

1 *The words of God, which he spake unto Moses at a time when Moses was **caught up** into an **exceedingly high mountain**,*

descent of heavenly messengers to earth,⁶¹ the common idea behind the symbol of a bird—and specifically in this context a dove—is that of sacred communication and communion between the spheres, “the certain tie between heaven and earth.”⁶²

- c ***exceedingly high mountain***. The location of this mountain is assumed to be somewhere near the northwest edge of the Arabian Peninsula. Potter adduces evidence that identifies the site with a mountain in the vicinity of Midian named Jabel al-Lawz.⁶³ He argues that at this location, rather than at the traditional spot on St. Catherine’s mountain in the Sinai Peninsula, Moses would have received his commission to free Israel from Egypt.⁶⁴ Later, it also would be the place where God would reveal the Law and the instructions for building the Tabernacle, and where the incident with the golden calf would take place.⁶⁵ Potter further conjectures that this may be the same “exceedingly high mountain” to which Nephi was “caught away” in vision,⁶⁶ since it is less than eighteen miles away from what some believe is the most plausible candidate for the valley of Lemuel, where he was camped at the time.⁶⁷

Note the similar wording that is associated with the mountain where God showed himself to the Brother of Jared: it was called Shelem “because of its exceeding height.”⁶⁸ As Thomas observes, the essential thing is to suggest “a place that is suitably high for temple activity.”⁶⁹ Thomas describes the spectrum of meanings associated with the three Hebrew consonants *slm*: “peace, tranquility, contentment, safety, completeness, being sound, finished, full, or perfect. Shelem (and Hebrew *shalom*) signify peace with God, especially in the covenant relationship. It also connotes submission to God, which we see in the Arabic words *muslim* and *islam*. In particular, *shelem* has reference to the peace offering of the law of sacrifice, which corresponds to the seeking of fellowship with God, and thereby has a relationship to the meanings of the *at-one-ment*; that is, *shelem*, fellowship, sealing, and *at-one-ment* have an obvious relationship.”⁷⁰ Nibley further explains: “The original word of *Shelem*, *Shalom*, means ‘peace,’ but it originally meant ‘safe’ (safety, security) because it was a high place. The *Shelem* was a high place. It’s still the word for ladder: *silma*, *selma*, a *sullam* in Arabic.”⁷¹ This connotation is significant because the ladder is a symbol often used to represent the process of exaltation.⁷²

Abraham, pp. 261-264; M. D. Rhodes, *Hor*, p. 20.

- 61 H. W. Nibley, *New Look*, July 1969, pp. 108-110, August 1969, pp. 75-77; H. W. Nibley, *Approach to Abraham*, pp. 258-265, 268-269; J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, before 8 August 1839, p. 10; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, December 1835, p. 98.
- 62 H. W. Nibley, *New Look*, July 1969, p. 109; H. W. Nibley, *Approach to Abraham*, p. 263. See W. J. Hamblin, *et al.*, *Temple*, p. 156 for a Sufi allegory involving birds who fly to the Celestial Temple. See also E. A. S. Butterworth, *Tree*, pp. 82-83; B. Mikael, *Mysteries*, pp. 18-20; *Figure 3-8*, p. 145; *Figure 6-14*, p. 473; *Commentary 2:2-c*, p. 97; 3:9-g, p. 163; 4:5-b, p. 246. See *Endnote E-204*, p. 754.
- 63 G. Potter, *Sinai*. Frank Moore Cross agrees with a general location in Midian (F. M. Cross, *Epic*, pp. 46, 66-67).
- 64 Exodus 3.
- 65 Exodus 19-32.
- 66 1 Nephi 11:1.
- 67 S. K. Brown, *Hunt*; G. Potter, *et al.*, *Lehi*, pp. 31-51; R. Wellington, *et al.*, *Lehi’s Trail*, p. 29. For a differing view, see J. R. Chadwick, *Wrong Place*.
- 68 Ether 3:1. A change to “exceedingly” was made in the LDS 1921 edition (K. P. Jackson, *Book of Moses*, p. 57). Note that, like the Book of Mormon, OT1 and OT2 read “exceeding” rather than “exceedingly” (S. H. Faulring, *et al.*, *Original Manuscripts*, pp. 83, 591).
- 69 M. C. Thomas, *Brother of Jared*, p. 391. Regarding a plausible candidate for the mountain Shelem, Potter notes: “At nearly 6,000 feet, [Jabal Samham] is the highest mountain in southern Oman and is mentioned by name in Genesis 10:30, where it is known as ‘Sephar, a mount of the east’” (G. Potter, *et al.*, *Lehi*, p. 130).
- 70 M. C. Thomas, *Brother of Jared*, p. 391.
- 71 H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 16, p. 196.
- 72 R. Guénon, *Symboles*, pp. 336-339; cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 7 April 1844, p. 348—see pp. 346-348, 354. See also M. C. Thomas, *Hebrews*; M. C. Thomas, *Brother of Jared*; Genesis 28:12; overview of Moses 1, p. 34; *Figure*