begs for forgiveness. There are 3 bows in this verse.

14- Eshkanda: Eshkanda means assistance of the priest.

Hymns of Enyani have been repeated in other books. These hymns are in figure of individual prayer and chanting. It is in fact understood that the contents of the hymns in Enyani are descended in form of verses and are in figure of Gnostic and truthful prayers, which are recited by the pious to draw the attention of Haii and the world of light and angels. This is yet ambiguous that this prayer book by who and when was collected.

4- Sidra- ed -Neshmatha

Sidra-ed- Neshmatha means the book of souls. There has been described the position of man's soul. Man is made of three parts: body, spirit and soul. Spirit is a sign of the world of evil and soul is a sign of the world of light. Soul corresponds to nature in Islamic philosophy and theology.

In this book, the way of treating man's soul for doing good act through various daily prayers has been explained. Baptismal prayers and the name of the guardian angels of running waters are explained in detail in Qolesta and have 103 verses in Edrasha-Yahya, Enyani and Sidra- ed- Neshmatha. Its prose is fluent and facile and is in the figure of hymn, which was probably intoned in chorus. The date of its collection is unknown. The terms used, are more common and closer to the current Mandaean language.

5-Masvetta

The book Masvetta proceeds to describe baptism rite. The word Masvetta (or Masbatta) means baptizing or dipping in to the water. Sabbi has been derived from this term. Although the word Sabeian has not been mentioned in Mandaean texts, Masvetta can easily reveal Mandaean's rites:

6- Esfar Malvashi

Esfar Malvashi means religious name. It is a collection of commands for getting a religious name according to the astronomical relations of the twelve zodiac. Every Mandaean has got a religious name in addition to his or her family name. Everyone's religious name is supplied corresponding to the month and time of his birth and his mother's name .It

indicates woman's position in the religious and social philosophy. Esfar Malvashi has got 670 verses

7- Alf tarisar Shyala

Alf tarisar Shyala means 1012 questions. This scroll has got 7 sections. It's a collection of questions and answers between loftier angels and lower ones. One section of it (the first one) is specialized to correct errors of ceremonies.

This scroll explains how to compensate the mistakes of ceremonies. Esvatha Emhatha (sin and right) and Tafsir Paghra (commentary of man's body) are the two other sections of this scroll. Sometimes the two recent sections are written and read in figure of a separated scroll. The other sections are about wedding and baptism.

This scroll explains the divine throne, exactly and clearly.

8- Tafsir Paghra

Paghra means body or inside. This scroll which is counted a section of Alf Tafsir Shayla is about circumstance of man's body organic relations. It has proceeded to some religious percepts about prohibited and lawful things.

9-Divans

Divans are long scrolls of paper in different sizes of 300 multiply by 7 or 160 multiply by 12 etc. which everybody supplies according to his taste and possibilities.

Divans in general have description aspect. Divan Harran Koveitha denotes the history of Mandaean migration; but it dose not explain the immigration from Yahya era. According to a historical tradition, Mandaean's life should be described from the First Adam, then after mentioning the bitter and sweat events of Shorba Haii and Shorba Hibel and Ram and Rod and Sam son of Noah should explain Jewish life during the era of Moses and Soleiman and other Jewish kings and afterwards should describe the birth and life of John the Baptist, then immigration of Mandaean to Harran. Mentioning the names of Parthian kings and the chiefs of Mandaean nation are of the main points in this section of Divan Harran Koveitha.

Divan Avathar which one of its copies in 760 cm length is kept in Vatican library deals with man's soul ascension after death and ascending route to the heavens and passing from the 7 planets and the 12 zodiac and the judgement of Avathar (justice) the angel. Divan Nahrvatha or Nahrvata is a description of the smaller rivers branching from Euphrates. Some pictures of trees, rivers and heavenly beings (with a very elementary painting) which have been worth for them, have been brought in it. Divan Melkotha Elaytha is a description of angelic rulers of the world of light and the characteristics of world of light. The names of angels who have been mentioned in Sidra -ed -Neshmatha, are seen in it. Divan Alma Risha Ya Zota means the little first world and Divan Alma Risha Ya Rabba means the great first world and Divan Zihron Razaksia means mysterious radiance and Divan Damoth Kushta means the world of truth. Those are of Divans in which Mandaean have no interest to reveal. Furthermore, Madaeans themselves, have a few numbers of these Divans. Prose of Divans is fluent and facile and the way sentences are constructed has an effect of Persian words and dialect, the verb sometimes comes after subject and sometimes at the end of the sentence. There are seen Mandaean local terms in it. Angel's names are compounds of Babylonian and Greek. Liuce (Venus), Acron and Or are representatives of beauty, darkness and evil.

