

עץ חיים

ETZ HAYIM

TORAH AND COMMENTARY

THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY
THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM



Produced by THE JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY

Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary
Copyright © 2001 by the Rabbinical Assembly

Copyright © 2001 by The Rabbinical Assembly

Hebrew text, based on Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia,

© 1999 by The Jewish Publication Society

English translation © 1985, 1999 by The Jewish Publication Society

First edition. All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, except for brief passages in connection with a critical review, without permission in writing from:

The Rabbinical Assembly

3080 Broadway

New York, NY 10027

Blessings for the Torah and haftiarot have been adapted from

Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals, © 2000 by The Rabbinical Assembly.

Maps © by Oxford University Press, supplied by Oxford Cartographers. Used by permission of Oxford University Press.

Illustrations of the tabernacle and its furnishings by Joe Sikora.

Composition by VARDA Graphics, Skokie, Illinois

Design by Adrienne Onderdonk Dudden

Manufactured in the United States of America

09 10 10 9 8

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Bible. O.T. Pentateuch. Hebrew. 2001.

Etz Hayim: Torah and commentary / senior editor, David L. Lieber; literary editor, Jules Harlow; sponsored by the Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

p. cm.

Text of the Pentateuch in Hebrew and English; commentary in English.

Includes the haftiarot and commentary on them, p'shat and d'rash commentaries, comments on Conservative halakhic practice, topical essays, and other material.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-10: 0-8276-0712-1 ISBN-13: 978-0-8276-0712-5

1. Bible. O.T. Pentateuch—Commentaries. 2. Haftiarot—Commentaries. 3. Bible. O.T. Pentateuch—Theology. 4. Conservative Judaism—Customs and practices. I. Lieber, David L. II. Harlow, Jules. III. United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. IV. Rabbinical Assembly. V. Bible. O.T. Pentateuch. English. Jewish Publication Society. 2001. VI. Title.

BS1222 .L54 2001

222'.1077—dc21

2001029757

¹⁰The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
¹¹“Phinehas, son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the Israelites by displaying among them his passion for Me, so that I did not wipe out the Israelite people in My passion. ¹²Say, therefore, ‘I grant

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ¹¹פִּינְחָס
 בֶּן־אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן הִשִּׁיב אֶת־
 חַמְתִּי מֵעַל בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִנְאוֹ אֶת־
 קִנְאַתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם וְלֹא־כִלִּיתִי אֶת־בְּנֵי־
 יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִנְאַתִּי: ¹²לֵכֵן אָמַר הַנְּבִי נַתַּן

IDOLATRY AND EXPIATION AT BAAL-PEOR (continued)

THE PACT WITH PHINEHAS (25:10–18)

11. passion Hebrew: *kin-ab*, a feature of God (*el kanna*; Exod. 20:5) that is shared by zealous advocates like Phinehas and Elijah (1 Kings 19:14). The passion displayed by Phinehas

matched God's in that he alone obeyed God's command to kill the leaders (25:4).

wipe out the Israelite people Once released, God's anger destroys everything in its path without making moral distinctions.

12. Say Tell the people in the form of an oath.

25:11. Phinehas killed an Israelite man and Moabite woman because their flagrant immorality profaned God's name. The Torah seems to approve of Phinehas's extreme act; some modern as well as ancient commentators follow suit. Thus Hirsch, for example: “Anyone who wages war on the enemies of what is good and true is a champion of the Covenant of Peace on earth even while engaged in war.” The Ḥatam Sofer praises Phinehas for showing the same zeal and energy to do right that the sinning Israelites displayed in doing wrong.

Some postbiblical commentators, however, have been uncomfortable with the zealous vigilantism of Phinehas, criticizing his fanaticism as a dangerous precedent. The Talmud claims that, had Phinehas asked the rabbinical court if it was permitted to kill Zimri and Cozbi, citing *halakhah* to justify his request, the court would have told him: “The law may permit it but we do not follow that law!” (BT Sanh. 82a). Moses of Coucy notes that although the previous *parashah* ends with Phinehas's deed and the death of 24,000 Israelites (it is unusual for a *parashah* to end on such a negative note), Phinehas's reward is not proclaimed until the beginning of this *parashah*. This teaches us to never rush to reward extremism. We are to wait until later events clarify whether the zealot's intention was indeed pure.

In the text of the Torah scroll, the letter *yod* in Phinehas's name in the second verse (v. 11) is written smaller than the other letters. When we commit violence, even if justifiable, the *yod* in us (standing for the name of God and for

y'hudi, “Jew”) is diminished thereby. In verse 12, the letter *vav* in *shalom* in the Torah scroll is written with a break in its stem. This is interpreted homiletically to suggest that the sort of peace one achieves by destroying one's opponent will inevitably be a flawed, incomplete peace.

Other commentators understand God's granting the priesthood to Phinehas and his descendants, not as a reward for his extremism but as an antidote for it. “He will have to cure himself of his violent temper if he is to function as a *kohen*” (*K'tav Sofer*). This will protect Phinehas from the destructive impulse within him. Perhaps serving as a *kohen* will give him ways of atoning for having taken two lives. A person is never the same after he has shed blood, no matter how justifiable the cause.

One commentator who sees Phinehas in as favorable a light as the Torah seems to, deems his replacing Aaron as part of a generational shift in leadership. Just as the stern and demanding Moses was balanced by Aaron, who avoided quarrels and confrontations, the more moderate Joshua will be balanced by the fervor of Phinehas as high priest.

The tradition generally considers moral threats to be more dangerous for national survival than physical threats. Although the Egyptians and the Edomites threatened Israel's physical existence, we are commanded not to hate them. We are told to wipe out the Midianites, however, for they tried to undermine Israel's moral standing.

him My pact of friendship. ¹³It shall be for him and his descendants after him a pact of priesthood for all time, because he took impassioned action for his God, thus making expiation for the Israelites.”

¹⁴The name of the Israelite who was killed, the one who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri son of Salu, chieftain of a Simeonite ancestral house. ¹⁵The name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi daughter of Zur; he was the tribal head of an ancestral house in Midian.

¹⁶The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁷“Assail the Midianites and defeat them—¹⁸for they assailed you by the trickery they practiced against you—because of the affair of Peor and because of the affair of their kinswoman Cozbi, daughter of the Midianite chieftain, who was killed at the time of the plague on account of Peor.”

My pact of friendship God’s covenant meant that Phinehas received divine protection against the revenge that would be sought by Zimri’s clan.

13. a pact of priesthood for all time Phinehas is awarded the high priesthood for suppressing apostasy, just as the Levites were awarded the priesthood (Exod. 32:29). God promises that his line, later called the Zadokites (see Ezek. 44:15–16), will be the exclusive officiants in the Temple (see 1 Chron. 5:30–34).

making expiation By means of his passion, Phinehas assuaged God’s wrath.

14–15. A postscript stating the names and pedigrees of the culprits.

ancestral house That is, a household, the basic unit of the clan.

17. Why are the Midianites assailed, because it was Moabite women who seduced the Israelites?

לו את־בְּרִיתִי שְׁלוֹם: ¹³וְהִיְתָה לוֹ וּלְזַרְעוֹ
אֲחֵרָיו בְּרִית כְּהֵנָת עוֹלָם תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר
קָנָא לְאֱלֹהָיו וַיִּכְפֹּר עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
¹⁴וְשֵׁם אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל הַמָּכָה אֲשֶׁר הִכָּה
אֶת־הַמִּדְיָנִית זִמְרִי בֶן־סָלוּא נְשִׂיא בֵּית־
אָב לְשִׁמְעוֹנִי: ¹⁵וְשֵׁם הָאִשָּׁה הַמָּכָה
הַמִּדְיָנִית כּוֹזְבִי בַת־צוּר רֹאשׁ אֲמוֹת בֵּית־
אָב בְּמִדְיָן הוּא: פ
¹⁶וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ¹⁷צַרּוּר
אֶת־הַמִּדְיָנִים וְהַכִּיתֶם אוֹתָם: ¹⁸כִּי
צָרְרִים הֵם לָכֶם בְּנֹכְלֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר־נָפְלוּ
לָכֶם עַל־דְּבַר־פְּעוֹר וְעַל־דְּבַר כּוֹזְבִי בַת־
נְשִׂיא מִדְיָן אַחֲתָם הַמָּכָה בְּיוֹם־הַמַּגֵּפָה
עַל־דְּבַר־פְּעוֹר:

This may simply reflect different sources or traditions. Alternatively, this episode may reflect the period when Moab was part of a Midianite confederation that embraced all of Transjordan as its protectorate (see Josh. 13:21). When Israel conquered Sihon’s territory, it severed the king’s highway (Num. 21:22) and thereby threatened the Midianites’ hold on the vital spice trade. Thus Midian, Israel’s erstwhile ally (10:29–32), now became its implacable foe.

18. Both Israel’s apostasy at Baal-peor and the act of Zimri are attributed to the scheming of the Midianites.

for they assailed you Alternatively, “they are hostile,” indicating both past and continuing hostility.

their kinswoman Thus the Midianites now felt obligated to avenge her death.

18. for they assailed you At first, the nations of the world resented and hated the Israelites because their ways of worship were different from those of the nations and at a higher moral level. Even when the people Israel tried to imitate gentile practices, though, their enemies continued to resent them. According to the Talmud (BT Sanh. 106a), Balaam was im-

pressed by Israel’s moral purity and realized that the only way to defeat them would be to compromise their moral excellence. It was his idea to lure the Israelites into participating in the orgiastic Midianite cult (Num. 31:16). The Midianites were so desperate to defeat Israel that they encouraged their daughters to engage in sexual orgies to lead the Israelites astray.

26¹⁹When the plague was over, ¹the LORD said to Moses and to Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, ²“Take a census of the whole Israelite community from the age of twenty years up, by their ancestral houses, all Israelites able to bear arms.” ³So Moses and Eleazar the priest, on the steppes of Moab, at the Jordan near Jericho, gave instructions about them, namely, ⁴those from twenty years up, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The descendants of the Israelites who came out of the land of Egypt were:

⁵Reuben, Israel’s first-born. Descendants of Reuben: [Of] Enoch, the clan of the Enochites;

כו¹⁹ וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַמַּגֵּפָה * פ
¹ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן־
 אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן לֵאמֹר: ² שְׂאוּ אֶת־רֹאשׁ |
 כָּל־עַדְת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה
 וּמַעְלָה לְבֵית אָבֹתָם כָּל־יֹצֵא צִבָּא
 בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: ³ וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה וְאֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן
 אֹתָם בְּעַרְבַת מוֹאָב עַל־יַרְדֵּן יְרֵחוֹ
 לֵאמֹר: ⁴ מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה כָּאֲשֶׁר
 צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה
 וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵי־צֵאִים מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:
⁵ רְאוּבֵן בְּכוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן הַנּוֹף
 מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֲנֹכִי לְפִלֹא מִשְׁפַּחַת

v. 19. פִּיטְקָא בַּאֲמַצַּע פְּטוּק, וְלֹא נֹחֵשֶׁב פְּטוּק נִפְרַד בְּסִבּוּם הַפְּטוּקִים

The Generation of the Conquest (25:19–36:13)

The central theme of the final 11 chapters of the Book of Numbers is the occupation of the Promised Land. In sharp contrast to the faithlessness of the Exodus generation, the following generation is loyal to God and courageous; it is successful in battle and deemed worthy to conquer the Land.

19. The Torah text breaks off in mid-verse at this point. Originally what followed may have been the account of the war against Midian (chapter 31), initiated by God as reported in 25:16–18. Because war requires conscription, the account of the census (chapter 26) was interposed.

