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Sefer Hayashar needs no introduction. It has been quoted and referred to by Torah scholars throughout the ages. The introduction to the book describes the circumstances surrounding the discovery of the original manuscript during the destruction of the Second Beis Hamikdosh. Many, however, are of the opinion that the book was compiled from various sources somewhere between the ninth and twelfth centuries of the Common Era in Spain or southern Italy. In many places Sefer Hayashar elucidates and elaborates on the Midrashim quoted by Rashi in his commentary on the Torah. In other places it uses Midrashim which are different than those quoted by Rashi.

It was first printed in Naples in 1553 and has been subsequently printed numerous times throughout Eastern Europe.

The stories related in the Sefer Hayashar have left their indelible mark on generations of Jewish readers, young and old. This new edition makes available to the English reading public a true font of inspiration which will be read and enjoyed for many generations.

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SEFER HAYASHAR

A MEDRASHIC CHRONICLE BEGINNING  
WITH THE CREATION OF MAN

# sefer HAYASHAR



Yeshiva Beth Moshe Edition



# Sefer Hayashar

PART I:

FROM THE CREATION  
UNTIL PHARAOH'S DREAMS



דורי אמת

5785

# Powerseferpress Koshersafe Edition

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by Nachum Y. Kornfeld

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# ❧ Contents ❧

Introduction	1
Bereshis	7
Noach	17
Lech Lecha	35
Vayeira	43
Chayei Sarah	61
Toldos	67
Vayeitzei	77
Vayishlach	85
Vayeishev	107





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## ❖ Introduction ❖

**T**he discovery of this book was made during the destruction of the holy city of Jerusalem by the wicked Titus. The captains of his armies entered in order to take their spoil of the city. Among them was a general named Sederus. While exploring the city and winding his way through the rubble, he found the remains of what was once a huge mansion. From this building he took everything which he thought to be of value.

As he was about to leave, he noticed what appeared to be something hidden behind a small hole in one of the walls of the mansion. He began to carefully demolish that section of the building when he came upon a huge container full of ancient holy writings. They contained the entire Bible and some historical records of the kings of Israel and of the other nations. He also found manuscripts of the Mishnah, and many other holy scrolls. As he proceeded further into this secret bunker, he found a well-stocked pantry containing food and wine.

Sederus then noticed an old man, alone in a secluded chamber, who was studying other ancient books. The general was taken aback by this amazing sight. He spoke softly to the old scholar. "Why do you sit alone among these ruins without anyone to keep you company?"

"I have known for many years," the man replied, "that the Holy City would be destroyed. I built this house with an underground passage leading to this chamber through which I brought all these books. I thought that I would thus preserve my own life."

God caused the general to take pity on the old man and Sederus took the scholar along on his journeys until they reached the city of Seville in Spain. The general was so impressed with the man's knowledge of so many subjects that he made him stay with him and became his student. He built a large house outside Seville and there they wrote down all the events which would happen until the coming of Mashiah.

So it was that when God violently drove us into exile by the hand of the king of Edom, and expelled us from city to city and from country to country in our sad condition, there came into our possession a book known as Toldos Adam (the Generations of Adam [or Man]) together with many other works. These came to us at the city called Napoli (Naples), then ruled by the king of Spain. When we saw that these volumes were full of wisdom, we decided to print them for publication as we did with all books of which we approve. This, however, was the most important of them all. There are twelve editions of this work and not one varied in any way from the other in spelling or context.

We realized that there was great spiritual value in these books so we set about the task of having them printed. The original title of the book is *Sefer Hayashar*. It was given this title since its contents are arranged in a strictly chronological order. No earlier event is made to follow a later one, and no later one to precede the earlier. This justifies the title which means "The Correct or Right Book." It used to be called the *Book of the Generations of Adam*, but the correct title is, as we have said, *Sefer Hayashar*. This is also the title which the Greek Jews give it, *Libros de los Falabros* (in Ladino, spoken by the Jews of Salonika).

In the Book of Chashmoneans we are told that King Ptolemy of Egypt ordered his servants to collect the legal writings of all peoples. His purpose was to establish a perfect order of justice for all. They collected a total of nine hundred and sixty-five tomes, but he wished to make the number one thousand. Thereupon certain evil sinners of the People of Israel said, "Oh king, why all this toil? Send to Jerusalem and order the Jews to bring you their Torah written by the word of God through the prophets. In this way, you will learn great wisdom." He took their advice, but the Jews were reluctant to comply. Instead they sent the king the *Sefer Hayashar*. King Ptolemy was pleased with it. He then abandoned the study of all the other books and blessed the person who advised him to obtain this volume.

In time, these evil sinners discovered that the real Torah was

never sent to the king. They informed the king, who became very angry, and he sent word to Jerusalem once more to obtain a copy of the Torah itself. This time he took precautions and sent for seventy elders whom he received and placed in seventy separate rooms. Each one was ordered to render his independent translation of the Torah (into Greek). The Divine spirit came upon them and they all rendered the version in exactly the same manner without the slightest variation. Ptolemy was very happy and showed great appreciation to the scholars who translated the Torah.

When Ptolemy died, the Jews used ingenuity to rescue this version, but they did leave the *Sefer Hayashar* with his son. This served to show each successive ruler that God had chosen Israel and that there is none beside God. The book is still in Egypt and copies reached all the countries of the exile, and as was stated above, it found its way to the city Napoli, ruled by the King of Spain.

You will, therefore, dear reader, find here some accounts concerning the kings of Edom and Crete and even Africa. This is not the principal purpose of the work, but it is important to make known to all, the difference between the wars of Israel and those of the heathens. The victories of Israel are not those of chance, but of miracle. These events alone teach us to place our trust in Him.

Therefore, you will see that the purposes of this book are numerous. They all lead us to the idea of faith in God and of clinging to Him and His ways. The first purpose is the knowledge we gain of the facts of Creation and the first twenty generations of man. The second is the additional material surrounding the birth of our father, Avraham, and his clinging to God and of his conflict with King Nimrod. It includes the story of the Age of Dispersion (Tower of Babel) and how the people were scattered to the ends of the earth. It tells of the building of the cities and states. The third purpose is that we learn about the attachment of our forefathers to God. The fourth is the story of the wicked cities, Sodom and Amora, and their destruction. This will teach us to



keep far from sin. The fifth reason is that we have recorded here the devotion of Yitzchak and Yaakov to God and the prayer of our mother, Sarah, and the binding of Yitzchak. This teaches us to incline our hearts to His service.

Next, the story of events describing the wars of the Sons of Yaakov with Shechem and the other cities should arouse in us the virtue of trust. In seventh place, the telling of the full story of Yoseif in Egypt and Potifar and his wife and the king of Egypt moves us to fear God. In eighth place, we are informed of the deeds of Moshe in Ethiopia and in Midian. This alone will show us how God works with the righteous. In ninth place, we are given many details of the slavery of Israel in Egypt — how this began and how they were subjected to all manner of bondage. One should read this section on the evenings of Pesach, especially after the Seder. This, in fact, is the practice in Spain. After we end the Seder, we read all the events from the descent into Egypt up to the deliverance.

In tenth place, some of the comments of our sages, of blessed memory, will be found in this book, such as the story of the angels who met Yaakov when he returned from Mesopotamia. The eleventh reason is that we are told about the story of the angel, Gavriel, who taught Yoseif seventy languages and the explanation of the verse “Who slew Midian in the field of Moav” (Bereishis 36:35). The twelfth reason is that any person who is called upon to preach in public may use this material which is not found elsewhere.

There is a thirteenth and final thought. There are traveling merchants and wayfarers who may find here a condensed form of Torah study and thus benefit spiritually. It gives a pleasure to the mind and the thoughts since it contains countless stories, as we have said, which are not told elsewhere.

All the above reasons being considered, it was thought commendable to print and publish this book. It will receive recognition throughout the communities of Israel. This will induce us to

ponder on the wonders of God and His mercies and those which he performed for our fathers; that He chose us out of all the peoples. So that by this study, we will learn to fear God. We put our trust in God on Whom we lean and we ask Him to help us in the fulfillment of this task, which is the work of heaven. We pray to Him to grant us success and to guide us in the right path, to deliver us from mistakes and absolve us from hidden errors. This is how King David prayed in Tehillim “Who can understand errors, so clear us from hidden things” (*Tehillim*). May God show us the good way and lead us in the path of success for the sake of His mercies and kindnesses and may He grant the requests of our hearts for good, Amen, and may it be His will . . .





## ❧ Bereishis ❧

### THE CREATION OF MAN

This is the book of generations of *Adam* whom God created on the earth on the day that God made earth and heaven. God said, "Let us make man in Our image and in Our likeness." Then God formed the man from the ground. God blew into him the breath of life and man became a living soul with the power of speech.

God said, "It is not good for a man to be alone so I shall make for him a compatible helper." God then caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. As Adam slept, God removed one of his ribs and, having built flesh around it to form Chava, brought her to man. Adam awoke and found the woman standing before him. He thought, "This is bone of my bones. She will be called woman (*ishah*) since she was taken from man (*ish*)." He named her Chava as she was the mother of all living humans.

God blessed them and called them *Adam* on the day when man was created. God said, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." He took Adam and his wife and placed them in *Gan Eiden* (the Garden of Eden) to till it and to watch over it. He commanded them, "You may eat of all the trees of the Garden, but from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil you may not eat, since on the day you eat of it you will surely die." Then, having blessed them, He ascended.

Adam and his wife lived in that Garden as God had commanded. But God had created the serpent on earth. Now this serpent came to tempt them to transgress the command which they had received. With great cunning the serpent beguiled the woman to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. She listened to it and took some of the fruit of that tree and gave of it to her husband too. By transgressing that commandment, they aroused God's anger and He cursed them and banished them from the Garden. They would now work, with anguish, the ground from

which they were taken. They left the Garden and dwelt east of Eiden.

### KAYIN AND HEVEL

Adam lived with his wife and she gave birth to two sons and three daughters. The elder son was named Kayin which implies acquiring a son (with God's help). The younger one was called Hevel which means "nothing," as if to say we came with nothing and we shall leave this earth with nothing.

The lads grew and their father gave them both possession of a piece of land. Kayin tilled the soil and Hevel became a shepherd. After a time they both brought an offering to God. Kayin brought some of the fruit of the earth and Hevel brought the firstborn of his sheep, selected from the best he had. So God was attentive to Hevel and to his gift and a fire came down from heaven and consumed the offering. But God paid no regard to the gift of Kayin, as he had given only the worst of his fruit. Kayin became jealous of his brother and began to seek a means of destroying him.

One day both brothers came to do their work as usual. Kayin plowed and Hevel tended his sheep. It happened that some sheep passed by the field where Kayin was plowing. Kayin became infuriated and turned to Hevel and said in an angry voice, "Why have you brought your sheep to graze on my land?" Hevel replied, "In that case, why do you eat the meat of my lambs and use their fleece for the wool of your clothing? Remove your woollen clothes and pay for all the meat you have eaten! If you do this, I shall leave your land, never to come back." Kayin, burning with hatred, said, "If I were to kill you now who would seek revenge from me?" Hevel calmly replied, "The God who created us to live on this earth will avenge my blood. God is Judge and He will render to man evil for evil and He will do to the wicked according to his evil ways. Should you slay me, be assured that God will know your hiding place and He will judge you for the evil which you plan."

When Kayin heard these words he flew into a rage, and, flushed with anger, raised the plowing iron and killed his brother. Hevel's blood streamed in torrents before the sheep, soaking the ground. Kayin, at the sight of his fallen brother, regretted his evil deed, and wept bitterly. With a heavy heart he dug a hole in the ground, and hid the body by covering it with earth.

But God knew what had happened and he called to Kayin, "Where is your brother Hevel?" Kayin answered, "I do not know, am I my brother's keeper?" God continued, "What have you done? The sound of your brother's voice cries to Me from the earth. You have killed your brother and you even believed that I would not see your act. You killed him because he spoke truthfully to you. Now you will be cursed from the very ground which opened itself to take your brother's blood and into which you buried him. When you till that earth, it will not continue to yield its full strength for you. There will grow thorns and thistles and you will be a wanderer and a fugitive in the world."

Kayin left God's presence and wandered about the earth east of Eiden with his belongings. He had a son whom he called Chanoch which contains the meaning of "ease," since God began to give him ease and tranquility. At this time Kayin began to build a city which he named after his son Chanoch. It was also at this time that God gave Kayin some repose so that he was not made to wander about so much. To Chanoch was born Irad and to Irad was born Mechuyo'el and to Mechuyo'el was born Mesusho'el and Mesusho'el had a son called Lemech.

## THE TEN GENERATIONS

It happened in the one hundred and thirtieth year of the life of Adam that he resumed living with his wife and she bore him a son in his likeness and form. She called him Sheis meaning that God had replaced the lost brother Hevel who had been killed by Kayin. When Sheis was one hundred and five years old he had a son whom he named Enosh. This name implies that a time had

come when men began to multiply, to bring pain to their own souls and to bring God's anger on them by rebelling against Him. Men began to worship other gods and to forget about God who had created them. They formed images of iron and wood and worshiped them. So in the time of Enosh, men forsook God.

God's anger was kindled against them because of their abominations. He brought a flood from the waters of the River Gichon which destroyed a third of the earth. The seed which they sowed grew into thorns and briers. The earth had already been cursed since Adam's sin and now it became worse in its deterioration.

Enosh was ninety when his son Keinan was born. When Keinan was forty, he was already so wise that he had mastered many subjects and he ruled over the spirits and the demons. Keinan indeed knew that God was about to destroy mankind because of their sinful lives. There would be a destructive flood in due time. Keinan wrote these things on tablets of stone and placed them in his treasury. Keinan ruled over the entire earth and restored many people to the right path of life.

When Keinan was seventy he had three sons and two daughters. The oldest son was named Mehalalel, the second Einan, and the third Mered. Their sisters were Adah and Tzillah. Lemech, the son of Mesusha'el arranged for marriages of his children into the family of Keinan whose two daughters became Lemech's wives. Lemech had a son by Adah whom he called Yaval and another son whom he named Yuval. The other wife, Tzillah, Adah's sister, was barren. It was the practice in those days to trespass the command, "be fruitful and multiply." Some men gave their wives a potion which rendered them unable to bear children. This was done in order to preserve their beauty. Tzillah was one of these. Those who bore children were treated by their husbands with some contempt, whereas the ones rendered barren were favorites. Yet, it transpired that towards old age Tzillah, too, conceived. She called her son Tuval Kayin. This was a play on words meaning, "now that I am old and worn out I gained him from God." She

then gave birth to a daughter whom she called Na'amoh. This word means "pleasure." She referred to the fact that at that age she was granted this pleasure.

### **THE ACCIDENT**

At this time Lemech was very old and his sight began to fail. He was attended by his son Tuval Kayin. One day, father and son went hunting in the field. Kayin, Adam's son, happened to be in the vicinity, but Lemech could not see him. Tuval Kayin asked his father, Lemech, to draw the bow since he saw Kayin at a distance and thought that the latter was a wild animal. The arrow pierced Kayin and killed him. The curse for Kayin's murder of Hevel, his brother, was thus fulfilled.

Then Lemech and his little son went to examine the body of the fallen prey. As they approached, they discovered that it was their own ancestor Kayin. Lemech was so shocked and horrified at this accident that, in despair, he clapped his hands. Tuval Kayin was caught between his father's hands and was killed instantly by the blow.

Lemech's wives heard about this tragic event and, overcome with grief, planned to kill him. They hated him for the rest of his days. Repelled by the old man's presence, they deserted him until he prevailed upon them to listen to him.

Trembling with emotion Lemech said, "Adah and Tzillah, wives of Lemech, give ear to my statement. You believe that I killed a man by wounding him and a child by smiting for no reason at all! Don't you know that I am very old and I acted without foreknowledge?" His wives were moved by his words and returned to him. But they did not bear him any more children, for they realized that the anger of God was growing against mankind. All men were to be destroyed by a disastrous flood in retribution for their evil and corrupt ways.

## CHANOCH

Now Mehalalel, the son of Keinan, was sixty-five years old when he had a son, Yered. Yered was one hundred and sixty-two years old when he had a son named Chanoch. Chanoch was sixty-five years old when he had a son, Mesushelach. Chanoch walked in God's path after his son was born. He served Him and rejected the evil ways of his contemporaries. His soul clung to God's teachings with knowledge and insight so that he knew all the ways of God. He left the company of men because of his wisdom, and he went into seclusion for a long time. After many years of living in this fashion and praying to God in isolation, an angel of God called to him, saying, "Chanoch, Chanoch," and the latter replied, "I am here."

The angel said to Chanoch, "Get up and leave your seclusion and return to society to rule over them. You will teach them the right ways and the proper deeds which they should perform."

Chanoch, greatly agitated by the angel's call, stirred into action. He gathered people around him and taught them about God. Word was sent around everywhere announcing that whoever wanted to know the ways of God and the good life should come to Chanoch for instruction. Hungry for the truth, people eagerly gathered around him and he taught them the wisdom of God. Thus the people served God all the lifetime of Chanoch. Rulers, princes, and judges, all came to hear him. He was loved and respected so much that three hundred rulers proclaimed him king over them. With gentle persuasion he was able to establish peaceful relations between all these rulers. He reigned for two hundred and forty-three years, guiding all people in the ways of God.

These were the sons of Chanoch. Mesushelach, Elishua, Elimelech — three sons, and two daughters — Malkoh and Na'amoh. When Mesushelach was one hundred and eighty-seven years old he had a son, Lemech. It was in the fifty-sixth year of Lemech's life that Adam died at the age of nine hundred and

thirty. At the behest of God, Adam's son, Sheis, and his sons, and Chanoch and Mesushelach buried Adam with great honor in the Cave of the Kings. Everyone mourned him with tears and much sorrow, a practice which has been preserved for all men to this day. Adam died because he had transgressed the command of God in eating from the Tree of Knowledge.

It was in the two hundred and fifty-third year of Chanoch's reign that Adam died. Chanoch decided to go into seclusion again and to live in solitude as he had done previously. He actually carried out his plan, except that he did not absent himself all the time. He would isolate himself for three days at a time, then present himself for one day. During the three days he devoted himself to his own spiritual exercises and on the fourth he taught as before. This became his continual practice. After a time, he would disappear for six days at a time and appear for only one day (on the seventh). Then it changed to an appearance of one day each month and finally, only one day each year. Everyone implored him to return to them, but they could not move him. They revered him greatly and were afraid to approach him on account of the Divine Presence which was on his countenance. They feared that they might perish because of his radiant appearance.

Kings from far and wide met and took counsel and presented themselves before Chanoch. When he consented to resume his daily instruction the kings joyfully shouted in unison: "Long live the king!" It happened that during one of the sessions an angel appeared to him, saying, "It is my wish to take you to Heaven where you shall reign over the angels just as you have done among men." Upon hearing this awesome message, Chanoch summoned all the inhabitants of the earth and taught them the wisdom of God. He said, "I have been commanded to ascend to Heaven but I do not know the day of my departure so let me teach you while I may, before I depart for all time."

He lived among them for some days and taught them. Then, one day while he was teaching, they saw the form of a huge horse



descending from heaven, running as swiftly as the wind. Chanoch told them, "This horse has come for me. The time has come for me to leave you." A proclamation was issued. "Whoever wishes to study with Chanoch must come to him at once." Then he instructed them for the last time and also made peace between them.

Now he arose and mounted his horse. He was followed by eight hundred thousand men for a distance of one day's journey. On the second day he said, "You must return to your homes lest you perish." Nevertheless, some insisted on remaining, but he continued to warn them each day to leave him. On the sixth day he spoke to them again warning them to leave. Many left but some remained and tearfully said, "Where you go, we shall go, and only death shall separate us." Chanoch now desisted from his warnings and the kings took a count to see how many had remained of them.

On the seventh day, before an awe-stricken crowd of admirers, Chanoch ascended to Heaven in a whirlwind with fiery horses and fiery chariots. The kings rushed to that very spot and found it covered with snow. On the snow they found a mass of huge boulders of ice. They attempted to break through the iceblocks to see if anyone was buried beneath. Their efforts were fruitless and they sadly concluded that all those who had remained with Chanoch had perished. They searched for Chanoch but he was never found, for he had ascended to Heaven. He had lived for three hundred and sixty-five years.

It was in the hundred and thirteenth year of the life of Lemech's son Mesushelach, that Chanoch ascended to Heaven. At this time, all the kings of the earth came to Mesushelach, asking him to reign over them, and thus he was crowned as their king. Mesushelach did all that was upright, as his father, Chanoch, had done before him. At the end of his life, however, men began to rebel against God. In retaliation, God destroyed the seed of the earth and there was no harvest. The ground grew thistles. Yet the

people did not repent of their evil ways and were bent on wrongdoing. God was angry. He regretted that He had created man and now planned to obliterate them.

### THE BIRTH OF NOACH

When Lemech was one hundred and sixty years old, Sheis, Adam's son died. He had lived for nine hundred and twelve years. When Lemech was eighty-one years old he took for a wife Eshmoa, daughter of Elishua, son of Chanoah, his uncle. In those days men sowed the earth but found little food. Even so, they did not turn from their evil ways and they rebelled against their Creator. Lemech's wife conceived and bore him a son. His grandfather, Mesushelach, called him Noach implying that the land had begun to rest and was not being spoiled as before. Lemech, his father, called him Menachem stating, as the Torah says, "This one will comfort us from our work and from the toil of our hands from the earth which God cursed."

The boy grew up and walked in the ways of his grandfather, Mesushelach. He was perfect in his observance of the ways of God. But mankind had turned away from those ways. As they multiplied with sons and daughters, each man taught his children evil ways. Each man fashioned his own god, and they robbed and were violent. The whole earth was full of violence. Their judges and police officers abducted young girls and forcibly robbed men of their wives, whenever they chose to. Even the beasts of the field, the wild animals, and birds were taught to behave unnaturally. All this was done to provoke God.

God saw that the earth was corrupt. Every form of life had perverted its way on earth — man and beast. God said, "I will blot out mankind which I have created from the face of the earth — man, bird and beast — for I regret that I created them." Every man who did walk in God's ways died in those days before God brought the evil which He had promised to bring. This was done by God so that they would not have to witness the destruction which He had decided to bring upon the earth.

Only Noach found favor in God's eyes. God chose him and his sons in order to preserve life on the face of the earth.

## ❧ Noach ❧

It was in the eighty-fourth year of the life of Noach that Enosh, the son of Sheis, died at the age of nine hundred and five. Keinan, the son of Enosh, died in the one hundred and seventy-ninth year of Noach's life. Keinan lived for nine hundred and ten years. In the two hundred and thirty-fourth year of the life of Noach, Mehalalel, the son of Keinan, died. Mehalalel lived for eight hundred and ninety-five years. At that time, Yered, the son of Mehalalel died. This was in the three hundred and sixty-sixth year of the life of Noach. Yered lived for nine hundred and two years. It so happened that those men who had followed God wholeheartedly died during this period. This was so that they should not see the evil which God had threatened to bring on the earth.

### ANNOUNCING THE GREAT FLOOD

By the four hundred and eightieth year of Noach's life, all those good people had died. Only Mesushelach was left of the old generation. It was then that God told Mesushelach and Noach to proclaim to all the world as follows: "Thus says God. Repent of your evil ways and He will change the decree He has made against you." Obediently, both these men proclaimed this warning to all. This they did day after day, but people refused to take heed. Now God set a deadline of one hundred and twenty years. This gave them further opportunity to repent, and God then would likewise withdraw His plan of destruction.

Owing to this impending doom, Noach, refrained from marrying and having children. He thought that if God were to destroy the earth, he would not like to bring children into such a fate. But he was a righteous man and God wished to preserve him and mankind through the children he might have. It was planned that Noach and his children would survive. So in obedience to God's purpose, he chose a wife. She was Na'amah, the daughter of

Chanoch, and she was five hundred and eighty years old. Their first son was named Yefes which implies enlargement, as if to say, "God has enlarged us and wishes to make a room for mankind through us." The second son was named Shem which is taken from the word *sam*, to place or to make ready. This implied that preparation was being made for the future of mankind. Noach was now five hundred and two years old.

These lads grew up and walked in God's path. They had been well trained by Mesushelach and by Noach. Lemech, Noach's father, died at the age of seven hundred and seventy-seven but he had not walked in God's ways completely. This happened in the five hundred and ninety-fifth year of Noach's life.

## THE GREAT FLOOD

After repeated warnings to men, God said, "The end of all living things has come before Me on account of their evil deeds and I plan to destroy them from the face of the earth. So get cypress wood and build a huge ark and let it stand there." This ark was to be three hundred cubits in length; fifty in width and thirty in height. "Make a door at the side and make the top of the ark slanted by sloping it to a width of one cubit at the top. Cover it inside and outside with pitch. Then I will bring a flood on the earth to destroy all life. Everything on the earth will perish. You must gather all the animals, male and female, so as to preserve life on the earth. All type of food suitable for each species must be stored in it. Choose three women for your sons so that they marry."

In the five hundred and ninety-fifth year of his life, Noach began to build the ark, and took the three daughters of Eliakim, the son of Mesushelach, as wives for his three sons. It was at this point that Mesushelach, the son of Chanoch, died at the age of nine hundred and sixty-nine.

