

THE SHEKINAH GLORY OF THE LORD AND THE SHROUD OF TURIN

By David M. Onysko

INTRODUCTION

It is impossible to discuss the Shroud of Turin without referring to the Bible. Indeed the very nature of the Shroud's controversy stems from the fact that it contains the image of a naked, bearded, long-haired man whose body suffered the brutal infliction of flogging and crucifixion. The stigmata of the man mirrors the Gospel's passion narrative and the image is likely that of Jesus Christ. Before I proceed any further however, I must inform you that I am a Bible-literalist. I believe in the literal interpretation of Scripture. I realize that this upfront declaration may make some of you uncomfortable. However, before I am dismissed as a "religious zealot", I would ask that you suspend any prior thought about this book, the Bible, and carefully consider what this paper will offer. That being said, Jesus Christ is as controversial today as He was 2000 years ago and evokes a strong emotional response from those who would dare to consider or to dismiss His claims. There are many in Academia who would argue that people of faith or those in sindonology who seek to examine the veracity of the Shroud of Turin, somehow cast aside their intellect and are not true to the laws of scientific reasoning. Those who hold such a position would do well to consider the courageous declaration of the French scientist and zoologist Yves Delage. In 1902, convinced by the scientific evidence generated by the 1898 photographs of Secondo Pia that the Shroud was authentic, Yves Delage wrote to the editor of the *Revue Scientifique*: "If it were anyone else but Christ, there would be no contention. A religious question has been needlessly injected onto a problem which, in itself, is purely scientific...with the result that feelings have run high and reason has been led astray. If, instead of Christ, there were a question of some person like a Sargon, an Achilles or one of the Pharaohs, no one would have thought of making an objection. I recognize Christ as historical personage and I see no reason why anyone should be scandalized that there still exist material traces of his earthly life." (1) I would disagree with Yves Delage on one issue. The religious question of the Shroud of Turin hasn't been "needlessly injected". It is part and parcel to the controversy of the image question. Specifically, whose image is it and how did it get there? If it is Jesus Christ and if the image was formed by a supernatural Resurrection event, it most certainly is religious. There are still others who take the position that matters of faith and science are mutually exclusive to each other. I would remind them that "many of the greatest scientists of the past were also Bible-believing Christians who believed in the inspiration and authority of the Bible, as well as in the deity and saving work of Jesus Christ"(2) Their commitment to believing in the Bible did not compromise their scientific discoveries. To the contrary, in many instances, it led them. "In fact one of them, Sir Francis Bacon, is credited with formulating and establishing the scientific method." (3) He is indeed, the "father of empiricism"! Consider other "founding fathers" and their scientific discoveries who believed in the veracity of the Bible: Sir Isaac Newton – the law of gravity, calculus, the reflecting telescope; Nicolaus Copernicus – geocentrism; Galileo Galilei – the refracting telescope; Johann Kepler – celestial mechanics, physical astronomy; Robert Boyle – chemistry; Lord Kelvin – thermodynamics; Leonardo DaVinci – hydraulics; By the way, it bears mentioning that Leonardo DaVinci was born in 1492, a full 100 years after the first recorded showing of the Shroud in France. Despite what some would have us believe, the Shroud of Turin IS NOT Leonardo's self-portrait. I could go on and on with this list, but you get the picture.

