

Chapter 1 : [www.nxgvision.com](http://www.nxgvision.com): Customer reviews: The Legends of the Jews Vol III

*In addition to four volumes of the legends themselves, The Legends of the Jews includes two indispensable volumes of notes, which provide the sources for every legend, as well as a comprehensive index to the people, places, and motifs found in the legends and their sources.*

Joshua did not at first want to expose himself to danger and leave the protection of the cloud, but Moses said to him, "Abandon the cloud and set forth against Amalek, if ever thou dost hope to set the crown upon thy head. Joshua acted in accordance with these commands [] and set out against Amalek, to conquer whom required not only skillful strategy, but also adeptness in the art of magic. For Amalek was a great magician and knew that propitious and the unpropitious hour of each individual, and in this way regulated his attacks against Israel; he attacked that one at night, whose death had been predicted for a night, and him whose death had been preordained for a day did he attack by day. But in this art, too, Joshua was his match, for he, too, knew how to time properly the attack upon [] individuals, and he destroyed Amalek, his sons, the armies he himself commanded, and those under the leadership of his sons. But in the very heat of battle, Joshua treated his enemies humanely, he did not repay like with like. But only through the aid of Moses, did Joshua with his victory. Moses did not go out into battle, but through his prayer and through his influence upon the people in inspiring them with faith, the battle was won. Through me has Thou brought Israel out of Egypt, through me hast Thou cleft the sea, and through me has Thou wrought miracles; so do Thou now work miracles for me, and lend me victory to Israel, for I well know that while all other nations fight only to the sixth hour of the day, this sinful nation stand in battle ranks till sunset. As often as he then raised his hands to heaven and the people prayed with him, trusting that God would lend them victory, they were indeed victorious; as often, however, as Moses let down his hands and the people ceased prayer, weakening in their faith in God, Amalek conquered. But it was hard for Moses constantly to raise his hands. Hence Aaron and Hur were obliged to hold up his arms and assist him in his prayer. As, furthermore, he was unable to stand all that time, he seated himself on a stone, disdaining a soft and comfortable seat, saying, "So long as Israel is in distress, I shall share it with them. God granted this prayer, for the sun did not set until Israel had completely destroyed their enemy. Thereupon Moses blessed Joshua with the words, "Some day the sun shall stand still for thy sake, as it did to-day for mine," and this blessing was later fulfilled at Gibeon, when the sun stood still to help Joshua in his battle against the Amorites. The miraculous exodus of Israel out of Egypt, and especially the cleaving of the sea, had created such alarm among the heathens, that none among them had dared to approach Israel. But this fear vanished as soon as Amalek attempted to compete in battle with Israel. Although he was terrible beaten, still the fear of the inaccessibility of Israel was gone. It was with Amalek as with that foolhardy wight who plunged into a scalding-hot tub. He scalded himself terribly, yet the tub became cold through his plunge into it. So long as the seed of Amalek exist, the face of God is, as it were, covered, and will only then come to view, when the seed of Amalek shall have been entirely exterminated. God had at first left the war against Amalek in the hands of His people, therefore He bade Joshua, the future leader of the people, never to forget the war against Amalek; and if Moses had listened intently, he would have perceived from this command of God that Joshua was destined to lead the people into the promised land. But later, when Amalek took part in the destruction of Jerusalem, God Himself took up the war against Amalek, saying, "By My throne I vow not to leave a single descendant of Amalek under the heavens, yea, no one shall even be able to say that this sheep or that wether belonged to an Amalekite. It was in consideration of this word of God that David slew the Amalekite, who announced to him the death of Saul and Jonathan; for he saw in him only a heathen, although he appeared in the guise of a Jew. He used to say to Amalek: He should have said to him: God, who tries the reins and the heart, said to him: Jethro was originally in the same plot with Amalek, both having incited Pharaoh against Israel, but when he saw that Amalek lost this world and the other, he repented of his sinful ways, saying: At first Moses was inclined to give no ear to this letter, but God said to him: I permitted Jethro to approach Me, and did not push him from Me. So do thou, too, receive this man, who desires to betake himself under the wings of the Shekinah, let him approach, and do not repulse him. Before Moses told his

father-in-law of the great miracles God had wrought for Egypt, such as the exodus from Egypt, the cleaving of the sea, the rain of manna, and the rest, he offered him the greeting of peace; for great is peace, that precedes event he praise of God. He said, moreover, "In the manna that God gives us we perceive the taste of bread, of meat, of fish, in short, of all the dishes there are. Out of the well that God gives us we draw a drink that possesses the taste of old wine as well as new, of milk and of honey, in short, of all the beverages that exist. In truth, it reflects shame upon Moses and the sixty myriads of Jews that they had not given thanks to God for the release from Egypt, until Jethro came and did so. Truly, great is the Lord before all gods, for whereas formerly not a single slave succeeded in escaping from Egypt, He led sixty myriads out of Egypt. There is no god whom I had not, at some time in my life, worshipped, but not I must admit that none is like the God of Israel. This God had not been unbeknown to me heretofore, but now I know Him better, for His fame will sound throughout the world, because He visited upon the Egyptians exactly what they had planned to undertake against Israel. They wanted to destroy Israel by water, and by water were they destroyed. In this he followed the example of Abraham, who in person waited on the three angels, though they appeared in the guise of idolatrous Arabs. They ate, drank and were merry, while Aaron and Jethro with their relatives sang songs of thanksgiving to God, and praised Him as the Creator and Donor of their lives and their liberty. At the same time they gave due appreciation to Moses, through whose courage everything had happily come to pass. In his words of gratitude to Moses, Jethro also gave expression to many glorious eulogies on the people of Israel, but he especially extolled Moses, who through difficulties and dangers had shown so much courage in the salvation of his friends. In the first months, however, he had no opportunity of observing Moses in the capacity of judge, for Moses spent the time from the day of the revelation to the tenth day of Tishri almost entirely in heaven. Jethro now perceived how Moses sat like a king upon his throne, while the people, who brought their lawsuits before him, stood around him. This so displeased him that he said to his son-in-law: It is not in my honor that they stand, but in honor of God, whose judgement they would know. When they are in doubt over a case of clean or unclean, or when there is a dispute between two parties, which they desire to have settled exactly according to the law, or in conformity with a compromise, they come to me; and when the parties at dispute leave me, they part as friends and no longer enemies. I expound to the people, besides, the words of God and His decisions. But if thou hearkenest now to my voice, thou wilt fare well, provided God approves of my plan. And thou shalt instruct them how to pray in the synagogues, how to tend the sick, how to bury their dead, how to render the services of friendship to one another, how to practice justice, and how, in some cases, not to insist on strict justice. But as for trying the people as a judge, thou shouldst, in accordance with thy prophetic insight, choose men that are possessed of wisdom, fear of God, modesty, hate of covetousness, love of truth, love of humanity, and a good name, and these shall devote all their time to trials, and to the study of the study of the Torah. If God approve my plan, then wilt thou and Aaron, his sons and the seventy elders, and all the people dwell in peace. The people were very disputatious, being willing to spend seventy silverlings in litigation costs for the sake of gaining one silverling, and did their utmost to lengthen their disputes at law. When on say that Moses was about to cast a decision against him, he demanded that his lawsuit be adjourned, declaring that had witnesses and other proofs, which he would bring forward on the next occasion. But they were not merely litigious and disputations, they were also spiteful, and vented their temper on Moses. If Moses went out early, they would say: I can no longer bear you alone. The Lord, God of you fathers, make you a thousand times so many as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you! God spoke to our father Abraham: I give you my blessing, but the blessing of God remains preserved for ye, and He will bless you unlimitedly, and multiply you as the fish of the sea and the sands on the seashore, as the star in the sky and the plants on the earth. Do not think, however, that I feel I must abide by your choice, for it depends solely upon me, whether or not I shall appoint them.

**Chapter 2 : Legends of the Jews - Wikipedia**

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It was at the same time a warning to the tribe of Simeon, that committed whoredom at Shittim with the daughters of Moab, to be mindful of chastity, and like its stone, to suffer no prostitution. This stone has the virtue of making him who wears it wise; but true wisdom is the fear of God, and it was this tribe alone that did not join in the worship of the Golden Calf. This stone increases strength of vision and heals many diseases, as the Torah, likewise, to which this tribe was so devoted, enlightens the eye and makes the body well. The white pearl is the stone of Zebulun, for with his merchant ships he sailed the sea and drew his sustenance from the ocean from which the pearl, too, is drawn. The pearl has also the quality of bringing its owner sleep, and it is all the more to the credit of this tribe that they nevertheless spent their nights on commercial ventures to maintain their brother-tribe Issachar, that lived only for the study of the Torah. The pearl is, furthermore, round, like the fortune of the rich, that turns like a wheel, and in this way the wealthy tribe of Zebulun were kept in mind of the fickleness of fortune. Sometimes he was angry with them for having sold into slavery Joseph, the only other brother by his mother Rachel, and in this mood he came near betraying their deed to his father; but, that he might not disgrace his brothers, he did not divulge their secret. To this discretion on his part alludes the Hebrew name of his stone, Yashpeh, which signifies, "There is a mouth," for Benjamin, though he had a mouth, did not utter the words that would have covered his brothers with disgrace. For whenever the king or the head of the Sanhedrin wished to get directions from the Urim and Tummim he betook himself to the high priest. The latter, robed in his breastplate and ephod, bade him look into his face and submit his inquiry. The high priest, looking down on his breastplate, then looked to see which of the letters engraved on the stones shone out most brightly, and then constructed the answer out of these letters. Yered, "He will pursue. Only a high priest who was permeated with the Holy Spirit, and over whom rested the Shekinah, might obtain an answer, for in other cases the stones withheld their power. But if the high priest was worthy, he received an answer to every inquiry, for on these stones were engraved all the letters of the alphabet, so that all conceivable words could be constructed from them. At the same time he impressed upon them that, however pious a deed participation in the construction of the Tabernacle might be, still they might under no circumstances break the Sabbath to hasten to building of the sanctuary. Moses thereupon expounded to them the kind of work that was permissible on the Sabbath, and the king that was prohibited, for there were not less than thirty-nine occupations the pursuit of which on the Sabbath was punishable by death. He summoned the people to these teachings with the words: They were not content to bring things out of their houses and treasuries, but forcibly snatched ornaments from their wives, their daughters, and their sons, and brought them to Moses for the construction of the Tabernacle. In this way they thought they could cancel their sin in having fashioned the Golden Calf; then had they used their ornaments in the construction of the idol, and now they employed them for the sanctuary of God. They did this in no miraculous a way, that they spun the wool while it was still upon the goats. If thou doest so because thou wantest in the sanctuary nothing that women use to enhance their charms, behold, here are our cloaks that we use to conceal ourselves from the eyes of the men. When in Egypt the men were exhausted from their heavy labors, the women were wont to come to them with food and drink, take out their mirrors, and caressingly say to their husbands: Take now these mirrors and fashion out of them the laver that contains the water for the sanctifying of the priests. As formerly the mirrors had been used to kindle conjugal affection, so out of them was made the vessel for the water that was to restore broken peace between husband and wife. The princes of the tribes came almost too late with their contributions, and at the last moment they brought the precious stones for the garments of Aaron, that they might not be entirely unrepresented in the sanctuary. But God took their delay amiss, and for this reason they later sought to be the first to offer up sacrifices in the sanctuary. He began his work by fashioning the boards, then attended to the overlaying of them, and when he had completed these things, he set to work to prepare the curtains, then completed the Ark with the penance-cover belonging to it, and finally the table for the