Alahihem and Alaha are more often commented as positive heavenly beings and true gods and sometimes false gods.

10- Scrolls of magic and antimagic:

Believing in magic, evil eye and influence of heavens in man's predestination and physical and mental position and also belief in influence of heavenly nonmaterial beings (such as jinni and angels) on the earth are mixed with Mandaean religious culture.

According to an ancient religious tradition, Word is able to confront the evil spirit. God created Word so as to help man, strengthen and protect him against misfortunes, and increase his force of drawing and removing; drawing angels and exorcism, drawing good predestination and removing bad destination. Madaeans have some spells called Qumaha with the meaning of knotting and Zarezta with the meaning of protecting and Pasher with the meaning of antimagic or dissolving magic to influence future events and human

relations.

Qumaha influences others, and Zarezta is the protector of man's body and soul against misfortunes and magic. Pershi destroys the influence of magic or evil jinni, respectively, the first one is offensive and the second and the third ones are defensive. Qumahas are bigger than Zareztas. There are more than 24 scrolls about it. Some of them are as follows:

1-Pasher Pershi = magic dissolve (are destroyed)

2- Pasher Ini = evil eye dissolves. Prayers about evil eyes of wicked individuals.

3-Zarezta ed Hibel Ziva = Protective prayer in which Hibel Ziva is asked for help to insure human against bad events.

4- Zarezta ed Epthahil = Protective prayer in which Epthahil is asked for help.

5-Zarezta = Protective prayer in which the angel of gnosticism and wisdom is asked for help.

Uses of Zareztas ,Qumahas , and Pashers

1- When somebody gets terrified or the Jinni.

2- When deficiency happens to wisdom and knowledge.

3-For women having disorder in their menstruation.

4- When they want to attract other's attention and fondness.

5-To repel harming of heavenly evil beings so as to put an effect on human predestination or his daily life.

6- For exorcism.

7- To protect house and household against theft, robbery and slaughter.

8- to protect passenger.

Scrolls of magic and antimagic are told with a mysterious common soul and dialect. What is

noticeable about these scrolls which differ from other Mandaean texts is their attachment and sincerity toward the 12 zodiac and the 7 planets and the 5 heavenly beings. Using prefixes like angel or "Il" for these beings and asking them sincerely for doing daily tasks are the signs of changing in magical text's position in front of heavenly beings. There, in some Qumahas, evil angels like Liuce (Greek Venus) are met positively. Double-faced astronomical thoughts of Mandaeans is due to their long stay in Harran.

Basic Mandaeans facing astronomical thoughts of Harranians, had criticized and scorned all Greek and Babylonian legends and manifestation of sun, moon and star- worship took them as polytheists and unbelievers. Therefore, all primary sections of Genza- rabba and some parts of Edrasha ed Yahya , Enyani and Sidra ed Neshmatha are influenced by this quarrelsome mentality . By lapse of their stay in Harran, changes happen in their philosophical outlook. Range of these changes is as follows:

1- Rays of light spawned by Yahya were taken as symbols of the inner knowledge of creation, locating in the upper heavens, they traded their place for heavenly beings. This change was a sign of alternation in Mandaean way of perception, replacing intuitive perception for sensory perception.

Thus the profound thoughts of priests in the first and the second century AD weakened gradually, and common desirable thoughts which the mass of the people had taken to, became current. This theory that magical thoughts of scrolls and even collection of them were provided by ordinary people is more acceptable.

People weren't as deliberate as priests for religious perception. Thus, (according to a historical possibility) these magical thoughts and superstitions penetrated from lower classes to the upper classes of Mandaean society. Even nowadays, Mandaean priests of Iran and Iraq have such a problem. Some current ordinary people worship various angels, intensely believe in astronomical thoughts such as lucky and unlucky, not reading Genza-rabba which is considered their main book, they are interested in invocation of spells, magic and antimagic, making talisman rings and so on instead.

2- Virtues and vices - good and evil, goodness and filth acquired according to Mandaean

original texts, have become old and eternal. In accordance with the recent idea, every body became wicked or righteous in terms of his heavenly predestination and his example in the upper heavens.