Contrary to the views of many, like those of Drs. Hall and Tite from the Oxford lab who carbon-dated the Shroud in 1988, those who believe that the Shroud of Turin is the authentic burial cloth of Jesus Christ ARE NOT “flat-earthers”! Indeed even Professor Christopher Ramsey, the director of the Oxford Radiocarbon Laboratory, as well as a signatory to the 1989 Nature paper documenting the results of the C14 test has admitted: “There is a lot of other evidence that suggests to many that the Shroud is older than the radiocarbon dates allow and so further research is certainly needed. Only by doing this will people be able to arrive at a coherent history of the Shroud which takes into account and explains all of the available scientific and historical information.”(3) Interestingly, even Philip Ball, the former editor of Nature who claimed that the 1988 carbon-dating provided conclusive evidence that the linen of the Shroud of Turin is medieval acknowledged: “It’s fair to say that despite the seemingly definitive tests in 1988, the status of the Shroud of Turin is murkier than ever. Not least, the nature of the image and how it was fixed on the cloth remains deeply puzzling.”(4) As I now delve into my hypothesis for this paper, that a Shekinah Glory of the Lord manifestation was the mechanism for the image-formation process and of the haunting vestige of the Man seen on the Shroud, “the rule to be observed then is this; take the Bible literally where at all possible. If symbolic or figurative language is used, look for the literal truth it tends to convey.”(5) The very reason we can equate the Shroud of Turin with Jesus Christ is precisely because of what is made known to us about Him from the sacred text of His Word, the Bible. The passionate suffering, death, Jewish burial and Resurrection of Jesus Christ are recorded in the Scriptures. It appears they are also recorded on a very old piece of funeral linen. Therefore, any subsequent discussions about the Shroud of Turin and the search for an explanation to the image-forming process MUST include the Bible. To not do so would be scientifically limiting and might reflect an academic ‘censoring’ of non-natural or of supernatural image-formation theories. This would not be in the interest of true unvarnished scientific inquiry which (as demonstrated by Yves Delage), does not shrink from the pursuit of any road toward knowledge no matter where that road may lead. Consider the archaeological dig sites of Biblical ruins uncovered in the Holy Lands of the Middle East. Pinpointed with astonishingly accurate detail, the foreknown locations of these ruins provide solid evidence that the Bible is not only a trustworthy guide to the past, but that by employing its’ usage within the process of scientific discovery, it often proves to be a valuable and reliable tool. In this paper we will enlist the aid of the Bible once again. My hope is that in doing so we may be provided with insight in our quest toward understanding the enigmatic nature of this cloth. The pages of Scripture might reveal clues to the question whose answer remains most elusive. Specifically, that question remains: How did the image on the Shroud of Turin come to be?

SHEKINAH GLORY

Throughout the ages and most certainly throughout the Bible the idea of God appearing before, dwelling with or manifesting His literal, divine presence among His people is well-documented. The emphasis here needs to be centered on the literal, abiding presence of God. Though metaphoric, symbolic and figurative references to a God-manifestation can also be cited, at certain times and in certain locations throughout history, God has literally tabernacled or dwelt with His people. Whether appearing before them during the 40-year desert wandering as a pillar cloud by day (to shelter them from the sun), in the form of a pillar of fire at night (to guide them in the darkness) (Exodus:13), or before the priests who could not stand to minister for the Glory of the Lord had filled the Temple (1 Kings 8:10-11), or to the shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night, who were sore afraid as the Glory of the Lord shone round about them (Luke 2:8-9), the visible appearance of the presence of God or the Shekinah Glory, is without question. Though the word Shekinah itself is not

specifically found in the Bible, its idea most clearly is. In the Targum (the Aramaic translation of the Hebrew Bible), Shekinah Glory is described as the “.....majestic presence of God.”(6) Derived from the Hebrew roots ‘shakan’ and ‘shekinot’, which advance the concept of God abiding with His people, ‘shakan’, ‘shekinot’ or Shekinah were often used by rabbinic scholars to describe a literal, localized appearance of God co-habiting with His people. Though this co-habitation took on different forms, it was usually demonstrated within the medium of light. In the Old Testament, the divine, majestic appearance was often seen as a bright cloud or as burning fire. This was attested to by the veiling of the face of Moses, whose visual countenance shined after being in God’s fiery presence atop Mount Sinai. In the New Testament, the Shekinah Glory aspect was seen radiantly, incandescently and shone with great brilliance and luminosity. Often, the visible physical appearance of God involved dazzling light. Indeed such dazzling light has long been used by scholars to describe God. It is known as the Primeval Light (7), and it is a distinctly Jewish idea. It can also be used to characterize God in an allegorical way. Most often however, it is used in rabbinic sources to describe God as being the “literal, physical embodiment of light”.(8) In the Hebrew Old Testament, Shekinah Glory (aka the Glory of Jehovah) is called Kvod Adonai and describes WHAT God is doing, that is, He is DWELLING with His people. In the Greek New Testament, Shekinah Glory (aka the Glory of the Lord) is called Doxa Kurion and is defined as: “the awesome light that radiates from God’s presence”. (Grk.#1391) (9) We may conclude then that the Shekinah Glory of the Lord, as described in both Testaments of the Bible, declares that God DWELLS with His people within the form of bright LIGHT. One might offer then that God’s presence with men was enshrouded by light, in light and as light.