THE SECOND CENSUS (26:1–65)

All able-bodied men above the age of 20 are registered for the ultimate purposes of dividing the Land among the tribes and providing a militia for the forthcoming war against Midian.

given to Moses and Aaron. After Aaron’s death, his successor, Eleazar, takes his place. This is the only time God speaks to Eleazar directly.

DIRECTIONS FOR TAKING A CENSUS (vv. 1–4)

RESULTS OF THE CENSUS (vv. 5–51)

1. God’s command for the first census was

This section enumerates the clans, the number of able-bodied men in each tribe, and their total sum.

CHAPTER 26

This chapter, like chapter 1, contains a census, suggesting that all of the chapters they enclose deal with one extended period of time, during which the generation that left Egypt treks through the desert and ultimately dies there. Although the ostensible purpose of this census was to learn about the relative land requirements of each clan and tribe, the commentators refuse to leave it at that. They en-

vision God counting the Israelites after the plague of Baal-peor as an act of love, “like a shepherd numbering his flock after wolves have attacked it” (Rashi). Hirsch suggests that, after the embarrassment of Baal-peor, the chastened Israelites were led to regain a sense of self-worth by reflecting on who their ancestors were. (Or is God scolding them after Baal-peor by asking them, “What would your parents and grandparents say about what you just did?”)

of Pallu, the clan of the Palluites; ⁶of Hezron, the clan of the Hezronites; of Carmi, the clan of the Carmites. ⁷Those are the clans of the Reubenites. The persons enrolled came to 43,730.

⁸Born to Pallu: Eliab. ⁹The sons of Eliab were Nemuel, and Dathan and Abiram. These are the same Dathan and Abiram, chosen in the assembly, who agitated against Moses and Aaron as part of Korah's band when they agitated against the LORD. ¹⁰Whereupon the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up with Korah—when that band died, when the fire consumed the two hundred and fifty men—and they became an example. ¹¹The sons of Korah, however, did not die.

¹²Descendants of Simeon by their clans: Of Nemuel, the clan of the Nemuelites; of Jamin, the clan of the Jaminites; of Jachin, the clan of the Jachinites; ¹³of Zerah, the clan of the Zerahites; of Saul, the clan of the Saulites. ¹⁴Those are the clans of the Simeonites; [persons enrolled:] 22,200.

¹⁵Descendants of Gad by their clans: Of Zephon, the clan of the Zephonites; of Haggi, the clan of the Haggites; of Shuni, the clan of the Shunites; ¹⁶of Ozni, the clan of the Oznites; of Eri, the clan of the Erites; ¹⁷of Arod, the clan of the Arodites; of Areli, the clan of the Arelites.

הַפְּלֹאִי: ⁶ לְחֶצְרֹן מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֶצְרוֹנִי
לְכַרְמֵי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַכַּרְמִי: ⁷ אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת
הָרְאוּבֵנִי וַיְהִיו פְּקֻדֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה
וְאַרְבָּעִים אֶלֶף וּשְׁבַע מֵאוֹת וּשְׁלֹשִׁים:

⁸ וּבְנֵי פְלוֹא אֱלִיאָב: ⁹ וּבְנֵי אֱלִיאָב נְמוּאֵל
וְדָתָן וְאַבִּירָם הוּא־דָתָן וְאַבִּירָם קְרוּאֵי
קְרִיאֵי הָעֵדָה אֲשֶׁר הֵצִו עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־
אַהֲרֹן בְּעֵדַת־קָרַח בְּהִצְתָּם עַל־יְהוָה:
¹⁰ וַתִּפְתַּח הָאָרֶץ אֶת־פִּיהָ וַתִּבְלַע אֹתָם
וְאֶת־קָרַח בְּמוֹת הָעֵדָה בְּאֹכַל הָאֵשׁ אֶת
חַמְשִׁים וּמֵאוֹתָיִם אִישׁ וַיְהִיו לְגֵס:
¹¹ וּבְנֵי־קָרַח לֹא־מָתוּ: ט

¹² בְּנֵי שִׁמְעוֹן לְמִשְׁפַּחֹתָם לְנְמוּאֵל
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַנְּמוּאֵלִי לְיָמִין מִשְׁפַּחַת הַיָּמִינִי
לְיָכִין מִשְׁפַּחַת הַיָּכִינִי: ¹³ לְזָרַח מִשְׁפַּחַת
הַזָּרַחִי לְשָׂאוּל מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשָּׂאוּלִי: ¹⁴ אֵלֶּה
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשִּׁמְעוֹנִי שְׁנַיִם וְעֶשְׂרִים אֶלֶף
וּמֵאוֹתָיִם: ט

¹⁵ בְּנֵי גָד לְמִשְׁפַּחֹתָם לְצִפּוֹן מִשְׁפַּחַת
הַצִּפּוֹנִי לְחַגִּי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחַגִּי לְשׁוּנֵי
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשׁוּנִי: ¹⁶ לְאֹזְנֵי מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאֹזְנִי
לְעֵרֵי מִשְׁפַּחַת הָעֵרִי: ¹⁷ לְאֲרוֹד מִשְׁפַּחַת
הָאֲרוֹדִי לְאַרְאֵלִי מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאַרְאֵלִי:

11. The Korahite clan survived to become an important levitical clan of Temple singers (see, e.g., the opening verses of Pss. 44–49). They also

served as temple guards at the most prestigious location—the entrance.

⁹. Apparently the rebels Dathan and Abiram had an older brother, Nemuel, who did not join them in their nefarious activities. Coming from the same environment, he resisted taking the path they chose.

11. The sons of Korah . . . did not die Some say that they carried on their father's quarrelsome ways, so that in every generation there are some people who seek to cause divisiveness in the community. Others disagree, saying that they learned their lesson and repented, and

later composed and sang half a dozen psalms. These include Psalm 47, recited before the sounding of the *shofar* on *Rosh ha-Shanah*, and Ps. 49, read in a house of mourning. This demonstrates that repentance is possible, that people can change their ways as they confront mortality, a lesson the descendants of Korah may well have learned from their ancestor's fate. Like Nemuel (v. 9), they represent the capacity of people to rise above the circumstances of their birth and upbringing.

¹⁸Those are the clans of Gad's descendants; persons enrolled: 40,500.

¹⁹Born to Judah: Er and Onan. Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan.

²⁰Descendants of Judah by their clans: Of Shelah, the clan of the Shelanites; of Perez, the clan of the Perezites; of Zerah, the clan of the Zerahites. ²¹Descendants of Perez: of Hezron, the clan of the Hezronites; of Hamul, the clan of the Hamulites. ²²Those are the clans of Judah; persons enrolled: 76,500.

²³Descendants of Issachar by their clans: [Of] Tola, the clan of the Tolaites; of Puvah, the clan of the Punites; ²⁴of Jashub, the clan of the Jashubites; of Shimron, the clan of the Shimronites. ²⁵Those are the clans of Issachar; persons enrolled: 64,300.

²⁶Descendants of Zebulun by their clans: Of Sered, the clan of the Seredites; of Elon, the clan of the Elonites; of Jahleel, the clan of the Jahleelites. ²⁷Those are the clans of the Zebulunites; persons enrolled: 60,500.

²⁸The sons of Joseph were Manasseh and Ephraim—by their clans.

²⁹Descendants of Manasseh: Of Machir, the clan of the Machirites.—Machir begot Gilead.—Of Gilead, the clan of the Gileadites.

³⁰These were the descendants of Gilead: [Of] Iezer, the clan of the Iezerites; of Helek, the clan of the Helekites; ³¹[of] Asriel, the clan of the Asrielites; [of] Shechem, the clan of the Shechemites; ³²[of] Shemida, the clan of the Shemidaites; [of] Hephher, the clan of the Hephherites.—³³Now Zelophehad son of Hephher had no sons, only daughters. The names of Zelophehad's daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.—³⁴Those are the clans of Manasseh; persons enrolled: 52,700.

18 אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפְּחֹת בְּנֵי־גַד לַפְּקָדִיָּהֶם
אַרְבַּעִים אֶלֶף וַחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת: ט
19 בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה עֵר וְאוֹנָן וַיָּמָת עֵר וְאוֹנָן
בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן:

20 וַיְהִיו בְּנֵי־יְהוּדָה לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם לְשֵׁלָה
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשְּׁלֹנִי לְפָרֶץ מִשְׁפַּחַת הַפְּרָצִי
לְזֶרַח מִשְׁפַּחַת הַזְּרַחִי: 21 וַיְהִיו בְּנֵי־
פָּרֶץ לְחֶצְרֹן מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֶצְרָנִי לְחַמּוּל
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחַמּוּלִי: 22 אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפְּחֹת
יְהוּדָה לַפְּקָדִיָּהֶם שֵׁשָׁה וְשִׁבְעִים אֶלֶף
וַחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת: ט

23 בְּנֵי יִשָּׂשכָר לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם תּוֹלַע
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַתּוֹלְעִי לְפֹהָ מִשְׁפַּחַת הַפּוֹנִי:
24 לְיִשׁוּב מִשְׁפַּחַת הַיִּשְׁבִּי לְשִׁמְרֹן
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשְּׁמֹרְנִי: 25 אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפְּחֹת
יִשָּׂשכָר לַפְּקָדִיָּהֶם אַרְבָּעָה וְשִׁשִּׁים אֶלֶף
וּשְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת: ט

26 בְּנֵי זְבוּלֹן לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם לְסֶרֶד מִשְׁפַּחַת
הַסְּרָדִי לְאֵלֹן מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאֵלְנִי לְיַחֲלָאֵל
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַיַּחֲלָאֵלִי: 27 אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפְּחֹת
הַזְּבוּלֹנִי לַפְּקָדִיָּהֶם שֵׁשִׁים אֶלֶף וַחֲמֵשׁ
מֵאוֹת: ט

28 בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם מְנַשֶּׁה וְאַפְרַיִם:
29 בְּנֵי מְנַשֶּׁה לְמַכִּיר מִשְׁפַּחַת הַמַּכִּירִי
וּמַכִּיר הוֹלִיד אֶת־גִּלְעָד לְגִלְעָד מִשְׁפַּחַת
הַגִּלְעָדִי: 30 אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי גִלְעָד אֵיעֶזֶר
מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאֵיעֶזְרִי לְחֶלֶק מִשְׁפַּחַת
הַחֶלְקִי: 31 וְאַשְׁרַיָּאל מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאֲשֵׁרָאֵלִי
וְשָׁכֶם מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשְּׁכָמִי: 32 וְשִׁמְיָדָע
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשְּׁמִידְעִי וְהֶפְרֵר מִשְׁפַּחַת
הַחֶפְרִי: 33 וְצִלְפְּחָד בֶּן־חֶפְרֵר לֹא־הָיוּ לוֹ
בָּנִים כִּי אִם־בָּנוֹת וְשֵׁם בָּנוֹת צִלְפְּחָד
מַחֲלָה וְנַעֲמָה חַגְלָה מְלָכָה וְתִרְצָה:
34 אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפְּחֹת מְנַשֶּׁה וּפְקָדִיָּהֶם שְׁנַיִם
וַחֲמֵשִׁים אֶלֶף וְשִׁבְעַת מֵאוֹת: ט

³⁵These are the descendants of Ephraim by their clans: Of Shuthelah, the clan of the Shuthelahites; of Becher, the clan of the Becherites; of Tahan, the clan of the Tahanites. ³⁶These are the descendants of Shuthelah: Of Eran, the clan of the Eranites. ³⁷Those are the clans of Ephraim's descendants; persons enrolled: 32,500.

Those are the descendants of Joseph by their clans.

