

Excursus 38

The Meaning of “Adam-ondi-Ahman”

NIBLEY derives the meaning “Adam (or man) in the presence of God” by reference to Egyptian: *Atum* (“Adam” or “man”⁸⁹¹), *ondi* (i.e., “in the presence of,” “at,” “by,” “around”⁸⁹²), *Amen* (also “Amun,” or “Amon”).⁸⁹³

Marquardt points out that the Kirtland “Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language,” in the handwriting of William W. Phelps, contains a reference to “The place appointed of God for the residence of Adam; Adam ondi= Ahman.”⁸⁹⁴ Adam-ondi-Ahman has also been described as “the place where Adam shall come to visit his people, or the Ancient of Days shall sit,”⁸⁹⁵ “the place where Adam dwelt,” or “Valley of God where Adam dwelt.”⁸⁹⁶ Matthews also mentions the following interpretations or descriptions: “Adam’s consecrated land,”⁸⁹⁷ “Adam’s grave”⁸⁹⁸ and “Valley of God in which Adam blessed his children.”⁸⁹⁹ He also cites the following from Elder Alvin R. Dyer, which relates the name “to the priesthood and revelatory experience of Adam in being the first man to hold the spiritual blessings of the gospel”:

The very word itself speaks of the manner in which Adam has received the “Keys of Salvation” under the counsel and direction of the Holy One, who is Jesus Christ the Lord.

The word “Adam” refers directly to Adam. The word “ondi,” means nearby or connected with. The word “Ahman” means the Lord himself. Therefore a literal translation of the words “Adam-ondi-Ahman” means The Lord Jesus Christ, through Adam unto mankind.⁹⁰⁰

Elsewhere, President Dyer remarks:

In conferring the “keys of salvation” upon Adam, the revealing and unlocking of the conditions of salvation were made known to them and through them to mankind. In this we can understand the true meaning of the term “Adam-ondi-Ahman,” or simply: from “Ahman,” who is the Lord, “ondi,” meaning through Adam unto mankind.⁹⁰¹

With respect to the term “Ahman,” Orson Pratt cited a revelation by Joseph Smith saying that it “signifies God... in the original language spoken by Adam.”⁹⁰² Tvedtnes conjectures that since: “Joseph Smith is said to have indicated that... Jesus is called ‘Son Ahman,’⁹⁰³ Old Testament prayers end simply with the word ‘Amen’ (= confirmed, true), and hence in the name (title) of Jesus Christ.”⁹⁰⁴

891 See *Commentary* 1:34-a, p. 66.

892 Nibley, cited in L. C. Berrett, *et al.*, *Missouri*, p. 380; cf. H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 53, 2:321.

893 See also H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 26, 1:338; 7, 1:79.

894 *Kirtland Egyptian Papers*, 1, p. 23, cited in H. M. Marquardt, *Revelations*, p. 198 n. 38.

895 D&C 116.

896 O. Pratt, *25 February 1877*, pp. 342-343; cf. O. Pratt, *18 May 1873*, p. 48.

897 Signboard of the Missouri State Historical Society, Courthouse Square, Gallatin, MO, cited in R. J. Matthews, *Adam-ondi-Ahman*, p. 30.

898 Heman Smith, *RLDS Journal of History*, 9:140, cited in R. J. Matthews, *Adam-ondi-Ahman*, p. 30.

899 John Corrill, Brief History, 11 February 1839, cited in R. J. Matthews, *Adam-ondi-Ahman*, p. 30.

900 A. R. Dyer, *The Lord Speaketh*, 1964, p. 216, cited in R. J. Matthews, *Adam-ondi-Ahman*, pp. 30-31.

901 A. R. Dyer, *Destiny*, p. 44.

902 O. Pratt, *25 February 1877*, p. 343; cf. O. Pratt, *18 February 1855*, p. 342. See also J. Smith, Jr. in D. M. Quinn, *Prayer Circles*, p. 83. For the original revelation, see J. Smith, Jr., *Papers 2008-*, Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books, A Sample of Pure Language, ca. March 1832, BCR 144, p. 265.

903 See O. Pratt, *18 February 1855*, p. 342. See J. Smith, Jr., *Papers 2008-*, Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books, A Sample of Pure Language, ca. March 1832, BCR 144, p. 265.

904 J. A. Tvedtnes, *Faith*, p. 114.