TRANSITIVE LAW

In mathematics, the transitive law of equality (aka—the transitive property law) states the following: if $A=B$, and if $B= C$, then A must equal C . This law is logical and well-reasoned. By applying the transitive law of equality to the Scriptures, we can also make some definitive statements using variables A , B and C . By substituting variable A with Jesus Christ, variable B with God and variable C with Light, we can use the Scriptures to present the following equation: Point #1—Jesus Christ is God (variable A is equal to variable B)—“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was (is) God” (John 1:1); “Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God” (Philippians 2:6) “I and my Father are one” (John 10:10). Point #2—God is Light (variable B is equal to variable C)—“This is the message which we have heard of Him and declare unto you, that God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). Point #3—Jesus Christ is Light (variable A is equal to variable C)—“And as he journeyed, he came near to Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a Light from heaven (above the brightness of the sun) (Acts 26), and he said, who art thou Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus (whom thou persecutest)” (Acts 9:3-5); The Light that Paul speaks of here is not meant to be allegorical though Jesus Christ is certainly the spiritual light as well. The Light Paul speaks of here is meant to be taken literally. As Jesus Christ appears to Paul on the Damascus road, He is in effect, the WHAT and the HOW manifestation of the Shekinah Glory of the Lord. He is DWELLING in Paul’s presence as LIGHT. The Greek word for the Light is defined 7 ways: phaino (to shine, shining, to give light), phos (daylight, firelight), phoster (brilliance, splendor), phosphoros (light-bearing), photeinos (full of light, bright), photizo (to give light, shine, to be illuminated), and photismos (light, illumination). (Grk. #5316/Grk. #5457-5462) Note the last three words mentioned: photeinos, photizo and photismos. One can easily extrapolate a derivation and find the word photo. It bears mentioning then that the image on the Shroud of Turin is photo-like in nature. It is also encoded with 3D (cloth-to-body-distance) and holographic information. Might the original Greek language for Light used in the New Testament be a

connection here? Do the descriptive words for Light point in the direction of the Shroud of Turin? Are the Gospel writers offering sindonologists of the 21st century a clue that the literal, physical aspect of Jesus Christ embodies Light? The summation then for Point #3 would be that Jesus Christ, according to the Scriptures, is garbed in Light. He is cloaked in it. He wears it as clothing. He is phosphoros. He is the Light-Bearer. As the physical embodiment of Shekinah Glory itself, Light literally exudes from Him. As we shall soon see, His raiment, His clothing, (His burial Shroud?), is awash in it as well.