³⁸The descendants of Benjamin by their clans: Of Bela, the clan of the Belaites; of Ashbel, the clan of the Ashbelites; of Ahiram, the clan of the Ahiramites; ³⁹of Shephupham, the clan of the Shuphamites; of Hupham, the clan of the Huphamites. ⁴⁰The sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: [Of Ard,] the clan of the Ardites; of Naaman, the clan of the Naamanites. ⁴¹Those are the descendants of Benjamin by their clans; persons enrolled: 45,600.

⁴²These are the descendants of Dan by their clans: Of Shuham, the clan of the Shuhamites. Those are the clans of Dan, by their clans. ⁴³All the clans of the Shuhamites; persons enrolled: 64,400.

⁴⁴Descendants of Asher by their clans: Of Imnah, the clan of the Imnites; of Ishvi, the clan of the Ishvites; of Beriah, the clan of the Berites. ⁴⁵Of the descendants of Beriah: Of Heber, the clan of the Heberites; of Malchiel, the clan of the Malchielites.—⁴⁶The name of Asher's daughter was Serah.—⁴⁷These are the clans of Asher's descendants; persons enrolled: 53,400.

⁴⁸Descendants of Naphtali by their clans: Of Jahzeel, the clan of the Jahzeelites; of Guni, the clan of the Gunites; ⁴⁹of Jezer, the clan of the Jezerites; of Shillem, the clan of the Shillemites.

35 אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי-אֶפְרַיִם לְמִשְׁפַּחֲתָם לְשׁוֹתְלַח מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשְּׁתֻלְחִי לְבֶכֶר מִשְׁפַּחַת הַבְּכָרִי לְתַחַן מִשְׁפַּחַת הַתַּחְנִי: 36 וְאֵלֶּה בְּנֵי שׁוֹתְלַח לְעֵרָן מִשְׁפַּחַת הָעֵרָנִי: 37 אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת בְּנֵי-אֶפְרַיִם לְפִקְדֵיהֶם שָׁנִים וְשִׁלְשִׁים אֶלֶף וַחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי-יוֹסֵף לְמִשְׁפַּחֲתָם: ס

38 בְּנֵי בְנִימִן לְמִשְׁפַּחֲתָם לְבֵלָע מִשְׁפַּחַת הַבְּלַעִי לְאַשְׁבֵּל מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאַשְׁבֵּלִי לְאַחִירָם מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאַחִירָמִי: 39 לְשֹׁפָם מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשׁוֹפָמִי לְחוּפָם מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחוּפָמִי: 40 וַיְהִי בְּנֵי-בֵלָע אַרְדֹּ וְנַעֲמָן מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאַרְדִּי לְנַעֲמָן מִשְׁפַּחַת הַנַּעֲמִי: 41 אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי-בְנִימִן לְמִשְׁפַּחֲתָם וּפִקְדֵיהֶם חֲמִשָּׁה וָאַרְבַּעִים אֶלֶף וְשֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת: ס 42 אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי-דָן לְמִשְׁפַּחֲתָם לְשׁוּחָם מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשׁוּחָמִי אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת דָּן לְמִשְׁפַּחֲתָם: 43 כָּל-מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשׁוּחָמִי לְפִקְדֵיהֶם אַרְבַּעַה וְשִׁשִּׁים אֶלֶף וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת: ס

44 בְּנֵי אָשֶׁר לְמִשְׁפַּחֲתָם לְיִמְנָה מִשְׁפַּחַת הַיִּמְנָה לְיִשְׁוִי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַיִּשְׁוִי לְבְרִיעָה מִשְׁפַּחַת הַבְּרִיעִי: 45 לְבְנֵי בְרִיעָה לְחָבֵר מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֶבְרִי לְמַלְכִיָּאל מִשְׁפַּחַת הַמַּלְכִיָּאִלִי: 46 וְשֵׁם בֵּת-אָשֶׁר שֶׁרָח: 47 אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת בְּנֵי-אָשֶׁר לְפִקְדֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה וַחֲמִשִּׁים אֶלֶף וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת: ס

48 בְּנֵי נַפְתָּלִי לְמִשְׁפַּחֲתָם לְיַחְצִיָּאל מִשְׁפַּחַת הַיַּחְצִיָּאִלִי לְגֹנִי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַגֹּנִי: 49 לְיֵצֶר מִשְׁפַּחַת הַיַּצְרִי לְשִׁלֵּם מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשְּׁלֵמִי: 50 אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת נַפְתָּלִי

46. Asher's daughter was Serah She is the only female in the genealogical lists; see also Gen. 46:17 and 1 Chron. 7:30. There is a tradition that her father died without sons. That places her in

the same category as the daughters of Zelophehad (see 27:1–7) and might explain why she is mentioned here. Otherwise, her presence remains a mystery.

⁵⁰Those are the clans of the Naphtalites, clan by clan; persons enrolled: 45,400.

⁵¹This is the enrollment of the Israelites: 601,730.

⁵²The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ⁵³“Among these shall the land be apportioned as shares, according to the listed names: ⁵⁴with larger groups increase the share, with smaller groups reduce the share. Each is to be assigned its share according to its enrollment. ⁵⁵The land, moreover, is to be apportioned by lot; and the allotment shall be made according to the listings of their ancestral tribes. ⁵⁶Each portion shall be assigned by lot, whether for larger or smaller groups.”

⁵⁷This is the enrollment of the Levites by their clans: Of Gershon, the clan of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the clan of the Kohathites; of Merari, the clan of the Merarites. ⁵⁸These are the clans of Levi: The clan of the Libnites, the clan of the Hebronites, the clan of the Mahlites, the clan of the Mushites, the clan of the Korahites.—

HOW TO APPORTION THE LAND
(vv. 52–56)

The procedure seems to involve two irreconcilable methods: by lot and by the size of each tribe. In fact, the location of tribal territory is determined by lot, but that territory’s size is a function of the tribe’s census count. These prescriptions will apply only to the 9½ that settle in Cisjordan, the western side of the Jordan (34:13–15). The 2½ Transjordanian tribes arrange to have their territory (already conquered) awarded to them by Moses (32:33).

53. Land was allotted only to those whose names were entered in this second census—not those who were counted in the first census and who died in the wilderness.

54. larger groups Refers to the more populous tribes, as indicated by the tribal totals in this second census.

Each . . . its . . . its Alternatively, “Each person . . . his . . . his”; that is, each person receives his allotment within his clan, not elsewhere.

55. The assignment of property by lot was also practiced elsewhere in the ancient Near East during the 2nd millennium B.C.E.

according to the listings Literally, “accord-

לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם חֲמֵשֶׁה וְאַרְבַּעִים
אֶלֶף וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת:

⁵¹ אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁשֵׁי־מֵאוֹת
אֶלֶף וְאַלְף שְׁבַע מֵאוֹת וּשְׁלֹשִׁים: פ

⁵² וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ⁵³ לְאֵלֶּה
תַּחֲלַק הָאָרֶץ בְּנַחֲלָה בְּמִסְפַּר שְׁמוֹת:

⁵⁴ לְרֹב תְּרֻבָּהּ נַחֲלָתוֹ וְלִמְעַט תִּמְעִיט
נַחֲלָתוֹ אִישׁ לְפִי פְּקוּדָיו יִתֵּן נַחֲלָתוֹ:

⁵⁵ אַךְ־בְּגוּרָל יַחֲלַק אֶת־הָאָרֶץ לְשְׁמוֹת
מִטּוֹת־אֲבֹתָם יִנְחֲלוּ: ⁵⁶ עַל־פִּי הַגּוּרָל

תַּחֲלַק נַחֲלָתוֹ בֵּין רַב לְמְעַט: ס

⁵⁷ וְאֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי הַלְוִי לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְגִרְשׁוֹן
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַגִּרְשֹׁנִי לַקֹּהַת מִשְׁפַּחַת

הַקֹּהֲתִי לְמֵרָרִי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַמֵּרָרִי: ⁵⁸ אֵלֶּה |
מִשְׁפַּחַת לְוִי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַלִּבְנִי מִשְׁפַּחַת

הַחֲבֵרֹנִי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַמַּחֲלִי מִשְׁפַּחַת
הַמּוֹשִׁי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַקָּרְחִי וּקֹהַת הַוָּלָד

ing to the names.” Each person will take his share within the territory assigned to his tribe by lot.

56. Each portion Literally, “its portion.” That is, each tribe’s portion.

whether Each tribe, irrespective of its size, will be assigned its territory by lot.

LEVITICAL CLANS (vv. 57–62)

The clans of Levi are listed separately because they are not entitled to any share of the Land (v. 62; see 18:23–24). Because they do not serve in the army, there is no need to limit their census to males above 20. The reason for this census is not given; it is most likely for the purpose of assigning the Levites their tabernacle duties.

57. The Gershonites, Kohathites, and Merarites make up the three traditional clans of Levi who are assigned to their respective guarding and transport duties in the tabernacle.

58. Libnites Libnah, a town in the territory of Judah, was assigned to the Aaronides.

Hebronites Hebron, a major city of Judah, was assigned to the Aaronides.

Mahlites This name survives on a cosmetic burner found on the site of the ancient city Lachish.

Korahites See Comment to 26:11.

Kohath begot Amram.⁵⁹The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; she bore to Amram Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam.⁶⁰To Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.⁶¹Nadab and Abihu died when they offered alien fire before the LORD.—⁶²Their enrollment of 23,000 comprised all males from a month up. They were not part of the regular enrollment of the Israelites, since no share was assigned to them among the Israelites.

⁶³These are the persons enrolled by Moses and Eleazar the priest who registered the Israelites on the steppes of Moab, at the Jordan near Jericho.⁶⁴Among these there was not one of those enrolled by Moses and Aaron the priest when they recorded the Israelites in the wilderness of Sinai.⁶⁵For the LORD had said of them, "They shall die in the wilderness." Not one of them survived, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

אֶת־עַמְרָם׃ 59 וְשֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ יוֹכֶבֶד בַּת־לֵוִי אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה אֹתָהּ לְלֵוִי בְּמִצְרַיִם וַתֵּלֶד לְעַמְרָם אֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת מִרְיָם אַחֲתָם׃ 60 וַיּוֹלֵד לְאַהֲרֹן אֶת־נָדָב וְאֶת־אֲבִיהוּא אֶת־אֶלְעָזָר וְאֶת־יִתְחָמָר׃ 61 וַיָּמָת נָדָב וְאֲבִיהוּא בְּהַקְרִיבֵם אֲשֶׁר־זָרָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה׃ 62 וַיְהִי וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה וְעֶשְׂרִים אֶלֶף כָּל־זָכָר מִבֶּן־חֹדֶשׁ וּמַעְלָה כִּי לֹא הָתַפְּקֻדוֹ בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי לֹא־נָתַן לָהֶם נַחֲלָה בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל׃

63 אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי מֹשֶׁה וְאֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר פָּקְדוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעַרְבַת מוֹאָב עַל יַרְדֵּן יַרְחוֹ׃ 64 וּבְאֵלֶּה לֹא־הָיָה אִישׁ מִפְּקוּדֵי מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר פָּקְדוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִדְבַר סִינַי׃ 65 כִּי־אָמַר יְהוָה לָהֶם מוֹת יָמָתוּ בְּמִדְבַר וְלֹא־נֹתַר מֵהֶם אִישׁ כִּי אִם־כָּלֵב בֶּן־יִפְנֶה וַיְהִי־שֵׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון׃ ח

27

The daughters of Zelophehad, of Ma-

כז ותקרבנה בנות צלפחד בן־חפר

Kohath begot Amram Thus Moses and Aaron (Amram's sons, v. 59) are totally separated from the Kohathites, having been singled out from among them (3:27) because of their leadership responsibilities.