God now told Noach, "Enter the ark with your family. All the animals will be brought to you and will surround the ark." Noach

was to go and place himself at the entrance and all these animals would present themselves to him. All those who would kneel before him were to be admitted, but those who remained in standing posture would be left outside. Noah acted accordingly, admitting only those which knelt.

Just then, a she lion presented herself with her two whelps, male and female. The three of them kneeled before Noah. Suddenly, the two young lions attacked their mother sinking their sharp claws and fangs into her flesh. The mother fled and sought refuge among other lions nearby. Noah was very puzzled by this scene, but he took the two young ones into the ark. Of the clean animals, he took seven pairs, male and female.

For the next seven days no rain appeared. Then threatening black clouds appeared with thunderbolts and flashes of lightning accompanied by such a terrifying noise as had never been heard before. This was really the final warning to make men repent, yet they remained stubborn.

After these seven days, in the six hundredth year of the life of Noah, the flood began with all its fierceness. The fountains of the Great Depth were opened as well as the flood gates of heaven, and the downpour continued for forty days. God had sealed Noah safely in the ark. When it became obvious that the rain was abnormally heavy, men began to cry out to Noah to let them enter. A crowd of 700,000 people had now gathered around the ark. Noah admonished them, "Did you not rebel against God and did I not warn you. You even denied His existence. I cautioned you for the past one hundred and twenty years and now you suddenly change your mind because your life is in danger!"

They begged for another chance to repent but they had been given so many warnings that it was now too late. They then attempted to break down the ark's door, but the animals which remained outside attacked them — some were killed while others managed to escape from these beasts. Eventually all living things

died — beasts, birds and even creeping things. The occupants of the ark were tossed about violently until Noah prayed to God. Then a wind came and the waters began to subside. The well-springs of the deep and the floodgates of heaven were now closed. The waters receded and the ark finally rested on ground.

Then Noah prayed, “Oh God of the whole universe, take me out of this enclosure. I am weary of my groaning.” Then God revealed to him that only after a full year would he be allowed to leave.

The year passed and the earth was indeed dry. Noah removed the cover of the ark on the seventh day of the second month. He left the ark only when he was commanded by God to do so. When they finally left, each being went its own way. Noah and his family stayed in the land which he was told to inherit. He served God all his life as before. God blessed them saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the whole earth.”

## NIMROD

The third son of Noah was named Cham who had a son named Kush. Kush married and had a son whom he called Nimrod. The very name suggested rebellion (*marad*). Nimrod's father had given to him the skin-coats which God had made for Adam and Chavah when they were expelled from the Garden of Eiden. When Adam died these garments were passed on to Chanoah, the son of Yered, and then to his son, Mesushelach. Then Noah took them and brought them to the ark where they were kept until they left that enclosure. Cham stole these garments and hid them from his father and brothers. Later he gave them to his son, Kush, who hid them until his son, Nimrod, was born.

Nimrod was twenty years old when he first donned this coat. When wearing it, he sensed a surge of strength and energy. He became a mighty hunter and killed animals which he offered to God as a sacrifice. He even fought wars on his brothers' behalf and



subdued all of his enemies. It became a proverb in those days that when anyone trained soldiers he would say to them, "Be as Nimrod who is a mighty hunter in the land."

When Nimrod was forty years old a war broke out between his brothers and the sons of Yefes. Nimrod gathered the sons of Kush and the sons of Cham and came to the aid of his brothers. Together, these warriors subdued their mighty enemies. The enemies' sons were taken as hostages and used as slaves.

Nimrod, being victorious, was now made king, and he made Terach, the son of Nachor, his chief captain. Then he took counsel with his officers about building a city as the royal capital. In their search for a suitable site they came across a plain where they built a magnificent metropolis, which they named Shin'ar. Nimrod ruled all mankind with an iron fist, so that his fame spread throughout the world.

All people heard about his greatness and they brought him gifts and paid homage to him. Many people now settled in the region of Shin'ar.

At this time the earth's peoples spoke the same language with uniform words. They did not walk in the ways of God but were as wicked as the men in the time of the flood. Nimrod also taught men his own evil ways and made gods of wood and stone. His son, Mardan, was even worse than his father, as it says, "From the wicked there proceeds wickedness" (Shmuel 24:13).

### **AVRAM'S BIRTH**

Terach was the son of Nachor and was captain of Nimrod's armies. He married Amasla, the daughter of Karnavo. Amasla gave birth to a son when Terach was seventy years old. This son was named Avram. The king had promoted Terach at that time and the name Avram indicated his high position (*ram*). When this child was born, Nimrod's entire court assembled to celebrate the event at the house of Terach. That night, as they left the banquet, they noticed a peculiar scene in the skies. A great star had risen in

the east which seemed to swallow four other stars from the four points of the compass. The wise men said, "This is an evil omen for Nimrod. It points to the future of the child, Avram. He will be a very mighty ruler and through his descendants he will conquer the world."

The ministers and wise men were very worried and began to discuss the matter among themselves. They reasoned, "If we conceal this information from Nimrod, and he discovers the truth of the scene, he will accuse us of hiding it from him and he will kill us."

They decided to tell Nimrod how they had been banqueting with Terach and upon departing had seen a wondrous heavenly scene. The chief magician added, "This celestial event portends great danger for you, great king, and for many mighty rulers." They continued, "This new-born child, Avram, is a threat to us all. We advise you to arrest the child for the safety of all and to remove this menace from our midst." Nimrod summoned Terach and offered him a huge sum of money in order to let him have the child. His plan was, of course, to kill Avram.

Terach, standing before Nimrod resolutely said, "Your Majesty, permit me to relate to you an incident that occurred only last night. Ayon, the son of Marad, came to me and asked me to sell him the fine stallion which you had given me as a gift. He offered me much gold for it but I said I would ask the king about this first." Nimrod, taken aback, replied, "Are you so foolish as to think of parting with such a gift? To barter a proud horse, the like of which is not to be found in the whole land?"

Terach, looking the king straight in the eye, said, "You, oh king, have asked me to do the same thing by asking me to trade my own son for money. What use have I for gold if my son is taken from me? I will have no one to inherit me and the gold will revert to the king."

But Nimrod would not be put off by such logic and angrily insisted. Terach thought of a plan. He asked, "Give me three days

to think the matter over.” Nimrod, knowing very well that he could have Avram brought to him by force, granted Terach’s wish. After three days, Nimrod sent word to Terach and again offered him the sum he had promised for his son. “If you refuse,” the message read, “you and your entire household will be destroyed.”

Terach now put his plan into action. He took one of his servant’s children, which had been born at that very time. (This child was indeed the son of Terach by a maidservant and was born on the same day as Avram.) Terach gave Nimrod this child and received the reward. The matter was forgotten after Nimrod had the child killed. Avram was taken by his parents and hidden in a remote cave, with a nurse to care for him. Avram grew and God was with him. He remained in that cave for ten years.

At this time Haran, son of Terach and brother of Avram, married. His wife gave birth to a son whom he named Lot. Haran was thirty-nine years old when this son was born. Then Haran had another child, a daughter called Milkah and then a daughter called Sarai. When Haran was forty-two years old, Avram was ten years old. When Avram left the cave, he journeyed to Noach and his son, Shem, and lived in their home and studied the ways of God. No one knew of Avram’s existence and Avram lived with Noach and Shem for a long time.

Avram now acknowledged the true God and had been with his teachers for thirty-nine years. Indeed, already at the age of three, Avram had followed God’s ways. He did so until the end of his life.

All men again rebelled against God. They made their own gods of wood and stone. Terach and his household likewise practiced idolatry. He had twelve such idols, one for each month of the year. Only Noach and his household remained faithful to God.

### **AVRAM FINDS GOD**

Avram had learned much wisdom and refused to accept the folly of worshiping man-made gods. He originally discovered God in the following manner. One day he looked at the sun and

realized that this huge body gave light to the world and he thought, "This radiant sun warms and sustains the world — it must be God. I will worship it and pray to it. But in the evening the sun set and Avram said, "No, the sun cannot be the true God." Then he watched the appearance of the moon and stars at night and he said, "These must be the Gods who created man and his world. I will bow down to them." But they all disappeared when the hour of sunnnrise arrived. He concluded, "None of these can possibly be the Creator. They are merely servants of the Almighty God." So Avram, when returning to the house of Noach, remained a faithful worshiper of God. The world, however, was still evil and Nimrod reigned securely.

### THE TOWER OF BAVEL

As has already been mentioned, the whole of mankind spoke one language with uniform words. All the princes and Mitzraim, Kush and Canaan took counsel together and said, "Let us build a city and a tower in its midst as a fortress reaching to the sky. We shall become very famous and no enemy will be able to hurt us. We shall never be scattered all over the earth." Nimrod took this advice and gathered together 600,000 men and sought out a wide territory on which to build this city. After searching for two years they found a suitable valley to the east of Shinar. Then they constructed furnaces in which to cast bricks. Their plan was an evil one because their purpose was to make war against God, climbing to the heavens to do battle.

Now there were differences of opinion as to how to attain victory. One group said, "Let us ascend and fight." Another said, "Let us place our own gods in heaven" and the third said, "We shall use weapons to shoot at God Himself." It took a year to get the bricks and mortar to the top, where the builders were waiting to receive the materials. There was constant ascending and descending. If a brick fell and was lost, everyone wept, but if a human life was lost, nobody cared. The arrows which they began

to shoot upwards returned to them dripping with blood. They believed that they were really killing celestial beings.

Years passed and God said to seventy angels, "Let us descend and confuse their speech so that no one will understand the meaning of his co-worker." Instantly, they forgot their common language and they failed to understand one another. If one man said to the other, "Give me a stone," the other gave him mortar. When he received mortar instead of a brick, he threw it back, killing the person who had handed it to him. A great number of laborers met their death in this manner.

The result was mass confusion and the project came to an abrupt end. God took vengeance on the three groups. Those who said, "Let us ascend and fight," became apes and elephants. The group who said, "Let us place our own gods in heaven" were killed by one another's hand. And those who said, "We shall make war with God" were scattered over the face of the earth. The remainder fled and were likewise dispersed over the whole world. The work of building ceased. The name of the place was now Babel since God had confused their language.

As to the tower itself, a third of its height was swallowed into the earth, a third was burned and the other third is there to this day. Part of it is also suspended in mid air and casts its shadow over a distance of three days travel. Peleg, son of Ever, died at this time in the forty-eighth year of Avram's life. Peleg lived two hundred and thirty-nine years (Peleg implies division).

Now that men were scattered over the face of the entire earth, they built cities wherever they settled and gave these cities names. Many of these cities were named after themselves or after their sons.

Nimrod, son of Kush, while still in the land of Shinar, had built cities. One was Babel, one Erech, one Akkad and a fourth called Kalneh. Here his ambitions came to an end and many rebelled against him. Nimrod remained in Babel where he established a

kingdom. He was now renamed Amrafel. This word implies a meaning of fallen. He did not repent of his idolatrous practices and his son remained as wicked as ever, even worse than his father. This son was Mardan.

At this time a war was fought between the families of Cham's children. Kedorlaomer, King of Elam, left the descendants of Cham. He had conquered the whole domain of Cham and he then went to the five cities on the plain and subdued them. They paid tribute to him for twelve years. At that time Nachor, the son of Serug died. This was in the forty-ninth year of the life of Avram. Nachor had lived for one hundred and forty-eight years. In the fiftieth year of his life, Avram left the house of Noach and returned to his father, Terach. Terach was still the chief captain of Nimrod's army.

### **AVRAM DESTROYS THE IDOLS**

Avram came to Terach's house and saw twelve idols, each placed in its own temple. Avram became very angry and he said to himself, "With God's help, I will demolish these idols before three days will have passed." Seething with fury, he rushed to his father who was seated in the outer courtyard with his servants. Avram, fuming with indignation, burst out, "Tell me, father, where is the God Who created Heaven and Earth, and Who made you and me?" Terach, with a puzzled look in his eyes replied, "They are right here," and he led him into the chambers where the idols were kept. There were twelve large ones and countless minor ones. Filled with loathing and disgust, Avram stared at the collection of idols — big and small — as Terach reverently said, "These gods created me and you and all that is in the world." Terach then bowed down to these images.

Then Avram went to his mother and asked her, "Please prepare a succulent goat as a sacrifice to my father's gods." She prepared a delectable dish which Avram put before one of the idols. He left the food there, but, of course, it was not eaten or



In many places Sefer Hayashar elucidates and elaborates on the Medrashim brought by Rashi in his commentary on the Torah, in other places it brings from Medrashim which are different than those quoted by Rashi.



# ❧ Contents ❧

Mikeitz	123
Vayigash	141
Vayechi	150
The Book of Shemos	159
The Book of Bamidbar	209
The Book of Devarim	219
The Book of Yehoshua	221

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## PHARAOH'S DREAMS

**A**fter Yitzchak's death, God brought a famine to the land. It was at this time that Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had a dream. In this dream he appeared to be standing at the bank of the Nile River. He then saw seven fat cows rising from the waters and followed by seven lean ones of very poor appearance. The seven lean cows devoured the fat cows but they remained as thin as they had been before. The king awoke from this baffling dream, but soon fell asleep again and dreamed. In this second dream he saw seven ears of corn, full and heavy, on one stalk. Then seven other ears of corn came which were thin and blasted by the east wind. They swallowed the seven full ones. Then Pharaoh awoke.

In the morning the king remembered the details of these strange dreams and was very upset. He hastened to summon his wise men and sorcerers who came and presented themselves before him. "I have dreamed a dream," he said to them, "but there seems to be no explanation for it." The wise men then asked Pharaoh to tell them the nature of his dream.

When Pharaoh finished relating the details of his dream his advisors proceeded to explain it, all with one theme. "The seven good cows mean seven daughters who will be born to you in due course. The meaning of the bad cows is that all these daughters will die in your own lifetime. The seven ears of corn may mean that you will build seven cities, but the seven lean ears of corn mean that these same cities will be destroyed in your lifetime." Pharaoh became very annoyed as he felt in his heart that these interpretations were untrue.

He admonished these men to discover a more suitable explanation and he, in the meantime, sent for other sorcerers who offered the same interpretations. Then the king issued a proclamation stating, "Whosoever is able to interpret my dreams must

come at once to the palace on penalty of death. The one who will give the most fitting explanation will be granted whatever he wishes."

Many wise men came from Goshen, Raamses, Tachpancheis, Tzoan and from other cities in Egypt offering different interpretations. Some said the seven cows meant that seven kings would emerge from this king's dynasty but that they would be overthrown by seven princes. And that the seven ears of corn meant seven ministers of the court who would fall in battle into the hands of seven rulers. Others maintained that the seven good cows denoted seven strong cities in Egypt and that the seven lean ones were the seven peoples of Canaan who would destroy these seven cities. The seven ears of corn implied that the rule of Egypt would be restored eventually to Pharaoh's children who would defeat the Canaanite peoples one by one.

Some, for want of a better explanation, went so far as to say that the seven good cows meant seven queens whom the king would marry and who would die in his lifetime and the seven good and the seven lean ears of corn meant fourteen sons who would fight against one another until the weaker seven would conquer the stronger seven. Still others believed that the seven good cows were seven sons who would be born to Pharaoh but would be killed by seven princes of the court and the seven ears of corn implied that those very princes who had killed the sons would, themselves, be destroyed by lesser princes than they were themselves, thus avenging the death of the king's sons.

Pharaoh was most distressed over these explanations and interpretations. All this was really the Hand of God, Who had decreed that Yoseif should be summoned to give his interpretation, which would be the true and authentic one. It was decreed in Heaven that Yoseif should be released from prison and rule over Egypt.

Pharaoh drove the wise men from his presence and decreed that they be killed. Indeed, as the penalty was being carried out by

the chief executioner, Meirud, the chief butler, came before the king. He had met Yoseif in prison, where he, himself, had been placed. Meirud addressed the king. "May Pharaoh live forever and may his kingdom be great in all the earth. His majesty was annoyed with his servants, that is, the chief baker and myself. This happened two years ago and we were placed in prison. We, too, had dreams which troubled us greatly. With us, in prison, there was a Hebrew slave whose name was Yoseif. He interpreted our dreams and they came true just as he had predicted. It all happened in every detail just as he had said. Now, oh king, do not continue to kill these wise men but let the lad be sent for. He will surely explain your dreams in the most satisfactory manner."

Yoseif was immediately sent for. He had his hair cut and his clothes were changed and he now appeared before Pharaoh. The king was seated on his throne which was dazzling with jewels. Yoseif was overwhelmed by this sight. The throne was overlaid with gold and silver and seventy steps led up to it.

### **YOSEIF APPEARS BEFORE PHARAOH**

It was a custom at the Egyptian royal court that if a very important man came before the king he had to climb thirty-one steps and then the king would step down thirty six in order to speak to him. Ordinarily people were allowed to climb only to the third step and the king would go down only four steps. If, however, a man was able to speak all the seventy languages of the earth, he was allowed to go to the top of the seventieth step. A man knowing several languages would ascend as many steps as the number of languages he had mastered. There was also a rule that no man could be king unless he knew all the seventy languages.

When Yoseif came, he advanced to the throne, bowed and sat on the third step. Then the king stepped down to the fourth step from the top. The king said to Yoseif, "so far no person has given me a suitable interpretation and we have heard that you are an expert in this field." Yoseif said, "Let Pharaoh but tell me the dream and God will interpret it."

Then Pharaoh told him the dreams of the cows and the corn. At that very moment, the spirit of God came upon Yoseif and he saw all that would happen to Pharaoh from that day onward. As he began to speak the king took kindly to Yoseif and listened to him intently. Yoseif said, "Oh, King, do not believe that these were really two different dreams. They were one and the same. The repetition is intended to stress the urgency of the matter. This dream affects the future of your country. Both the seven good cows and the seven full ears of corn spell seven good years and, likewise, the seven lean cows and sickly ears of corn mean seven lean years — years of famine. You see, seven years of plenty are about to come in the land of Egypt which will be followed by seven years of severe famine — so severe that the years of plenty will be quickly forgotten — since this famine will ruin the land. The repetition of the dream in the second description of the corn merely begs you to be in readiness, since God has decreed what is to happen."

Yoseif continued, "Save this land and seek out a clever man who will supervise the hoarding of grain during the seven good years. Thus storing food for the seven hungry years, so that your people should not perish of hunger. Likewise, let each person save his own grain for use during the famine. This is the correct meaning of your dreams with the accompanying advice to protect the land."

The king replied, "Who can tell, and how shall we know that you speak correctly?" Yoseif answered, "This is the sign that I speak the truth. Your queen is ready to give birth to a child and, indeed, she will give birth to a son this very day and you will rejoice greatly. But at the exact moment that this son comes into the world, the boy who was born to you two years ago will die. The new son, however, will bring you consolation for the death of your firstborn."

Yoseif bowed and as soon as he left the court, the things which he had foretold occurred. The queen did give birth to a son. But

as soon as the good tidings were announced and as the bringer of this news left Pharaoh, the firstborn of the king died. There was a great cry in the palace and when the king asked for the cause of this wailing, he was told the sad news. Then Pharaoh knew that Yoseif had spoken accurately.

### **YOSEIF IS APPOINTED VICEROY**

Now the king assembled all his princes and servants. "You have all heard what this Hebrew told me" he said, in a low voice, "and I am certain that his interpretation of my dream is the true one. We can only save ourselves and our land by following his advice." The servants agreed that they must act according to Yoseif's counsel and appoint the person who is the wisest in the king's eyes to a position of power to oversee the collection of grain. Pharaoh said, "Since this man has Divine wisdom, there can be no other person who has his understanding and judgment."

The servants replied, "Is it not recorded in our laws that only a man fluent in all seventy languages of mankind may be king or viceroy? Otherwise, he may not be given any ruling position." They thought that Yoseif spoke only the language of the Hebrews, and they asked that he be summoned to be tested before the king. Thus, on the next day, Yoseif appeared before Pharaoh once again.

That same night God sent His angel to Yoseif as he slept in the dungeon where his master had confined him. The angel aroused Yoseif and taught him the seventy languages and named him 'Yehoseif,' adding the letter "hei" to his name. In the morning, Yoseif was summoned to the king. He came and climbed all the seventy steps to the top of the throne and spoke to Pharaoh. Originally, the servants had objected to Yoseif being appointed to any position since they thought he was not able to speak even Egyptian. Now, they were all amazed. They rejoiced that now the king would be able to appoint Yoseif to a very high position.

The king now spoke to Yoseif. "You are a wise man and you advised me to appoint a man over Egypt who would save the land.

Now that God has made known to you all these things, I realize that there is no one like you in all the land. Henceforth, you will be called Tzafenas Pa'aneach, the "revealer of things hidden," and you will be my second in command in this land. All the affairs of this kingdom will be managed by you. My servants will receive their allotted allowance monthly from you and the people will bow to you; only on this throne shall I be higher than you."

Then the king removed a ring from his finger and gave it to Yoseif and he had him clothed in royal apparel. He placed a crown on his head and a golden chain around his neck. The king's servants led Yoseif to the second best chariot in the land; the one which always rode behind that of the king. It was drawn by the finest horse. While he was being driven through the streets, the best musicians were told to play. There were one thousand drums and there were harps. Then five thousand men with swords followed. There were also twenty thousand nobles girded in leather overlaid with gold on each side of Yoseif. Great throngs of people stood in the streets to behold this pageantry. Incense and perfume were scattered on his path. He was proclaimed by twenty thousand men as viceroy and the people bowed and cried, "Long live the king, and long live his viceroy." Then Yoseif lifted his eyes to Heaven and said, "Praised be God Who raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the rubbish heap, Oh God of Hosts. Happy is the man who places his trust in You."

As viceroy of Egypt, Yoseif journeyed throughout the land and was shown all the treasures. When he returned, Pharaoh gave him a large tract of land with fields and vineyards. He was given three thousand talents of silver and one thousand talents of gold with onyx stones and precious crystal. Then the king ordered everyone to bring gifts which were placed on a special huge platform which had been erected in the street. All these gifts of gems and precious metals were for Yoseif who would now place them in his treasures.



## **OSENAS**

[Years before, a daughter was born to Deenah, Yaakov's daughter. Her name was Osenas. Yaakov's children wanted to have the baby killed because of their fear that the inhabitants of the land will mock them, saying, "there are unsavoury affairs going on amidst the tents of Yaakov." Yaakov, however, would not permit his children to do this. Instead, he brought an amulet and on it engraved the Holy Name of God, and the inscription, "whoever marries me, will marry into the family of Yaakov." He then hung this charm around Osenas' neck and left her under a bramble bush in the desert.

The angel Micha'el came and transported her to Egypt to the home of Potiphera, who, being childless, raised her as his own daughter.] Now the king sent to Potiphera, son of Achiram the priest, to give his daughter, Osenas, to Yoseif as a wife. [After the marriage took place, Yoseif found this amulet and hid it. He acknowledged, once again, God's benevolence toward him.]

Yoseif was now thirty years old. He was given one hundred servants to attend to his household needs. He built himself a magnificent mansion near the palace of the king. This mansion took three years to complete. In it he made a splendid throne of gold and silver on which was engraved the map of the land of Egypt. He also had an army of forty thousand and six hundred men. All of them were provided with all necessary weapons and armor.

## **TARSHISH AGAINST YISHMAEL**

At that time, the children of Tarshish came and waged war with the children of Yishmael. The Yishmaelites, being few in number, sent a delegation to Egypt asking the king to supply captains for their army. Yoseif and his men were sent to the land of Chavilah to assist the sons of Yishmael. Yoseif's army defeated the armies of Tarshish. The people of Tarshish fled and sought a

new home in the land of Greece among their kinsmen and then Yoseif returned to Egypt.

At the end of the second year of Yoseif's rule over Egypt, God showered great plenty on the land and this abundance was to last for seven years. Yoseif's officers collected food during this period which was stored in granaries. This grain was brought together with the earth of the place in which it grew so that it would be well preserved. An enormous amount of communal grain was amassed while the inhabitants of the land stored their own grain privately. The granaries of Yoseif were guarded by special officers to insure against theft.

Yoseif's wife, Osenas, bore him two sons. The first was named Menasheh and the second was called Efrayim. Yoseif was thirty-four years old when his second son was born. They grew and were trained in the ways of God and were also taught subjects relating to the affairs of the land. They grew up among the sons of the king of Egypt.

### THE YEARS OF FAMINE

The seven good years came to an end and there followed the start of the period of famine. The people now opened their private storehouses but the grain was found to be infested by insects. Much to their dismay, the people could not use this grain, so they abandoned their storehouses and appealed to Pharaoh for food. He told the people to go to Yoseif. The king was anxious about the welfare of his people, since he learned that their private food stocks had spoiled. So Yoseif opened the warehouses and sold them food.

Not only did this famine affect Egypt but it spread to all the surrounding countries. When the inhabitants of Canaan and Philistia heard that there was grain to be purchased in Egypt, they all came to buy. Yoseif opened the storehouses and sold grain to everyone who came.