TRANSFIGURATION

In Matthew 17:2 we read: "And He was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the Light." Mark 9: 2-3 records the same transfiguration event as follows: "And He was transfigured before them. And His raiment became shining exceedingly white as snow; as no fuller on earth can whiten them." Luke 9:29 mentions the transfiguration this way: "And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance changed and was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening." All three of the above-cited Scriptures state that He was transfigured. That His bodily appearance and physical countenance changed and was altered. The Greek translation for this is metamorpho, which literally means.....to change in form. An example of metamorpho would be when a caterpillar physically changes into a butterfly. In other words, the physical body of Jesus Christ was radiantly transformed before them, changing into Light His face shone like the sun. This is not meant to be a symbolic description, but a literal one. The Greek word for shine is lampo. (Grk. #2985-2989) The English word lamp is derived from this. What do lamps do? They illuminate and provide light. These Scriptures mean that the face of Jesus Christ turned into brilliant shining and gave forth Light. Matthew states that His clothing became white as Light. Mark tells us that His clothing became shining, whiter than the whitest snow. Luke tells us that His raiment was white and glistening. The translation for shining and glistening (Grk. #4744,1823) is: to dazzle, to be brilliant, to flash like lightning. The whiteness of His clothing wasn't just white, it was exceedingly white. Again the Greek (#3029), translates this as: very much, greatly or completely white. Interestingly, it was so white that Mark goes on further to say that no fuller, (Grk. #1102) translated 'bleacher or one who cleans' (i.e. dry-cleaner), could out-whiten it. Remember that word fuller. We will refer to it later. By using the aforementioned translations, the transfiguration of Jesus Christ can be reworded as follows: "And the physical form of His body was changed into brilliant radiance before them. The appearance of His face turned to bright shining and gave forth Light brighter than the sun. His clothing became brilliantly white, dazzlingly white, flashing like lightning around them." (emphasis mine)

AN ATOMIC CONNECTION?

At the beginning of this paper, I quoted Yves Delage who stated in part: "...A religious question has been needlessly injected onto a problem which in itself is purely scientific..." I countered that the religious question of the Shroud of Turin hasn't been "needlessly injected". That it is part and parcel to the controversy of the image-formation question. Again, whose image is it and how did it get there? I believe many would agree that it is indeed the image of Jesus Christ. Regarding the image-formation question what then can we observe? What remains has been referred to as the "shadow of a man" (pg.73) or that of a "vague human silhouette" (pg.73). It has been postulated by some that this imaging-process resulted in the "dematerialization of the body" (pg.5), and that the image left behind was the

product of a “tremendous flash of light” (pg. 8). Still others suggest that it must have been equivalent to a “gigantic photographic flash” (pg.14) that must have been “done in one instant” (pg.67). That the surrounding area became “filled with a blinding light” (pg.16) The words neutrons, beta rays and gamma rays have become synonymous with this never-before-seen event. A shadow of a man? A vague human silhouette? The dematerialization of the body? A tremendous flash of light? A gigantic photographic flash? Done in one instant? Filled with a blinding light? To those of us in sindonology, these descriptive words are certainly familiar. They have often been used to describe the image upon the cloth we study. However, you may be surprised to learn that the aforementioned descriptions are not cited to identify with the Shroud of Turin, nor are they used to explain how the image came to be imprinted on the uppermost surface of its fabric. Though they are eerily similar and bear an uncanny resemblance to adjectives used to describe the image-formation process of the Shroud of Turin and its remaining vestiges, in fact, they are descriptions used by John Hersey in his book titled: ‘Hiroshima’ (10) which chronicles the tragic events that took place in August of 1945. I am referring of course to the atomic bombing of the Japanese cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima which effectively ended the conflict with Japan in WWII. It is intriguing to note that the descriptive words used to visually capture the atomic bomb detonations and their horrifying after-effects, are not only comparable to adjectives used to describe the image-formation process of the haunting image seen on the Shroud of Turin, but are in many instances, identical. Both processes appear to have required a tremendous, perhaps unknowable amount of energy and light. Interestingly, and related to further Shroud study, is the fact that white clothing repelled the heat from the atomic bomb while dark clothing absorbed it. Simply stated, those individuals wearing the color white did not suffer burns to the skin beneath their clothing. Conversely, those individuals wearing dark clothing did suffer burns to the underlying skin tissue. As it relates to the once pure white linen Shroud, keep in mind that only the top-most surface fibers of the cloth are straw-colored. These yellow surface fibers covered those directly beneath and protected them from being chemically changed. As a result, the underlying fibers remain pure white, having been unaffected by the catalyst of the Shroud’s image-forming mechanism. Recall earlier the transfiguration event as described in Mark 9:2-3. He stated that the raiment or clothing of Jesus “...became shining, exceedingly white as snow; as no fuller on earth can whiten them”. Oddly, the word fuller has been inserted into this particular text quantifying just how white the clothing of Jesus had become. Might this inexplicable insertion of the word fuller by Mark, describing the brilliantly-white clothing of Jesus which could not be out-whitened by one whose job it was to clean or bleach offer a clue? Should we focus on the color white? It is a curious thing that the skin of bombing victims was protected that fateful August day in Japan. Despite the devastating flash of an atomic bomb, the whiteness of the clothing they worn shielded their skin from becoming altered or burned. Similarly, might the originally pure whiteness of the cloth that is the Shroud of Turin have offered similar protection to underlying fibers despite what some insist was a comparable flash of energy and power? Was a Shekinah Glory of the Lord manifestation the reason these fibers remained pure white? That similar to the Transfiguration, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ caused His burial Shroud to become dazzlingly white preventing a color change below the top-most surface fibers? In addition, the dropping of the atomic bomb instantly exposed unused hospital x-ray plates, some of which were stored beneath the surface of the ground. Recall earlier the Greek words used to describe light: photeinos, photizo and photismos. Is it just a coincidence that Shroud research tells us that the image on the cloth is photo-like, 3-dimensional, holographic and appears to show bone and dental structures in x-ray-like fashion? Is there a similarity to the flash of light projected by the atomic bomb with the Shroud of Turin? Further, famously seen in WWII photographs are ghost-like images which were burned onto the walls of buildings and support structures following the bomb’s detonation. Silhouettes of objects, animals and humans were cast as shadows by the light of the bomb as the dematerialization power of its explosive energy was released. The Shroud of Turin is a shadow-like, silhouette-like image, ghost-like image. Many scientists believe

