

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

Saul Leeman in his interesting article "The Names of God" (XXX:II, April 2004, pp. 104-7) notes that "we introduce our Shabbat Kiddush with *yom hashishi* [the sixth day],' two words which are entirely out of place. . . . In order that the first four words uttered aloud bear the initials that spell *Hashem* [*Yom Hashishi Vaychulu Hashamayim*]." While not germane to Leeman's topic, one may wonder what compelled such a "forcing" of the Masoretic Text? Why was it important to have the Tetragrammaton included in the biblical text of the Kiddush? The following answers occurred to me.

1. The biblical portion of the Kiddush mentions God only by the name *Elohim*, which is His attribute of Justice [*midat hadin*]. Inclusion of the Tetragrammaton would balance the attribute of Justice with the attribute of Mercy [*midat harahamim*], which the Tetragrammaton represents. This is also how the Midrash explains the admixture of the Tetragrammaton in the initial Genesis text. God wanted the world to be created with *midat hadin*, but saw that it could not exist with just *midat hadin*, so He added the *midat harahamim* (Genesis Rabbah 27:15).

2. There was apparently some difficulty regarding Genesis 2:2. The words *Vaychal Elohim bayom hashvvi* seemed to imply that God did some work on the Seventh Day. An echo of this difficulty can be found in Genesis Rabbah 10:10. It is suggested there that unlike man God stopped His work "on the dot [*nichnas bo kehut hasaara*]." The Samaritan Bible resolves this difficulty by changing the Masoretic Text into *Vaychal Elohim bayom hashishi* (A. Sadaqa, *Jewish-Samaritan Pentateuch*, Tel Aviv, 1964). Perhaps the authors of the Kiddush wanted to mitigate the perception that God did some work on the Seventh Day, so they adjoined in an unnatural way *yom hashishi* to *vaychal Elohim*, implying that all was finished by the Sixth Day.

3. It is obviously possible that both of the above played a role in the formulation of the Kiddush.

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