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Gardner's "Seeds of Transcendence: Understanding the Hebrew Bible Through Plants" (Book Review)

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send one American missionary. This revolutionary idea works because 1) indigenous missionaries often understand the culture, customs and lifestyle as well as the language; 2) the most effective communication occurs between peers; and 3) it is a wise investment of our resources because the national missionary works more economically than foreign missionaries can (p. 149). Yohannan relates many miracles and stories of the effectiveness of Gospel for Asia missionaries. This book will cause many Americans to see a need to reorient their missionary priorities.

Seeds of Transcendence:

Understanding the Hebrew Bible Through Plants,

by J. Gardner. Mount Vernon, NY: Decalogue Books, 2014. 376 pp. \$29.95.

ISBN 9780915474158

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Gardner's *Seeds of Transcendence* completely fulfills her stated purpose. She desired to provide an easily accessible work that enhances readers' understanding of the Pentateuch by providing information on the plants mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. While written at the popular level, this book provides sufficient detail to make it an invaluable tool for botanists and religious scholars alike. As a speaker, author, and gardener returning to her Jewish roots, she realized the plants mentioned in the Hebrew Bible must have been included for a reason: the original, ancient Near Eastern audience would have known these plants and honed in on their significance. It is her wish that both believers and non-believers will be provoked to a deeper study of the Bible by reading her words. It is her ultimate goal that her readers become seeds of transcendence themselves, "generations who [pass] on God's blessing and promise of a nation" (xxii).

Her work follows the Sabbath readings of the Torah. Each chapter has two sections: one provides the plant's context in Scripture, and the second discusses the plant in detail including its rich symbolism for the original audience. She includes extensively researched and documented findings in both botany and religion. Helpful tools include maps of the Holy Land; a directory of biblical plant gardens in the United States and Israel; botany and Judaism websites; cross-referenced glossaries of Hebrew, Latin and common plant names; and two extensive indices. As such, this book is enjoyable as a quick read for enjoyment and information, or can be utilized as a quick-reference tool. For those interested in enriching their knowledge of botany or Scripture – or both – this book is a must-read! It is highly recommended as a reference tool for Old Testament scholars, especially those focusing on the Pentateuch.