that an energy force equal to or greater than the atomic bombs dropped on Japan in WWII created the Shroud's image. In the process of that event, the Man's body resting within His burial cloth dematerialized.

CONCLUSION

The image on the Shroud of Turin has confounded the world for centuries. Despite the scientific community's best efforts, it defies a complete understanding and has resisted persistent attempts toward an explanation. It has been described as archeiopoietos, "not made with human hands". It has been thought by some to have been formed by a process of "flash photolysis". Still others believe that the superficial image seen on the Shroud's uppermost fibrils is the result of a yet-to-be-understood form of radiant energy. Similar to the Shekinah Glory of the Lord, what remains on this burial cloth is the permanent 'presence' of a man. He appears to have been 'dwelling' for a very long period of time within His funeral linen. 2000 years perhaps? Still two questions stubbornly remain. Whose image is it and how did it get there? If we decide to exercise intellectual honesty, we must then agree with Yves Delage who courageously declared to skeptical colleagues who did not share his unbiased pursuit of scientific truth that the image on the Shroud of Turin is indeed that of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Skeptical colleagues of our day (like Yves Delage), must not "be scandalized that there still exist material traces of His earthly life". The principles advanced by William of Ockham (aka Occam's Razor), most certainly apply to the first question. As to identity, the simplest answer is all roads point to Jesus. Having objectively answered the first question we are left with the second. How did the image get there? Once again by applying the mathematical Transitive Law of Equality to the Scriptures, we can state that because Jesus Christ is God and because God is Light, that Jesus Christ is Light as well. Could it be that the Shroud of Turin's image is the Light (dare I say scorch-like) residue, which remains permanently imprinted upon its linen fabric due to yet another Shekinah Glory of the Lord manifestation that was the Resurrection? That at the very moment God the Father went about raising God the Son, the once-upon-a-time pure white burial cloth of Jesus Christ, as did His glistering raiment seen by the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, yet again became dazzlingly brilliant exceedingly white as snow? That when His body underwent phosphoros metamorpho, the Light-Bearer Jesus Christ, changed in physical form in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, as a tremendous explosion of Light, becoming brighter than the sun? That as the literal, physical embodiment of the Shekinah Glory of the Lord, Jesus Christ came bursting forth through His burial Shroud (which could not hold Him), leaving behind (as seen at Nagasaki and Hiroshima) shadow-like images which are everlasting traces of the Primeval Light that is God? This pictograph of linen, this quasi-photograph of the Redeemer's sin-bearing efficacious pain, suffering and love impresses upon its fabric the visual testimony of Jesus Christ Himself who declared that though "I must go to my Father", yet "I will never leave you nor forsake you". Even today, His comforting remains evident for all to see. Not just with our physical eyes but more importantly, with our spiritual eyes as well. The ones which take up residence and illuminate within the deep recesses of the soul. The spoken Word having been brutally and graphically recorded upon a burial Shroud within the darkness of His Garden Tomb. I have a sense that endless searches for a natural explanation for the image-forming mechanism will continue to be thwarted by God Himself. "For without faith it is impossible to please Him." (Hebrews 11:6). We should not permit the naysayers to frame the debate. Who unapologetically declare that matters of science and faith are mutually exclusive to each other. This is non-intellectual nonsense. Similarly, this also needs to be unapologetically excised from the debate by those who rightly see, (as did the founding fathers of science), the inclusivity and compatibility of faith with reason. May the words of Jesus spoken to Philip in John 14:9 never find