Yoseif now issued a decree, “Anyone who wishes to buy grain should not send his servants but may only use his sons as buyers. Nor may buyers from Egypt and Canaan buy grain in order to sell. They may buy only the amount essential to the needs of their home and family. Only one beast of burden may be loaded with such food. The buyer is instructed to write his own name and the name of his father and grandfather and these names are to be handed to Yoseif at the end of each day of selling.” Yoseif, of course, had a plan when he devised these decrees. He wished to be aware of the arrival of his brothers, who would one day make their appearance in Egypt. These laws were obeyed and every night Yoseif searched the list of grain buyers for the names he hoped to find.

Yaakov heard that there was grain to be had in Egypt and he told his sons to go there to buy it. He said to his sons, “Why do you appear in the eyes of the citizens of the land as if you were well fed. Go down to Egypt and get grain from that land.” The sons, heeding their father’s wish, journeyed to Egypt and arrived among the other buyers. Their father had told them not to enter the city together, but, rather, each one should enter through a separate gate. The youngest son, Binyamin, was kept at home, as his father was afraid of a mishap as had occurred with Yoseif.

Ten sons, in all, went down to Egypt. While traveling, they had time to think about their lost brother, Yoseif, and they began to repent of what they had done to him. Certain that Yoseif had been taken to Egypt they said to one another: “When we get there, we will search for him and when we find him we will ransom him from his master. If our ransom is rejected, we will take him by force.” They all agreed: “Indeed, we are ready to die to rescue our brother.”

### **THE BROTHERS ARRIVE**

They came to Egypt and parted company and entered the city through different gates. The gatekeepers wrote down the names

of all those who entered the city and brought these names to Yoseif each day. That evening he examined the lists and at last he knew that his brothers had arrived in the land of Egypt. He then gave orders that all the food storehouses in Egypt be closed except one. This order was immediately carried out. Yoseif gave the names of the brothers to the officer in charge of the granary. He told this officer that if anyone came to buy grain and who bore one of the names given by Yoseif, he was to be notified immediately.

The sons of Yaakov had, meanwhile, made some efforts to seek out Yoseif. They did this even before they came to buy food. They had been to the disreputable areas of the city and sought him there for three days, since they feared that he may have been sold to such a place. Reports of the brothers had not been handed in to Yoseif since they had still not bought grain, so he sent sixteen of his men who spread-out through the city. Four of them searched the disreputable areas and found the brothers there.

They were now brought before Yoseif who was sitting in his palace dressed in his royal clothes and a large gold crown on his head. The brothers were amazed at the radiant appearance of the ruler. Yoseif recognized them at once, but they did not recognize him, for they were overawed by his presence. He asked, "Where do you come from?" They replied, "We have come from the land of Canaan to buy produce." He then asked them, "Why did you enter by ten different gates? This can only mean that you intend to spy out the land." They told him, "We are ten brothers, all sons of the same father. We are honest men. Not spies. Our father ordered us to enter through different gates." Yoseif told them, "I am also aware that you have been wandering about for three days in the harlot's quarter. Only spies would act in this manner."

They told Yoseif, "We were twelve brothers in all, sons of Yaakov, the son of Yitzchak, the son of Avraham the Hebrew. The youngest is at home with his father and one brother was lost, but he might be in Egypt. We will look for him in all of Egypt. Thus

far, we have walked about for three days in the hope of finding him." But Yoseif replied, "I am surprised that you should look for your brother in such an unsavory neighborhood. What would a son of Yaakov do in such a place?" They explained again that they had heard that he was taken in the direction of Egypt and they also told Yoseif that the lost brother had been taken by Yishmaelites, who had stolen him from them. They explained, "Our missing brother was very handsome. Therefore, we think it is possible that he was taken to a disreputable place."

Yoseif then accused them of lying and said, "I do not believe that you are descendants of Avraham." He also asked them, "If you found your brother, would you be willing to ransom him at a huge price?" They replied, "We certainly would pay any price and if the owner would refuse to sell him back, we would even kill that owner." Then Yoseif said, "So you have come here to kill us? We have heard what happened at Shechem when two of you slew the whole city on account of a sister and now you intend to go on killing here, too! I shall believe you are good men, only if one of you go back to Canaan to bring your youngest brother here."

Then Yoseif took seventy soldiers and ordered them to take the brothers and place them into custody. They were imprisoned for three days. On the third day he told them, "You will be spared if one of the brothers is left behind. All the others can leave and take food with them to Canaan."

At this point, they began to reproach one another and said, "We deserve to be punished because of what we did to our brother. We saw him suffering and we would not listen to him. That is why this great misfortune has come upon us now." Yoseif, on hearing this, left them and wept. After composing himself, he took Shimon and had him placed in chains. Shimon resisted and fought back, as he was very strong, so the seventy warriors were called in. Shimon, with his powerful voice, terrified the soldiers who fled. Only Yoseif and his two sons remained. Menasheh went to Shimon and struck him on his shoulder. Shimon gave up his

resistance and was chained. He said to his brothers, "It is not possible for an Egyptian to possess such power. Only a member of our family can display such strength."

Yoseif gave orders that each man's sack be filled with grain and that the money they had paid be returned to them in the sacks and that they be given food for the journey. He insisted, "You must bring your youngest brother Binyamin to Egypt. When you do, you will receive permission to go wherever you wish in the land of Egypt, and Shimon will be given back to you. Then you will be able to return to your own land in peace."

On the way home, in a lodging place, Levi happened to open his sack in order to feed his donkey when he noticed that the money had been returned to them. When he told his brothers, they shuddered with fear. They wondered, "Why have we been delivered into the hands of the king of Egypt, who wishes to accuse us falsely." Reuven interrupted them: "Didn't I tell you not to commit a crime against that boy. You wouldn't listen. Now you have to answer for his blood before God."

They continued on their way and eventually came to their father. Yaakov came out to greet them. He saw at once that Shimon was not with them. The brothers explained what had happened to them. When they opened their sacks, they found, to their great amazement, that all their money had been returned to them. Yaakov said, "What have you done to me. I sent Yoseif to you to find out how you were and he was killed. Next Shimon went with you and he is not here and you tell me that the ruler of Egypt took him and imprisoned him. Now you wish to take Binyamin with you. You will bring my white head down to the grave in misery. I shall not let Binyamin go with you; his brother is dead and he is all I have left. Something might happen to him along the way, too, as happened to his brother. Reuven tried to reason with his father. "You may kill both my sons if I do not bring him back to you. Let him be my responsibility and I will return him to you."

Then Yaakov said, "Stay here and do not go back to Egypt as I will not let my son go with you." Yehudah said to his brothers, "We shall wait until the produce is finished and when hunger strikes everyone, our father, himself, will tell us to take our brother with us to Egypt. He and all the family will suffer hunger and he will then give in."

The famine became worse and all the people of Canaan went to Egypt to buy grain. The sons of Yaakov remained at home for one year and two months until the food was consumed. Now they were all hungry. The children came to Yaakov for food and surrounded him, asking him to have pity. Yaakov heard their pleading and so he called his sons and asked them to return to Egypt to buy supplies.

Yehudah said, "Do you not see how our family cries for food, but we were told by the ruler of Egypt that we should not dare to return unless our youngest brother is with us. So, if you send him with us, well and good, and if not, we cannot go there. If we had not waited so long, we could have been there twice and back by now. This ruler is not like any other potentate. He is mightier than Avimelech of the Philistines. You should have seen his magnificent palace and his throne which is sumptuous. His wisdom is enormous and even his voice is extremely pleasant. He even knew our names and he asked about our father. At first we thought of treating him as we did Shechem and the Amorites but we became afraid of him. So send the lad with us that we may live and not perish of starvation."

Yaakov said, "Why did you do such a terrible thing to me, telling the man that you had another brother?" Yehudah replied, "He kept asking us about every detail of our family. How were we to know that he would order us to bring Binyamin to him? Send the boy with me," he continued, "and if I do not bring him back, then I will have sinned for all time. We shall rely on the mercies of the God of our father. Please pray for us so that we will be shown kindness by this ruler."

Yaakov said, "May the Almighty grant that the man has pity on you and lets you go with your other brother and Binyamin." He told them, "Take a gift to the ruler of Egypt of rare fruits and spices. Take along twice as much money, so that you will be able to return the money that was put into your sacks and buy new provisions." He gave them specific instructions regarding Binyamin. "Never leave him on his own, neither during the journey nor in Egypt." Then Yaakov prayed, "God of heaven and earth, remember our father Avraham and the covenant which You made with him and also with Yitzchak, my father. Show mercy to my children. Save them from the Egyptians and send back to me my youngest son with Shimon." The son's wives and children cried with him in prayer.

He also wrote a letter to the ruler of Egypt and gave it to Yehudah. It read:

From your servant, Yaakov, son of Yitzchak, son of Avraham the Hebrew, the prince of God, to the mighty and wise ruler, Tzafenas Pa'aneach.

Please know that the famine is severe in Canaan, so I have again sent my sons to buy grain so that we may survive. I am surrounded by seventy souls and I am old. My eyes are dim from weeping each day for my lost son, Yoseif. I charged my sons not to enter any city together and that they search for my son, Yoseif. On this account you suspected them of being spies. You are wise and quite capable of discerning that my sons are not spies. We know how you interpreted Pharaoh's dreams and how accurate this was. Surely a man such as yourself is able to know that my sons are honest men and not spies.

I have now sent my son, Binyamin, as you demanded. Please watch over him until he leaves you. Take heed of what God did to Pharaoh who took Sarah, and what he did to Avimelech. Remember what Avraham did to the kings of Eilam and what two sons of mine did to Shechem. This youngest son gives me consolation for my lost beloved son, Yoseif. The might of God is with us and He



hears our prayers. Had I cried to God about your conduct towards my sons up to now, He would surely have destroyed you and your servants before Binyamin ever reached you. But I did not wish harm to befall my son, Shimon, who is now with you. So treat my son, Binyamin, well and God, likewise, will treat you kindly and protect you and your land. I have told you what is in my heart.

This letter was sent with Yehudah to be delivered to the ruler of Egypt.

### **THE BROTHERS RETURN TO EGYPT**

Yaakov's sons took Binyamin with them and finally stood before the ruler of Egypt. Yoseif recognized his brother, Binyamin, and he greeted the other brothers. They were brought to Yoseif's house and the steward of the palace prepared food for them. In the afternoon, Yoseif sent for the brothers who reported the matter of the money which had been found in their sacks. They were told, "Do not be afraid, everything is fine as far as you are concerned." With that he brought Shimon out to them. The ruler had been very kind to Shimon and he was not kept bound but was housed with the ruler in his own palace.

Yehudah brought Binyamin and showed him to Yoseif and they bowed to him and presented him with the gift they had brought. Yoseif asked if they and their father were all well and they answered, "All is well." When Yoseif read the letter and he recognized the handwriting of his father he was moved to tears and he left the room for a time. When he took a close look at Binyamin, he said, "This must be your youngest brother about whom you told me." Yoseif placed his hands on Binyamin's head and said, "May God be gracious to you, my son."

He then ordered the table to be set. In his hand was a silver cup set with fine jewels. "By using this goblet," he said, "I know your names and your position in the family. Reuven is the oldest, then Shimon and Levi, Yisachar and Zevulun are the sons of the

same mother. Please be seated in the order of your age. I know that Binyamin has no brother (from the same mother) and I have no brother, so let him sit with me. Binyamin sat with Yoseif apart from the brothers and they were all astonished by Yoseif's uncommon knowledge. They ate and were merry. With them were Yoseif's sons, Menasheh and Efrayim. At first, the brothers refused to drink, and they explained: "Since the day that Yoseif has gone, we have refused to drink wine," but Yoseif persuaded them to drink and they were merry.

Then Yoseif turned to Binyamin to talk to him and asked him whether he had any sons. He replied, "I have ten sons and their names are as follows: Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Na'aman, Eich, Rosh, Mupim, Chupim and Ard." Yoseif desired to know the meaning of these names and Binyamin told him that each son was named after incidents in the life of his lost brother.

Yoseif sent for a telescope and showed it to Binyamin. "I know that the Hebrews know every form of wisdom. Do you understand this instrument, too?" "Indeed," replied Binyamin, "I know about the use of this instrument, since my father taught me all the sciences." So Yoseif asked, "Look at this and tell me by your knowledge of the stars, where your brother is in this land of Egypt." Binyamin looked and divided the land into quadrants and saw that his brother, Yoseif, was right there sitting next to him.

Yoseif whispered to him, "I am indeed your brother, Yoseif. But do not disclose this to the others. My plan is to send you with them out of the city. When you reach the outskirts, I will send my man to take you back and bring you here. Now, if they are willing to risk their lives for you, I will know that they have repented for what they have done to me and I will then make myself known to them. If they forsake you, then I will take you into my palace and you will dwell with me and they will never learn my true identity."

Yoseif ordered the steward to fill their sacks with food and to place in their sacks the money they paid and to give them food for

the journey. The brothers arose on the next day and they loaded the donkeys with the supplies and left with Binyamin and Shimon. They had just left the city and had not gone far, when Yoseif told his overseer, "Get out and pursue those men. Catch up with them and say to them, 'Why have you stolen the goblet?'"

The overseer caught up with them and told them what Yoseif had said about the silver goblet. They were very surprised and they said, "If anyone has taken this cup, he will die. You can take the rest of us as slaves." The sacks were searched and the goblet was found in Binyamin's sack. They all tore their clothes in grief and they beat Binyamin all the way to the city.

Yehudah angrily said, "This man — the ruler — wishes us to return to Egypt today so that we destroy it." They were brought to Yoseif, who was sitting on his throne, surrounded on his left and right, by his mighty warriors. He said, "What is this which you have done to me. I am sure you took this cup in order to discover by its powers where your lost brother is." Then Yehudah said, "What shall we say and how can we justify ourselves. God has uncovered our old guilt and has done this to us."

Yoseif stood and took Binyamin from them and kept him in his house and closed the door. Then he said to his chief officer, "Go and tell the men that they may depart in peace to their father, only the man with whom the cup was found will remain behind." Then Yehudah came with his brothers and with a loud crush he broke the door and entered it in order to talk to Yoseif.



## ❧ Dayigash ❧

### YEHUDAH SPEAKS TO YOSEIF

**A**t this point, Yehudah walked up to Yoseif and said, "Please, your highness, let me say something to you personally. Don't be angry with me. Yoseif said, "Speak up." Yehudah continued while his brothers were standing with him. "Is it not true that when we came to you in order to buy grain, you suspected us of being spies. Then you told us to bring our brother, Binyamin, with us. Now you insist on accusing us of stealing. So hear my words well. Let our brother go back to our home in Canaan. Should you refuse, I must warn you that your own life and the very existence of Egypt is threatened.

"You must know what our brothers, Shimon and Levi, did with Shechem. Imagine what we would do now where Binyamin is concerned. I am stronger than these two brothers. Do you know what God did to Pharaoh and to Egypt on account of our mother, Sarah? In fact, the story is still being told in Egypt. God will remember His covenant with our father and will bring great evil upon you for causing distress and pain to our father."

"Do not boast of your strength," Yoseif replied, "since I am in a position to command all my warriors against you!" Yehudah, answered, "I warn you that if I do draw my sword, it will not be put back into its sheath until all Egypt is slain, beginning with you and ending with Pharaoh."

"There are others as strong as you are," Yoseif retorted, "and I am as strong as you, so if you draw your sword, it will bounce back on yourself and all your brothers."

Then Yehudah said, "If I just open my mouth, I can swallow you and you will be destroyed."

"Indeed you may open your mouth, but I shall stuff it up with a stone," was Yoseif's reply

"God is witness that I seek no war," Yehudah said. "Just give us our brother and we shall go."

"By the life of Pharaoh," said Yoseif, "I swear that if all the kings of Canaan were with you, you could not take your brother from me. Your brother will remain with me as my servant and you will go back to your father. Your brother did steal from the royal treasury."

But Yehudah immediately shot back, "Why mention your own property or the king's. The king is able to spend gold and silver or even to lose jewels without feeling the loss, so why do you make a fuss over a silver cup? Indeed, you, yourself, placed it in the sack of our brother. None of the children of Avraham steals."

Yoseif replied, "Then take the cup itself and leave, but let your brother remain here, since our law dictates that a thief must become a slave."

Then Yehudah said, "Are you not ashamed of making such a statement, that we leave our brother here and take a cup with us? Even if such a cup were worth a thousand times more than it is, we would still die for him."

Yoseif questioned, "Then why did you forsake your other brother and sell him for twenty pieces of silver? Why not do the same with this brother?"

Yehudah said, "Give us our brother and we shall leave," but Yoseif again refused. Yehudah continued, "What shall we tell our father if we return without him?"

"Tell your father" Yoseif said, "that the rope has followed the bucket."

"You are a king. Yehudah answered, Why do you speak so unjustly?"

Yoseif replied, "You, too, spoke falsehood about your brother when you said that he was killed by a beast when you had really sold him to the merchants."

Then Yehudah retorted, "There is a fire burning within me which will burn you and your land."

Yoseif objected. "Your daughter-in-law, Tamar, had a fire which burned your sons, now extinguish this fire of yours."

Yehudah said, "If I take one hair out of my body, all of Egypt will be swamped with blood."

Upon this Yoseif replied, "Yes, you always mention the word 'blood.' You dipped the coat of Yoseif in blood and brought it to his father."

When Yehudah heard this, he exploded with anger. He picked up a stone weighing four hundred shekels and threw it upwards. Then he caught it in his hand and placed it beneath his feet and with one swift turn of his heel, crushed it into dust. Yoseif was now truly afraid and asked his son, Menasheh, "Let me see if you can do the same thing." Menasheh immediately did what Yehudah had done.

Upon seeing this, Yehudah exclaimed, "Let no man tell me that this person is an Egyptian, he can only be one of our father's descendants."

Yoseif replied, "Strength has been given to others. Not only to you. Go and tell your father that this brother, too, was devoured by a beast."

Then Yehudah turned to Naftali, who was swift of foot and told him: "Go at once and count the main streets of Egypt and return and tell me."

Shimon now said; "I will go to the mountain and get a stone and throw it into Egypt and kill all its inhabitants."

Yoseif was listening while his brothers were making their menacing plans. They did not know, of course, that he understood Hebrew, since whenever they spoke to him, an interpreter had always been there. Yoseif turned to his son, Menasheh, and told

him: "Quietly, assemble the soldiers of Egypt with all their weapons."

Naftali, who was as swift as a deer and who could run over a field of grain without breaking a stalk, now ran to count the streets. There were twelve in all. Yehudah told his brothers to take their swords and attack these streets, each by one brother. But before Yehudah finished speaking, five hundred Egyptian soldiers came galloping on horseback, ten thousand on foot, and four hundred who could fight with their bare hands, without weapons. All these surrounded the sons of Yaakov. Yoseif arranged this to frighten them, but even so, Yehudah was not afraid. When Yehudah noticed that his brothers were fearful, he admonished them to trust in God.

To be sure, Yoseif had commanded the armies not to touch the brothers. God, however, put a great fear into the armies of Egypt and they fled. While retreating, they panicked and killed one another in great numbers. Yehudah roared at them while running after them to the palace of the king and Pharaoh fell off his throne from the shock of Yehudah's voice.

Pharaoh, after asking what had happened, was told about the "battle." He sent word to Yoseif expressing his fear about the possible destruction of his land and told him: "Let those men leave with their brother." He added to Yoseif in a message, "If you desire their company so much, then please leave with them. Choose between me and these Hebrews; between Egypt and the land of the Hebrews."

Yoseif told his son, Menasheh, to place his hand on Yehudah's shoulder. When he did this, Yehudah stopped roaring. Again, Yehudah remarked that this was not the strength of an Egyptian, but of a Hebrew. At this point, Yoseif went up to Yehudah and spoke softly as follows, "What you say about your God and your strength is correct, but tell me why do you wish to fight over this brother more than you would over any other?"



"I made myself responsible for his safe return," explained Yehudah, "and I will gladly take his place and become your servant. I am even willing to serve as a soldier in the Egyptian army. Believe me, on my own, I would be a very powerful force." He reminded Yoseif about the history of Avraham and his servant, Eliezer, who together defeated the five mighty kings in one night.

Yoseif said, "This is true and I know that you do not tell lies, but if I let Binyamin go with you, will you bring me the other brother of his mother, since you suppose he may be in Egypt? I can certainly take him from you since you did not offer yourself as security for him!"

Then Shimon said, "We do not know where he is, whether he is alive or dead." Yoseif saw that Yehudah's anger was stirred at the mention of Yoseif.

### **YOSEIF REVEALS HIS IDENTITY**

"You say he may be dead," said Yoseif, "but what if I called him to appear here? Would you give him to me in Binyamin's place?" Then Yoseif ended his arguments and called, "Yoseif, Yoseif, come here and let your brothers see you, and sit with them."

They all looked around but did not see Yoseif enter, and now Yoseif said, "Why do you look around in bewilderment? I am Yoseif, your brother! You sold me to Egypt. Now don't worry or feel guilty because you sold me. God did this in order to save us from famine."

His brothers looked around in great confusion when they heard these words and Yehudah became very embarrassed. When Binyamin heard Yoseif's words, he ran to him. He had been in a separate room all this time. He embraced Yoseif and fell upon his shoulder and they both wept. When they saw this, all the brothers embraced Yoseif and they all wept greatly.

The news spread to Pharaoh's palace that Yoseif's brothers had shown up. This pleased Pharaoh, since he began to fear about

the future of Egypt. The king sent some of his servants to join in the happy reunion. Pharaoh sent a message: "Tell your brothers to bring their families and all their possessions with them and dwell in the best part of the land." Each brother was given gifts of food and clothing, and was given five outfits and three hundred pieces of silver. Thus arrayed, they were brought before the king. Pharaoh noticed that they were all very strong and fine in appearance and he was happy to see them.

The brothers now left Egypt in order to make their way to Canaan. Their brother, Binyamin, was with them. Yoseif gave them eleven chariots from Pharaoh's coach house. Yoseif also gave them the chariot on which he, himself, rode when he was appointed viceroy of Egypt for his father to use when he would make his appearance in Egypt. Yoseif also sent clothes for all his brother's children and one hundred pieces of silver to each of them. He also sent gifts of clothes to his brothers' wives. These were from the wardrobe of the king's wives along with perfumes and cosmetics. Each brother was escorted by ten men to help in the moving process to Egypt; to arrange the transportation of the children and any other detail. With Binyamin, he sent ten suits of clothes; that is one share above those sent to the others' children with fifty pieces of silver and ten chariots from Pharaoh himself. For his father he sent ten donkeys laden with all manner of foods and provisions for the journey to Egypt. He sent Dinah clothes of great value as well as to Binyamin's wives. In addition he sent to the women, jewels and choice objects.

Now they were all sent off to Canaan and Yoseif escorted them to the border of Egypt. He gave them instructions about the planned move to Egypt. He told them, "Do not argue with each other; everything that has happened is for the best and for a purpose." He told them, "When you reach your father, do not tell him the good news all at once; act discreetly."

They all left in good spirits. On the way home they said one to another, "How shall we proceed to tell our father that Yoseif is

alive and in such a high position. This will overwhelm him and might cause him harm?" They traveled on until they reached their homes, and the first person they saw coming towards them was Serach, the daughter of Asher. She was a young woman of good character and she was an expert in playing the harp. They motioned her to come nearer and she came and welcome them.

They handed her a harp and told her, "Go to our father and sit with him for a while and then play and sing a song which we shall compose for you." She did so and the harp played well while she sang: "My uncle, Yoseif, is alive and rules over Egypt. He is not dead." She played this over again and again and it gave Yaakov great peace and ease of mind. By this means, he brought the spirit of God upon himself and by this form of prophecy, he knew that what she said was true. Yaakov blessed her and said, "My child, may death never have power over you. You have restored my spirit, so play on and sing." In this way, Yaakov's spirit was revived.

While she was singing, the sons came in with all the accompanying men. They had arrived with the beasts and all the gifts. They said to Yaakov, "Father, be prepared for good news about Yoseif. He is alive and rules in Egypt. He, indeed, is the ruler of whom we spoke so often." Yaakov became faint at first, since he could not believe them, but when he saw all the gifts they had brought with them and what they signified, he accepted it as true and he said, "I must now go down to Egypt to see my son and his children."

Yaakov arose and put on the garments which his son had sent him along with a special hat. The entire family dressed for this occasion and the dwellers of Canaan and their dignitaries came to him and they made a feast that lasted for three days. Then Yaakov said, "I will go and see my son in Egypt and then I shall return to Canaan, as I cannot leave the land of my birth." Then the word of God came to him. "Go down to Egypt with all your household, and dwell there and do not be afraid. For it is there that I shall make you a great nation." Then Yaakov said, "But I only wish to go there to see my son, Yoseif, and to know that he is still a God-fearing

man among the people of that land.” God spoke to Yaakov. “Fear not concerning Yoseif. He still remains wholeheartedly in my service, in a way that will please you.” Yaakov was very happy to learn this about his long lost son.

### YAAKOV ARRIVES IN EGYPT

Then Yaakov told his sons to prepare to go to Egypt, as God had commanded him. They left Canaan from Be’er Sheva in great joy. As they approached Egypt, Yaakov sent Yehudah before him to let Yoseif know that his father was approaching and to prepare a place for him to live. Yehudah rushed to Egypt and prepared a place for his father’s residence in the land of Goshen. Then Yehudah returned to his father who was still on his way.