Authority has a particular place in Mandaean original texts. To be a man of ternary (spirit - soul - body) demonstrates a sort of individual authority. Whereas, according to Harranian thoughts, a kind of absolute fatalism dominates human manner. A few parts of Edrasha ed Yahya especially the righteous shepherd and the kind hunter and Sam's teachings defend authoritarianism rather than fatalism. Some of Yahya's teachings based on fatalism are as follows:

One's good acts in this world are his support in this world and the staff of his way in that world.

Woe on the ignorant who are drowned in ignorance and misfortune and make no attempt to come out of this position.

Woe on those who are aware of their sin and don't follow the right way.

Woe on the builder and the architect who doesn't construct a building for his future in that world by his good acts in this world .

Be like a farmer whose farm he plants with the best seed. `

Comparative inspection of Mandaean texts regarding to their contents indicates that:

1-More authentic texts are based on monotheism and disproving polytheism. These texts are closer to John the Baptist's era.

2-Texts provided in the 4th century AD and after expound Babylonian and Greek legends and explain the wars of Gods. Whereas, more authentic texts deal with explanation of the upper world and mentioning generalities of the contrast between light and darkness.

3-Older texts have a purer Gnosticism, a Gnosticism based on intuitive perception, purification of ethics and religious law. The recent texts which have been generally composed since The 4th century AD, depend on the influence of heavenly beings over the

earth and astronomical thought, authoritarianism is their main subject.

4- Magic scrolls have a fluent prose and a sort of colloquial language. The complication and firmness of Genza and the wisely explicitness of Yahya's teachings aren't seen in them.

The prose of Mandaean texts is various according to subject and the time of composing. The first thesis of Genza have more firmness and fluency. The words used are rhythmical, beautiful and choice. Approaching the last sections of the right Genza, we find more meaning and literary dispersion. There, pronouns of the first, second and third persons and their addressees aren't clearly known. Objective pronouns are also beyond a halo of ambiguity, we can guess the tellers and the addressees. By virtue of this, it's supposed that the beginning sections of the right Genza, have more genuineness and ancientness, its middle and last sections have been written by the copy of next priestly brothers or commentators. These changes might have gradually happened from the 3d century AD to the 4th century AD this theory isn't approved by current high -ranking priests. They believe that the right and the left Genza have remained without an alteration so far. They demonstrate that the conception of this thesis is onerous for non-Mandaeans. Political events and religious influences of neighboring countries in this period are effective in copying.

Mandaean exile from Jerusalem to the north side of Euphrates, their struggle with Jews and also settlement in Christian cities located in western side of Euphrates, and of more importance, their long stay in Harran are political events and religious influences which Mandaeans have reacted to them. The prose of Mandaean texts is divided into 4 groups according to their themes:

- 1- Praising hymns which generally praise Haii and the world of light.
- 2- Predicative sentences which describes war events between light and darkness and / or their inner happening (the history of Mandaeans life is told in this way).
- 3- Commandments of individual life, baptism, burial and marriage.
- 4- Magic and antimagic (magical scrolls about lucky and unlucky and confronting

misfortunes and evils).

It's not like this that each Mandaean book specializes in one of these groups. All main texts such as Genza-rabba , Edrasha ed Yahya , Enyani , Masveta and Sidra ed Neshmatha are compounds of the 4fold themes above .

Divans, which are the same scrolls in small print, are more specialized. The scroll Harran Koveitha deals with history. The scroll Tafsir Paghra is the law of man's soul and ritual foods. The scroll Zarezta talks about magical acts and the scroll Nahravatha deals with the rivers branched from Euphrates. Divan Avathar describes soul immigration from lower to the upper world (after death and the houses in which the soul lives through this way). Scrolls must have been written during the Mandaean's settlement in Harran. Magical enigmatic subjects, astronomical prophecy and presentation of lucky and unlucky calendars for setting daily life and profiting by Greek words and Babylonian and Assyrian legends, approve the statement above. The whole Mandaean literature is so extensive that life of John the Baptist couldn't have sufficed for composing all these together.