59. Jochebed daughter of Levi Because she is the aunt of Amram, Levi's grandson, she is forbidden to him in marriage by the law of Leviticus (18:12, 20:19). This law, however, was not in force before the revelation at Mount Sinai. For examples of similar pre-Sinaitic practices, see Gen. 20:12 and 38:24–26.

in Egypt According to this tradition (Levi–Jochebed–Moses), only two generations were slaves in Egypt. This differs from the 400-year tradition for Egyptian bondage in Gen.15:13 (see Gen. 15:16, Exod. 6:14ff.).

POSTSCRIPT (vv. 63–65)

The postscript explains that this census did not include those counted in the previous census who (with the exception of Caleb and Joshua) had perished in the wilderness at God's command (14:29–32).

THE LAW OF SUCCESSION IN INHERITANCE (27:1–11)

The census taken for the purpose of dividing the Promised Land among the tribal clans (chap. 26) is followed by a problematic case: What if the de-

ceased leaves daughters but no sons? Note that the daughters of Zelophehad are referred to again in chapter 36. Chapters 27 and 36, then, bracket the

nassite family—son of Hephher son of Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh son of Joseph—came forward. The names of the daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.² They stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the chieftains, and the whole assembly, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and they said,³ “Our father died in the wilderness. He was not one of the faction, Korah’s faction, which banded together against the LORD, but died for his own sin; and he has left no sons.⁴ Let not our father’s name be lost to his clan just because

בְּנֵי־גֹלְעָד בְּנֵי־מְכִיר בְּנֵי־מְנַשֶּׁה לְמִשְׁפַּחַת מְנַשֶּׁה בְּנֵי־יוֹסֵף וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֹתָיו מַחֲלָה נֹחַ וְחֹגְלָה וּמִלְכָּה וְתִרְצָח׃² וַתַּעֲמֹדנָה לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה וּלְפָנָי אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וּלְפָנֵי הַנְּשִׂאִים וְכָל־הָעֵדָה פֶּתַח אֹהֶל־מוֹעֵד לֵאמֹר׃³ אָבִינוּ מֵת בַּמִּדְבָּר וְהוּא לֹא־הָיָה בְּתוֹךְ הָעֵדָה הַנוֹעְדִים עַל־יְהוָה בְּעֵדַת־קָרַח כִּי־בַחֲטָאוֹ מֵת וּבָנִים לֹא־הָיוּ לוֹ׃⁴ לִמָּה יִגָּרַע שֵׁם־אָבִינוּ

conclusion of the wilderness trek and the preparation for allotting the Land.

THE CASE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD (vv. 1–7)

The basic assumption here is that the Land belongs to God, who assigned it to the Israelite clans for their use (Lev. 25:23). Whoever alienates it from them is subject to divine punishment. It is also assumed that only males can inherit, because the clan is perpetuated through the male line. This being so, the daughters of sonless Zelophehad

plead that, unless they can inherit, their father’s name will be wiped out.

2. the entrance of the Tent of Meeting Where they presented their case.

3. not one of . . . Korah’s faction This implies that the participants in the Korahite rebellion were denied the right to inherit the Land.

died for his own sin That is, in the punishment meted out to the entire nation after the scout episode (14:29).

4. Underlying this statement are the assumptions that a name exists as long as it is attached

CHAPTER 27

1. The commentators are quite taken with the daughters of Zelophehad and their request to claim land in Canaan to perpetuate their father’s name. It is as if, after reviewing so many accounts of complaint, envy, and immoral behavior, they are relieved to have met Israelites who yearn for nothing more than a family home in the Promised Land. The Midrash goes so far as to say: “For forty years in the wilderness, the men tore down fences and the women repaired them” (Num. R. 21:10). The women did not take part in the sin of worshiping the Golden Calf. They did not join in the orgies at Baal-peor. And when the men heard the report of the scouts and lost all hope

of settling the Promised Land, the daughters of Zelophehad came forward to claim their share of it.

3. He was not one of . . . Korah’s faction Upon hearing these words, Moses refers the request to God. This is not because he does not know the law, but because he could no longer trust himself to be impartial after being told “our father was on your side during the rebellion.” In the Talmud, Akiva identifies Zelophehad as the man who was executed for gathering wood on *Shabbat* (Num.15:32ff.). The Sages rebuke him: “Akiva, if Zelophehad was innocent, then you have libeled an innocent man. If he was guilty and the Torah chose not to reveal his name, why should you shame him?” (BT Shab. 96b).

HALAKHAH L’MA’ASEH

27:1. daughters Jewish law originally excluded daughters from inheritance rights when sons survived. The Sages modified these laws by providing for the maintenance of the widow and daughters of the deceased. In the 16th century, Moses Isserles permitted fathers to give their daughters a gift of half of their sons’ share in their estate (S.A. H.M. 281:7, gloss). According to a *takkanah* (enactment) of the chief rabbinate of Palestine in 1943, in Israel daughters inherit on an equal footing with sons.

he had no son! Give us a holding among our father's kinsmen!"

⁵Moses brought their case before the LORD.

⁶And the LORD said to Moses, ⁷"The plea of Zelophehad's daughters is just: you should give them a hereditary holding among their father's kinsmen; transfer their father's share to them.

⁸"Further, speak to the Israelite people as follows: 'If a man dies without leaving a son, you shall transfer his property to his daughter. ⁹If he has no daughter, you shall assign his property to his brothers. ¹⁰If he has no brothers, you shall assign his property to his father's brothers. ¹¹If his father had no brothers, you shall assign his property to his nearest relative in his own clan, and he shall inherit it.' This shall be the law of procedure for the Israelites, in accordance with the LORD's command to Moses."

מִתּוֹךְ מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ כִּי אֵין לוֹ בֶן תְּנֶה-לָנוּ
אֲחֻזָּה בְּתוֹךְ אַחֵי אָבִינוּ:

⁵ וַיִּקְרַב מֹשֶׁה אֶת-מִשְׁפָּטָן * לִפְנֵי
יְהוָה: ס

רביעי ⁶ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ⁷ כֵּן בְּנֹת
צִלְפַּחַד דְּבַרְתְּ נָתַן תִּתֵּן לָהֶם אֲחֻזֹּת
נַחֲלָה בְּתוֹךְ אַחֵי אֲבֵיהֶם וְהֶעֱבַרְתְּ אֶת-
נַחֲלַת אֲבֵיהֶן לָהֶן:

⁸ וְאֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל תְּדַבֵּר לֵאמֹר אִישׁ
כִּי-יָמוּת וּבֶן אֵין לוֹ וְהֶעֱבַרְתֶּם אֶת-
נַחֲלָתוֹ לְבָתּוֹ: ⁹ וְאִם-אֵין לוֹ בֵּת וּנְתַתֶּם
אֶת-נַחֲלָתוֹ לְאָחָיו: ¹⁰ וְאִם-אֵין לוֹ אָחִים
וּנְתַתֶּם אֶת-נַחֲלָתוֹ לְאָחֵי אָבִיו: ¹¹ וְאִם-
אֵין אָחִים לְאָבִיו וּנְתַתֶּם אֶת-נַחֲלָתוֹ
לְשֹׂארוֹ הַקָּרִב אֵלָיו מִמִּשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ וַיִּרְשׁ
אֹתָהּ וְהָיְתָה לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְחֻקַּת מִשְׁפָּט
כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה: ס

v. 5. ן רבתי

to land, and that Zelophehad's name would be perpetuated through his grandsons.

because he had no son The text presupposes that the wife was either dead or infertile. Thus the levirate solution detailed in Deut. 25:5–6 could not be applied here. It is also presumed that the daughters were unmarried; otherwise the land would ultimately pass to the clans of their husbands. (See Num. 36, where the ruling's intent clearly is to ensure that the property due to Zelophehad would remain within his clan.)

our father's kinsmen That is, of the clan of Hephher (v. 1). The land is parceled out to the tribes according to their clans.

5. Moses alone could bring the case before the Lord (see Exod. 18:19; Lev. 24:13; Num. 9:8–9, 15:35–36; Josh. 17:4).

before the LORD That is, for an oracle.

THE LAW OF SUCCESSION (vv. 8–11)

For ancestral property, a man's natural heirs are his sons. If he has no sons, his daughters become his heirs. If he has no children, his brothers are his heirs, and in the absence of brothers, his father's brothers are. If the father had no brothers, the inheritance passes on to the next of kin. Thus the patrilineal principle of succession through the father's male line is preserved. A daughter does not really inherit; she transfers the inheritance from father to grandson, and thereby keeps the ancestral land in the father's line.

8. his property This refers to inherited, landed property.

9. brothers Also of his mother (Ibn Ezra).

11. in his own clan Refers to his male relatives and assumes that the land remains in the clan.

7–8. God honored the daughters of Zelophehad for their faith in the Land by arranging for them to cause a law to be added to the Torah; that is why this law was not included in the

original revelation at Sinai. In the same way, God honored those Israelites who did not want to miss the *Pesah* celebration, by letting them be the cause of a new law (see 9:6–14) (*Sifrei*).

¹²The LORD said to Moses, “Ascend these heights of Abarim and view the land that I have given to the Israelite people. ¹³When you have seen it, you too shall be gathered to your kin, just as your brother Aaron was. ¹⁴For, in the wilderness of Zin, when the community was contentious, you disobeyed My command to uphold My sanctity in their sight by means of the water.” Those are the Waters of Meribath-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin.

¹⁵Moses spoke to the LORD, saying, ¹⁶“Let the LORD, Source of the breath of all flesh, appoint someone over the community ¹⁷who shall go out before them and come in before them, and who shall take them out and bring them in, so that the LORD’s community may not be like sheep that have no shepherd.” ¹⁸And the LORD answered Moses, “Single out Joshua son of Nun, an inspired man, and lay your hand upon him. ¹⁹Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before the whole community, and commission him in their sight. ²⁰Invest him with some of your authority, so that the whole Israelite com-

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה עֲלֵה אֶל־הַר הָעֲבָרִים הַזֶּה וּרְאֵה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ¹³ וּרְאִיתָה אֹתָהּ וּנְאֻסַּפְתָּ אֶל־עַמִּיךָ גַּם־אֹתָהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר נֹאסַף אֶהְרֹן אַחִיךָ: ¹⁴ כַּאֲשֶׁר מְרִיתֶם פִּי בַּמִּדְבָּר־צִן בְּמִרְיַת הָעֵדָה לְהַקְדִּישְׁנִי בַּמַּיִם לְעֵינֵיהֶם הֵם מִי־מִרְיַת קֹדֶשׁ מִדְּבַר־צִן: פ

¹⁵ וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: ¹⁶ יִפְקֹד יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחֹת לְכָל־בֶּשֶׂר אִישׁ עַל־הָעֵדָה: ¹⁷ אֲשֶׁר־יֵצֵא לִפְנֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יָבֹא לִפְנֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יוֹצִיאֵם וְאֲשֶׁר יְבִיאֵם וְלֹא תִהְיֶה עֵדוּת יְהוָה כִּצְאֹן אֲשֶׁר אִין־לָהֶם רְעָה: ¹⁸ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה קַח־לְךָ אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־רוּחַ בּוֹ וְסִמַּכְתָּ אֶת־יָדְךָ עָלָיו: ¹⁹ וְהֶעַמְדַתְּ אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וּלְפָנַי כָּל־הָעֵדָה וְצִוִּיתָה אֹתוֹ לְעֵינֵיהֶם: ²⁰ וְנָתַתָּה מִהוֹדְךָ עָלָיו לְמַעַן יִשְׁמְעוּ כָּל־עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

THE SUCCESSION OF MOSES BY JOSHUA (27:12–23)

Moses is commanded to ascend the mountain. From there he will see the Promised Land and then die. The fulfillment of this command is postponed (Deut. 34), for Moses has yet many laws and a lengthy testament to give to his people.