All the servants of Yoseif and the soldiers were told to be in readiness to greet his father. The Egyptians were dressed in their princely garments and the soldiers were arrayed in their armor. They went with musical instruments and played, and scattered sweet-smelling spices in his path. The women played their instruments on the roof tops. Pharaoh sent Yoseif to represent him and told him to wear his royal crown for that occasion. At a distance of fifty cubits from his father, Yoseif descended from his chariot and proceeded on foot. All the princes did likewise. When Yaakov saw this company, he was overwhelmed. He said to Yehudah, “What does this mean? Who is this man whom I see before me, dressed like a king, and yet he descends from his chariot towards me?” Yehudah explained that this was Yoseif. Yaakov was enthralled.

Yoseif presented himself to his father and bowed, as did the whole company. Yaakov went to his son and threw himself on his shoulder and he wept and kissed him. He said, “Now I can die in happiness, since I have seen you alive and in such circumstances.” The sons of Yaakov wept and embraced Yoseif. So did the entire household of Yaakov and his sons. They went back to their places and went with Yoseif to Goshen — a very good district in that land.

Yoseif said, "Let me go and inform Pharaoh that my brothers and their families are here and they are in Goshen. He selected five brothers to go with him to Pharaoh. These were: Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yissachar and Binyamin, and he presented them to the king. He told the king that his brothers had come with the rest of the family as the famine was very severe in Canaan.

Pharaoh told Yoseif: "Settle them in the best part of the land. Nothing should be spared in the effort to make them comfortable. They should enjoy the best of that land's produce.

Yoseif said that he settled them in Goshen and said, "Now I ask that they be allowed to remain in that region, as they are shepherds and they would be able to tend to their sheep without annoying the Egyptians."

Pharaoh said to Yoseif, "Whatever your brothers ask of you, do it." The brothers were now dismissed and they left while bowing. Then Yoseif brought his father to Pharaoh and he bowed and departed.

At that time, Yoseif had settled his brothers in Goshen. This was in the one hundred and thirtieth year of Yaakov's life. Throughout the famine years Yoseif provided all the needs of his father and his brothers and their families and gave food for the small children. They lacked nothing and lived securely while Yoseif was still with them. Yaakov ate at Yoseif's table together with all his sons. All Egypt had food during the years of the famine since the Egyptians had sold their fields to Pharaoh in exchange for food.

Yoseif's two sons, Ephraim and Menasheh, stayed with their grandfather, Yaakov, together with their cousins. Yaakov taught the ways of God and his Torah to all his grandchildren.



## ❧ Dayechi ❧

**Y**aakov had lived in the land of Egypt for seventeen years when he fell ill with the sickness from which he would die. He called for his son, Yoseif, to come to his house. "I am about to die," he said to Yoseif, "and the God of your father will surely remember you and will bring you back to the land which he promised to give to my children. When I die, bury me in the Cave of Machpelah in Chevron, in the land of Canaan."

Yoseif swore to his father that he would do so. Yaakov called his sons and blessed them and charged them as follows, "Serve God Who will save you from all evil as he saved your fathers." He asked his sons to summon all their sons and the children of their sons and he blessed them all as follows, "May the God of your fathers increase you one thousand times and bless you and give you the blessing of your father, Avraham." All the children left after Yaakov had blessed them.

On the following day, Yaakov called his sons and they assembled and came to him. Yaakov blessed them again on that day just before he died. These blessings are written in the Torah for all Israel to see. Yaakov said to Yehudah, "I know, my son, that you are the leader of your brothers and their king and that your sons will one day reign over their descendants for all time. Teach your children the use of the bow and every kind of arms so that they will be able to fight the wars against their enemies and defeat them." Then he said, "I am about to be gathered to my people. Carry my bones from Egypt and bury me in the Cave of Machpelah, as I have already commanded you, but let not any of your sons carry me; only my own sons should bear me and I give you my final instructions.

My sons, Yehudah, Yissachar, and Zevulun shall take the east side of the bier; Reuvein, Shimon and Gad the south side; Ephraim, Menasheh and Binyamin the west side and Dan, Asher and Naftali shall hold the north side. Levi shall not share in this

carrying rite since his sons will one day carry the Ark of the Covenant of God. Neither shall Yoseif take part since he is a king and it will not befit his honor — but his sons will do it in his place. Do not change any of my instructions. If you follow them and do my bidding, then God will remember you and your sons for good.

Now honor each other and charge your sons after you, and their children after them, to serve God all their days. Then you will live long upon the land. Only do what is good and right in the eyes of God. You, my son, Yoseif, forgive the sin of your brothers against you, since you see that God intended this for a purpose. Yoseif, do not forsake your brothers; do not leave them to the Egyptians. Do not cause them any distress, since I have left them in the care of God and in your hands.”

The sons of Yaakov answered their father, “Whatever you have asked we shall do, only may God be with you.”

Then Yaakov answered, “Indeed, He will be with you only if you observe His ways and do not depart from these either to the right or to the left, for I know that many evils and troubles will one day beset your children in this very land. But serve God and He will save you from all evil and one day there will arise a savior from your sons and he will deliver you from all evil and bring you out of Egypt and bring you back to the land of your fathers which you will inherit.” Yaakov ended his instructions and drew his feet back into the bed and he was brought back to his people.

Yoseif fell upon his father’s face and kissed him. Then all Yaakov’s household came and fell upon his face and wept. All his sons tore their clothes and placed sackcloth on their loins. Then Osenas, the wife of Yoseif, was told of Yaakov’s death and she, too, put on sackcloth. All the people in Egypt who had known Yaakov came and mourned him. They continued this mourning for seventy days. After that, the physicians of Egypt were told by Yoseif to embalm the body of his father with myrrh and other incense.

After the seventy days of mourning, Yoseif said to Pharaoh, “Let me go up and bury my father in the land of Canaan. Then I



shall return.” Pharaoh sent to Yoseif telling him as follows: “Go up and bury your father as he has commanded you and as you swore to him.” So Yoseif went up to go to Canaan to bury his father. Pharaoh issued a proclamation to this effect: “Anyone who does not go to escort Yoseif and his brothers will be punished.”

All the servants and elders of Pharaoh and the princes went to escort the body of Yaakov. The procedure of carrying the bier as laid down by Yaakov was strictly adhered to. This bier was overlaid with gold and gems. The cover was of woven material of gold and tassels. He was buried as a king with crown and scepter and accompanied by soldiers in armor. The lamenters went at a distance before the bier. Yoseif followed barefoot and fifty servants went before the bier and scattered myrrh and the sons walked on the fragrant perfumes. This was done every day until they reached Canaan. They came to the threshing floor of Atad on the other side of the Jordan and they set up there a “mourning.” When the news of this spread in Canaan, the thirty-one kings of that land came with their men. When they saw the crown on the bier they set their own crowns on it, too. They paid respect to Yaakov and to his sons for their mighty acts.

The news of the death of Yaakov now reached the ears of his brother, Eisav. He also learned that Yaakov’s body was being brought to Canaan for burial. At that time, Eisav was living in Mount Seir. He gathered his sons and grandchildren — a great number of people — and came to mourn for Yaakov. They found themselves in the company of all the great men of Egypt. The family of Yaakov proceeded to Chevron, that is Kiryas Arba, and they arrived at the Cave of Machpelah.

At this point, Eisav placed himself at the entrance to the cave and refused to allow the body of Yaakov to enter. Eisav protested, “Yaakov will not be buried here.” Eisav’s sons protested, likewise, “This place is reserved for their father and for us,” they shouted. Yoseif and his brothers replied that their father had bought this place from Eisav twenty-five years before at a very high price. This

was when Yitzchak had died. They claimed that Yaakov had settled for the whole land of Canaan and these events have already been narrated.

Eisav argued that this was not true. Eisav knew that Yoseif had been away for a long time and was unacquainted with what had been happening, and so, he was not in a position to contradict him. Yoseif said, "There must be a deed of purchase which would prove my father's claim?"

Eisav said, "Produce such a deed then."

So Yoseif summoned his brother, Naftali, and told him, "Run swiftly to Egypt and obtain this deed. Also bring with this document the deed of birthright. Then we shall see what is written in them."

Naftali ran swiftly as he was ordered and Eisav continued to be hostile and his men even provoked Yoseif in order to create a conflict. A battle finally took place in which forty men of Eisav's company were killed. Then Chushim, the son of Dan, happened to be in the area — a little distant from the scene of the battle. He had remained with the children in order to take care of them — about one hundred cubits from the main company. Chushim could neither speak nor hear but he was able to detect that there was some trouble and tumult. He made signs to indicate that he wanted to know the cause for the delay. Those nearby made him understand, by sign language, that Eisav wanted to obtain the cave and was, therefore, delaying the burial. Chushim became annoyed and irritated. He took a sword and ran to Eisav and killed him by cutting off his head. This brought the dispute to an end and the battle was finished.

So they buried Yaakov in the cave while the sons of Eisav stood by watching unable to lift a finger. Yaakov was laid to rest in the cave which Avraham had bought from the sons of Cheis. No king ever had such honor at his burial. The mourning period lasted for seven days.

After the burial, a battle erupted between the sons of Yaakov and those of Eisav. This took place in Chevron, and Eisav was not yet buried. The battle was fierce and the sons of Eisav were defeated. Eighty men of Eisav's army were killed. Then Tzephoh, the son of Eliphaz, was taken captive together with fifty men. They were to be brought in chains to Egypt. When they saw this, the rest of the house of Eisav made their escape. With them, they took Eisav's body to Mount Seir for burial, but the decapitated head was left behind and was buried in Chevron. Although the sons of Yaakov pursued this company of Eisav, they killed no one since they had respect for the body of Eisav. Yaakov's sons returned to Chevron and rested on that day and on the next. On the third day, the sons of Seir the Chorite, and all the Sons of the East gathered to go to Egypt in order to fight with Yoseif. They also wished to liberate their captive brethren. They fought in Ramseis, but they were defeated to the number of six hundred thousand, and only a few of the Chorites were left behind. Eliphaz and his army fled and were pursued as far as Sukkos, where more of his men were killed.

Tzephoh, son of Eliphaz, and his sons, now in Egypt, became servants of the sons of Yaakov. Then the Chorites began to argue with the children of Eisav, stating: "you sparked the slaughter by your quarrel with Yaakov's sons." They told the sons of Eisav, "you had better leave our land and settle elsewhere in Canaan," since they did not wish the descendants of Eisav to take over the territory of Seir, which was the land of the Chorites.

The sons of Eisav very slyly sent the following message to Angias, the king of Africa, which is Dinhavah. "Send us men to help us fight against the Chorites until we drive them out." Angias showed friendship towards the sons of Eisav and complied. He sent five hundred foot soldiers and eight hundred men on horses. Then the sons of Seir sent a message to the East and to Midian as follows: "You have seen what the sons of Eisav did to us; we lost so many men because of them. Help us to drive them out so that we may revenge the death of our brothers who perished because

of them." They came to help the Chorites and sent eight hundred swordsmen. The battle between the sons of Seir and the sons of Eisav took place in the wilderness of Paran. The sons of Seir were stronger and killed two hundred of the enemy; that is of the men of Angias of Dinhavah. On the second day of the battle the men of Seir were again victorious.

The sons of Eisav saw that the enemy was stronger, so they tried again and lost fifty-eight men of the ones whom Angias had sent. On the next day when the sons of Eisav learned that some of their own army had gone into battle again, they sent again to Angias for reinforcements. He sent them another six hundred men.

The next battle began ten days later and this time the sons of Eisav were victorious and two thousand of the Chorites were slain. There were no men left among the Chorites to continue the battle as only the children remained alive. The allies of Seir fled and were pursued and many of the Sons of the East and Midian were killed. The sons of Eisav went back to Seir and killed all the remaining people of that land. Only fifty young men and women were left alive and were taken as slaves. So now the sons of Eisav took Seir as their possession, taking the flocks and herds and everything which was there.

The land of Seir was now divided into five parts, corresponding to the five sons of Eisav. These sons now came together and consulted about appointing a king over them. They said, "We must have a king to advise us and to lead us in battle." They swore to each other in a solemn pact that never should any one of their own tribe be made a king over them but that only a stranger should rule them.

At that time there was a soldier of the army of Angias of Dinhavah and his name was Bela, the son of Beor. He was a fine soldier with a handsome appearance and they chose him to be king over the children of Eisav. They spread a sheet on the ground

and threw much money and jewelry onto it. From this collection they made a crown and a throne. Then they built a palace. And so, Bela became king of the descendants of Eisav. The soldiers of Angias took their pay and returned to their own land. Bela, son of Beor, reigned for thirty years over the children of Eisav in the land of Seir, the Chorite, whom they had destroyed.

### PHARAOH DIES

In the thirty-second year of the settling of the B'nei Yisrael in Egypt, which was the seventy-first year of the life of Yoseif, Pharaoh died. His son, Migron, succeeded him. Before his death, Pharaoh had charged Migron to obey the counsel of Yoseif and he had asked Yoseif to act as mentor to his son. Migron succeeded to his father's throne at the age of forty-one and he reigned for forty-three years. His name was now changed to Pharaoh, as indeed all the kings of Egypt were named. Although there were people who disapproved of the rule of men not born in the territory of Egypt (such as Yoseif), he, nevertheless, continued in his position as viceroy and ruled successfully and advised them in time of war. So Yoseif remained in his position of rule for forty more years. The Philistines, Canaanites and inhabitants of Tzidon (Phoenicia) brought tribute to Yoseif. The brothers of Yoseif lived securely in Goshen all the days of Yoseif's life and they served God, as their father, Yaakov, had commanded them.

After a time when the children of Eisav had taken over the land of Seir and possessed it as their own with their new king, Bela, they decided to wage war against the sons of Yaakov in order to retrieve Tzephoh, the son of Eliphaz, the son of Eisav, with his captured friends, who were still in Egypt. They sent messengers to the Sons of the East and made peace with them. They asked them to join with them in a war against Egypt. Angias of Dinhavah was also invited to become an ally, as were the children of Yishmael.

Angias sent eight hundred thousand men to fight against Yoseif and Egypt. The sons of Yaakov with Yoseif leading them,

encamped at Ramseis. This took place in the fiftieth year after the B'nei Yisrael had come down to Egypt, which was the thirtieth year of the reign of Bela in Seir. After a fierce battle, all these mighty armies surrendered to Yoseif. The sons of Eisav and their allies lost about two hundred thousand men and the king Bela, the son of Beor, fell on the battlefield. Then, when the sons of Eisav saw that their king had been killed, they lost courage and fled. Yoseif and his army pursued them for one day and three hundred men of Eisav's company were killed in the chase. Yoseif returned to Egypt without loss of men. Only twelve men of the Egyptians were killed. Then it was commanded that Tzepho and his companions be put in chains.

The sons of Eisav now appointed a new king in the place of the fallen Bela. This king was from the Sons of the East and his name was Yovav, son of Zerach of Botzrah. Yovav reigned in Seir for ten years. Seir now became known as Edom. The sons of Eisav stopped fighting against the sons of Yaakov but retained a bitter hatred for the B'nei Yisrael until this day. After ten years, Yovav, son of Zerach, now king of Edom, died. The children of Eisav took Chusham of Teiman and made him their king. Chusham reigned for twenty years.

Yoseif and his brothers and all their children lived securely in the land of Egypt. They now had no enemy to trouble them and had no menace. The land of Egypt had rest from war from this time onward and during the entire lives of Yoseif and his brothers.

# ❧ The Book of Shemos ❧

## B'NEI YISRAEL IN EGYPT

These are the names of the B'nei Yisreol who came to Egypt with Yaakov and who settled there. Each man had come with his family. The sons of Leah were: Reuvein, Shimon, Levi, Yehudah, Yisachar, Zevulun and Dinah, their sister. The sons of Rachel were Yoseif and Binyamin. The sons of Zilpah, handmaid of Leah, were Gad and Asher. The sons of Bilhah, handmaid of Rachel, were Dan and Naftali.

These are the generations born to them in Canaan before they came to Egypt with Yaakov, their father. The sons of Reuvein were Chanoch, Pallu, Chetzron and Karmi. The sons of Shimon were Yemuel, Yamin, Ohad, Tzochar and Shaul, son of the Canaanitess. The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kehas, Merari and their sister, Yocheved, who was born when they came to Egypt. The sons of Yehudah were Er, Onan, Shelah, Peretz and Zerach. Er and Onan died in Canaan. The sons of Peretz were Chetzron and Chamul. The sons of Yisachar were Tolah, Puvah, Yov and Shimron. The sons of Zevulun were Sered, Eilon and Yachle'el. The son of Dan was Chushim. The sons of Naftali were Yachze'el, Guni, Yeitzer and Shilem. The sons of Gad were Tzifyon, Chagi, Shuni, Eztbon, Eiri, Arodi and Areli. The sons of Asher were Yimnah, Yishvah, Yishvi, Beriah and Serach, their sister. The sons of Beriah were Chever and Malkiel. The sons of Binyamin were Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Geira, Naaman, Eichi, Rosh, Muppim, Chuppim and Ard. The sons of Yoseif, born to him in Egypt were Menasheh and Ephraim. So the entire household arriving in Egypt with Yaakov numbered seventy.

Yoseif and his brothers dwelled in Egypt securely and ate from the bounty of the land of Egypt throughout Yoseif's lifetime. He lived in Egypt for ninety-three years and had ruled over that land for eighty years.

When Yoseif realized that he would soon die he said to his brothers, "I am about to die. God will remember you one day and bring you out of this land to the land that He promised you by oath to give to you. When the time comes for you to leave this country, Egypt, you will bring my remains out of here with you." Yoseif made his brothers swear that they would fulfill this request and this charge was passed on to their children.

Yoseif died in the seventy-first year after the entry of Israel to Egypt. He was one hundred and ten years old when he died. All his brothers and servants came and he was embalmed, as was the practice in those days. They wept for him for seventy days. Yoseif was placed in a casket filled with spices and perfumes that was placed for burial at the brink of the Nile while his sons and brothers mourned for him for seven days. After his death, Egypt ruled over the B'nei Yisrael, and Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, who succeeded his father, ruled over the land and the people by his own counsel. He ruled securely over the land.

At the end of that year, in the seventy-second year after Israel's coming to Egypt, Tzefto, son of Elifaz, son of Eisav escaped from Egypt with his men. They arrived in Africa, which is Dinhabah, and came to Angias, the king of Africa, who received them with great honor. He appointed Tzefto as the commander-in-chief of his army and he held this military post for many years. Tzefto urged the king to gather an army and fight against Egypt and the sons of Yaakov. His aim was to take revenge for the defeat described at the end of the *Sidra Vayechi*. Angias refused to listen to this advice. He knew very well about the power of Yaakov's sons from what had happened to his own army in the previous war, when he fought to help the sons of Eisav. But Tzefto exercised great influence over Angias and was in high standing in the nation itself. He continued to urge the king and the people to war.

### THE WAR OVER UTZU'S DAUGHTER

Now there was in the land of Kittim a man who lived in the city of Pitzimna. His name was Utzu and he proclaimed himself as



a false god. He died leaving no son. But he did have a daughter whose name was Yania who was very beautiful and wise. There was no one like her anywhere in the world. The men of Angias, king of Africa, saw her, and told of her beauty and wisdom to their king. Angias sent messengers to Kittim with offers of marriage to her, and the people of Kittim consented.

It so happened that just as the messengers of Angias left the land of Kittim, the envoys of Turgus, the king of Bevento, arrived there. Turgus had also heard about the beautiful Yania and he, too, sent to ask for her hand in marriage. The Kittimites replied: "This is not possible as we have already pledged her to Angias of Africa. If we would break our promise we would provoke a war, and you, men of Turgus, will not be strong enough to offer resistance against the forces of Africa." The messengers of Turgus to there King then returned with this message.

The men of Kittim now sent the following letter to King Angias: "Turgus has sent messengers asking us for Yania and we told him such and such. We now learn that he is about to go to battle against you. He has already marched against Sardinia to do battle with your brother, Lukus, and then he will surely fight with you."

Upon hearing this news, Angias became enraged. He assembled an army and went to the Isles of the Mediterranean Sea to assist his brother, Lukus, of Sardinia. When Niblos, Lukus' son, heard that his uncle, Angias, was approaching, he went to meet him and embraced him. He asked of his uncle one favor: "When you will meet your brother, Lukus, ask him to make me the commander of the army." Lukus consented and Niblos became the commander of a huge army and together, they went to do battle against Turgus. They set sail in great ships and arrived at Asmoras.

Turgus now went to war and attacked Sardinia first. He then planned to do battle with Angias. They all met in the valley of

Canopia where there ensued a fierce battle. The tide of the battle turned against Lukus of Sardinia and his army was annihilated. His son, Niblos, also fell in the battle. Angias, Niblos' uncle, ordered his servants to make a golden statue of Niblos and to place his body in it.

Now it was Angias' turn to take the offensive against Turgus. After a bloody fight he defeated Turgus, and so he avenged the death of his nephew, Niblos, and the defeat of the army of his brother, Lukus. When Turgus was killed, his followers threw down their weapons and fled, but they were pursued by Angias and Lukus to the crossroad leading to Rome and Alpano. The whole army of Turgus was wiped out.

Lukus, king of Sardinia, had a copper coffin made, into which they placed the body of Niblos, and buried it at this crossroad. They constructed a high tower over his tomb and they named that place Niblos. At this place, Niblos lies buried on one side of the crossroad and Turgus on the opposite side and there is a plaza between the two tombs.

After Niblos was buried, his father, Lukus, returned with his army to Sardinia. Lukus' brother, Angias, king of Africa, went to the city of Bevento, the city of Turgus. The inhabitants of Bevento were frightened and went to meet Angias and pleaded with him to spare their lives. Angias was agreeable to their entreaties and did not destroy their territory. Bevento was now considered to be annexed as part of Kittim. From that time onward the armies of the king of Africa would appear from time to time to collect their tribute. Whenever they went there, Tzefo, the captain of Angias' army, went with them. Angias and his army turned toward Pitzimna and Angias took the princess Yania, daughter of Utzu, as his wife and brought her to Africa to his own capital city.

At this time, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, commanded his people to build him a mighty palace. The sons of Yaakov were included in this order. A huge palace was built and Pharaoh ruled in it and was very securely settled in his monarchy.

In that same year, Zevulun, son of Yaakov died in his seventy-fourth year after Yaakov had come to Egypt. He was one hundred and fourteen years old. He was placed in a casket and this was given to his sons. In the seventy-fifth year of their descent to Egypt, Shimon died at the age of one hundred and twenty.

Now Tzefo, son of Elifaz, the son of Eisav, who was the commander of the army of Angias, still urged the king daily to make war against the sons of Yaakov. The king refused as his servants reminded him of the mighty deeds of these men, but by persistent argument Angias was finally persuaded and he made preparations to wage war against the children of Yaakov in Egypt. Angias assembled his people into a large army as numerous as the sands of the sea and set out to Egypt.

There was, at that time, a lad among the servants of Angias who was only fifteen years old who's name was Bilam, son of Beor. He was very clever and an expert in the practice of sorcery. Angias asked him to ascertain, by his art, whether his army would be victorious. Bilam had wax brought to him and from this wax he fashioned scale models of the armies of both sides, complete with chariots and riders. He put these in his own specially treated water and took palm branches in his hands, and went to work with his magic potions and incantations. He perceived the likeness of Angias's armies falling in battle, defeated by the children of Yaakov.

On hearing this bad forecast from Bilam, Angias declined to fight and remained in his city. Realizing that his plan would not materialize, Tzefo left the court of Angias and went to Kittim where he was received with great honor. He was hired to be their general and became very rich.

### **TZEFO CROWNED AS KING**

The armies of Angias were still spreading about Kittim continuing their practice of collecting tribute. These men of Kittim went

to Mount Kopitzia to hide from the armies of Angias. It happened that a calf belonging to Tzefo had strayed and on searching for this animal, Tzefo heard some noises in a cave nearby. This cave was shut by a huge stone. Tzefo, instantly crushed the boulder and entered. There he saw a monster that had in its upper parts the form of a human and that of a beast in its lower parts and with loud grunts it was devouring the calf. Tzefo attacked it and killed it with his sword and thus destroyed the beast that was causing havoc among the cattle of Kittim. The inhabitants wished to become acquainted with this man who had been so brave. They were so happy and grateful that they even proclaimed an annual holiday in honor of this hero and called it "Tzefo Day." They also poured out libations and made offerings in his honor.

At that time, Yania, the daughter of Utzu, the wife of Angias, became sick. The king was anxious to find a cure for her and the physicians told the king that the air and water of Africa was so different from that to which she had been used to in her native Kittim. This, they maintained, had caused her illness. She must now drink only the water imported from Kittim.

At first, this water was brought by vessels from Kittim. These were the waters of Forma, which were sparkling light. Then the king engaged myriads of workmen and constructed a canal to draw this water from Kittim that was used not only for drinking, but for washing of the body and laundering. Even the soil for growing food was treated with care and the irrigation was performed by this water only. Even earth was brought from Kittim in which the seeds were put for growth. Then special stones were brought from Kittim with which to build a palace for her. In this manner, she recovered from her sickness.

