

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

In his revealing article ("The Gardens Of Eden and of Sodom" XXXI:3, July-September 2003), Berel Dov Lerner quotes Ezekiel 36:35 and comments: "this new metaphor is not without difficulties".

I think these difficulties would diminish a lot when we consider that Prophet Ezekiel, in his prophecy about the re-gathering of Israel (in Ch. 37), uses key words directly taken from the record of Adam's formation in the Garden of Eden:

\* breathing the breath of life into Adam's nostrils (*vayifah*) / into the people of Israel (*u'fehi*, v. 9);

\* the coming to life of Adam (*vayehi ha'adam le'nefesh hayah*) / of the people of Israel respectively (*vi'hyitem*, v. 14);

\* living comfortably – or: giving rest – Adam in the Garden of Eden (*vayanhehu*) / the people of Israel in their land (*ve'hinahti*, v. 14)

\* All these above acts come under the term of "making": . . . *in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens (be'yom assot . . . ) / I the Lord have spoken it, and made it, says the Lord (dibarti ve'assiti . . . v. 14).*

Asher Eder

Jerusalem

Sir,

Josiah Derby claimed ("Gideon or Jerubaal" XXXI:3, July-September 2003) there is no philological relation between *Havvah* and the verb *hay*. The name *Havvah* is spelled with a stressed *waw*, which is interchangeable in semitic languages with a *yod* (ex. *yeled* - *walad* - *w'ladoth*). The name and verb are one, and the biblical etymology is not homiletic. The biblical etymology for Moshe (to draw out) does indeed appear to be homiletic; the name in Egyptian means 'boy'.

Dan Vogel's *darshanut* article ("The Forgotten Figure at the Akedah" XXXI:3, July-September 2003) goes to the meta-historical core of the Jewish People; *y'yushar ko'ah*. I would remark, however, that the reason the *Aqeda* motif (together with related midrashic material) became widespread, and not The Woman and Her Seven Sons (in most variants she is unnamed), is because the *Aqeda* involves biblical figures, the Patriarchs themselves. No other historical reason is required. Dan Vogel's explanation, though beautiful and

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

perceptive, is a *drash* of a midrash. Within the context of *darshanut*, such practice is, of course, acceptable. Within the context of academic discourse only a critical explanation will do. In the plastic context of the *darshanut* column, I suggest an explanation should be explicitly categorized. The reader will thus know the intended status of the explanation.

In my own lectures I stress the status of each explanation: *p'shat* of the Scriptures, *drash*, *p'shat* of the *drash* or *drash* of the *drash*.

Jonathan C. Kelman  
Karnei Shomron

Sir,

In a Letter to the Editor, Asher Eder commented (XXXI:4, July-September 2003) on my article ("Ishmael, Son of Abraham" XXX:4, October-December 2002). He made two comments: one referring to Abraham's stating to God *O that Ishmael might live before Thee* (Gen. 17:18), and second he asks where do I find persecutions of Jews by Arabs before the outgoing Middle Ages.

On comment one he questioned my interpretation of Abraham's request as asking God to protect Ishmael. He asks protection 'from whom? From Isaac?' No, from Sarah who had already expelled his mother when she was pregnant into the desert where without God's help she would have died and he never born. He and his mother, Abraham's junior wife, would again be exiled and again without God's help, both would have died.

On comment two, the persecutions of the Jews and Judaism begin in the Qur'an particularly in Sura's 2,3,4,5,9 and 22.

Moshe Reiss  
Beit Shemesh

## COLLEGE CREDIT

Your students can earn significant college credit (or even a full, regionally accredited B.A.) for their knowledge in: Hebrew, *Tanakh*, Jewish Music, Talmud, and Jewish Law. See our Internet website: <http://www.jewishbible.org> for details.