12. heights of Abarim The peak of this mountain chain is identified as Mount Nebo in Deut. 32:49. At a height of 2740 feet (843 m), it offers a wide view of Cisjordan.

13. as your brother Aaron Aaron ascended a mountain to die; this is also the purpose of Moses’ ascent.

18. an inspired man Literally, “a man in whom there is spirit.” He was a courageous and skillful military leader.

your hand Hebrew: *yadkha*, which should be read as a plural (“your hands”). Authority and power could be transferred only by the laying on of both hands (v. 23; cf. Num. 8:10, Lev. 16:21).

20. Invest him Literally, “place upon him.” Moses thus establishes a physical conduit for the transfer of his authority.

with some of your authority Moses is empowered to transfer to Joshua only his authority,

16. Confronted with the finality of God’s decision that he will not enter the Promised Land, Moses’ first response is not self-pity but concern for his people’s future. Realizing that the next Israelite leader will face different challenges, Moses urges God to appoint someone who will “go out before the people and come in before them,” i.e., a military leader who will

lead the charge instead of remaining behind in safety. The Midrash pictures Moses urging God to appoint a leader able to relate to every Israelite, even those with whom he disagrees (Tanḥ. 10). Is Moses seeking to balance the zealotry of Phinehas?

20. Invest him with some of your authority Joshua would reflect Moses’ greatness

munity may obey. ²¹But he shall present himself to Eleazar the priest, who shall on his behalf seek the decision of the Urim before the LORD. By such instruction they shall go out and by such instruction they shall come in, he and all the Israelites, the whole community.”

²²Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and before the whole community. ²³He laid his hands upon him and commissioned him—as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

28 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²Command the Israelite people and say to them: Be punctilious in presenting to Me at stated

not his spiritual powers. Only God, who endowed those powers, can transfer them; thus God allowed the elders to share Moses’ prophetic gifts (11:17,25). The Hebrew word *hod* (authority) means “majesty, power, charisma, ray of glory” in other contexts.

21. go out . . . come in That is, for war. Only in military matters is Joshua commanded to consult the Urim and Thummim through the agency of the high priest.

וּלְפָנַי אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן יַעֲמֹד וְשָׁאַל לִי
בְּמִשְׁפַּט הָאוּרִים לְפָנַי יְהוָה עַל-פִּי יֵצְאוּ
וְעַל-פִּי יָבֹאוּ הוּא וְכָל-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אִתּוֹ
וְכָל-הָעֵדָה:

וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ וַיִּקַּח
אֶת-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיַּעֲמֵדְהוּ לְפָנַי אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן
וּלְפָנַי כָּל-הָעֵדָה: ²³וַיִּסְמְךָ אֶת-יָדָיו עָלָיו
וַיִּצְוֵהוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה בְּיַד-מֹשֶׁה: פ

כח חמישי וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:
²צַו אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם אֶת-

By such instruction That is, of the Urim’s decision. Or, perhaps, by Eleazar’s instruction, because it is he who consults the Urim.

all the Israelites Refers to the troops that Joshua will lead in battle.

the whole community Refers to all the Israelites, not only the army.

THE CALENDAR OF PUBLIC SACRIFICES (28:1–30:1)

With the division of the Land and the succession to Moses now determined, the Torah turns to the establishment of the religious calendar that will prevail in the Land. Thus the Israelites’ first duty upon settling in their land is to institute the proper lines of communion with the Lord

through the medium of the sacrificial system. This catalog of public offerings concludes with a reminder (in 29:39) that each Israelite could also bring private offerings.

2. at stated times The sacrifices are invalid if offered at the wrong time.

as the moon reflects the light of the sun (BT BB 75a). God commands Moses to “lay your hand upon” Joshua (v. 18), but Moses lays both hands on him (v. 23), transferring power without reservation or ambivalence, a rare gesture for a man who has been accustomed to authority for so long. What must have been going through Moses’ mind as he reflected on the achievements and frustrations of the past, and the awareness of all that he yearned to do and would never be able to do?

CHAPTER 28

The list of offerings in chapters 28 and 29 is familiar to many as the *maftir* readings from a second Torah scroll on the festivals. They are read in sequence during the summer, in the weeks preceding *Tish-ah b’Av*, the anniversary of the Temple’s destruction. Tradition teaches that God counts our reading of these passages as the equivalent of our bringing offerings to the Temple.

times the offerings of food due Me, as gifts of pleasing odor to Me.

³Say to them: These are the gifts that you are to present to the LORD:

As a regular burnt offering every day, two yearling lambs without blemish. ⁴You shall offer one lamb in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. ⁵And as a grain offering, there shall be a tenth of an *ephah* of choice flour with a quarter of a *hin* of beaten oil mixed in—⁶the regular burnt offering instituted at Mount Sinai—a gift of pleasing odor to the LORD.

⁷The libation with it shall be a quarter of a *hin* for each lamb, to be poured in the sacred precinct as an offering of fermented drink to the LORD. ⁸The other lamb you shall offer at twilight, preparing the same grain offering and libation as in the morning—a gift of pleasing odor to the LORD.

⁹On the sabbath day: two yearling lambs without blemish, together with two-tenths of a measure of choice flour with oil mixed in as a grain offering, and with the proper libation—¹⁰a burnt offering for every sabbath, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its libation.

DAILY OFFERING (vv. 3–8)

Called “*tamid*” from biblical times on, the daily offering consisted of a burnt offering of a lamb together with its grain and wine adjuncts. It was offered twice daily, morning and evening.

3. The *tamid* offering is to be financed by all the people, not merely by the leaders or by the rich (Neh. 10:34).

4. at twilight The time between sunset and darkness.

5. ephah See Comment to Exod. 16:36.

hin See Comment to Exod. 29:40.

beaten Hebrew: *katit*, “pressed in a mortar.” Hence it was pure oil.

7. with it Refers to the lamb (v. 4, as in v. 8).

SHABBAT OFFERING (vv. 9–10)

The sacrifice for a special day, called *musaf* in Rabbinic Hebrew, is in addition to the daily *tamid* and is offered immediately after it. Because the *Shabbat* offering is the same as the *tamid*, adding *musaf* gives *Shabbat* double the number of offerings of a weekday.

10. regular burnt offering Refers to the

קָרְבָּנֵי לַחֲמֵי לְאִשֵּׁי רִיחַ נִיחֹחַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ
לְהַקְרִיב לִי בְמוֹעֵדוֹ:

³ וְאָמַרְתָּ לָהֶם זֶה הָאֲשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְרִיבוּ
לַיהוָה

כִּבְשֵׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה תְּמִימִם שְׁנַיִם לַיּוֹם
עֶלֶה תְּמִיד: ⁴ אֶת־הַכֶּבֶשׂ אֶחָד תַּעֲשֶׂה
בַּבֹּקֶר וְאֶת הַכֶּבֶשׂ הַשֵּׁנִי תַעֲשֶׂה בֵּין
הָעֶרְבִים: ⁵ וְעֵשִׂירִית הָאֵיפָה סֵלֶת
לְמִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן כֶּתִית רְבִיעֵת
הַהֵיזָן: ⁶ עֲלֹת תְּמִיד הָעֵשִׂיָה בְּהָרַר סִינֵי
לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה:

⁷ וְנִסְכּוֹ רְבִיעֵת הַהֵיזָן לְכֶבֶשׂ הָאֶחָד בְּקֹדֶשׁ
הַסֹּף נִסֵּךְ שֶׁכֶר לַיהוָה: ⁸ וְאֶת הַכֶּבֶשׂ
הַשֵּׁנִי תַעֲשֶׂה בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים כְּמִנְחַת הַבֹּקֶר
וְכִנְסָכוֹ תַעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁה רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ
לַיהוָה: פ

⁹ וּבַיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת שְׁנַיִם־כֶּבֶשִׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה
תְּמִימִם וּשְׁנַיִם עֵשְׂרֹנִים סֵלֶת מִנְחָה
בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן וְנִסְכּוֹ: ¹⁰ עֲלֹת שַׁבָּת
בְּשַׁבְּתוֹ עַל־עֲלֹת הַתְּמִיד וְנִסְכּוֹ: ס

HALAKHAH L'MA'ASEH

28:4. in the morning . . . at twilight The Sages determined that prayer, specifically the *Amidah*, substitutes for the communal sacrifices mandated in the Torah (BT Ber. 26b). *Shaharit* and *Minhah* (the morning and afternoon services) are thus based on the requirements articulated in this verse.

28:10. in addition to the regular burnt offering The requirement in this chapter for an additional sacrifice offered on *Shabbat*, festivals, and *Rosh Hodesh* (New Moon) is fulfilled today through the additional *Amidah* of *Musaf* recited on these days (BT Ber. 26b–27a).

¹¹On your new moons you shall present a burnt offering to the LORD: two bulls of the herd, one ram, and seven yearling lambs, without blemish. ¹²As grain offering for each bull: three-tenths of a measure of choice flour with oil mixed in. As grain offering for each ram: two-tenths of a measure of choice flour with oil mixed in. ¹³As grain offering for each lamb: a tenth of a measure of fine flour with oil mixed in. Such shall be the burnt offering of pleasing odor, a gift to the LORD. ¹⁴Their libations shall be: half a *hin* of wine for a bull, a third of a *hin* for a ram, and a quarter of a *hin* for a lamb. That shall be the monthly burnt offering for each new moon of the year. ¹⁵And there shall be one goat as a purification offering to the LORD, to be offered in addition to the regular burnt offering and its libation.

¹⁶In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, there shall be a passover sacrifice

morning *tamid*, because there could be no offering after the *tamid* of the evening. It should be noted that purification sacrifices are never brought on *Shabbat*, because intimations of human wrongdoing are not permitted on this joyous day.

ROSH HODESH, THE NEW MOON
(vv. 11–15)

In early Israel, this was an important festival celebrated by families and clans in a state of ritual purity at the local sanctuary.

14. Only here are the libation quantities

וּבְרֵאשֵׁי חֳדָשֵׁיכֶם תִּקְרִיבוּ עֹלָה לַיהוָה 11
פָּרִים בְּנֵי-בֶקֶר שְׁנַיִם וְאַיִל אֶחָד כִּבְשֵׁים
בְּנֵי-שָׁנָה שִׁבְעָה תְּמִימִם: 12 וּשְׁלֹשָׁה
עֶשְׂרֹנִים סֶלֶת מִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן לֶפָר
הָאֶחָד וּשְׁנַיִ עֶשְׂרֹנִים סֶלֶת מִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה
בְּשֶׁמֶן לְאַיִל הָאֶחָד: 13 וְעֶשְׂרֹן עֶשְׂרֹן
סֶלֶת מִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן לִכְבֶּשׂ הָאֶחָד
עֹלָה רֵיחַ רֵיחַ אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה: 14 וְנִסְכֵיהֶם
חֲצִי הַהֵינֶן יִהְיֶה לֶפָר וּשְׁלִישֶׁת הַהֵינֶן
לְאַיִל וּרְבִיעֵת הַהֵינֶן לִכְבֶּשׂ יֵינֵן זֹאת עֹלֹת
חֹדֶשׁ בְּחֹדְשׁוֹ לְחֹדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה: 15 וּשְׁעִיר
עֹזִים אֶחָד לְחֻטָּאת לַיהוָה עַל-עֹלֹת
הַתָּמִיד יַעֲשֶׂה וְנִסְכּוֹ: ט
שְׁשִׁי 16 וּבַחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן בְּאַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם

specified. Because they are always the same, they need not be repeated.

burnt offering Use of this term implies the auxiliary grain offering and libation.

new moon Hebrew: *hodesh*, “new moon,” as in 29:6. (The word can also mean “month.”)

**PASCHAL SACRIFICE AND
UNLEAVENED BREAD** (vv. 16–25)

The day of the paschal offering and the seven-day Festival of Unleavened Bread originally were separate and distinct holidays (cf. Lev. 23:5–6). The fact that the paschal offering is mentioned here

15. purification offering to the LORD Hebrew: *hattat l’Adonai*. Noting that this is the only place in the Torah where this phrase occurs, the Talmud understands it to mean “a purification offering for the LORD.” It is brought on God’s behalf on *Rosh Hodesh* (when the new moon appears) as an apology to the moon for having made it smaller and less consequential

than the sun (BT Hūl. 60b). Did the Sages here picture God apologizing for all the unfairness of life—to people who are born less healthy, gifted, or fortunate than others? Given the traditional identification of *Rosh Hodesh* as a woman’s festival, did the Sages imagine God expressing regret to women for having a less prominent role than men for so much of history?

HALAKHAH L’MA’ASEH

28:11. new moons The Jewish calendar is based on the cycles of the moon. An extra month (Adar I) is added 7 times in 19 years to make the lunar calendar conform to the solar year. Each Hebrew month begins with the New Moon (*Rosh Hodesh*); it is announced in synagogue (except for the month of *Tishrei*) on the preceding *Shabbat*, in the Blessing of the Month (*Birkat Ha-Hodesh*). See Comment on Exod. 12:2.

to the LORD,¹⁷ and on the fifteenth day of that month a festival. Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days.¹⁸ The first day shall be a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations.¹⁹ You shall present a gift, a burnt offering, to the LORD: two bulls of the herd, one ram, and seven yearling lambs—see that they are without blemish.²⁰ The grain offering with them shall be of choice flour with oil mixed in: prepare three-tenths of a measure for a bull, two-tenths for a ram;²¹ and for each of the seven lambs prepare one-tenth of a measure.²² And there shall be one goat for a purification offering, to make expiation in your behalf.²³ You shall present these in addition to the morning portion of the regular burnt offering.²⁴ You shall offer the like daily for seven days as food, a gift of pleasing odor to the LORD; they shall be offered, with their libations, in addition to the regular burnt offering.²⁵ And the seventh day shall be a sacred occasion for you: you shall not work at your occupations.

²⁶On the day of the first fruits, your Feast of Weeks, when you bring an offering of new grain to the LORD, you shall observe a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations.²⁷ You shall present a burnt offering of pleasing odor to the LORD: two bulls of the herd, one ram, seven yearling lambs.²⁸ The grain offering with them shall be of choice flour with oil mixed

לְחֹדֶשׁ פֶּסַח לַיהוָה: ¹⁷ וּבַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לְחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה חֵג שִׁבְעַת יָמִים מִצּוֹת יֹאכְל: ¹⁸ בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן מִקְרֵא־קֹדֶשׁ כָּל-מִלְאֲכַת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: ¹⁹ וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם אִשָּׁה עֲלֶיהָ לַיהוָה פָּרִים בְּנֵי-בָקָר שְׁנַיִם וְאֵיל אֶחָד וְשִׁבְעָה כִּבְשִׂים בְּנֵי שָׁנָה תְּמִימִם יִהְיוּ לָכֶם: ²⁰ וּמִנְחֹתָם סֹלֶת בָּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן שְׁלִשָּׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְפָר וּשְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְאֵיל תַּעֲשׂוּ: ²¹ עֶשְׂרוֹן עֶשְׂרוֹן תַּעֲשֶׂה לְכַפֵּשׁ הָאֶחָד לְשִׁבְעַת הַכִּבְשִׂים: ²² וְשִׁעִיר חֲטָאֵת אֶחָד לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם: ²³ מִלֶּבֶד עֹלֹת הַבָּקָר אֲשֶׁר לְעֹלֹת הַתָּמִיד תַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת-אֵלֶּה: ²⁴ כָּאֵלֶּה תַּעֲשׂוּ לַיּוֹם שִׁבְעַת יָמִים לֶחֶם אִשָּׁה רִיחַ-נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה עַל-עֹלֹת הַתָּמִיד יַעֲשֶׂה וְנִסְבּוּ: ²⁵ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִקְרֵא־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל-מִלְאֲכַת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: ²⁶ וּבַיּוֹם הַבְּכוּרִים בְּהִקְרִיבְכֶם מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה לַיהוָה בְּשִׁבְעַת־יָמֵיךְ מִקְרֵא־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל-מִלְאֲכַת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: ²⁷ וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם עֹלָה לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה פָּרִים בְּנֵי-בָקָר שְׁנַיִם אֵיל אֶחָד שִׁבְעָה כִּבְשִׂים בְּנֵי שָׁנָה: ²⁸ וּמִנְחֹתָם סֹלֶת בָּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן שְׁלִשָּׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים

even though it is a private sacrifice (see Exod. 12:1–11) indicates that by this time the two festivals had become fused.

17. festival Both the paschal sacrifice and the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread are observed at the sanctuary, precisely as instituted by Deut. 16:1–6.

18. occupations Hebrew: *m'lekhet avodah*; literally, “laborious work,” of the sort that is forbidden on the festivals. This is in contrast to “any work” (*kol m'lakhab*), which is forbidden on *Shabbat* and *Yom Kippur* (Num. 29:7; Lev. 23:3,28). The nonlaborious work permitted (by implication) on the festivals is not defined, except for the explicit permission to pre-

pare food on the first and last days of *Pesah* (Exod. 12:16).

FEAST OF WEEKS (vv. 26–31)

This festival, which marks the start of the wheat harvest, does not depend on the lunar calendar. It occurs seven weeks after the beginning of the barley harvest (Lev. 23:15–16). In this regard it is like *Shabbat*, which is also independent of the lunar calendar.

26. day of the first fruits This day is also called “the Feast of the Harvest” (*Hag ha-Katzir*) in Exod. 23:16, and “the Feast of Weeks” (*Hag [ha-]Shavu-ot*) in Exod. 34:22, Deut. 16:10,16, and 2 Chron. 8:13.

in, three-tenths of a measure for a bull, two-tenths for a ram, ²⁹and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. ³⁰And there shall be one goat for expiation in your behalf. ³¹You shall present them—see that they are without blemish—with their libations, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its grain offering.

29 In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. You shall observe it as a day when the horn is sounded. ²You shall present a burnt offering of pleasing odor to the LORD: one bull of the herd, one ram, and seven yearling lambs, without blemish. ³The grain offering with them—choice flour with oil mixed in—shall be: three-tenths of a measure for a bull, two-tenths for a ram, ⁴and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. ⁵And there shall be one goat for a purification offering, to make expiation in your behalf—⁶in addition to the burnt offering of the new moon with its grain offering and the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, each with its libation as prescribed, gifts of pleasing odor to the LORD.

⁷On the tenth day of the same seventh month

FIRST DAY OF THE SEVENTH MONTH
(29:1–6)

The seventh new moon is to the ordinary new moon as the seventh day is to the ordinary day, thereby indicating how the sabbatical cycle was preserved in the lunar calendar. The seventh month is actually the beginning of the agricultural year, as is apparent from the oldest calendars of the Bible (see Exod. 23:16, 34:22). The Jewish religious calendar still preserves the first day of the seventh month as the beginning of the year: *Rosh ha-Shanah*, “The Head of the Year,” or New Year’s Day. The Bible neither mentions it by name nor describes any New Year festival.

לֶפָר הָאֶחָד שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְאֵיל
הָאֶחָד: ²⁹עֶשְׂרוֹן עֶשְׂרוֹן לְכֶבֶשׂ הָאֶחָד
לְשִׁבְעַת הַכֶּבֶשִׂים: ³⁰שְׁעִיר עֲזִים אֶחָד
לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם: ³¹מִלֶּבֶד עַל־תְּמִיד
וּמִנְחָתוֹ תַעֲשׂוּ תְּמִימִם יְהִי־לְכֶם
וְנִסְפִיהֶם: פ

כט וּבַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ
מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל־מְלֶאכֶת
עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ יוֹם תְּרוּעָה יִהְיֶה לָכֶם:
²וַעֲשִׂיתֶם עֹלָה לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה פֶּר
בֶּן־בָּקָר אֶחָד אֵיל אֶחָד כֶּבֶשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה
שִׁבְעָה תְּמִימִם: ³וּמִנְחָתָם סֶלֶת בָּלוּלָה
בְּשֶׁמֶן שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים לֶפָר שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֹנִים
לְאֵיל: ⁴וַעֲשִׂרוֹן אֶחָד לְכֶבֶשׂ הָאֶחָד
לְשִׁבְעַת הַכֶּבֶשִׂים: ⁵וְשְׁעִיר־עֲזִים אֶחָד
חֹטָאת לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם: ⁶מִלֶּבֶד עַל־תְּ
הַחֹדֶשׁ וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְעַל־תְּמִיד וּמִנְחָתָהּ
וְנִסְפִיהֶם כְּמִשְׁפָּטָם לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ אִשָּׁה
לַיהוָה: ס
⁷וּבַעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה מִקְרָא־

1. a day when the horn is sounded Hebrew: *yom t'ru-ah*, “a day of acclaim,” probably the royal acclaim of God as King and Creator. The horn blowing on this day should not be confused with the prescription that horns should be blown on all festivals (10:10).

TENTH DAY OF THE SEVENTH MONTH
(vv. 7–11)

The day is known as *Yom ha-Kippurim*, “The Day of Purgation,” which refers to the purgation of the sanctuary following its year-long defilement by mortals. Thus the purgation rituals are entirely within the confines of the sanctuary

HALAKHAH L'MA'ASEH

29:1. a day when the horn is sounded Maimonides cites this verse as the source for the commandment to listen to the *shofar* blasts on *Rosh ha-Shanah* (MT *Shofar* 1:1)

Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary

Copyright © 2001 by the Rabbinical Assembly

you shall observe a sacred occasion when you shall practice self-denial. You shall do no work. ⁸You shall present to the LORD a burnt offering of pleasing odor: one bull of the herd, one ram, seven yearling lambs; see that they are without blemish. ⁹The grain offering with them—of choice flour with oil mixed in—shall be: three-tenths of a measure for a bull, two-tenths for the one ram, ¹⁰one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. ¹¹And there shall be one goat for a purification offering, in addition to the purification offering of expiation and the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, each with its libation.

¹²On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, you shall observe a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations.—Seven days you shall observe a festival of the LORD.—¹³You shall present a burnt offering, a gift of pleasing odor to the LORD: Thirteen bulls of the herd, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs; they shall be without blemish. ¹⁴The grain offerings with them—of choice flour with oil mixed in—shall be: three-tenths of a measure for each of the thirteen bulls, two-tenths for each of the two rams, ¹⁵and one-tenth for each of the fourteen lambs. ¹⁶And there shall be one goat for a purification offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and libation.

and performed exclusively by the high priest (Lev. 16).

7. you shall practice self-denial Literally, “you shall afflict yourselves,” chiefly by fasting.