Statement: writing biography at the end of books:

Dating the writing and collection of Mandaean texts are very difficult. There is no date, which correctly demonstrates the time of writing. Copyists and collectors noted a list of their activity and incentive together with fathers or other previous copyists at the end of their books called statement. Occasionally the time of writing was clearly and exactly included and sometime local events were considered as criterion. Rudolph Macuch has recounted the date 271-272 A.D among one of the oldest extant copies called Qolesta. The ancient transcription of Qolesta copied by the high - ranking priest, Rabbi - Adam, named Rish Deraz, recounts that the original text of Qolesta was written in the 3d century AD. A part of the long statement of Qolesta is as follows:

... and Ramoi , son of Qaimat , said : since , it was written by Zazai ed Qozta , son of Eve , to date , that I wrote it , hath passed 368 years ; and Ramoi , son of Qaimat said : I wrote this Divan in the city of Tayyeb , during the ages of Anush , son of Danqa , followed the chief of people and when Arabs came forth ...

Zazai ed Qozta is one of the important Mandaean authors who might have collected a great part of Mandaean texts during 260-270 AD. Before Zazai ed Qozta , Yuozateq , son of Sasa , had already copied Genza from the scrolls belonged to Eshlama's father , it was during 190-200 AD.

According to the copyists ' biography written at the end of every section of the right and the left Genza-rabba and other Mandaean texts, the latest copyists belonged to the last years of the 2nd century (180-200 AD) and the most important one was Zazai ed Qozta (260-270 AD) who might have had a big library and some hired writers. The four transcriptions of Genza which Hinrish Peterman published in 1867 A.D belonged to 1860 AD. (988 A.H which belonged to Ram Bakhtiar, Hoveizeh resident) and 1632 A.D (1042 A.H which belonged to Bakhtiar Bolbol, resident of Basreh and Mogaddam of Khoozestan) and 1680 AD. (1090 A.H. which belonged to Yahya Adam resident of Hoveizeh) and 1700 A.D (1110 A.H which belonged to Yahya Bahram, resident of Shamania of Khoozestan). Biographies inserted in them recount that those texts have been republished and copied since 180-200 AD generation to generation, and all clergyman and non clergyman writers have made an attempt to preserve these texts with all their heart.

We can guess through the biographies inserted in the 4 Genzas above:

- 1- The last writers of Genza belonged to the 2d century A.D since, to the age of Yahya the Baptist there is no exact information of an inscription available.
- 2- Women together with men were active in writing religious texts (they could be promoted to the rank of priests).
- 3- Within the 7th century A.D a few changes happened in the system of writing of Genza.
- 4- Mandaean geographical development causes to aggravate copying the texts, there by, a particular group called writer showed an ambition in this affair. Dating exactly the geographical enlargement of Mandaeans, is very difficult due to the lack of raw historical materials. However, we can take the 3d century (probably with the appearance of Mani) and the 7th century (with the aggression of Islamic army) as the turning points of this geographical development. According to the list of biographies Peterman has published and

professor lady Joron Bockley has recently written a research article entitled the biographies of Sidra Rabba published by Peterman, and also by profiting the expression of Qolesta published by Mrs. Drower, a list of Mandaean texts writers is supplied. Their biographies are partly approximate. It is possible that there were also other writers within the space of the two generations whom we don't know.

270 decade AD, Yuzateq son of Sam from the Genza belonged to Eshlama Father (Eshlama daughter of Qadra)

270decade A.D, Qozta (father of Tabia)

Probably 4th century A.D, Miriai daughter of Simat

Probably 5th century A.D, Eshkanda son of Yasmin

Probably 5th century A.D, Qaimi son of Barkh Alaha

Probably 5th century A.D, Qaimat child of Sharet

Probably 6th century A.D, Bahram son of Barkh Alaha

7th century A. D., Sam, Son of Anush

7th century A. D., Khayyam, son of Zidana and Bayan Hibel, son of Barkh Yavar

632 - 636 A. D., Ram Shiliai, son of Dymar

Aggression of Islamic army to Mesopotamia, Romoi, son of Qaimat, place: Tayyeb

10th A.D /8th A.H, Yahya, son of Adam Koheili

Beginning of 16th century A.D, Yahya Omahtom (Ganzebra), place: Hoveizeh

Written in 1560 A.D / 968 A.H, Ram Bakhtiar , Hoveizeh

Written in 1629 A.D/ 1039 A. H, Adam Zahron (ram Bakhtiar's grand children), khalf Abad of Khoozestan