Some time later, the armies of Africa came to Kittim to plunder it. When Tzefo heard this he geared-up to fight. Not interested in doing battle, the invaders turned and fled. The people of Kittim were so grateful that they crowned Tzefo as their king. He then conquered the land of Tuval and subdued the isles

of the sea around Tuval. When this battle was over, they set up the monarchy and built a palace for Tzefo and made him a throne. Tzefo ruled over Kittim and over Italy for fifty years.

In that year, the seventy-ninth year after Israel's coming to Egypt, Reuvein, son of Yaakov, died at the age of one hundred and twenty-five. In the eightieth year of this era, Dan died at the age of one hundred and twenty-four. Then Chusham, king of Edom, died and after him there reigned Hadad, son of Bedad, for thirty-five years.

In the eighty-first year of this era, Yissachar, son of Yaakov, died at the age of one hundred and twenty-five. In the eighty-second year, Asher died at the age of one hundred and twenty-three. In the eighty-third year, Gad died at the age of one hundred and twenty-five.

In the eighty-fourth year, which was the fifth year of Hadad's reign in Edom, the latter assembled the sons of Eisav to the number of four hundred thousand and went to war against Moav. The Moavites, in their panic, sent for the Midianites. Then this Hadad, king of Edom, came to Moav and the armies of Moav came forth in the field of Moav. Hadad fought and killed about two thousand men from the combined armies of Moav and Midian. In the midst of a heated battle, the Moavites secretly fled and left the fighting to the Midianites. The Midianites continued to fight alone and were soundly defeated. Hadad subdued Moav at this time and taxed their country very heavily. Then Hadad returned to his own land.

At the end of that year, the Midianites realized that their defeat was due to Moav's cowardly and secret retreat from the battle. The Midianites wanted to take revenge on Moav and assembled armies from all the sons of Keturah to help them fight against Moav. Now Moav turned to Edom for help and asked Hadad ben Bedad to come to their aid. A battle took place between the combined forces of Midian and all the Sons of the

East against the armies of Moav in the field of Moav. After a fierce battle, Hadad's army emerged victorious and saved Moav from Midian. Hadad went back to his own country.

From that day onward, the Midianites hated the Moavites because so many Midianites fell in battle because of them. Any Midianite now found in the domain of Moav was killed and vice-versa. This mutual hatred continued for a long time.

At this time Yehudah, son of Yaakov, died in the eighty-sixth year of Israel's descent to Egypt. He had lived for one hundred and twenty-nine years. In the eighty-seventh year, Binyamin died at the age of one hundred and seventeen. In the eighty-ninth year, Naftali died at the age of one hundred and thirty-two.

In the ninety-first year of Israel's descent to Egypt, which is the thirteenth year of the reign of Tzezo over Kittim, the men of Africa came to Kittim to take their tribute, as was their custom of old. They had not been there for thirteen years. This time Tzezo, son of Elifaz, came with his men and chased the Africans out of Kittim. King Angias heard about this action against his men and was afraid of Tzezo all his days.

### **A NEW PHARAOH**

In the ninety-third year of the counting of Israel's stay in Egypt, Levi, son of Yaakov died at the age of one hundred and thirty-seven. Now all the sons of Yaakov had died and Egypt took notice of this. They began to trouble the B'nei Yisrael and make their lives miserable from that time until the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. They took from them their vineyards and fields which Yoseif had given to them, and took away from them the good houses in which they lived.

After many years, in the hundred and second year of the stay of Israel in Egypt, the king of Egypt died. His son, Melol, reigned in his place. All the mighty and important men of Egypt who had known Yoseif were now dead. The new generation did not know

of the sons of Yaakov nor of the good that they had done for Egypt. They forgot that the ancestors of these Hebrews had saved the land from famine.

All this, however, was the Hand of God, Who intended to make it better for them in the end and to show His wonders that would be performed in Egypt on their behalf. These great deeds would make the B'nei Yisrael fear God and walk in His ways.

At the age of twenty-six, Melol began his reign over Egypt, which lasted ninety-four years. His name was immediately changed to Pharaoh, as was the custom in Egypt where all the kings were known by that title.

Now, once again, the bands of robbers from Africa came to Kittim to take their tribute. Tzefo, the son of Elifaz, the son of Eisav, who was now the king of Kittim attacked them and dispersed them. Not one of this band lived to return to Africa. Angias of Africa assembled his armies and asked his brother, Lukus, to join him. Lukus came to his aid and he was ready to fight against Tzefo and the Kittites. Then Tzefo knew that he had reason to be afraid so he sent a letter to Edom, to Hadad ben Bedad their king, as follows: "I have heard that Angias, king of Africa, is about to fight us and we fear his huge army. So come to our aid and we shall be able to resist Angias and his brother, Lukus. If you do not help us, we shall perish!

### **TZEFO FIGHTS AGAINST ANGIAS**

The sons of Eisav replied, "We cannot fight against Angias as we have a treaty with him from the days of Bela, son of Beor, our first king and from the days of Yoseif, the son of Yaakov against whom we fought when he came to bury his father in Canaan." When he heard this, Tzefo stopped asking for help from Edom.

Angias and Lukus were now set for battle. They had about eight hundred thousand men and proceeded to fight against Tzefo in Kittim. Tzefo's force numbered only about three thousand

men. So the people of Kittim asked Tzefo to pray to God and he prayed saying, "God of Avraham and of Yitzchak my fathers, let it be known this day that You are the true God and that the gods of the heathens are vanity. Remember Your covenant with our father, Avraham, and do kindness this day with me for the sake of Avraham and Yitzchak and save us from Angias and Lukus."

God heard his prayer and He saved Tzefo on that day and the men of Angias fell into the hands of the Kittites. About four hundred thousand men of Angias's army fell on that day. Angias sent a message to Africa and asked for reinforcements, commanding every person over the age of ten years to appear. So three hundred thousand men (including boys) came to his aid.

After ten days, the battle began and many men of Angias's army were killed. Sosiftar, the captain of Angias' army fell in battle. On seeing that their captain had been killed, many soldiers fled, as did Angias and Lukus. Tzefo pursued them and killed about two hundred men. Isdrubal, son of Angias, fled with his father and twenty men of Isdrubal's company were killed. Isdrubal, himself, escaped. After that Angias returned with his brother, Lukus, to Africa. Angias now feared Tzefo and was always afraid of the possibility that he might come to fight against Africa.

Bilam, son of Beor, was then with the army of Angias. When he saw that Tzefo had been victorious, he defected to Kittim and was well received by Tzefo and by all the men of Kittim. He was encouraged to stay in that land and was given many gifts.

After counting his army, Tzefo saw that no man was missing after the battle. Tzefo made a banquet for all his servants, but he did not remember God at these festivities. He continued to walk in the ways of the Kittim and the sins of Eisav, as it says, "From the wicked, comes forth wickedness" (I Shmuel 24:14). Tzefo continued to reign in Kittim and forgot God, Who had saved him. The bands of robbers no longer came to molest Kittim, because of their fear of Tzefo.



Now, a new thought occurred to Tzefo. Taking courage because he had conquered the Africans, he decided to fight against the sons of Yaakov and against Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Tzefo heard that all the warriors of fame in Egypt were no longer alive and, of course, Yoseif and his brothers were no longer there. He now entertained a notion that it would be the right time to declare war on Egypt and on the B'nei Yisrael to take revenge for the sons of Eisav, his kinsman, who had been killed when Yaakov was being buried in Chevron.

He sent a message to Hadad ben Bedad and to all the clan of Eisav saying, "Did I not tell you not to fight against the king of Africa, since you are his confederates? I fought against him, and I won. Now I say that we should hold battle with Egypt and with the sons of Yaakov that we may take revenge for the evil which Yoseif and his brothers did to us in Canaan, when they went to bury their father in Chevron. If you wish to come to help me, we shall be able to fight and be avenged."

The sons of Eisav heard the statement of Tzefo and they came in great numbers to help him and the sons of Kittim. He had already sent to all the Sons of the East and to Yishmael's descendants. They all gathered to fight against Egypt. These allies of Tzefo arranged their forces in Chevron. Their army was so numerous that it stretched as far as a three days' journey. They came together and joined with Kittim in the Valley of Pasros.

### **TZEFO'S WAR AGAINST EGYPT**

Egypt heard about Tzefo's preparations for war and they gathered an army of three hundred thousand men. The B'nei Yisrael who were then settled in Goshen were asked to give their help and they mustered one hundred and fifty men. Yet, the Egyptians did not trust the B'nei Yisrael and suspected that they might defect to the other side, since they were of the same family as Eisav and Yishmael. Therefore, they told the B'nei Yisrael: "Remain where you are while we will go out and fight. Yet, should

the enemy show signs of victory, you will be alerted to help us.” The B’nei Yisrael remained in their place as ordered. The combined armies of Tzefo, king of Kittim, and Hadad ben Bedad, king of Edom, the Sons of the East, and the sons of Yishmael — an array as numerous as the sands of the sea — were encamped at Pasros opposite Tachpanches. In that camp of Kittim was the famous sorcerer, Bilam ben Beor, who was greatly respected by Tzefo and his company.

Now, Tzefo asked Bilam to find out by means of his magic whether the Egyptians would be victorious. But Bilam was not able, at that time, to carry out his art of sorcery. He was unsuccessful, however much he tried. This was the intervention of the Hand of God so that Tzefo and his armies should fall into the hands of Israel, who placed their trust in God.

The armies of Egypt were ready for the battle and left the B’nei Yisrael behind as arranged. As the battle unfolded, Tzefo’s superior armies easily gained the upper hand over the Egyptians. The Egyptians lost about one hundred and eighty men whereas the allied kings with Tzefo lost only thirty. The Egyptian army fled and was pursued by the armies of Eisav and Yishmael to the very spot where the B’nei Yisrael had been left. The Egyptians, while fleeing, cried out to the B’nei Yisrael, “Come, hurry and help us.”

The B’nei Yisrael cried to God for help, as they were only one hundred and fifty men. But with God’s help the B’nei Yisrael defeated the men of the allied camps of Tzefo. The B’nei Yisrael killed about four thousand men and continued to pursue them to the very borders of the land of Ethiopia. The Egyptians had left the B’nei Yisrael to fight on their own. This act of betrayal by the Egyptians eventually came to the B’nei Yisrael’s attention. In fact, the Egyptians actually hid themselves during this attack by B’nei Yisrael. The B’nei Yisrael were annoyed by this treacherous act of the Egyptians and they, too, acted with cunning, and slew these Egyptians when they were returning now that the armies of Tzefo were beaten by Israel.

The B'nei Yisrael said, "Why did you abandon us when we had so few men and we were left to fight against these kings while you made your escape?" Thus, the B'nei Yisrael killed about two hundred of the Egyptians. The Egyptians then feared the might of Israel, seeing that no man of Israel had fallen in battle. So the B'nei Yisrael returned in joy to their homes in Goshen and the remaining Egyptian soldiers returned to their places in Egypt.

### THE NEW ORDER

After this event, Pharaoh's advisors and courtiers assembled and spoke to their king. "See, your majesty, that the Israelite people are very strong. You have heard what they did to us in the wars. They have inherited great strength from their ancestors. If so few are able to conquer so many, imagine what could happen if they become more numerous? So now let us deal wisely with them since it would be best to annihilate them completely. If we were attacked in our own land by an enemy, they might join this attacker and this would finish us altogether."

The king heard this and said, "There is only one way to deal with this problem. The lands of Pisom and Raamses are not fortified. We must build up these cities and fortify them. We will issue an order to all in the following words, 'To you, people of Egypt, Goshen and Pasros. The king has commanded to build up Pisom and Raamses. Whoever takes part in this work will receive payment. The B'nei Yisrael are also asked to join in the work and receive pay.' This will only be done for a short time and then the B'nei Yisrael will be left to do the work all by themselves. The Egyptians gradually will withdraw, and the B'nei Yisrael will still be receiving payment. Then the Egyptians will return as overseers and the B'nei Yisrael will work for us since this difficult labor will diminish them in number, as they will be separated from their wives."

The elders heard this plan and agreed with it. The proclamation of the king was issued. "You have seen what the sons of Eisav

and Yishmael have done to us. They wished to destroy us. To prevent this from happening in the future, Pharaoh has commanded that we strengthen our land. We must build Pisom and Raamses, both Egyptians and the B'nei Yisrael must do the work. You will all receive payment for your work."

Both Egyptians and the B'nei Yisrael came to join in the work. The sons of Levi, however, were wise and saw through this plan and never joined in it. The servants of Pharaoh came as arranged, and worked and were paid. This continued for one month when all but a few of the Egyptians cunningly abandoned the work while the B'nei Yisrael stayed on, not knowing about the shrewd plan.

After one year and four months, all the Egyptians had abandoned the work force and the B'nei Yisrael were left on their own. When the Egyptians did return to the work, it was only to be appointed as overseers. Even the salary that the B'nei Yisrael used to receive was now taken from them in the form of taxes. The work became life-suffering — an unbearable workload — coupled with daily beatings. The B'nei Yisrael worked hard. Some making bricks and others building. They continued working and fortifying the land of Egypt.

Only the tribe of Levi alone abstained from this labor from the very beginning until they left Egypt. The Levites knew from the outset that this scheme was based on lies and deceit. In fact, the Egyptians never paid attention to the refusal of the Levites to work. The Egyptians made the lives of the B'nei Yisrael miserable by harsh labor, with mortar and bricks. But the more the Egyptians embittered the lives of the B'nei Yisrael, the more they increased, so that the Egyptians came to dread the B'nei Yisrael.

At that time, Hadad ben Bedad, king of Edom, died and Samlah of Masreikah reigned in his place. Samlah was one of the Sons of the East. It was in the thirteenth year of the reign of this Pharaoh, which was the one hundred and fifteenth year of Israel's descent to Egypt that Samlah began his rule in Edom. He reigned

there for eighteen years. When he began his reign, he took an army to fight against Tzefo, the son of Elifaz, and the men of Kittim, because they had fought against the king of Africa, Angias, and destroyed his army. Yet, he did not carry out this plan to fight, since the children of Eisav discouraged him. They said that such a war would be a war of brothers. So Samlah yielded to the sons of Eisav and returned with his army by way of the land of Edom. In the end, he avoided fighting against Tzefo, the son of Elifaz.

News of Samlah's intentions reached Pharaoh in Egypt. Pharaoh thought that Samlah would ultimately go to war against Egypt. Because of this suspicion, Pharaoh made the B'nei Yisrael work much harder and faster in order to achieve a greater security by fortifying Egypt and protecting the land from the sons of Eisav. Pharaoh really believed that the children of Eisav would invade Egypt and that the B'nei Yisrael would join Eisav's descendants in battle against Egypt.

The B'nei Yisrael now worked in place of the Egyptians. Yet the more the B'nei Yisrael were enslaved, the more numerous did they become and the whole of Egypt was full of them.

### EGYPT SEEKS ADVICE

It was in the one hundred and twenty-fifth year of Israel's descent to Egypt, when Egypt saw that their objective had not been achieved, that the elders of Egypt came before the king. They said, "May Pharaoh live forever. You did, indeed, advise us about the B'nei Yisrael and you acted accordingly. But the result is the opposite of that which we planned since they have now become more numerous. We look to you to tell us how to destroy them by decreasing their numbers." The king replied, "Give us your advice."

Then an officer named Iyov of Utz, in the region of Mesopotamia, spoke. "What the king advised some time ago was sound," he said. "Let the work be imposed on them for all time. Yet the

fear remains that should a war break out, the B'nei Yisrael might join the enemy and they will drive us out of this land. There is a way to avoid this and it would be best to record this in the laws of this land. The law should state that any male child born to the Hebrews should be killed. Pharaoh should summon the Hebrew midwives and instruct them accordingly."

The king was pleased with Iyov's suggestion and the midwives, whose names were Shifrah and Pu'ah, were summoned. "When you deliver Hebrew women," he ordered, "you must look carefully at the birthstool. If the infant is a boy, kill it. But if it is a girl, let it live." He threatened to burn the houses of the midwives, together with them, if they disobeyed this order. The midwives were God-fearing women and paid no heed to Pharaoh's command. They allowed the infant boys to live.

Pharaoh sent for the midwives and asked, "Why did you disobey me? You let the infant boys live." They told the king, "The Hebrew women are so strong, they give birth to the children before we get to them." The midwives left Pharaoh and God rewarded them and the people of Israel became very numerous.

At that time, there lived in Egypt a man who was of the tribe of Levi. This was Amram, the son of Kehas, the son of Levi, the son of Yisrael. He married Yocheved, the daughter of Levi who was, then, one hundred and twenty-six years old. She bore to him a daughter who was named Miriam. Then she bore a son who was called Aharon.

### **BILAM'S ADVICE**

At that time, Tzefo, the son of Elifaz, the son of Eisav died and Yaniash reigned in his place. Tzefo had ruled for fifty years and was buried in the city of Navan in Kittim. His successor, Yaniash, also reigned for fifty years. When Tzefo died, Bilam, son of Beor, fled to Egypt and was received with honor at the court of Pharaoh.

Now all the courtiers brought Bilam gifts and wished to

receive his advice on all matters of importance. It happened in the one hundred and thirtieth year of Israel's descent to Egypt that Pharaoh had the following dream. He dreamed that he was sitting on his throne and that he lifted up his eyes and saw an old man standing before him in whose hand was a pair of scales. This man held the scales suspended before Pharaoh, and took the elders of Egypt and placed them on one pan of the scale and on the other he placed a dish of milk. But the pan with the milk outweighed the pan with the elders and Pharaoh awoke.

He called his servants and told them about this strange dream and the men were extremely afraid. The king asked the wise men to interpret this dream. Bilam, son of Beor, said that this was a portent of great evil that would come upon Egypt at some future date. A boy would be born who would destroy Egypt and its inhabitants. He would take out all the B'nei Yisrael from Egypt. He said, "Now Lord King, take action and destroy the hope of Israel. Do this before the evil grows upon Egypt."

The king said to Bilam, "What shall I do to Israel? We took action against them but we have still not accomplished our purpose. Give us your advice. How can we prevail over them?" Bilam answered the king. "Summon all your advisors and I will hear them first. Then I, Bilam, will give my advice to you."

Pharaoh summoned his advisors. These were Reuel, the Midianite, and Iyov of Utz, and said to them, "You have all heard about my dream and its interpretation. Give me now your counsel and tell me what to do about the B'nei Yisrael to suppress them before a great evil happens to us?"

### **REUEL AND IYOV'S ADVICE**

Reuel, the Midianite, addressed the king as follows: "If the king wishes to follow my advice, let him stop causing pain to the Hebrews. Their God has chosen them in the distant past and has taken them for his special inheritance. Whoever attempts to

destroy them will not be spared. Do you not know what happened when their father, Avraham, came to Egypt and a former Pharaoh saw his wife, Sarah? After being told that she was Avraham's sister, that king took her and he and his household were smitten until he was forced to give Sarah back to Avraham.

"The same thing happened to Avimelech of Gerar, the king of the Philistines, who was also admonished by God over a similar event. He, too, suffered until he made amends with Sarah and Avraham. It happened, too, with Yitzchak who was driven from Gerar and God dried up the wells of the hostile neighbors, but the king, Avimelech, and his friend, Chuzas and the captain of the army, Pichol, went to Yitzchak and appeased him. Yaakov, the son of Yitzchak, was saved by his complete faith, both from Eisav and from Lavan, and from the kings of Canaan.

"No one has ever laid a hand on them and succeeded. Did not a former Pharaoh, your own grandfather, promote Yoseif above all the princes of Egypt, since his wisdom saved Egypt from famine. Then that Pharaoh ordered that Yaakov and his sons be brought to Egypt to save the land.

"Turn away from your plan of destruction and if you do not wish to see them settled in your land, then send them back to their native Canaan."

When Pharaoh heard the statement of Reuel, he was very angry. Reuel-Yisro left at once and went to Midian that very day taking with him the staff of Yoseif.

Pharaoh then turned to Iyov of Utz. Iyov said, "Are not all the inhabitants of this land in your hands? Do what is best in your eyes."

### **BILAM'S PLAN**

Then Pharaoh turned to Bilam who said, "These people will escape any form of destruction that the king might devise. They will elude any plan and the king will not prevail. If you seek to destroy them by fire, you will not succeed, since Avraham escaped



fire in Ur. If you have in mind destruction by the sword, Yitzchak escaped that death and a ram was substituted for him. If you wish to destroy them through hard labor, then Yaakov came safely through the toil placed on him by Lavan. There is only one method you can use and this is water since, so far, none of their ancestors are known to have been put to that test. Cast the male children into the water.”

The king heard this and was pleased. He issued the following order: “All male children are to be thrown into the water. Only the females are to be spared.”

When the B’nei Yisrael heard about this decree, some men left the company of their wives while others remained with them. Some did as follows: Every wife about to bear a child would go out to the fields and give birth and then leave the children there and return home. God, Who had sworn to increase the offspring of the Patriarchs, would send His angel to wash and anoint the child and place before it two smooth stones that would give milk and honey to each infant. The hair of the child would grow and cover its whole body, thus hiding its presence. Even the very soil protected it until it was able to walk. Then, at the proper age, they would appear from the ground like the grass and make their way to their parents. When the Egyptians saw this, they would go into the fields and do their plowing, but even these deep furrows could not hurt the children. Only if they found the children would they take them by force and if it was a male, would throw him into the river.

### **MOSHE IS BORN**

At that time, the spirit of God came upon Miriam, the daughter of Amram, the sister of Aharon. She went and prophesied at home and said, “A child will be born of my father and mother and this child will save Israel from Egypt.” When Amram heard his daughter talking in this manner, he returned to his wife, Yocheved. Because of Pharaoh’s decree, he had been separated from her for three years. She was with child and in the seventh

month she gave birth to a son. When he was born the whole house was full of light, as the shining of the sun and moon in their full splendor. The mother saw how beautiful he was and she hid him in an inner chamber of the house for three months.

### THE EGYPTIAN DECEPTION

The Egyptians had thought of a trick. They would take their own babies into the homes of the Hebrews and these Egyptian babies would make noises as small children do. This would attract the attention of the Hebrew babies who would respond with their cries and sounds. Then the officers of Pharaoh would come to do their work of destruction, once the hiding place of the babies was betrayed by the cries.

Yocheved understood that her son would become a victim of this plan. Her fears were realized when, after three months, Pharaoh found out about the existence of the boy. Yocheved quickly made a small box of bulrushes and covered it with lime and pitch outside. She put her infant son in the box and placed the box in the reeds near the water. Miriam, the baby's sister stood by the water's edge with a watchful eye.

At that time, God caused an intense heat to descend on Egypt that made the people come out and bathe for relief. Among these was Basya, the daughter of Pharaoh who was attended by her maidservants. She saw a strange box floating on the water and sent one of her servants to get it. When she opened it she was astonished to find a weeping infant. The daughter of Pharaoh said, "This must be a child of the Hebrews." All the women who were with her attempted to feed the child but he would not drink. This was an act of God so that the infant be taken to its mother. Miriam came out of her hiding place and asked the princess: "Shall I go and call a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for you?" Miriam went and brought the child's own mother, Yocheved. The princess rewarded the mother by giving her two pieces of silver daily.

## MOSHE IN THE PALACE

The lad grew and after two years was brought to the palace. As the son of Basya he was treated royally. Basya called him "Moshe" indicating that he was "drawn" from the water. His father, Amram, called him "Chever" since he was the means of Amram's rejoining his wife. Moshe's mother called him "Yekusiel" since by him, her hope had been fulfilled. His sister Miriam called him "Yered" since she had gone down to the river to watch over him. His brother, Aharon, called him "Avi-Zanoach," since his parents might have been separated from each other for all time, but they were now together. Kehas, Amram's father, named him "Avigdor" since now God would close the breach made in Israel and this boy would bring this about. His nurse called him "Avi-Socho" as he had been hidden in a box from the sons of Cham (Egyptians). All Israel called him "Shemaya ben Nesanel" because in his days, God would hear their cries and would deliver them. So Moshe was brought up in the court of Pharaoh.

Samlah, the king of Edom, died at that time after having reigned for eighteen years and was buried in his palace. The sons of Eisav sent to the city of Pesor by the river and brought from there a handsome young man whose name was Shaul of Rechovos Hanohor who succeeded Samlah. Shaul reigned in Edom for fourteen years.

Now that Pharaoh saw that the plan proposed by Bilam had failed and that the B'nei Yisrael had become numerous, he issued a new order. He decreed: "Any worker who produces less than the stipulated amount of labor will be penalized by giving up one of his children." This meant one son for each brick below the quota. They would put the child into the structure in place of the brick. Only the tribe of Levi avoided this scheme since they had seen through Pharaoh's cunning from the beginning.

## THE TEST

In the third year after his birth, Moshe was with Pharaoh and

his court. Pharaoh was sitting with his queen, Alparonis, at his right hand and Basya, his daughter, was at his left side. Moshe was held by Basya. Bilam ben Beor, with his two sons, had also joined the group. Suddenly the child, Moshe, stretched out his hand and snatched the crown from the king's head and put it on his own head.