You shall do no work Literally, “you shall not do any work.” The same phrase is used for *Shabbat* (Lev. 23:3). It indicates a more severe

קָדֵשׁ יְהִיָּה לָכֶם וְעֵינֵיכֶם אֶת־נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם כָּל־מְלָאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: ⁸ וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם עֲלֶיהָ לִיהוָה רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ פֶּר בֶּן־בָּקָר אֶחָד אֵיל אֶחָד כִּבְשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה שִׁבְעָה תְּמִימִם יִהְיוּ לָכֶם: ⁹ וּמִנְחֹתֶם סֹלֶת בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְפָר שְׁנַי עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְאֵיל הָאֶחָד: ¹⁰ עֶשְׂרוֹן עֶשְׂרוֹן לְכֹבֵשׁ הָאֶחָד לְשִׁבְעַת הַכִּבְשִׂים: ¹¹ שְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד חֲטָאת מַלְבֵּד חֲטָאת הַכֹּפְרִים וְעֹלֹת הַתְּמִיד וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְנֹסְפֵיהֶם: פ

¹² וּבַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִקְרָא־קֹדֵשׁ יְהִיָּה לָכֶם כָּל־מְלָאכָת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ וְחַגְתֶּם חֹג לִיהוָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים: ¹³ וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם עֲלֶיהָ אִשָּׁה רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לִיהוָה פָּרִים בְּנֵי־בָקָר שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר אֵילִם שְׁנַיִם כִּבְשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר תְּמִימִם יִהְיוּ: ¹⁴ וּמִנְחֹתֶם סֹלֶת בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְפָר הָאֶחָד לְשִׁבְעָה עָשָׂר פָּרִים שְׁנַי עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְאֵיל הָאֶחָד לְשְׁנֵי הָאֵילִם: ¹⁵ וְעֶשְׂרוֹן* עֶשְׂרוֹן לְכֹבֵשׁ הָאֶחָד לְאַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר כִּבְשִׂים: ¹⁶ וְשְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד חֲטָאת מַלְבֵּד עֹלֹת הַתְּמִיד מִנְחָתָהּ וְנֹסְפָהּ: ט

v. 15. נקוד על ו' בתראה

prohibition of work on these days than on the other festivals.

THE 15th TO THE 21st OF THE SEVENTH MONTH (vv. 12–34)

This sacred occasion is called “the Feast of Booths” (*Hag ha-Sukkot*) in Lev. 23:34 and Deut.

CHAPTER 29

13. Offerings for the week of *Sukkot* are staggering in number, a total of 98 lambs and 70 bullocks. (*Pesah* week requires only 16 bulls; no other holiday requires more than 2.) The Talmud teaches that the 70 bulls represent thanks-

giving offerings on behalf of the 70 nations of the world (BT Suk. 55b). In case some nations forget to be grateful to God, Israel brings a bull-ock offering (the most extravagant of the sacrifices) on their behalf on *Sukkot*, the festival of thanksgiving. One of Israel’s tasks in the world is to remind other nations to be grateful to God.

¹⁷Second day: Twelve bulls of the herd, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish; ¹⁸the grain offerings and libations for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in the quantities prescribed; ¹⁹and one goat for a purification offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and libations.

²⁰Third day: Eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish; ²¹the grain offerings and libations for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in the quantities prescribed; ²²and one goat for a purification offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and libation.

²³Fourth day: Ten bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish; ²⁴the grain offerings and libations for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in the quantities prescribed; ²⁵and one goat for a purification offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and libation.

²⁶Fifth day: Nine bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish; ²⁷the grain offerings and libations for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in the quantities prescribed; ²⁸and one goat for a purification offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and libation.

²⁹Sixth day: Eight bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs, without blemish; ³⁰the grain offerings and libations for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in the quantities prescribed; ³¹and one goat for a purification offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and libations.

³²Seventh day: Seven bulls, two rams, four-

17 וּבַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי פָּרִים בְּנֵי־בָקָר שְׁנַיִם
עֶשֶׂר אֵילִם שְׁנַיִם כְּבָשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה
אַרְבַּעַה עֶשֶׂר תְּמִימִם: 18 וּמִנְחֹתֶם
וְנִסְפֵיהֶם לְפָרִים לְאֵילִם וְלִכְבָּשִׂים
בְּמִסְפָּרָם כַּמִּשְׁפָּט: 19 וְשִׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד
חֹטָאת מִלֶּבֶד עֲלֹת הַתָּמִיד וּמִנְחֹתֶיהָ
וְנִסְפֵיהֶם: ט

20 וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי פָּרִים עֶשְׂתֵּי־עֶשֶׂר
אֵילִם שְׁנַיִם כְּבָשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה אַרְבַּעַה
עֶשֶׂר תְּמִימִם: 21 וּמִנְחֹתֶם וְנִסְפֵיהֶם
לְפָרִים לְאֵילִם וְלִכְבָּשִׂים בְּמִסְפָּרָם
כַּמִּשְׁפָּט: 22 וְשִׁעִיר חֹטָאת אֶחָד מִלֶּבֶד
עֲלֹת הַתָּמִיד וּמִנְחֹתֶיהָ וְנִסְפָּהּ: ט

23 וּבַיּוֹם הָרְבִיעִי פָּרִים עֶשְׂרֵה אֵילִם
שְׁנַיִם כְּבָשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה אַרְבַּעַה עֶשֶׂר
תְּמִימִם: 24 מִנְחֹתֶם וְנִסְפֵיהֶם לְפָרִים
לְאֵילִם וְלִכְבָּשִׂים בְּמִסְפָּרָם כַּמִּשְׁפָּט:
25 וְשִׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד חֹטָאת מִלֶּבֶד עֲלֹת
הַתָּמִיד מִנְחֹתֶיהָ וְנִסְפָּהּ: ט

26 וּבַיּוֹם הַחֲמִישִׁי פָּרִים תְּשֻׁעָה אֵילִם
שְׁנַיִם כְּבָשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה אַרְבַּעַה עֶשֶׂר
תְּמִימִם: 27 וּמִנְחֹתֶם וְנִסְפֵיהֶם לְפָרִים
לְאֵילִם וְלִכְבָּשִׂים בְּמִסְפָּרָם כַּמִּשְׁפָּט:
28 וְשִׁעִיר חֹטָאת אֶחָד מִלֶּבֶד עֲלֹת
הַתָּמִיד וּמִנְחֹתֶיהָ וְנִסְפָּהּ: ט

29 וּבַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁשִׁי פָּרִים שְׁמֹנֶה אֵילִם שְׁנַיִם
כְּבָשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה אַרְבַּעַה עֶשֶׂר תְּמִימִם:
30 וּמִנְחֹתֶם וְנִסְפֵיהֶם לְפָרִים לְאֵילִם
וְלִכְבָּשִׂים בְּמִסְפָּרָם כַּמִּשְׁפָּט: 31 וְשִׁעִיר
חֹטָאת אֶחָד מִלֶּבֶד עֲלֹת הַתָּמִיד מִנְחֹתֶיהָ
וְנִסְפָּהּ: פ

32 וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי פָּרִים שִׁבְעָה אֵילִם

16:13; “the Feast of Ingathering” (*Hag ha-Asif*) in Exod. 23:16 and 34:22; and “the Feast” (*be-Hag*), i.e., the pre-eminent festival, in 1 Kings 8:2 and 12:32. When the harvest was in

at the end of the agricultural year and the new year was beginning, the Israelite farmer could go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem for this seven-day festival.

teen yearling lambs, without blemish; ³³the grain offerings and libations for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in the quantities prescribed; ³⁴and one goat for a purification offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and libation.

³⁵On the eighth day you shall hold a solemn gathering; you shall not work at your occupations. ³⁶You shall present a burnt offering, a gift of pleasing odor to the LORD; one bull, one ram, seven yearling lambs, without blemish; ³⁷the grain offerings and libations for the bull, the ram, and the lambs, in the quantities prescribed; ³⁸and one goat for a purification offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and libation.

³⁹All these you shall offer to the LORD at the stated times, in addition to your votive and free-will offerings, be they burnt offerings, grain offerings, libations, or offerings of well-being. ¹So Moses spoke to the Israelites just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

EIGHTH DAY (vv. 35–38)

Although *Sukkot* is a seven-day festival (v. 12), an eighth festival day is added. Its offerings, however, are not the same as those of the preceding festival; rather, they are the same as those of the 1st and the 10th of this month.

35. On the eighth day This, the eighth day, is an independent celebration, unconnected to

שְׁנַיִם כִּבְשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה אַרְבַּעַה עָשָׂר
תְּמִימִם: ³³וּמִנְחֹתָם וְנִסְכֵיהֶם* לַפָּרִים
לְאֵילָם וְלִכְבָּשִׂים בְּמִסְפָּרָם כְּמִשְׁפָּטָם:
וְשִׁעִיר חֹטָאת אֶחָד מִלֶּבֶד עֲלֹת

הַתְּמִיד מִנְחֹתָהּ וְנִסְכָּהּ: פ

³⁵מִפְטִיר בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי עֲצַרְתָּ תְהִיָּה לָכֶם כָּל־
מְלֹאכֶת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: ³⁶וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם
עֲלֶיהָ אִשָּׁה רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה פֶּר אֶחָד
אֵיל אֶחָד כִּבְשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה שִׁבְעָה
תְּמִימִם: ³⁷מִנְחֹתָם וְנִסְכֵיהֶם לַפָּר לְאֵיל
וְלִכְבָּשִׂים בְּמִסְפָּרָם כְּמִשְׁפָּט: ³⁸וְשִׁעִיר
חֹטָאת אֶחָד מִלֶּבֶד עֲלֹת הַתְּמִיד וּמִנְחֹתָהּ
וְנִסְכָּהּ:

³⁹אֵלֶּה תַעֲשׂוּ לַיהוָה בְּמוֹעֲדֵיכֶם לְבַד
מִנְדְּרֵיכֶם וְנִדְבַתֵיכֶם לְעֹלֹתֵיכֶם
וּלְמִנְחֹתֵיכֶם וְלִנְסֻכֵיכֶם וּלְשִׁלְמֵיכֶם:
וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל
אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: פ

חֶסֶר י' v. 33.

the preceding festival. Work is prohibited on this day, thereby making it a “sacred occasion,” as is the first day of *Sukkot* (v. 12).

39. Personal offerings may be presented in addition to the public offerings stipulated above.

30:1. This verse tells us that Moses informed the Israelites about the religious calendar before addressing them on the next subject.

35. On *Sh’mini Atzeret* (the Hebrew name of the festival cited), the day immediately after *Sukkot* week, the offerings are more restrained. The Talmud pictures God as a host, welcoming representatives of all nations who

come to pay homage on *Sukkot*; then, as the festival ends and the other nations depart, God says to Israel: “Stay here with Me a while longer for a more intimate celebration” (BT Suk. 55b).

הפטרה ראשונה דפורענותא

FIRST HAFTARAH OF ADMONITION HAFTARAH FOR MATTOT

JEREMIAH 1:1–2:3

(Recite on the first Shabbat after the 17th of Tammuz, coinciding with the reading of either Pinhas or Mattot alone.)

This *haftarah* presents the opening passages of the Book of Jeremiah. His commission as a messenger of God's word is reinforced by two visionary omens that introduce the themes of divine providence and of imminent doom.

God's call to prophecy strikes terror in Jeremiah's heart, a feeling that is countered by the promise of protection and verbal inspiration. The subjective tone of the entire passage draws on a formal literary pattern preserved in the prophetic calls of Moses (Exod. 3:10–12; 4:15), Isaiah (6:6–7), and Ezekiel (2:3–3:11).

The *haftarah* closes with the prophetic proclamation of Jer. 2:1–3. In verse 2, God recalls Israel's past devotion, accounting it in the nation's favor. In verse 3, Jeremiah enunciates the consequences. This results in a prophecy of hope and protection based on past loyalty. The Sages presumably concluded the *haftarah* here to emphasize the optimism in these verses.