Written in 1680 A.D/ 1039 A. H, Yahya Adam, Hoveizeh

Written in 1700 A.D / 1111 A. H, Yahya Bahram (Ganzebra), Hoveizeh

The end of 18th century or the beginnings of 19th century A.D/ 13th A.H, Yahya Bayan, son of Sam and Yahya Sam Zahron Hibel

A part of Genza rabba which Ram Bakhtiar copied in 1560 A.D / 968 A. H. in Hoveizeh and demonstrates the political area of Khuzestan in Mahsashieh's age is as follows:

This book I have versified in the name of the everlasting God and have finished successfully. In the name of Yavar Manda ed Haii and with belief in Mana Rabba Kabira and in the name of Hibel, Shitel and Anush, the chief of all generations. In the name of Yavar Ziva, in the name of them on Saturday the 14th of Parvan in the year 968 (according to Arabic calendar) which begins on Habshabba (Sunday), in the city of Mogaddam on the area of Hoveizeh. At this time, here, in this region one king exists named Saeed, king Soshad! son of king Badran, son of king Mohsen, son of Mohammad Mahdi, whom be protected by great light. For we enjoyed his support, respect and favor, and our religion was accepted by him. And there we lived and he wasn't predominant neither over us nor over our root (i.e. religion). Two big cities, one Ganeed in Hoveizeh and the other Shatit beside Abadan and other small cities on the shore of Karkheh, did Mandaean dwell and in other words, they were active there. In these cities is the source of bright souls and dwells a number of Tarmidas and Gnzebras.

A part of someone's statement named Rish Deraz (at the end of Sidra ed Neshmatha) comes at the end. He claims that he has copied his book from Divan Ramoi Qimat (7th century A.D). Rish Deraz also claims that he has created a desirable book with new order of verses and swears everybody that if they don't perform rituals in this manner, their rites won't be accepted.

This book is Gadana, which Hibel Ziva hath given to the chosen selection and I copied it for myself. I am a poor, simple, free of pollution and diligent person who's been bothered by the Seven and the Twelve. I am one of the eternal God's roots, an insignificant man among priests and Ganzebras, the earth underfoot of Nasoraeans (faithful) and the ground underfoot of the virtuous.

I am a slave entirely sin. This book, Gadana, I have copied for myself, so that somebody remembers my name on the earth and in the heavenly world of light. My heart is in love with life and my eyes are waiting for Manda ed Haii who is a protector of mine and will save me from Acron's sons.

I am Adam Yuhanna, son of Bahram, son of Sadan, son of Mas'adan, Rish Deraz. I copied it for myself from the book of a pious righteous woman whose mouth is pure and there in it, is no sensuality, cupidity and greed or debauchery. That woman dedicated her life to love the truth (Koshta) and copied this book, Gadana. Anciently, there, in the earth and in the heavenly powerful worlds of light is a memorial for her. She is my paternal grandmother and Enhor, daughter of Sharet, is her baptismal name. Excess of life be on her name. The name she was called was Daya, daughter of Adam, son of S'ad Javiri. She copied it from the great respected Ram Yohanna and son of Yahya Zahron, son of Zihron, son of Adam, son of Yahya Adam, son of Shitel, son of Ram, son of Zaki, son of Yahya, son of the father of Ganzebras. Ommahtom, son of Sam who is recognized by the title of Mandavi and surname of Akama (black)

She copied it from the book of the great respected Yahya Zahrin, son of Yahya Bahram, son of Adam, son of Yahya Adam who are recognized by the title of Mandavi and the surname of Akoma (black)

The pedigree of this statement reaches to Zazai Qozta (about 270 A.D) and the rest of the copyists' series should be followed in the four transcription of Genza published by Peterman.

Obstacles which block inspections of statement (copyists' biographies) of Mandaean texts are as follows:

1-Some copyists took an action to omit pedigrees or adding pedigrees of the original text to their own. This deed was due to multiple problems in copying and excessive tiredness of penning.

2-Statement writers engaged in copyists' biographies and description of their own family (father, ancestor, great grand father, and also mother, sisters and brothers) so researcher

would become involved in verbal confusions.

3-Names of Mandaean characters are generally their religious names (astronomical or baptismal) and their real names have been used less.

4-Some statements don't match to other statements. Even the statement in one text may be different from the statements of other sections regarding the pedigree of writers. This theme is seen more in Genza Rabba, Ram Bakhtiar's manuscript (written in 1042 A. H.) and less in Bakhtiar Bolbol's Genza Rabba (written in 1042 A. H.)