This caused great consternation among the whole gathering. The king asked everyone present: "What should be done with a boy who acts in such a manner?" Bilam reminded the king about the dream he had a long time before this event and said, "Let not the king believe that this was a mere childish act, as the boy is full of wisdom and has chosen the crown for himself.

"His ancestor, Avraham, did this to Nimrod and to Avimelech. Yitzchak, son of Avraham, also gained might and riches at Gerar and Yaakov, son of Yitzchak, took the birthright and the blessings from Eisav. Then he went to Padan Aram to Lavan, his uncle, and took his daughters and his cattle. His son, Yoseif, was sold into slavery and came to Egypt. Though he had been in prison for twelve years, he was still able to reach a very high position. Then he brought his father and family to Egypt and there he acquired all the Egyptians as servants.

"Now you have here a child who will one day ridicule all the princes and the king, himself. Kill him at once and prevent him from taking the monarchy itself."

Pharaoh said, "Let us summon the judges who will decide what the fate of this child should be."

The judges were called to the court along with all the wise men. An angel of God came there in human form and assumed the appearance of one of the judges. After explaining what had happened, the king asked for a verdict. The angel spoke as follows, "Let the king send for precious stones and for some hot coals and place both before the child. If the boy takes the jewels, we shall know that he is wise and acted with intent. But if he stretches his

hand to the coals, it will be obvious that he only acted in a childish and innocent manner.”

The king accepted this advice. The gems and the hot coals were brought and placed before the boy who reached out to take a jewel, but the angel placed his own hand on the hand of Moshe and guided it so that and the child touched the coal that had been made cooler by the angel. Moshe placed the coal to his lips but the coal was still somewhat hot and Moshe thus became a stutterer. Meanwhile, the onlookers were convinced that the act of snatching the crown was merely a childish whim and he was not put to death.

The boy was brought up in the palace, wore the purple garments of royalty, and grew up among the princes. He was treated as a son of Basya and was respected by all the Egyptians. He would visit Goshen daily to see his brothers working under very harsh conditions. Seeing them at their backbreaking labors, he would ask about the cause of all this. Moshe wondered how all this came about.

He was told how it happened and how Bilam had instigated all this and even attempted to have Moshe, himself, destroyed. Moshe realized the danger of Bilam’s existence. He searched daily for an opportunity to get this Bilam out of the way.

On learning that Basya’s son was plotting against him, Bilam fled with his two sons to Ethiopia to the realm of King Kikanos. Moshe, on his continuous visits to Goshen, was deeply hurt on seeing the continuing misery of his brothers.

### **MOSHE SLAYS THE EGYPTIAN**

He returned to the palace and requested an audience with Pharaoh to obtain a favor for his brothers. He asked Pharaoh: “Please, your Majesty, allow the Hebrews to rest one day each week.” Pharaoh granted this concession and the Hebrews were given a day of rest, once in seven days. Moshe was very happy about this achievement.

Moshe continued to take an active interest in the plight of the Hebrews. He was now eighteen years old and desired to see his father and mother in Goshen. As he approached Goshen he saw the troubles and woes of his brethren and particularly noticed a Hebrew being beaten by an Egyptian. The victim ran toward Moshe who was well-known as a member of the palace household. This Egyptian bully had been defiling the man's wife and now the Egyptian planned to kill the Hebrew husband. The Hebrew now approached Moshe and when Moshe looked around and saw no other person there, he killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand, thus saving the Hebrew from his persecutor.

On the next day, Moshe went out again to his brethren and saw two men quarreling. He turned to the one who was about to beat his neighbor and said, "Wicked one, why do you beat your friend?" The man said to Moshe, "Who has made you a prince or judge over us? Do you now mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Fear gripped Moshe as he realized that the incident was known.

By this time Pharaoh had heard about the whole story and ordered that Moshe be put to death. Pharaoh brought a sword so sharp that in all the world there was none other like it. He tried to execute Moshe ten times with this sword but God caused a miracle to occur. Moshe's neck became a pillar of marble on which the sword had no effect. An angel sent by God took hold of Moshe's right hand and led him to a place forty days journey from the borders of Egypt.

Aharon, Moshe's brother, remained in Egypt and prophesied to the B'nei Yisrael, telling them: "Let each man cast away any Egyptian abominations in his house and put an end to this form of contamination." But the B'nei Yisrael did not obey. God would have put an end to Israel at this time if it were not for the covenant with Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. Pharaoh would now increase the oppression of the B'nei Yisrael until the day arrived when God would remember them and send His messenger to redeem them.

## ETHIOPIANS AT WAR

At that time a fierce war broke out between the Ethiopians and the Sons of the East and their ally, Aram. These two nations had been under the domination of Kikanos, king of Ethiopia, and now they rebelled against him. Kikanos went to war to bring these nations back under his rule, leaving Bilam, the sorcerer, and his two sons, behind to rule the land in his stead. Kikanos fought and defeated Aram and the Sons of the East and he imposed heavy taxes on them but did not destroy their land.

While Kikanos was away from his country fighting, Bilam took advantage of his position as regent and persuaded the people to rebel against their King Kikanos and to prevent him from reentering his own royal city. Bilam's plan succeeded and he was made king. His two sons were appointed as captains of the army. They raised the heights of the walls on two sides of the city. On the third side they dug many pits between the city and the river that flows around the whole land of Ethiopia and connected them by means of small canals so they filled with water. On the fourth side of the city they gathered a large number of serpents by means of sorcery and witches' incantations. Thus they made the city impenetrable from all sides.

Kikanos now made his way back to his own land, Ethiopia. As he approached the city he saw the walls that were now of enormous height and he was bewildered. At first, Kikanos thought that this was done to protect the city from enemies since they were, after all, at war. But, to his surprise, he found all the gates of his city closed against him and his army. He called out: "Open the gates and let us enter." But the gatekeepers, on Bilam's orders, refused to open the gates to him. A battle ensued in which thirty men of Kikanos' army were killed. The battle continued and on the next day Kikanos' army tried to enter the city from the river. They could not make headway and many soldiers drowned by trying to swim through the waters. The king ordered rafts to be built but still the men were drowned. Two hundred men were killed in this attempt.

On the third day, they tried from the side on which the serpents had been placed, and again this attempt failed. This siege continued for nine years and they still could not gain entry.

While this terrible siege was still in progress, Moshe fled from Egypt and, quite by chance, reached the camp of Kikanos. Moshe was then eighteen years old and he arrived to join Kikanos in the siege when it was in its ninth year of action. King Kikanos and all the princes took kindly to Moshe. He was tall and very strong and he became the king's advisor. At the end of nine more years of siege, the king fell ill and died, after a sickness of seven days. They embalmed him and buried him opposite the gate of the city that faced in the direction of Egypt. His soldiers built a tomb above his grave constructed of large stone blocks on which they inscribed the mighty acts of the late king.

After the death of Kikanos, king of Ethiopia, the army became weary of the siege. They began to think of plans to end the stalemate. They argued as follows: "If we stay here, it means remaining indefinitely in the desert. If we fight we shall be killed outright. Indeed, now that our enemies know that King Kikanos has died, there will be danger of attack, especially from the kings of Aram and the Sons of the East. There is only one plan and that is to appoint a new king over us."

This plan was approved and they found no fitter person to appoint as king than Moshe. They removed their upper garments and placed them on the ground, thus making a big platform upon which they enthroned Moshe, as they did not have a real throne. They sounded trumpets and shouted, "Long live the king." They all swore allegiance to Moshe and gave Adeniya, the widow of the late king, Kikanos, to him as a wife. A garment was spread out and they all threw in precious jewels and coins. Moshe took these gifts and placed them in a treasury.

All this happened in the fifty-fifth year of the life of Pharaoh, which was the one hundred and fifty-seventh year after Israel had



arrived in Egypt. Moshe was now twenty-seven years old and he reigned over Ethiopia for forty years. He was beloved by everyone and was good in the eyes of God and men.

### ETHIOPIAN VICTORY

On the seventh day of his reign, the Ethiopians assembled and bowed before him. "Great King," they reminded him, "it is now eighteen years since this siege has begun. We have not seen our wives and children during all this time." The new king replied: "If you will obey me, I will be able to end your troubles. Go now, each of you, and catch a young stork. Take the bird and raise it and teach it to fly, as a hawk would."

They obeyed Moshe's order faithfully. Each man went to the forest and took a fledgling stork and taught it to fly as a hawk. When the proper time arrived they starved these storks for three days. Moshe then told them: "Be brave and gird yourselves with armor, mount your horses and take the birds with you in your hands. The attack will begin at the side of the city where the serpents were placed. You will send forth the storks to prey on these serpents."

They followed these instructions and all the serpents were killed outright. Trumpets were sounded and the attack on the city began. Moshe's army easily penetrated the city's defenses and slew eleven hundred men. The remaining soldiers still outside entered triumphantly and rejoined their families. Not one soldier from the attacking army was killed. Bilam and his two sons saw that their situation was hopeless, so they fled together with Bilam's eight brothers. These eight brothers became the sorcerers mentioned in the Torah who were with Pharaoh and who faced Moshe when God brought the plagues on Egypt.

Now Moshe was formally installed in his position as king. He was duly crowned and given Adeniya as wife as has been mentioned above. But being a God-fearing man, he never associated

with her or even looked at her. He knew about the order that Avraham had given to Eliezer not to take a wife for Yitzchak from the daughters of Canaan nor from any of the children of Cham. God had made these as servants of the children of Sheim and Yefes. Moshe feared God and followed Him in all his ways and never departed from the good ways of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. He reigned over Ethiopia wisely and the people respected him greatly.

Aram and the Sons of the East heard that Kikanos, the king of Ethiopia had died and they again rebelled against the rule of Ethiopia. The new king, Moshe, assembled thirty thousand men and went to fight the Sons of the East. He subdued the enemy, by killing many of them. Then Moshe turned to Aram and they, too, were conquered. Then he returned to Ethiopia and his rule was firmly established. Fifteen years after these events, Shaul, king of Edom died and Baal Chanan ben Achbor reigned after him.

In the sixteenth year of Moshe's rule over Ethiopia, Baal Chanan ben Achbor began to reign in Edom and he reigned for thirty-eight years. During his reign, Moav rebelled against Edom. Moav had been under the rule of Edom since the time of Hadad ben Bedad who had conquered them and the Midianites. Angias, king of Africa, had died and in his place his son, Isdrubal, ruled. Then Yaniash, the king of Kittim, died and he was buried in the valley of Campania and Latianus reigned after him.

In the twenty-second year of the reign of Moshe over Ethiopia, Latianus began to rule over the Kittites and his reign lasted for forty-five years. He built a high tower within which was a palace. In the third year of his reign, he issued an edict to build ships. He did this in order to wage war against Isdrubal of Africa. Latianus destroyed the canal that was built by Angias for the sake of Yaniya, as has been described above. But the men of Isdrubal were fierce and were ready to fight to the death against Latianus of Kittim. They were, however, killed in great numbers by the army of Latianus and Isdrubal also fell in the battle.

Isdrubal had a daughter who was very beautiful and her name was Uspiona. The men of Africa used to embroider her likeness on their clothes. The subjects of Latianus praised her beauty and when he heard about her, he took her as a wife and returned with her to Kittim. When Isdrubal, the son of Angias, died, Latianus returned to Kittim and all the inhabitants arose and took Anibal, the son of Angias, the brother of Isdrubal, and they appointed him as their king. As soon as he began his reign, he planned to go to Kittim to take revenge for the defeat and for the death of his brother, Isdrubal. He built ships and with these he brought his army to Kittim. This war lasted eighteen years and all this time Anibal was encamped against Kittim. At last Anibal smote Kittim and slew their nobles and princes in addition to eighty thousand men of that land. Eventually Anibal returned to Africa and continued his reign.

### EPHRAIMITES LEAVE EGYPT

About this time in the one hundred and eighteenth year after the B'nei Yisrael had come to Egypt some valiant men of Israel decided to leave the land of Egypt. They numbered thirty thousand and they were all from the tribe of Yoseif: Ephraimites. They left Egypt because they thought that the set time of redemption had arrived. They believed that this was the term fixed by God and stipulated to Avraham. These men girded themselves with swords and relied on their own strength. They left Egypt with a mighty hand.

They took no provisions of food with them. They took only gold and silver. "This will buy us food from the Philistines," they said, "and if the Philistines refuse to sell us what we need, we will take it from them by force." They set out for Gas where they found the shepherds of that place grazing their sheep. They approached these shepherds. "Sell us some of your sheep," they said, "for we are all very hungry and in need of food." The shepherds replied: "These sheep are not our own. We are merely tending other

people's sheep." The men of Ephraim then went to take the sheep by force. The shepherds began to shout and this was heard by the people of Gas who then came out to see what had happened. Then they went back to Gas and assembled for war.

The battle was fierce. On the second day the men of Gas sent to the other towns of the Philistines to come to their aid. The men of Ephraim were exhausted and hungry — they were fighting against forty thousand men — and were crushed by the Philistines. Only ten men of this company of exiles remained alive and they fled. This was the intervention of the Hand of God because they had left Egypt before the stipulated time. Twenty thousand men of the Philistines were killed in this battle. The corpses of the Ephraimites were left unburied in the valley of Gas for many days. Those who fled returned to Egypt and told the Israelites what had happened. Their father, Ephraim, mourned many days and his brothers came to console him. After this he had a son whom he named Beriah which means that he was in an "evil" state because this misfortune.

Moshe, the son of Amram, was still king of Ethiopia and continued to rule well and justly and all the inhabitants loved him. In the fortieth year of his reign his wife, Adeniya, came before the people while Moshe was seated on his throne. She said, "What are you doing, sons of Ethiopia. It is now forty years since this man began to reign here and he has never come near me, nor has he worshiped any of your gods. Why should this man remain king? You must appoint one of your own kind as ruler. There is Mancharia, my oldest son, the child of your former king. Is it not better that one of your own should be king?"

The princes and the people heard what she had said, but they left the matter for that night. On the very next morning they appointed Mancharia, son of Kikanos, as their king. The people were very careful that no harm befell Moshe. They gave him many gifts and sent him away with great honor. Moshe was now sixty-seven years old.

## MOSHE GOES TO MIDIAN

This incident was divinely conceived since the time for Israel's deliverance from Egypt was near and they were now to be liberated from the children of Cham. Moshe made his way to Midian as he was afraid to return to Egypt at that time.

Moshe was resting near a well as the seven daughters of Reuel came to draw water for their sheep. Other shepherds came and drove them away, but Moshe came to their aid and even gave water to the sheep. The girls told their father, Reuel, what had happened and he asked this man to his home and invited him to partake of their meal.

Moshe then told his own story about his flight from Egypt and his rule over Ethiopia. Reuel thought, "I must place this man in a prison and thus placate the Ethiopians from whom he must have fled." Moshe was then locked in prison for ten years, but Tzipporah, Reuel's daughter, showed him kindness and secretly fed him all this time.

Meanwhile, the B'nei Yisrael were in Egypt and were still slaves. At that time, God had smitten Pharaoh with leprosy from head to foot as a punishment for his cruelty. But he did not repent. He consulted his wise men about this disease and they told him that he must apply the blood of children to his body. So he sent to Goshen and took Hebrew children for this purpose. He killed three hundred and seventy-five children for their blood, but the disease became worse and lasted ten more years. It became progressively more painful and he was also smitten by boils and severe abdominal pains.

The officers of Pharaoh came from Goshen and reported to him: "We have witnessed the work of the B'nei Yisrael and we must tell you that they are becoming lazy." Pharaoh said: "These people know that I am sick and they are taking advantage of this fact." He ordered his chariot to be ready for him so that he could see for himself what was happening and what was described as

Israel's mocking him. His servants prepared his chariot and they rode with him to Goshen.

Pharaoh took with him twenty riders and ten foot soldiers as he was unable to drive the chariot himself. Then the horses went through a hilly area riding through a narrow vineyard road that was surrounded by a low valley. The horses pushed against one another and fell into the valley below caused the chariot to overturn. The chariot and horse spun over so that the king was lying beneath them. Pharaoh was badly wounded and was carried back to his palace on the shoulders of his servants. He was put into bed at once. The queen, Alparonis, wept at the sight but the princes seeing that his end was near advised him to name his heir.

He had three sons and two daughters from this queen besides children from his other wives. The oldest son was named Esro, the second, Adikam, and the third, Moryon. Their sisters were Basya and Akuzis. The oldest son was an imbecile. The second, Adikam, was very clever but very ugly. His height was one cubit and a span (about two and half feet) and he was very fat. His father thought it best to let him reign after him. He married him to Geduda, the daughter of Avilas, who was then only ten years old. She bore him four sons. Then he married three other wives and had eight sons and three daughters from these.

Meanwhile, the dying king's sickness became worse and he empowered Adikam to reign while he was still alive. After three years the sick king died in great shame and pain and was buried in the royal tombs of Tsoan. He was not embalmed since his physical state made this impossible and no one would approach his body. He was buried in great haste and was thus punished for his cruelty.

Adikam was twenty years old when he began his reign and he ruled as king for four years. In the two hundred and sixth year of Israel's descent to Egypt this Pharaoh began his reign. He did not live as long as any of his ancestors. His father, Melol, had reigned

for ninety-four years but his last ten years were years of pain. Now the new king, following the practice of Egypt, was named Pharaoh with the nickname “Avuz” which, in Egyptian, means fat. Besides his being a dwarf, his beard reached to his ankles. He ruled by his cunning and was more wicked than his predecessors. He took a daily account of the work of the Hebrews, visiting Goshen often. The overseers continued the evil practice of snatching the children from the Israelites and placing them inside the walls. Two hundred and seven children were lost in this way.

Thus, the B’nei Yisrael strained under the strenuous work load and groaned from their suffering. They had hoped that the death of the previous Pharaoh would ease their plight. Yet, God was now about to deliver them and remembered His covenant with Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.

In the tenth year of Moshe’s imprisonment in Reuel’s prison — the first year of the new Pharaoh’s reign — Tzipporah said to her father, “What could have happened to the Hebrew man whom you locked away ten years ago? We should go and see what became of him.” Her father, Reuel, did not know that she had been taking care of him all this time. Reuel asked, “Is it possible that someone can be alive for ten years without eating or drinking?”

“Do you know,” Tzipporah asked, “that the God of the Hebrews is very powerful and performs wonders always? He saved Avraham in Ur Kasdim, and Yitzchak from the sword, and Yaakov from the angel who fought him. He also did great things with this man. He was saved as a child from the waters of the river and from the sword of Pharaoh and from the Ethiopians. It is also possible that he was saved from starvation.” These words pleased Reuel and he went to see what had happened to Moshe and he found him well and saw him praising God and praying fervently. Reuel released him from prison and had his hair trimmed and he gave him new garments and food.

### THE SAPPHIRE STAFF

After this, Moshe went into Reuel's garden and prayed to God Who had worked such miracles for him. As he walked about, he noticed a wondrous staff made of sapphire stone, fixed in the ground of the garden. He went to it and saw the unutterable Name of God inscribed on it. When he lifted this staff, it felt as though he was lifting a tree from the forest. The staff was now in his hand.

This staff had an amazing history. After the world was created, when man was expelled from the Garden of Eiden, Adam took this staff when he began to till the soil. Then this staff reached Noach, then Sheim, then Avraham and was given to Yitzchak, and even in his wanderings, Yaakov had this stick with him and never lost it. When he came to Egypt, he gave it to Yoseif. After Yoseif's death, the princes of Egypt came to his home, plundered it, and brought it to Pharaoh's palace.

Yisro (Reuel) was, at that time, one of the important advisors at the Egyptian court. On seeing this staff he knew he must have it as his own. He stole it from the palace and brought it to his home where he anchored it in the ground of his garden. All the strong men tried to pull it out but no one succeeded. Actually, this was the test given to any suitor who asked for the hand of Tzipporah. When Reuel saw the staff in the hand of Moshe, he immediately gave him Tzipporah for a wife.

At this time, Baal Chanan ben Achbor, the king of Edom, died and he was buried in Edom. Then the sons of Eisav sent messengers to Aram to find a king to rule over them. The man they chose was Hadar and he reigned over Edom for forty-eight years. He fought against Moav to bring them under Edom's rule but he was unsuccessful. Moav appointed a king of their own choice and sent word to the sons of Amon who were their kinsmen and asked for their help against Hadar of Edom. Hadar feared this alliance between Moav and Amon and this ended the fighting.

Now Moshe, the son of Amram, had taken Tzipporah, Reuel's



daughter, as his wife. She followed the ways of the children of Yaakov and was no less pious than Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah. She gave birth to a son who they named Gershom. He was thus named since Moshe had been a stranger in a strange land. He did not, as yet, circumcise this boy since Reuel had objected to it. The next son was Eliezer, named so because he said, "The God of my father helped me and saved me from the sword of Pharaoh."

### THE BURNING BUSH

Now the toil of the B'nei Yisrael in Egypt was made even more unbearable and no straw was provided for them to make bricks. They now had to find the straw while maintaining the quota of bricks to be produced daily. God saw their distress. The time had finally come for their deliverance.

Moshe was now tending the sheep of his father-in-law in Midian near the Wilderness of Sin with the wondrous staff in his hand. One day a young goat strayed from the herd and Moshe went after it. During his search, he arrived at the Mountain of God at Chorev. Here, God appeared to him in a bush. Moshe saw a bush that seemed on fire, yet this same bush showed no sign of being burned. Moshe was bewildered and approached to see why this bush was not being consumed.

At this point God called to Moshe from the fire and commanded him to go to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to send the B'nei Yisrael out of Egypt. "Return to Egypt," God said, "as all the people who sought your life are now dead. Tell Pharaoh to send Israel out of Egypt." God gave him instructions about performing wonders in the presence of Pharaoh and his servants so that they would believe him when he said that God had sent him. Moshe obeyed what God had told him and returned to his father-in-law and told him of his intention. His father-in-law said, "Go in peace."

Moshe now arose and took his wife and two sons with him. On the way to Egypt, Moshe and his family rested in a lodging place.

It was there that an angel of God appeared and wanted to kill Moshe because his older son had not yet been circumcised according to the covenant that God had made with Avraham. Moshe had listened to his father-in-law who, as mentioned above, had not permitted him to perform the circumcision. Tzipporah saw the angel and understood why he was ready to take her husband's life. She took speedy action. She took a very sharp flint and circumcised her son and, by so doing, saved her husband's life.

Aharon, Moshe's brother, was walking near the edge of the river when God appeared to him and said, "Go and meet Moshe in the direction of the wilderness." He went and met Moshe and kissed him. Aharon then saw Tzipporah, Moshe's wife, and the two sons, and he asked who they were. Moshe replied: "These are my wife and sons which God has given me in Midian." Aharon was displeased about Moshe's family accompanying him and he told Moshe to send them back to Midian. Moshe listened and they were sent back. Tzipporah went with her two sons to Reuel where they lived until God visited His people and took them out of Egypt.

### **MOSHE AND AHARON BEFORE PHARAOH**

Moshe and Aharon now came to the B'nei Yisrael in Egypt and reported to them the words of God and the people were extremely happy. As the next day dawned, Moshe and Aharon arose and went to the palace of Pharaoh, taking with them the staff of God. They approached the palace. At its gates there were two young lions held by iron chains. No man could leave or enter the palace while the lions were there unless the king had granted permission for that person's entrance or departure. When this happened the trainers of the lions would use their skill to make the lions lie down. But Moshe raised the staff and these beasts were not only freed of their chains but even accompanied the two brothers as willingly and cheerfully as a dog goes with its master.

When Pharaoh saw the two brothers he was taken aback because of the unusual behavior of the lions and because of the godly appearance of these visitors. "What is your wish?" the king asked. They replied, "The eternal God of the Hebrews has sent us to tell you as follows: 'Let My people leave so that they may serve Me.'"

When Pharaoh heard these words he became nervous and said, "Leave now and return tomorrow." They left the palace and Pharaoh immediately sent for the great sorcerer, Bilam and his two sons, Yanus and Yambrus. He also sent for all his advisors and all the magicians. He revealed to them what Moshe and Aharon had said to him and how they had gained entry through the gate in spite of the lions. He told them the wonders of the staff and the behavior of the lions.

### **THE STAFF BECOMES A SERPENT**

Bilam replied as follows, "These men are merely magicians just as we are. Send for them and see how we shall test them."

In the morning, the king sent for the two brothers. They came with the staff and spoke again: "Thus says the God of the Hebrews. 'Let My people leave so that they may serve Me.'"

"Who do you think will believe you, said the King when you say that you are messengers of God and that you come here by His command? Give me a sign, so that your statements may be verified."

At once, Aharon put out his staff which turned into a serpent. The magicians did likewise and also produced such serpents, but the serpent of Aharon opened its mouth as if to swallow the serpents produced by the magicians of Pharaoh.

Bilam stated that "this was an old established fact among magicians that such 'magic' serpents swallow one another just as the fish of the sea swallow one another. Now return your serpent

to its original shape of a staff and the magicians' serpents will likewise resume their previous shapes." He added: "If your staff, in its original form, will swallow the magicians' sticks then we will have to admit that the spirit of God is behind all this. If not, then you are magicians of the same type as we are."

Aharon acted accordingly and took the tail of his serpent and it instantly became a stick as it was originally. The magicians did likewise and changed their serpents into sticks again. As soon as they assumed their original shapes, Aharon's staff devoured the others.

Pharaoh was watching and commanded that the annals of the kings of Egypt be brought before him. In these books there was a record of the names of all the gods known to Egypt and these names were now read to the king. The name of the God mentioned by Moshe was not found in any of these records. He turned to Moshe and Aharon and said, "I cannot find any mention of the name of your God. I do not know Him or His name."

But the king's men said, "We have heard that this God of the Hebrews is among the wise of the kings of the East." Pharaoh insisted that he knew nothing of such a God and that he would not send the people of Israel from Egypt. Then Moshe and Aharon said, "His name is Eternal, the God of gods, and we are called by His name from the days of our ancestors. He has sent us and has told us, 'Go to Pharaoh and tell him that he should send forth My people and we shall go out in order to serve Him for three days in the wilderness and to offer sacrifices to Him.' Since our fathers came down to this country we have not been asked to do this service for Him. If you do not let us go, He will be very angry with you and He will smite Egypt with plague and sword."

Pharaoh said to them, "Tell me about His powers and wonders." They replied, "He created the heaven and earth, the seas and all that is in them. He creates light and darkness and causes rain to irrigate the land in order to make it fertile and give its fruit

and vegetables. He created man, the beast of the field, and the fish of the sea. All live and die at His command. Did he not create you, yourself, from the womb of your mother and give you the breath of life? He placed you above others and put you on the throne of Egypt. He will one day take your breath and life from you and restore you to the ground from which you came.”

The king became furious and stated, “Who among the gods of the peoples can do this to me? The river is mine and I made it.” He drove them out and gave orders that the harsh labor of the Hebrews should be increased.

So Moshe and Aharon left Pharaoh and were now aware that the plight of the B’nei Yisrael had been made worse than it was before. They turned to God and said, “Why have You done this to Your people, making things worse since we went to Pharaoh?” God told them thus, “Now you will see that Pharaoh will send Israel out of Egypt. He will be forced to do this by My strong hand and by terrible plagues.”

Moshe and Aharon went and lived with their brethren in Egypt. The Egyptians embittered the lives of the Hebrews by the brutal labor which they imposed on them.

## THE PLAGUES

After two years passed, God sent Moshe and Aharon to Pharaoh to tell him once again to let the B’nei Yisrael leave Egypt. They went to the palace and Pharaoh related to God’s message but he refused to listen to God’s command. Then God revealed His great power which was now used against Pharaoh and Egypt and against the servants of Pharaoh. They were smitten with severe plagues.

Aharon was ordered to turn the waters of Egypt to blood. When the Egyptians wished to draw water from a well, this water would turn to blood. This also happened as soon as anyone wished to drink water from a cup, to knead dough or to cook anything. The water would always turn to blood.

Then came the swarms of frogs which emerged from the river and reached the homes of the Egyptians. When they drank water the frogs would breed and roll about inside their stomachs. Their drinking and cooking water bred frogs and the very perspiration of their bodies made these frogs appear and swarm around on their beds.

The anger of God was still not appeased. Then came the third plague of lice. They came in such numbers that they formed piles higher than three feet from the ground. They spread over the skin of man and cattle.

When this ended, the fourth plague began in the form of an onslaught of wild beasts which destroyed man and cattle. Along with these, came fiery serpents and ugly creatures — flies, hornets, fleas and gnats — which found their way into the eyes and ears of the people of Egypt. The people attempted to enclose themselves in their rooms but God caused a strong sea current to force itself into the land. The people were forced to climb to the roofs which cracked and collapsed. Much injury was caused.

Then came the fifth plague which was a pestilence which broke out among horses, donkeys, camels, and cattle. In the morning, when the Egyptians went to send their cattle to pasture, they found them dead. This destroyed nine-tenths of the Egyptian's cattle. In Goshen, where the B'nei Yisrael lived, no cattle perished.

The sixth plague that came was an epidemic of boils which affected their whole bodies.

Then there was the seventh plague which was a storm of hail and this destroyed the vineyards and orchards. Even the vegetables withered. This hail was mingled with fire which destroyed both man and beast.

Then came the eighth plague which was locust and similar flying menaces which destroyed vegetation. Everything which was not destroyed by the hail was devoured by this locust. Some

Egyptians tried to preserve this locust for food but God brought a strong wind which carried the locust to the Sea of Reeds. What had already been gathered and placed in vessels for preservation was also taken to the sea.

Then came the ninth plague of darkness which covered Egypt for three days so that no person could even see his hand in front of him. During this plague many of the Hebrews also died. These had rebelled against God and refused to believe that Moshe had been sent to save them. They said, "We do not intend leaving Egypt as we do not want to starve in the desert." These persons perished during the days of darkness and they were quickly buried so that the Egyptians would know nothing of this which would, of course, have pleased them. The darkness was so thick that those who were sitting could not stand and no one could walk from his place.

### THE FINAL PLAGUE

The darkness passed and God sent Moshe and Aharon to the B'nei Yisrael to tell them as follows: "Celebrate your new festival and perform a sacrifice of Pesach because I am about to pass over Egypt at midnight when I will kill all the first-born of Egypt.

Pharaoh stayed up during that terrible night accompanied by all his servants. There was a great outcry throughout the land since there was not a single house in which someone did not die. Even pictures of a firstborn hanging on the walls of houses disintegrated. The remains of a firstborn who had died a long time ago were dug up by dogs and strewn about before the people. On experiencing this horror, the Egyptians lost all control of themselves and cried aloud.

Basya, Pharaoh's daughter, went with the king on that night in search of Moshe and Aharon. They found them eating in their own homes and in a good mood. Basya said to Moshe, "Is this the gratitude which you show for what I did for you. I reared you and now you bring this great evil on me and my father's house?"

"There have now been ten plagues in Egypt," Moshe replied. Did any one of these affect you personally?" She replied that she had not been harmed. Then Moshe said, "You are a firstborn of your mother, yet you will not die nor will any harm befall you."

"What benefit is this to me," She replied. I have witnessed my brother, the king, and his household in such a terrible plight?"

Moshe replied, "Your brother and his servants did not listen to the warning of God which is why this has come upon them."

Then the king of Egypt approached Moshe and Aharon and those of the B'nei Yisrael who were there with the two brothers and pleaded as follows: "Get moving! Get out from among my people! Go! Worship God just as you demanded. Take your sheep and cattle, just as you said. Go! and bless me too!"

Moshe said, "You, too, are a firstborn but you will not perish this night, since God preserves you in order to show His wonders which He will perform with His strong hand and outstretched arm."

## THE EXODUS

Pharaoh gave the command to let the B'nei Yisrael leave with wealth and cattle according to the oath which God had made to Avraham, our father. The B'nei Yisrael tarried a little, saying, "Are we thieves that we must leave at night?" Then the B'nei Yisrael demanded of the Egyptians vessels of gold and silver and garments.

Moshe went hastily to the river in order to retrieve the remains of Yoseif, that were to be taken to the Holy Land. Likewise, all the B'nei Yisrael took with them the remains of their ancestors. They then journeyed from Ramseis to Sukkos numbering about six hundred thousand men, besides the women and children. In addition, a great mixture of non-Hebrews went with them with much cattle. The B'nei Yisrael had worked in Egypt for



two hundred and ten years. Then God took them out of Egypt with a mighty hand and they arrived at Sukkos on the fifteenth day of the first month, Nissan, while the Egyptians were still burying their dead, which took three days. They now left Sukkos and encamped at Eisam at the edge of the wilderness.

### THE EGYPTIAN PURSUIT

On the third day when the dead of Egypt had been buried, many Egyptians thought of forcing the Hebrews to return. They said, "We thought that they would leave us for three days only; now they have gone altogether. We shall get up early tomorrow morning and see that they return to us."

So they assembled, numbering about seven hundred thousand men. They reached the place where the B'nei Yisrael were encamped, and saw Moshe and Aharon and all Israel in a festive mood. The Egyptians first approached peacefully to remind them that it was now five days since they had been away and that it was time to go back to Egypt. Moshe replied, "God has Himself pledged, 'You will never return to Egypt, but you will be taken to a land flowing with milk and honey.'"

Now that the princes of Egypt heard this, they prepared themselves for a fight. A battle ensued and the B'nei Yisrael defeated the Egyptians who fled after many of them had been slain. The officers of this army went to Pharaoh and reported that the B'nei Yisrael had resolved never to return. Remorse now overtook the king and his servants and they regretted having let them leave Egypt. Pharaoh's heart was again hardened. He resolved to pursue the B'nei Yisrael and bring them back to Egypt. This was destined by God in order to bring the final catastrophe upon Egypt. Pharaoh readied his chariot and assembled all the Egyptians as many as one million men.

This army arrived as the B'nei Yisrael were encamped near the Sea of Reeds. The people of Israel became afraid and cried aloud

when they saw Pharaoh and his army approaching. The people were now divided into four groups, each expressing its own attitude. One was the group including the tribes; Reuvein, Shimon and Yissachar who were ready to throw themselves into the sea, as they were extremely afraid. This section was addressed by Moshe who said, "Stand firm and you will see what God will do to rescue you today."

The second group, consisting of the tribes of Zevulun, Binyamin and Naftali, planned to return to Egypt. To them Moshe said, "Don't be afraid, you will never see the Egyptians again." The third division was made up of the tribes of Yehudah, Dan and Yoseif. These were prepared to do battle with the Egyptians. To them, Moshe said, "Wait and stay where you are. God will fight for you and you will remain silent." The fourth group was composed of the tribes of Levi, Gad and Asher. They were ready to run among the Egyptian ranks so as to cause confusion among them. Moshe told this group, "Remain in your places and fear not. Only call on God Who will save you from their hands."

### **THE PASSAGE THROUGH THE SEA**

At this critical stage, Moshe arose and prayed as follows: "Oh God of the whole world, save Your people whom You have brought out of Egypt and do not let the Egyptians say that the power is theirs." God said, "Why do you cry to Me. Speak to the B'nei Yisrael and let them start moving. Stretch out your staff over the sea and divide it so that the B'nei Yisrael may cross over on dry land." Moshe raised his staff over the sea and it divided into twelve sections (one for each tribe). They passed through the sea on foot as one would walk through a well-trodden road. This they did, wearing their shoes. God showed them His wonders.

### **THE EGYPTIANS PERISH**

Now the Egyptians began their passage through the parted sea. But once the B'nei Yisrael were on the other side, the waters

closed back again as they were before and the armies of Egypt were drowned. Only one remained alive and this was Pharaoh who finally admitted God's greatness and really believed in Him. God commanded an angel to rescue him from the waters and to take him far away to Nineveh over which he ruled for a long time.

God rescued the B'nei Yisrael on that day from the Egyptians and the B'nei Yisrael saw that the Egyptians were dead and they saw the great power which God had unleashed against Egypt. So Moshe and all Israel sang, "Let us sing to God because He has shown His pride, horse and rider He threw into the sea." This is written in the Torah.

Now they journeyed and came to Marah and God gave them there statutes and judgments. He commanded them to walk in His ways. Then they left Marah and came to Eilim where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees. They encamped there by this oasis. They journeyed from Eilim and came to the desert of Sin on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had left Egypt. Then God gave the B'nei Yisrael the *man* and this descended from heaven for forty years until they reached the border of the promised land.

### AMALEIK

They came to Alush and from there they came to Refidim where Amaleik, the son of Eliphaz, son of Eisav, appeared. He was the brother of Tzevo and came to do battle with Israel bringing with him one thousand and eighty times ten thousand men with sorcerers. He waged war with them at Refidim. His armies were beaten by the B'nei Yisrael, led by Yehoshua bin Nun, who was the constant attendant of Moshe. He was of the tribe of Ephraim.

God then told Moshe: "Write this as an everlasting reminder in the Book and place it into the hand of Yehoshua. The charge being, 'when they enter the land of Canaan, they are to blot out the memory of Amaleik.'" So Moshe wrote, "Remember what

Amaleik did to you when you left Egypt. They encountered you on the way and attacked from the rear, you who were tired and exhausted, and they showed no fear of God. When God gives you peace from all your enemies in your new land, you must destroy Amaleik. The king who will not carry out this completely will have to answer to Me for it. I will banish him from his people.”

They journeyed from Refidim, encamping in the desert of Sinai. This was in the third month after they had left Egypt. At this time, Reuel the Midianite (Yisro), the father-in-law of Moshe came to the desert with his daughter, Tzipporah, and her two sons. He had heard of the wonders which God had done for His people, Israel, and how they were saved from Egypt. Now Yisro came to Moshe, to the place where Moshe was encamped, near the mountain of God. Moshe came out to greet his father-in-law and great honor was shown to him. He and his children remained with Israel for a long time, and he acknowledged God from that time onward.

### **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

In the third month after Israel's departure from Egypt, on the sixth day of that month, God gave the Torah to Israel on Mount Sinai. On this day the Ten Commandments were proclaimed and the B'nei Yisrael were very exalted. The glory of God rested on the mountain and God called to Moshe, who entered into the midst of the cloud and ascended the mountain. He was there for forty days and nights partaking neither of food nor water and God taught him the laws which he, in turn, was to teach to Israel. At the end of these forty days, he was given two tablets of stone inscribed by the Hand of God.

### **THE GOLDEN CALF**

But the B'nei Yisrael saw that Moshe had delayed coming down from the mountain and they assembled and came to Aharon and said, “This man, Moshe, has gone and we do not know what

has happened to him. Come and make for us a god which will lead us, otherwise you will be killed.” Aharon feared the people and he gave instructions that gold be brought and a calf was made, from the molten gold.

God told Moshe, “Go down at once, for these people have made a golden image and are worshipping it; so leave Me and I shall destroy them as they are a stiff-necked people.” Moshe prayed for them and he came down with the tablets of stone. When he came near the camp and saw what was happening he became enraged and smashed the tablets. He took the calf and smashed it into dust which was then mixed with water and was given to the people to drink. On that day, about three thousand men were slain by the sword.

### **ATONEMENT**

On the following day Moshe went up the mountain in order to seek forgiveness for the people. Again, he stayed there for forty days and God accepted his prayer. Then two tablets of stone were again cut and the Ten Commandments were again inscribed on them. After being instructed by God, Moshe ordered that a Tabernacle be built so that God would dwell among the people of Israel. God showed him the pattern of this construction and the form of all the furnishings and vessels of it. Moshe taught this to the people along with many other wondrous things about the ways of God. The people were very happy and said to Moshe: “Whatever God tells you, we will do and obey.”

### **BUILDING THE MISHKAN**

They all came as one man and they brought whatever they could and they did this voluntarily. They brought silver and copper and anything which was needed for this structure. All the skilled people came in order to work to construct this Mishkan (Tabernacle of Dwelling) where God’s Presence would be. They made all the vessels as God had commanded Moshe.

Now, after five months, all the work was finished. They did exactly as they had been instructed to do. They brought this Tabernacle to Moshe with all its furnishings and vessels according to the vision which Moshe was shown. Moshe saw all this work and noted that they had done it in every detail as God had commanded him. Moshe blessed the people.

# ❧ The Book of Bamidbar ❧

## THE DEDICATION OF THE MISHKAN

**I**n the twelfth month, on the twenty-third day of that month (seven days before the first of Nissan), Moshe took Aharon and his sons and clothed them with the special garments and anointed them and did as God had commanded him. He also offered all the sacrifices on that day as he had been bidden. Aharon and his sons were told to stay at the entrance of the tent of meeting and not to leave during that time. On the eighth day — the first day of the month of Nissan, in the second year after their having left Egypt, Moshe set up the Tabernacle and placed all the vessels in their proper places. He told Aharon and his sons to offer the burnt-offering for themselves and for the B'nei Yisrael.

## NADAV AND AVIHU

On that day Nadav and Avihu, the two sons of Aharon, brought unauthorized fire before God which had not been commanded them and a fire came from God and consumed them so that they died before God.

## THE OFFERING OF THE PRINCES

The princes of Israel each brought their gifts for the dedication of the Tabernacle. Each day a prince of each tribe came and each brought the same gift, as follows: A silver bowl weighing a hundred and thirty shekels; a tossing bowl weighing seventy, both full of flour mixed with oil as a meal-offering; one pan weighing ten gold shekels filled with incense; one young bull, one ram and one yearling lamb as a burnt-offering; and a he-goat as a sin-offering. For a peace-offering each brought two bulls, five rams, five he-goats and five yearling lambs.

## THE CENSUS

On the thirteenth day, Moshe gave instructions about the Pesach sacrifice which was performed in its proper time, on the fourteenth day of the first month (Nissan), as God had commanded. In the second month on the second day of that month, God spoke to Moshe. "Take the count of all the males of Israel over twenty years of age. This shall be done by you, by your brother Aharon, and by the twelve princes of Israel. They did so and they came and counted the B'nei Yisrael in the wilderness of Sinai. They numbered in all six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. The Levites were not counted among their brethren. The number of all firstborn males of one month of age and above was twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three. The number of Levites above one month old was twenty-two thousand. Moshe placed the Kohanim and Levites, each to his particular task, in the Tent of Meeting.

## KIVROS HATA'AVAH

On the twentieth day of the month (the second month, Iyar) the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle of Assembly and the B'nei Yisrael journeyed on from the wilderness of Sinai. At Paran that cloud settled again. At this place, God's anger was kindled since the people had provoked Him by asking for meat. They were given meat and they ate this for one month but they perished and the name of that place was then called Kivros HaTa'avah, "the graves of those who lusted."

They left that place and came to Chatzeiros which is in the wilderness of Paran. While they were in Chatzeiros, Miriam, sister of Moshe, was stricken with leprosy because she had uttered disrespectful words against her brother, Moshe. She was quarantined for seven days and the people did not travel until she was healed. Then the B'nei Yisrael left Chatzeiros and encamped at the edge of the wilderness of Paran.



## THE TWELVE SPIES

At this time, God told Moshe to send twelve spies to explore the land of Canaan. Twelve men went to Canaan for this purpose. They passed through the country from the wilderness of Sin to Rechov at the entrance of Chamos. They returned to Moshe and Aharon at the end of forty days and brought back word according to their own feelings.

They gave an unfavorable report about the land and said, "It would have been better if we had stayed in Egypt." When the people heard this they planned to return to Egypt. They said: "Canaan is a land that devours its inhabitants."

Yehoshua and Kaleb, the son of Yefuneh, gave a different report: "The land through which we passed is a very good land. With the help of God, we will possess it. It is a land flowing with milk and honey."

But the people listened to the opinion of the ten other spies. God was very angry because of the murmurings of the people and said, "Not one person of this evil generation will see the promised land; only those under the age of twenty years will enter that land. This generation will end their days in the desert and will wander about for forty years." So the people remained in Paran for some time. Then they journeyed on to the wilderness of the Sea of Reeds.

## KORACH

At that time, Korach, the son of Yitzhar, the son of Kehas, the son of Levi, gathered many men with him and caused a split among the people. They started a quarrel with Moshe and Aharon and with the assembly of Israel. God became angry and caused the earth to open and swallow the followers of Korach. Their homes and possessions were destroyed.

After that the people journeyed around the Mountain of Seir for a long time. They were told not to wage war against the

children of Eisav as they would not be given any of their land. This part was given to Eisav as an inheritance. So no war was waged against Seir. This land had been taken by the sons of Eisav from the Seirites and this has been described previously in this book. The B'nei Yisrael were told to buy food and water from them and to eat and drink only what they paid for. Here the B'nei Yisrael spent nineteen years.

Now at that time, Latianus, king of Kittim died after reigning forty-five years. This was in the fourteenth year after Israel had left Egypt. He was buried in his palace which he had built in Kittim. After him there reigned Avimanos for thirty-eight years. The Children of Israel passed the border of Seir after being in that area for nineteen years and they came to the wilderness of Moav. God said, "Do not make any siege against Moav as I will not give any of its territory to you." They passed through that part for nineteen years, but never attacked it.

### **WANDERINGS THROUGH THE DESERT**

After thirty-six years of Israel's wanderings, God struck down Sichon, king of the Amorites. This king had made preparations to fight against Moav and he sent messengers to Beor, the son of Yanos, the son of Bilam, advisor to the king of Egypt and also to the son of Beor who was named Bilam (great-grandson of the first Bilam). He asked these magicians to curse Moav and its king so that the land be delivered into his hand. These messengers met Beor at Pesor in Mesopotamia and brought him with his son to the city where Sichon resided. They uttered their curses against Moav and its king in the presence of Sichon, king of the Amorites.

Sichon went out with all his army and fought against Moav and subdued it. Sichon killed the king of Moav and took all his cities. He took the city of Cheshbon and placed in it his princes and nobles. Therefore, the writers of parables (Beor and Bilam) described the incident in song, as follows, "Come to Cheshbon, the city of Sichon, which will be built and remain firm. Woe to

you, people of the god, Kemosh. You have perished.” This is all written in the Torah.

When Sichon had conquered Moav, he placed guards in their cities and a large number of captives, men and women, were taken from Moav. The king of Moav was killed and Sichon then returned to his own land after he gave gifts of silver and gold to Beor, and Bilam, his son. He then let them return to their homeland in Mesopotamia.

Now Israel passed by the wilderness of Moav and then went around the wilderness of Edom. They came to the wilderness of Tzin in the first month of the fortieth year after they had left Egypt. They encamped at Kadeish where Miriam died and was buried.

At that time, Moshe sent messengers to Hadad, king of Edom, with these words: “Let us pass through your land. We shall not traverse any field or vineyard, nor shall we drink from your wells. We shall only walk on the king’s main road.” Edom refused entry and came towards B’nei Yisrael with a large army.

Having been refused entry, the B’nei Yisrael pitched their camp elsewhere. They did not attempt to fight against Edom, as they had been commanded to desist.

### **AHARON DIES**

The B’nei Yisrael were now at Kadeish and came to Mount Hor. It was here that Moshe was told to tell his brother, Aharon, that he must die at this place and that he would not enter the Promised Land. Aharon went up the mount as he was told and he died there in the fortieth year of Israel’s wanderings in the fifth month on the first day. Aharon was one hundred and twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor.

Then the Canaanite king of Arad (who lived in the south) heard that Israel was coming by the way of Asarim and he

prepared to battle against Israel. The B'nei Yisrael were afraid since the enemy had a huge army so they retreated to the extent of a three days' journey to Moseros B'nei Ya'akon. Here they waited for thirty days. When the Levites saw that the B'nei Yisrael would not go to their destination, they arose and fought against their brothers and forced them to return to Mount Hor.

There, the king of Arad, was waiting to fight against Israel. So Israel swore before God, "If you deliver this people into my hand, I shall lay waste to their cities." So the Canaanites were beaten by Israel and these cities were devastated and the place was called Chormah.

### WAR AGAINST SICHON AND OG

Then Israel journeyed from Mount Hor and encamped in Ovos. They journeyed from Ovos and encamped in Iyyei-Avarim on the border of Moav. The B'nei Yisrael asked, "Let us pass through your land, to reach our destination." But Moav would not allow them to pass through since the Moavites were afraid of Israel. They feared that Israel would destroy them as Sichon had already done to them. So, after the refusal of Moav to let the B'nei Yisrael pass through their land, Israel turned aside, as it was forbidden to Israel to fight against Moav.

Israel went and pitched north of Arnon in the borderland of Moav which was between Moav and the wilderness of Kedemos. The B'nei Yisrael sent messengers to Sichon, king of the Amorites. "Let us pass through your land," they said. "We shall not turn aside to field or vineyard, nor shall we drink the water of the wells." But Sichon did not permit them to pass, and he assembled the Amorites and went forth to the wilderness to meet Israel in battle. This took place at Yahatsah (east of Sichon's land). God gave this king into the hands of the B'nei Yisrael and they thus avenged Moav.

The B'nei Yisrael possessed the land of Sichon from Arnon to Yabok as far as the boundary of Ammon and they dwelled in the

cities of the Amorites. The B'nei Yisrael now planned to take the territory of the sons of Ammon but God had prohibited this and they withdrew.

Then the B'nei Yisrael went to Bashan, the land of Og the giant, who was its king. Og went out to fight against Israel with a huge army of the Amorite people. Og had a son who was named Naarotz who was even stronger than his father. Og said, "The entire army of Israel and its camp is three parasangs in extent. I could kill them all as one man without using sword or spear." He went to Mount Yahatsah and took a boulder and was about to throw it onto the camp of Israel, but an angel of God came and split the stone injuring the head of Og who fell to the ground.

God told Israel, "Do not fear Og, for I have given him into your hand and you will do to him as you did to Sichon." So Moshe went to him with a few people and Moshe killed Og with the staff which he aimed at the ankles of the giant. Then the B'nei Yisrael pursued the people of Og and destroyed them.

Moshe sent men of Israel to spy on the important and thriving city of Yaazer. The spies trusted God and fought against the men of Yaazer. These men took Yaazer and its suburbs and they drove out the Amorites who lived there. Then the B'nei Yisrael took the land of the two kings of the Amorites who had been there, thus taking the cities of the eastern side from the valley of Arnon to Mount Chermon.