RELATION OF THE HAFTARAH TO THE CALENDAR

The *haftarah* is not connected to the *parashah* by theme. It was chosen as the first of three prophetic

readings of admonition for the three weeks that precede the fast of *Tish-ab b'Av*. Thus on the three Sabbaths preceding that commemoration of the destruction of the First and Second Temples, prophetic passages that warn the people Israel about the consequences of sin are read. These three weeks begin after the fast of the 17th of *Tammuz*, which marks the first breach in the walls of Jerusalem by the ancient Babylonians during the time of the First Temple. Rabbinic literature refers to the period from the 17th of *Tammuz* to the 9th of *Av* as *Bein ha-M'tzarim*, "Between the Breaches," after a phrase in Lamentations 1:3. The interval between these two fast days is also designated liturgically as "The Three [Weeks] of Admonition" (*t'lata d'puranuta*) because of the theme of the *haftarot* recited during this period.

After this cycle of readings and after *Tish-ab b'Av* come seven weeks of prophecies of consolation (*shivata d'nehemata*). Thus we have a total of 10 readings, which in turn are followed by other *haftarah* readings connected to themes of the holy days of the New Year. Thus a major liturgical shift begins this week, initiating a period during which the *haftarot* relate thematically to the religious calendar, not to the *parashiyot*.

The choice of admonitions from the prophet Jeremiah is undoubtedly owing to the tradition that he was believed to be the author of the Book of Lamentations (recited on *Tish-ab b'Av*).

1 The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiyah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. ²The word of the LORD came to him in the days of King Josiah son of Amon of Judah,

א דְּבַרְי יִרְמְיָהוּ בֶן־חִלְקִיָּהוּ מִן־
הַכֹּהֲנִים אֲשֶׁר בְּעֲנָתוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ בְּנֵימִן:
אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֵלָיו בַּיָּמֵי יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ
בֶן־אָמוֹן מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה בְּשָׁלֹשׁ־עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה

Jeremiah 1:1. Jeremiah A name derived either from the verb *ramah* (i.e., "the LORD loosens") or *rum* (i.e., "the LORD is exalted"). It is also known from 8th-century B.C.E. Hebrew seals.

in the thirteenth year of his reign,³ and throughout the days of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of King Zedekiah son of Josiah of Judah, when Jerusalem went into exile in the fifth month.

⁴The word of the LORD came to me:

⁵Before I created you in the womb, I selected you;
Before you were born, I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet concerning the nations.

⁶I replied:

Ah, Lord God!

I don't know how to speak,
For I am still a boy.

⁷And the LORD said to me:

Do not say, "I am still a boy,"

But go wherever I send you

And speak whatever I command you.

⁸Have no fear of them,

For I am with you to deliver you

—declares the LORD.

⁹The LORD put out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: Herewith I put My words into your mouth.

¹⁰See, I appoint you this day

Over nations and kingdoms:

2. in the thirteenth year This refers to 627 B.C.E., during the reign of King Josiah. At this time King Nebuchadrezzar I of Babylon revolted against his Assyrian overlord. Gradually, the Assyrian Empire was contained and overcome; Babylon rose to hegemony in the region, dominating Judea and destroying it in 587–586 B.C.E.

5. a prophet concerning the nations Framing the prophetic commission with reference to the nations who will exact divine judgment (v. 10) and the dominance of this theme in the pot image (vv. 13–15) suggest that only the foreign nations are referred to in this verse. As specified here, Jeremiah's role is to announce the northern enemy

לְמַלְכוֹ: ³וַיְהִי בִימֵי יְהוֹיָקִים בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ
מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה עַד־תָּם עָשִׂיתִי עֲשָׂרָה שָׁנָה
לְצַדְקִיָּהוּ בֶן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה עַד־
גְּלוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַחֲמִישִׁי: ^ס

⁴וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר:

⁵בְּטֶרֶם אֶצְרָךְ אֶצְרָךְ בְּבֶטֶן יִדְעֵתִיךָ
וּבְטֶרֶם תֵּצֵא מִרְחֹם הַקֶּדֶשׁ תִּתִּיךָ
נְבִיא לְגוֹיִם נְתַתִּיךָ:

⁶וָאָמַר

אָהֵה אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה
הִנֵּה לֹא־יִדְעֵתִי דְבַר
כִּי־נָעַר אָנֹכִי: ^פ

⁷וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי

אֶל־תֹּאמַר נָעַר אָנֹכִי

כִּי עַל־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אֶשְׁלַחְךָ תִּלְוֶה

וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אֶצְוֶה תִּדְבֹר:

⁸אֶל־תִּירָא מִפְּנֵיהֶם

כִּי־אֲתֹנֶה אֲנִי לְהַצִּילְךָ

נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

⁹וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיַּגַּע עַל־פִּי וַיֹּאמֶר

יְהוָה אֵלַי הִנֵּה נְתַתִּי דְבָרִי בְּפִיךָ:

¹⁰רְאֵה הַפִּקְדוֹתֶיךָ הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה

עַל־הַגּוֹיִם וְעַל־הַמְּמַלְכוֹת

and its allies (cf. v. 15) who will destroy Judah because of its sins.

6–9. This scenario of prophetic commission follows a standard structure in the Bible. It includes a divine confrontation and commission, a prophetic objection, and a divine assurance.

Speak whatever I command you . . . I put My words into your mouth This echoes Deut. 18:18, where God tells Moses that the true prophet will speak what he is commanded, because the word of God is in his mouth. The allusion establishes Jeremiah as a true prophet in the tradition of Moses.

To uproot and to pull down,
To destroy and to overthrow,
To build and to plant.

לְנָתוּשׁ וּלְנָתוּץ
וּלְהַאֲבִיד וּלְהָרוֹס
לְבָנוֹת וּלְנִטְוֹעַ: פ

¹¹The word of the LORD came to me: What do you see, Jeremiah? I replied: I see a branch of an almond tree.

¹¹ וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר מַה־אַתָּה רֹאֶה יִרְמְיָהוּ וַאֲמַר מִקַּל שָׁקֵד אָנִי רֹאֶה:
¹² וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי הֵיטְבַת לְרְאוֹת כִּי־שָׁקֵד אָנִי עַל־דְּבָרִי לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ: פ

¹²The LORD said to me:
You have seen right,
For I am watchful to bring My word to pass.

¹³And the word of the LORD came to me a second time: What do you see? I replied:

¹³ וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי שֵׁנִית לֵאמֹר מַה אַתָּה רֹאֶה וַאֲמַר סִיר נִפְוָח אָנִי רֹאֶה וּפָנָיו מִפָּנַי צְפוּנָה:
¹⁴ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי מִצְפוֹן תִּפְתַּח הָרְעָה עַל כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ:
¹⁵ כִּי אֲהַנְּנִי קִרְא לְכָל־מְשַׁפְּחוֹת מִמְּלֻכוֹת צְפוּנָה

I see a steaming pot,
Tipped away from the north.

¹⁴And the LORD said to me:
From the north shall disaster break loose
Upon all the inhabitants of the land!

¹⁵For I am summoning all the peoples
Of the kingdoms of the north
—declares the LORD.

They shall come, and shall each set up a throne

Before the gates of Jerusalem,
Against its walls round about,
And against all the towns of Judah.

¹⁶And I will argue My case against them
For all their wickedness:

They have forsaken Me
And sacrificed to other gods
And worshiped the works of their hands.

¹⁷So you, gird up your loins,
Arise and speak to them
All that I command you.
Do not break down before them,
Lest I break you before them.

נְאֻם־יְהוָה וּבָאוּ וַנִּתְּנוּ אִישׁ כִּסְאוֹ פָתַח אֲשֶׁר־יְרוּשָׁלַם וְעַל כָּל־חֻמֹּתֶיהָ סָבִיב וְעַל כָּל־עָרֵי יְהוּדָה:
¹⁶ וְדַבַּרְתִּי מִשְׁפָּטִי אוֹתָם עַל כָּל־רַעְתָם אֲשֶׁר עֲזָבוּנִי וַיִּקְטְרוּ לֵאלֹהִים אַחֲרָיִם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לְמַעֲשֵׂי יְדֵיהֶם:

¹⁷ וְאַתָּה תִּתְּנֶה תִּתְּנֶה וְקַמְתָּ וְדַבַּרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי אֹצֶנֶךָ אֲל־תַּחַת מַפְּנֵיהֶם פֶּן־אֶחַתְּךָ לְפָנֵיהֶם:

10. To uproot and to pull down This summation of functions is a theme that runs throughout the prophecies of Jeremiah.

13–14. from the north The designation is vague in this context. Jeremiah will not identify the enemy with Babylon until 605 B.C.E. (25:9).

18I make you this day
 A fortified city,
 And an iron pillar,
 And bronze walls
 Against the whole land—
 Against Judah's kings and officers,
 And against its priests and citizens.
 19They will attack you,
 But they shall not overcome you;
 For I am with you—declares the LORD—to
 save you.

18 וְאֲנִי הִנֵּה נֹתְתִיךָ הַיּוֹם
 לְעִיר מְבֻצָּר
 וְלַעֲמֹוד בְּרֹזֶל וְלַחֲמוֹת נְחָשֶׁת
 עַל-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ
 לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה לְשָׂרֵיהֶּ
 לְכַהֲנֵיהֶּ וְלַעַם הָאָרֶץ:
 19 וְנִלְחְמוּ אֵלֶיךָ
 וְלֹא-יִוָּכְלוּ לָךְ
 כִּי-אֲתָךְ אֲנִי נֹאֲם-יְהוָה לְהַצִּילְךָ: פ

2 The word of the LORD came to me, saying,
 2Go proclaim to Jerusalem: Thus said the LORD:
 I accounted to your favor
 The devotion of your youth,
 Your love as a bride—
 How you followed Me in the wilderness,
 In a land not sown.
 3Israel is holy to the LORD,
 The first fruits of His harvest.
 All who eat of it shall be held guilty;
 Disaster shall befall them
 —declares the LORD.

ב וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: 2 הֲלֹךְ
 וְקִרְאתָ בְּאָזְנֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר
 יְהוָה
 זָכַרְתִּי לָךְ
 חֶסֶד נְעוּרֶיךָ
 אֶהְבֵּת פְּלוּלְתֶיךָ
 לְכַתֶּךָ אַחֲרֵי בְמִדְבָר
 בְּאָרֶץ לֹא זְרוּעָה:
 3 קָדַשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל לַיהוָה
 רֵאשִׁית תְּבוּאתָהּ תְּבוּאֹתָו
 כָּל-אֲכָלֵיו יֵאָשְׁמוּ
 רָעָה תָבֵא אֲלֵיהֶם
 נֹאֲם-יְהוָה: פ

Jeremiah 2:2–3. The positive report of Israel's youthful past and the marital symbolism of the Covenant echo Hos. 2. Yet this portrait contradicts the repeated episodes of Israel's faithlessness found in the Torah. Apparently, differing streams of tradition and didactic motives found expression in different passages of the Bible.

Verse 3 turns on another metaphor. Israel's relation to God is now imagined in terms of the donation of "first fruits." Jeremiah's rhetoric is based on the wording of the priestly rule about profaning a sacred donation: "If a man eats of a sacred donation unwittingly, he shall pay the priest for the sacred donation, adding one-fifth of its value" (Lev. 22:14). Jeremiah transforms this warning against desecrating gifts offered to the Lord into a metaphor for God's relationship to

the people: The people Israel is God's sacred portion, and the nations that consume it are held guilty, with disastrous consequences. This portrays the entire people Israel as sacred.

3. Jeremiah's depiction of the nation as a holy people articulates the theology of Deuteronomy (see Deut. 7:6), which revises the conditional nature of the people's holy status found in Exod. 19:4–6. In that context of Exodus, Israel may become holy if it observes God's teachings. The revision in Deuteronomy deems Israel holy per se and, therefore, obligated to fulfill its covenantal obligations.

In its original context, this verse described past events (see 2:4–8). But as the climax to this haftarah, its meaning shifts; it becomes a prophecy of hope.