occasion to be spoken to those of us who study His burial Shroud: "Have I been so long time with you and yet thou hast not known me?" If the totality of the Shroud of Turin's image-forming process is ever sufficiently discovered, I have the feeling that it will only be given to those who take Him who is the Word, at His Word. In the Scripture Jesus Christ self-declares: "I am the Light of the world". (John 8:12) He is Doxa Kurion "the awesome Light that radiates from God's presence". (11) We would be wise to consider the words of the Apostle John. Though in his 90's and suffering from failing health, he was given a vision of Heaven the eternal city and of the Shekinah Glory of the Lord in Jesus Christ. He writes in Revelation 21:23: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it. For the Glory of God (the Shekinah Glory) did Lighten it, and the Lamb (Jesus Christ) is the Light thereof." Like the Apostle John we too are given a vision. Only this vision, which covers His body, also covers our sin. So that we may never forget, it remains bloody and dirt-stained. Its visage speaks of the One whom Isaiah 52:14 declares: "was marred more than any man." May our viewing of this image not be shrouded by indifference. May we each be given clarity of vision through the spiritual eyes within our hearts in order that we may lovingly gaze upon the One who enlightens before us. In my humble opinion, the Shroud of Turin bears upon its once dazzlingly pure white linen fibers, the Shekinah Glory of the Lord's presence, still permanently dwelling among His people within the glorious, radiant reflection of the Light-Bearer Himself, who is Jesus Christ of Nazareth!

REFERENCES

1. Walsh, J.E., 'The Shroud', Random House Publishing: New York, New York, 1963, pgs.106-107.
2. Paper: 'Bible-Believing Scientists of the Past', Henry Morris Ph.D.-Institute for Creation Research
3. Ramsey, C.B., 'Shroud of Turin Version 77', Oxford Radiocarbon Acceleration Unit, (3/23/08)
4. Ball, P., 'Material Witness: Shrouded in Mystery', Nature Materials, Volume7/#5, (5/08), pg.349.
5. DAKES ANNOTATED REFERENCE BIBLE (KING JAMES VERSION)—PREFACE, Finis Jennings Dake, Copyright 1963.
6. Kaufmann Kohler/Ludwig Blau—'SHEKINAH', Jewish Encyclopedia.com
7. Josef Bitton, 'Awesome Creation', Gefen Publishing House, Jerusalem, Israel, 2013/5773.
8. Kaufmann Kohler/Ludwig Blau—'SHEKINAH', Jewish Encyclopedia.com
9. The Strongest Strong's Concordance, Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI., 2001, pg.1381.
10. My Paper, Section Titled; THE ATOMIC CONNECTION--John Hersey's 'Hiroshima', Random House Publishing: New York, New York, 1949
11. The Strongest Strong's Concordance, Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI., 2001, pg.1381.
12. All Greek (#) references taken from The Strongest Strong's Concordance, Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI.