

19 And out of the ground I, the Lord God, formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and **commanded that they should come unto Adam**, to see what he would call them; and they were also **living souls**; for I, God, **breathed** into them the breath of life, and commanded that whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that should be the name thereof.

20 And **Adam** gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but as for Adam, **there was not found an help meet for him**.

21 And I, the Lord God, caused a **deep sleep** to fall upon Adam; and he slept, and I took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in the stead thereof;

the current text.<sup>510</sup> In both versions, the JST reading that, unlike Eve, the animals were not brought personally by God to Adam, has the effect of highlighting the special nature of the introduction of the man and the woman in v. 22.<sup>511</sup>

- c **living souls.** See *Commentary* 3:7-e, p. 158.
  - d **breathed.** See *Commentary* 3:7-d, 158.
- 20 a** **Adam.** This is the first reference in Hebrew to Adam as a proper name, “probably because the narrative now speaks of the man as a personality rather than an archetypal human.”<sup>512</sup> For conjectures on the meaning of the name Adam, see *Commentary* 1:34-a, p. 66.
- b** **There was not found an help meet for him.** The account of Adam’s search for “an help meet” assures the reader “that man was not like the other creatures.”<sup>513</sup> Through the process of naming the animals, Adam observes the universal pairing of male and female in the animal world and becomes aware of his exceptional solitary state.<sup>514</sup> Now, not only God, but also Adam, recognized fully that it was not good to be alone, and he is now ready “to appreciate and cherish the gift that the Lord God was to give him.”<sup>515</sup>
- Anticipating Moses 4:18, Rashi further comments: “Because God foresaw that [Adam] will complain against her, [Eve] was not given him until he expressly asked God for her.”<sup>516</sup>
- 21 a** **deep sleep.** “Hebrew *tardemah* is used of abnormally heavy sleep, divinely induced.”<sup>517</sup> The image is one of transition from a former state into a new one, a “sleep and a forgetting,”<sup>518</sup> which, in Egyptian rites, preceded the bestowal of instructions and power, and the appearance of the great wife and mother-goddess.<sup>519</sup> An Islamic legend says that Adam slept after having eaten grapes from Paradise given him by Gabriel.<sup>520</sup> In the Gnostic *Apocryphon of John*, Adam’s sleep is induced by drinking the waters of forgetfulness, recalling the Greek conception of the water of the River Lethe in the underworld that made the souls who drank of it forget their previous lives.<sup>521</sup> Without remembrance of all that came before, Adam “was simple as a new-born child.”<sup>522</sup>

When the sleeping Adam lost the memory of his past, he also became ignorant of other things. The *Apocalypse of Adam* records Adam saying that “the first knowledge that breathed

510 *Ibid.*, p. 599; K. P. Jackson, *Book of Moses*, p. 76.

511 See *Commentary* 3:22-c, p. 182.

512 N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 22. See *Commentary* 3:19-b, p. 177.

513 J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 47.

514 N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 22.

515 U. Cassuto, *Adam to Noah*, p. 128.

516 R. M. Zlotowitz, *et al.*, *Bereishis*, p. 107; cf. p. 105. See *Commentary* 4:18-a, p. 263.

517 N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 22.

518 William Wordsworth in L. Richards, *Marvelous*, p. 290.

519 H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, pp. 245-256; cf. the sleep of Jacob at Beth-El (H. W. Nibley, *Sacred*, p. 581).

520 G. Weil, *Legends*, p. 23.

521 W. Barnstone, *et al.*, *Gnostic*, p. 160; cf. H. Schwartz, *Tree*, 175, p. 140; C. Schmidt, *Pistis*, 4:144, pp. 749-753; G. R. S. Mead, *Pistis*, 6, 144, 380, p. 315; H. W. Nibley, *Apocryphal*, p. 309; F. Wisse, *Apocryphon of John*, 22:20-26, p. 117.

522 U. Cassuto, *Adam to Noah*, p. 113. See also *Commentary* 3:23-c, p. 183.