### **BALAK AND BILAM**

Then the B'nei Yisrael journeyed and came to the Plains of Moav on the east side of the Jordan River at Yericho. The people of Moav had heard all that Israel had done to the two kings of the Amorites, Sichon and Og, and the men of Moav feared Israel very much. So the elders of Moav said, "These two kings were the strongest in the world and they could not prevail against Israel. How shall we stand against them? Is it not a fact that they sent to

us at one time asking that we let them pass through our land and we did not allow them this passage. So now they will return with the sword and destroy us, that is, they will destroy what Og has left of us.”

So Moav took counsel as to how to deal with Israel. The elders of Moav said, “We must appoint a king over us.” So they appointed Balak, the son of Tzippor, a Moavite. After he became king, they sent to the elders of Midian and made a peace treaty.

There had been a state of war between Moav and Midian but Balak was a very clever man. The elders of Midian came and, together with Moav, discussed the best methods of defending themselves against Israel. All the children of Moav said to the Midianites, “Now the B’nei Yisrael will lick-up our surroundings just as the ox licks the grass of the field. Just as they did to the two powerful kings of the Amorites who were so much stronger than we are.”

Then the elders of Midian said, “We did hear that when Sichon fought against you and eventually succeeded, he had first sent to Beor, the son of Yanos, the son of Bilam, who came and cursed you. As a result Sichon was victorious. Let us imitate Sichon’s tactics and let us hire this sorcerer who will come and curse this people whom you fear.” The elders of Moav understood this logic and were pleased with the plan.

Balak sent messengers to Bilam, the son of Beor with this statement: “This people who left Egypt now cover the surface of the land and this people is now near my land. Come and curse this people for me as it is stronger than I am. But perhaps, with your help, we shall be able to fight, defeat and drive them from us. We know that whomever you bless is blessed and whomever you curse is cursed.”

The messengers went to Bilam and eventually convinced him to curse Israel. But God said to Bilam, “You will not curse this people as this people is already blessed.” But Balak persisted and prevailed upon Bilam to curse the people. Bilam did not curse

Israel, as he had to obey God. When Balak saw that Bilam did not do his bidding he left and returned to Moav and Bilam returned to his own place. From there, he eventually went to Midian.

The B'nei Yisrael journeyed from the Plains of Moav and encamped by the Jordan River from Beis Hayeshimos to the Valley of Shittim at the edge of the Plains of Moav.

### **ISRAEL SINS WITH MOAV**

Now the B'nei Yisrael dwelled in the Valley of Shittim and they began to behave immorally with the Moavite girls. The sons of Israel came near to the Moavites who had pitched their tents opposite the camp of the B'nei Yisrael. These Moavites feared the B'nei Yisrael and they took their daughters and all the beautiful women and clothed them with silver and gold and precious garments. The Moavites placed these women at the entrance of their tents so that the sons of Israel should see them and turn to them. This proved effective and the men of Israel began to talk with the daughters of Moav.

Then the men of Moav came out of the tents and said, "Look, we are, after all, sons of Lot and are related to Avraham, too. Why do you not stay with us and eat with us and share our bread and sacrifices?"

### **PINCHAS ACTS**

This persuasion had its desired effect and they enticed the sons of Israel to come into their tents where the Moavites gave them food. They ate of their food and offerings and they became intoxicated. Then a young woman would be placed before the guest and because of his drunkenness, he was not even aware of the great sin which he was committing.

The anger of God was kindled against Israel and He sent a plague and this killed twenty-four thousand men of Israel. Then one man came out of the tribe of Shimon. This was Zimri, son of

Salu. He brought with him a Midianitess, Kozbi, daughter of Tzur, king of Midian. This he did in the presence of all Israel.

When Pinchas, the son of Elazar, the son of Aharon, saw this degenerate act he took a spear and drove it through Zimri and the woman. With that, the plague was ended.

After this, God said, "Take a count of the B'nei Yisrael from twenty years and over, all those who go out to war. So Moshe and Elazar counted the B'nei Yisrael according to their families and they numbered six hundred and one thousand, seven hundred and thirty. The sons of Levi numbered twenty-three thousand. This number includes all males from one month and above.

### **WAR AGAINST MIDIAN**

Among this census there was no man who had been counted by Moshe and Aharon in the wilderness of Sinai, since God had said that they would end their days in the wilderness. Only Yehoshua and Kalev were left of these men. Then God told Moshe to avenge the B'nei Yisrael who had suffered tragic consequences because of Midian. One thousand men of each tribe were taken, making twelve thousand in all. These went to battle against Midian. All the Midianite males were killed. The five kings of Midian were also slain in battle and Bilam, son of Beor, was slain by the sword. The B'nei Yisrael captured the women of the Midianites and their cattle and children and brought the spoils to Moshe and Elazar and to the princes of Israel on the Plains of Moav. The latter had gone out to meet the fighting men, and the spoil was divided. The B'nei Yisrael who had perished in the plague were now avenged.



## ❧ The Book of Devarim ❧

Soon after these events, God said to Moshe, “Your days now draw near to death. So take your servant, Yehoshua bin Nun, and both of you stand in the Tent of Meeting and there I shall give him charge. Moshe did so and God charged Yehoshua as follows: “Be strong and brave, for you will bring Israel to the land which I have promised them and I shall be with you.”

Moshe then said to Yehoshua, “Be strong and courageous for you will cause the B’nei Yisrael to inherit the land and God will be with you and He will not abandon you, nor will He forsake you, so do not be afraid or dismayed.”

Then Moshe called all Israel and said to them, “You have seen all the good which God has shown you in the wilderness. Observe the Torah and walk in the way of God and do not depart from His path which he has commanded you — either to the right or the left.

Then Moshe taught the B’nei Yisrael the laws and the teachings so that they would do these in the land as God had ordained. These laws are written in the Torah which he gave to the B’nei Yisrael through Moshe, their teacher.

### MOSHE’S DEATH

When Moshe ended commanding the people, God said to him, “Go up to the mountain of Avarim and die there and be gathered to your fathers, as your brother, Aharon, was before you.” Moshe went up and he died there in the land of Moav by the word of God. This was in the fortieth year after the departure of the B’nei Yisrael from the land of Egypt. The B’nei Yisrael wept for Moshe on the Plains of Moav for thirty days and then the period of mourning for Moshe ended.



## ❧ The Book of Yehoshua ❧

**A**fter the death of Moshe, God told Yehoshua, the son of Nun, “Arise and pass over the Jordan River to the land which I have given to the B’nei Yisrael and apportion it to them. Wherever your feet will step, I will give to you — from the wilderness to Levanon as far as the River Euphrates — this will be your border and no man will be able to offer resistance to you all the days of your life. As I was with Moshe, so shall I be with you. Only be strong and brave in observing the Torah which Moshe commanded you. Do not turn from the path, either to the right or left, so that you act wisely in all that you do.”

Then Yehoshua commanded the officers of Israel, “Pass through the camp and command the people to prepare provisions, for in three days you will pass through the Jordan River in order to possess the land. The officers of Israel did so and they commanded the people who did as Yehoshua had commanded.

### CONQUEST OF YERICHO

Then Yehoshua sent two men to explore the land and they went and spied on the city of Yericho. They returned to Yehoshua after seven days and told him that God would surely give into the hands of Israel all the land and that its population would tremble with fear before Israel. After this, Yehoshua arose in the morning and all Israel were with him and they journeyed from Shittim.

Yehoshua crossed the Jordan the tenth day of the first month, Nissan, when he was eighty-two years old. They made camp in Gilgal on the east side of Yericho and here they performed the Pesach sacrifice on the fourteenth day of Nissan, as is commanded in the Torah. The *man* ceased to fall on the day after that Pesach and from that day on the people ate from the produce of the Land of Canaan.

Now Yericho was closely shut on account of the B’nei Yisrael. No person entered or left. It happened on the first day of the

second month that God said to Yehoshua, "Break camp, as I have given Yericho and its king and its people into your hands. All the men capable of fighting shall make a circuit around the city once each day. This you will do for six days. The Kohanim will blow the shofar. When you hear the sound of the shofar, the people will sound a great alarm and the wall of the city will fall down flat. Then every man will go forward. Yehoshua acted accordingly. On the seventh day, they made seven circuits around the city and the Kohanim blew the shofar. With the seventh circuit, Yehoshua told the people to sound the alarm, for God had delivered the city into their hands. Yehoshua also told the people that the city was forbidden by God with everything that was in it and if anyone took of the spoils, this would bring Israel under a curse.

Then the Kohanim blew the shofar. With this alarm, the wall collapsed and the people went in and captured the city. The ban was placed on it and on everything which it contained. The city was burned, but the vessels of silver, gold, copper and iron were given to the treasury of God. Then Yehoshua pronounced a curse. "Cursed be the man who will rebuild Yericho. He will lay the foundation but his first born will die. He will set up the gates but his youngest will die [in retribution]."

### **ACHAN'S SIN**

Then Achan, the son of Karmi, son of Zavdi, son of Zerach, who was the son of Yehudah, trespassed against the ban on Yericho. He concealed in his tent what he had taken from the spoils. The anger of God was kindled against Israel.

When the B'nei Yisrael had returned from the destruction of Yericho, Yehoshua sent spies to the city of Ai which they were going to attack next. The spies reported back to Yehoshua: "The entire army need not go on the attack. Three thousand men will be enough to accompany you since there are few inhabitants in that city." The battle did not go well. Thirty-six men of Israel were smitten and the B'nei Yisrael fled.

Then Yehoshua tore his garments and fell to the ground before God and the elders of the people and they placed dust on their heads. Yehoshua cried, "Oh God, why did you allow this people to cross the Jordan and now they have fled before the enemy? The Canaanites will hear about this and they will surround us and destroy us."

God said, "Why are you downcast? Get up and take action, for Israel has sinned and has taken from the forbidden objects. I shall not continue to be with them unless they clear away the forbidden things from their midst."

Yehoshua arose and assembled the people. He ordered that the Urim (part of the breastplate of the Kohen Godal) be brought to him. The Urim named the tribe of Yehudah and eventually Achan, son of Karmi was named. Yehoshua said to Achan, "Tell me, my son, what have you done?" Achan said, "I saw among the spoils a robe of Shinar and two hundred shekels and a strip of gold weighing fifty shekels. I wanted these and I placed them in my tent and they are hidden in the ground." Yehoshua sent men to find these and they brought them from that tent and showed them to Yehoshua who took Achan and his family as far as the valley of Achor. The valuables were burned and Achan was stoned and the place covered by a heap of stones was called Eimek Achor (valley of troubling). Then the anger of God was appeased.

## THE CONQUEST OF AI

After this, Yehoshua approached the city of Ai to fight against it. God said to Yehoshua, "Do not fear and do not be dismayed. I have given into your hand the city of Ai — its king and its people. Do to them as you did to Yericho, but you may keep the spoils. Place an ambush behind the city."

Yehoshua did so and chose thirty-thousand warriors and sent them to be placed as an ambush behind the city. Yehoshua commanded as follows: "When you see us fleeing from the men of

Ai (as a ruse, since they will, of course, chase us), then you should rise from the ambush, enter and take the city.”

Yehoshua then began the battle and the men of the city went out against Israel, not knowing that an ambush was waiting behind the city. Then, according to plan, Yehoshua and his men retreated from the attack and were pursued by the inhabitants. The city was now virtually undefended since the men had gone out in pursuit of the men of Israel. The Israelite ambushers got up and attacked the undefended city of Ai from the rear. Seeing their city in smoke, the men of Ai now had no means of escape. Their king, Malosh, was hanged. In all, twelve thousand people of Ai fell.

### THE GIVEONITES

All the kings of the East of the Jordan River had heard about the destruction of Yericho and Ai by Israel and the inhabitants of this region gathered together to fight against them. But the inhabitants of Giveon were especially afraid so they acted with cunning. They came to Yehoshua and all Israel and said to them, “We have come from a distance in order to make a covenant with you. The covenant of peace was made and the princes of the assembly gave their oath.

Then Israel found out that these were really a neighboring people but they were not hurt since an oath had been made. These people were given jobs as hewers of wood and drawers of water. Then Yehoshua asked, “Why did you deceive us thus?” They replied, “It was told to us what you have done to the kings of the Amorites, so we feared for our lives and we did this thing.”

It was on that day, Yehoshua made the Giveonites hewers of wood and drawers of water and they were distributed among the tribes.

Now when Adoni-Tzedek, king of Jerusalem, heard what the B’nei Yisrael had done to Yericho and Ai, he sent to Hoham, king of Chevron, to Piram, king of Yarmus, to Yafia, king of Lachish, to Dvir, the king of Eglon saying, “Come and help us so that we may

defeat the B'nei Yisrael and the Giveonites who made this peace with Israel."

So the five kings of the Amorites came with their divisions — a very large gathering — as many as the sand on the seashore. They all came to fight against the men of Giveon. The Giveonites sent word to Yehoshua: "Come to us at once since the kings of the Amorites have gathered to attack us." Yehoshua with his army went to Gilgal and he attacked these kings suddenly and God delivered them into the hands of to the B'nei Yisrael. They pursued them by way of the ascent of Beis-Choron to Makedah and they fled before Israel.

Then God cast hailstones on them which killed more of them than had been killed by Israel. The B'nei Yisrael still pursued them but the day was waning and Yehoshua said, "Sun at Giveon stand still, and the moon in the Valley of Ayalon, until the people have taken revenge against its enemies." God heard Yehoshua and the sun stayed in the height of the sky for thirty-six hours. Such has never happened either before or after that God should so hear the prayer of man. God was fighting for Israel.

### YEHOSHUA'S SONG

Then Yehoshua sang this song when God delivered the Amorites into the hands of Israel. He spoke it in the presence of all Israel: "Many things you have done, oh God. You have performed wondrous things. Who is like You. My lips sing to Your Name. My mercy and my fortress placing me on high. I will sing a new song to You in thanks. You are the strength of my salvation. All the kings of the earth will praise You. The princes of the world will praise You. The B'nei Yisrael will sing of Your salvation and will sing and praise Your might."

"In You we trust, oh God. We said that You are our God, for You are a refuge and a tower of strength against our enemies. Unto You did we cry and we were not abashed. In You did we

trust and we were rescued. When we cried to You, You heard us and saved our soul from the sword.

“You have shown us Your mercies and given us Your salvation and made our hearts glad in Your might. You went forth to save us and redeemed with Your arm, Your own people. You answered us from Your holy heaven and rescued us from myriads of people.

“The sun and moon stood in their abode while Your anger stood against our adversaries, while You commanded Your judgments against them.

“All the princes of the earth stood. The kings of the nations were assembled and moved not from Your presence. They desired only Your battles.

“You arose against them in Your anger and brought down Your wrath and destroyed them by Your fierce anger and cut them off by Your fire. Nations were confounded before Your dread and kingdoms tottered on account of Your annoyance. You cut down kings on the day of Your wrath. You poured down upon them Your anger and Your fierce wrath did overtake them. You returned their own iniquity on them and destroyed them for their evil. They spread destruction. In it they, themselves, fell and their foot was trapped. Your hand reached Your enemies, they who said that they inherited the earth by their sword and by their own strength inhabited cities. You have filled their presence with shame and brought their power to the ground. You confounded them by Your wrath and destroyed them.

“From Your presence the earth trembled; It shook on account of Your thunder. You did not withhold them from death and their existence reached as far as the deep (Sheol). You pursued them with your whirlwind and put an end to them by Your strong storm. Their rains were turned into hail and they fell into traps and did not rise. Their bodies were cast astray; in the open places were they cast. They were ended and completed by You and You saved Your people by Your strength.



“Therefore will our heart rejoice and our soul be glad in Your help. Our tongue will tell of Your powers and will sing and praise Your wonders. For You have saved us from our enemies and rescued us from our foes. You have destroyed them from before us and thrust them beneath us. So shall all Your enemies perish and the wicked shall be cleared away as chaff by the wind. But those who love You will be planted like trees by the waters.”

Now Yehoshua and all Israel returned to the camp at Gilgal after they had defeated the kings so that not one of them was left. The five kings fled on foot from the battle and they hid in a cave. Yehoshua had searched for them during the battle but he did not find them. Later he was informed that they were hidden in the cave. Yehoshua appointed men to stand by this cave so that the kings could not escape. When Yehoshua had completed his defeat of the Amorites, he gave command that these kings be brought from this cave. He called the princes and told them to place their feet on the necks of the kings and they did so. The kings were killed and placed in the cave and a huge stone was placed at the entrance of the cave.

### CONQUEST OF THE LAND

Then Yehoshua and the people went from there to Makedah and defeated it. He prohibited all the spoils as he had done in the case of Yericho. From there he went to Livnah and attacked that place and did to it and its king as was done to Yericho. Then on he went to Lachish. When Horam, king of Gezev, came to help Lachish, they were defeated, and Lachish, as well as Livnah, fell. Then he went on to Eglon and to Chevron and conquered these places, too. He proceeded to Dvir and took that place too. So Yehoshua defeated all the kings of the Amorites from Kadeish Barnea to Azzah, all in one move. Then Yehoshua returned to the camp at Gilgal.

Now Yavin, king of Chatzor, who had heard about all this, sent messengers to Yorav, king of Madon, and to Lavan, king of Shimron, to Yifon, king of Achshof and to all remaining kings

saying, "Come at once and aid us so that we may defeat Israel before they destroy us as they have already done to the others." The kings read this message and they went forth with their armies — that is, seventeen kings with a huge assembly of armies and horses and chariots. They came to the waters of Meron to wage war against Israel.

Then God said to Yehoshua, "Do not fear them, for at this time tomorrow, I shall have delivered all of them into your hands. Their horses will be maimed and their chariots burned." So Yehoshua came upon them suddenly and defeated them totally so that the entire company of kings was absolutely defeated.

Then Yehoshua passed on to Chatzor and defeated it. From there he continued on to Shimron and to Achshof and to Adulam. After these victories he passed on to all the cities of these kings and they were all defeated. Thus, did he strike the land of the Canaanites and killed their thirty-one kings. This land was taken by Israel in addition to the lands of the kings, Sichon and Og, on the other side of the Jordan which had already been given by Moshe to Reuvein, Gad and half the tribe of Menasheh. For five years did this war rage before complete peace reigned for Israel.

At that time, five years after Israel had passed over the Jordan, there was a great war between Edom and the children of Kittim. Kittim having declared war against Edom. It happened that King Avianus of Kittim in the thirty-first year of his reign went with a powerful army to the land of Seir to wage war against the children of Eisav. Hadad was the king of Edom and he went to fight with a large army in the territory of Edom.

The people of Kittim prevailed against the army of Eisav and Kittim killed twenty-two thousand so that all Eisav fled. They captured Hadad, the king of Edom alive, and brought him to Avianus of Kittim. Avianus gave an order to kill Hadad, who died in the forty-eighth year of his reign. Edom was now subdued by Kittim.

From that time onward, the people of Edom were ruled by Kittim and they became one kingdom. The Edomites never again

raised their hand against Kittim. King Avianus then placed vice-roys to represent him in Edom and returned to his own land. He built a large palace and reigned securely over Kittim and Edom.

In those days Israel had dispossessed the Canaanites and Amorites. Yehoshua was now old. God said to him, "You are now advanced in years and there is still much of the land left to conquer. Divide the land now as an inheritance to the nine tribes and to half the tribe of Menasheh.

Yehoshua immediately did what he had been commanded to do. He apportioned the land accordingly, but to the tribe of Levi no portion was allotted since the offerings to God were their share. Yehoshua gave Mount Chevron to Kalev, son of Yefuneh and to his sons to this day as an extra portion over his brothers as God had commanded. Yehoshua apportioned the land by ballot to all Israel. The B'nei Yisrael gave cities to the tribe of Levi to dwell in, as well as suburbs of these cities for their cattle and possessions.

### **DIVIDING THE LAND**

The land was divided among them proportionally, to large and small numbers, as God had commanded Moshe. The B'nei Yisrael also gave a settlement to Yehoshua bin Nun according to the word of God. This settlement was Timnas Serach in the region of Mount Ephraim. He built up this city and resided in it.

The allotted portions were apportioned by Eliezer, the Kohein, and by Yehoshua bin Nun, together with the heads of the tribes. These were so given by a lot at Shiloh before God at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. They now ended this task of division so that at last the whole promised territory was given to the B'nei Yisrael as God had spoken and as he had pledged to their fathers. Now He gave them rest from all their enemies so that now no man was able to wage war against them. None of the good things promised to them was now lacking.

Yehoshua called all the B'nei Yisrael together and he blessed them and ordered them to serve God. He sent them each to his

city and each to his piece of land. They served God all the days of Yehoshua and now they were given peace and were able to live in their cities securely.

At this time, Avianos, king of Kittim died in the thirty-eighth year of his reign which was the seventh year of his having reigned over Edom. They buried him in his own palace which he had built for himself. After him Latinos reigned for fifty years. When Latinos became king, he took an army and fought against the inhabitants of Britannia and Kamania who were the children of Elisha, the son of Yavan. He conquered these and they paid him tribute. Then he heard that Edom had rebelled against Kittim and Latinos had fought against them and subdued them. For a long time, Edom had no king because they were under the rule of Kittim.

### **YEHOSHUA RENEWS THE COVENANT**

Yehoshua, now being old, summoned the elders, judges and officers of Israel after peace and tranquility was established among them after the wars. He addressed them as follows: "Behold I am now old and you have seen what God has done to all the nations which He has driven out before you. You see that He fights for you. So now be strong and observe the Torah of Moshe so as not to turn away from it, neither to the right nor to the left. Do not intermarry with these peoples and make no mention of their gods, but cleave only to your God as you have done to this day." Yehoshua urged the people strongly to serve God.

All Israel replied, "Indeed, we shall always serve God all our days; we, our children and all our descendants for all time." So Yehoshua made this covenant with the people on that day and he sent them, each one to his particular parcel of land and to his city. They buried the remains of the patriarchs of each tribe that they had brought up from Egypt; each one in the land of their respective descendants. Thus were the remains of the twelve sons of Yaakov placed in the territory of their children.

These are the names of the cities in which the twelve sons of Yaakov were laid to rest. Reuvein and Gad were buried in Romia on the east side of the Jordan River. Shimon and Levi were buried in Magda that belonged to the tribe of Shimon but a suburb of that place had been given to the tribe of Levi. Yehudah was laid to rest in Bavia near Beis Lechem. Yisachar and Zevulun were buried in Tzidon in the portion given to their descendants. Dan was placed in Eshto'al and the bones of Asher were placed in Kedeish-Naftali. Each one in the land given to his children. The remains of Yoseif were put in Shechem — in the very place bought by Yaakov from Chamor. Binyamin was placed in Jerusalem near the Yevusite territory.

### DEATH OF YEHOSHUA

Two years after this assembly, Yehoshua bin Nun died at the age of one hundred and ten. He had judged Israel for twenty-eight years and the people of Israel served God all the days of his life. The remaining acts of Yehoshua and the history of the battles which he fought against the Canaanites and how he instructed Israel are all recorded in the Book of Yehoshua given to Israel and in "The Book of the Battles of Hashem." These contain the names of the cities which the B'nei Yisrael inherited. Israel then buried Yehoshua in his own territory in Timnas Serach, near Mount Ephraim in Givas Pinchas ben Elazar.

After Yehoshua died the B'nei Yisrael wished to drive out some of the Canaanites who were still in the land. They asked of God, "Who will start the battle for us against the Canaanites?" God said, "Yehudah will advance." So the tribe of Yehudah said to the tribe of Shimon, "Come up with us in our territory and we shall, likewise, go with you in your territory to fight against the Canaanites." So the sons of Shimon went with the sons of Yehudah. Both fought the remaining Canaanites who were still found in both tribes' land.

They went and fought against the Canaanites and God delivered these into their hands and they defeated them in Bezek to the

number of ten thousand. They defeated and caught Adoni-Bezek, the chieftain in Bezek, and they cut off his thumbs and the big toes of his feet. He said, "There were seventy kings who used to gather food from beneath my table who were thus mutilated by me. As I did, so has God done to me." Then he died.

Then the sons of Shimon went with the sons of Yehudah and they defeated the Canaanites and God was with Yehudah and they drove out the inhabitants of the mountain.

The children of Yoseif went up to Beis-Eil in Luz and God was with them. They spied out this city and the watchmen saw a man going out of the city. They said to him, "Show us the entrance to this city and we shall show you kindness." This man showed them the entrance and the children of Yoseif defeated the city by sword. This man and his family were allowed to go to the land of the Chittites where he, in turn, built a city which he named Luz (after his own native city).

## CONCLUSION

Now Israel dwelt in their cities and they served God all the days of Yehoshua and during the time of the Elders who survived Yehoshua and who had witnessed the great deeds which God had done for Israel. These Elders judged Israel for seventeen years after the death of Yehoshua and they also fought against the Canaanites who were driven out by God. Israel was now settled in the land of the Canaanites.

God had fulfilled the promise which He had made with Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. He had kept the oath in which He had sworn to give them and their children the Land of Canaan. This good land was given to the B'nei Yisrael and God gave Israel rest, at last, from all enemies around them so that the B'nei Yisrael lived securely in all the cities of the land.