5-The events described in copyist's statement should be compared with Iranian local history so as to be dated correctly.

What we can consider as one of the points of these biographies is that copyists being intensely faithful are reliable in telling the truth.

Some Mandaean texts are called "chosen". They contain more prayers and verses. "Chosen" texts related to copyists - who were mostly Ganzebras - who diagnosed to change the other of some verses - not differing a lot from other texts. These texts are accepted by Mandaean priests, however, following them is not essential for contemporary priests of Iraq and Iran.

As you've seen so far, the collection of Mandaean texts has done by Mandaean priests or writers who wanted to forgive their sins and without using printers, during 2000 years.

Circumstance of this action was as follows:

High - ranking priests, themselves or their writers, began to write one or ten of one text - generally Genza or Qolesta - on a leaden board with a reed pen and ink obtained from coal dust, wanting to repent by preparing food (and sometimes leaden table) and having checked them with valid Genzas, they sent them to far and near cities where Mandaeans live.

Some texts were for Ganzebras' personal use or for keeping in his personal use or for keeping in his personal library, and some other were for poor Mandaeans reading in unison. Occasionally rich people (such as artisan Shalmani) engaged in reproducing

religious texts by calling nicely written writers. Mandaean texts were generally written on paper and animals' skin for this affair was unlawful. Small prayers called Zarezta were engaged on earth ware or silver rings and bracelets.

In critical situations such as torrent and holocaust, texts located in earth ware were buried.

Valid text in every era belonged to the contemporary righteous and reliable personalities whom Ganzabras of various regions are accepted by priests. This confidence and reliance wasn't simply obtained. First of all, an inquiry was made by Ganzabras concerning the copyist of the text, particularly his knowledge, literary and righteous personality and his proficiency in rites, then, they let their disciples to copy it. Validity of every Mandaean text was known by the writers' pedigree.

The writers have described themselves, their family, their ancestors, and the writers in previous text at the end of sections in the book. This act was known as "statements". Statement means to reveal identity of previous and present writers. Therefore research in identification of the real texts from false texts was formed. It is something like "science of men" in Shiite and determining the narratives of each discourse to distinct pure from non-pure. It began from the second half of the 2nd century in Harran and continues so far. It is not known yet that from which nation Mandaeans have borrowed this way, Jews, Arabs and or Babolians?

The order of verses in Genza Rabba has been preserved so far, though a little change has been made. However, they are different in the 6 - fold Mandaean texts for the reason above (chosen texts). Criterion of the order of the verses in Genza is not known. No tendency is on the order of verses (in Genza); neither subjective nor temporal one. The left Genza is an exception, for all verses are about the upper world. The problem is with the right Genza and other 6-fold Mandaean texts, which have been arranged unusually. The subjects as Haii's attributes, usage of angels, difference of light world and darkness, Mandaean's history, and the Jews prophets have not presented orderly in the right Genza. It seems that the order of verses in the right Genza is in company. Perhaps the early writers and even John the Baptist have believed in descending of verses in company, that it has been defended during 2000 years.

Current Mandaean believe that the original writer of Genza, Hibel Ziva, the angel, wrote everything inspired without lost, by the command of Manda ed Haii. There fore, inspiration was group like. All at once, the hatch of heaven was opened and the meaning, which nobody understood but Hibel Ziva, were descended; then, he wrote them (which were in the language of the upper world) in form of a book in Mandaean language with Aa, Ba, Ga, Da alphabet, and he was the person, who inspired Adam with this book (Sidra Rabba). The first man learnt Aa, Ba, Ga, Da, by Hibel Ziva.

Current Mandaean believe that Hibel Ziva (Gabriel) has inspired the verses of the religious texts to Adam Qura Qadmai. The subsequent men have memorized these verses and having invented Mandaean writing, they have rendered them in the form of books and scrolls. Hibel Ziva was descending the verses by the command of Mznda ed Haii and Manda ed Haii doing so by the command of Haii Qadmai. Some verses has been suggested to Adam by Manda ed Haii.

Subjective and objective pronounces of Genza suggest that some events have been narrated by Hibel Ziva and some other by Manda ed Haii. None of Mandaean texts' statements has demonstrated that who had written the right and the left Genzas, and the time of writing, as well.