shewbread, and the candlestick. The mockers among Israel, of course, to whom this was not known, made fun of Moses, saying: If he showed himself upon the street, they called out to one another: But when it came to giving his account, he forgot one item of seven hundred seventy-five shekels which he had expended for hooks upon which to hang the curtains of the Tabernacle. Then, as he suddenly raised his eyes, he saw the Shekinah resting on the hooks and was reminded of his omission of this expenditure. Thereafter all Israel became convinced that Moses was a faithful and reliable administrator. Now all went to Bezalel and his assistant Oholiab, saying to them: Look now upon this completed work, and tell us if we have omitted aught, or have done aught we should have refrained from doing, examine it with care and answer us. Bezalel and Oholiab failed to set it up, and all the wise men as well! But God said to him: For this reason did it come to pass that none could set up the Tabernacle, for I want all Israel to see that it cannot stand if thou dost not set it up. I do not know how to put it up. Hardly had Moses put his hand upon the Tabernacle, when it stood erect, and the rumors among the people that Moses had arbitrarily put up the Tabernacle without the command of God ceased forevermore. On this occasion the miracle came to pass that twelve lugs of oil sufficed not only to anoint the sanctuary and its vessels, and Aaron and his two sons throughout the seven days of their consecration, but with this same oil were anointed all the successors of Aaron in the office of high priest, and several kings until the days of Josiah. An especial miracle occurred when Aaron was anointed and on his pointed beard two drops of holy oil hung pendant like two pearls. These drops did not even disappear when he trimmed his beard, but rose to the roots of the hair. A Divine voice quieted Aaron, also, who likewise feared the accident that had turned the holy oil to his personal use. During this time Moses performed all priestly duties, even bringing sacrifices for Aaron and his sons, and sprinkling them with the blood of these sacrifices. But effect his appointment before all Israel, that he may be honored in this way, and at the same time warn the people that after the choice of Aaron none may assume priestly rights. Gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the Tabernacle. How shall I be able to assemble before the door of the Tabernacle, a space that measures only two seah, sixty myriads of adult men and as many youths? Greater miracles than this have I accomplished. The heaven was originally as thin and as small as the retina of the eye, still I caused it to stretch over all the world from one end to the other. Moses made a sin offering because he feared that among the gifts out of which the sanctuary had been constructed, there might have been ill-gotten gains, and God loves justice and hates loot as an offering, Moses through a sin offering sought to obtain forgiveness for a possible wrong. During this week, however, the sanctuary was only temporarily used. Moses would set it up mornings and evenings, then fold it together again, and it was not until this week had passed that the sanctuary was committed to the general use. After that it was not folded together except when they moved from one encampment to another. God, before bringing the flood upon the earth, observed the seven days preceding as a week of mourning, and in the same way He bade Aaron and his sons live in absolute retirement for a week, as is the duty of mourners, for a heavy loss awaited them - the death of Nadab and Abihu, which took place on the joyous day of their dedication.

**Chapter 3 : Legends of the Jews index**

*The two oxen of the peace offering corresponded to the two deliverers of the Jews that sprang from the tribe of Benjamin, Mordecai, and Esther. The five heads each of the three kinds of small cattle for a peace offering symbolized the triple distinction of Benjamin and his tribe by five gifts.*

He had been the treasurer of Pharaoh, and possessed treasures so vast that he employed three hundred white mules to carry the keys of his treasures: Korah had obtained possession of his riches in the following way: When Joseph, during the lean years, through the sale of grain amassed great treasures, he erected three great buildings, one hundred cubits wide, one hundred cubits long, and one hundred cubits high, filled them with money and delivered them to Pharaoh, being too honest to leave even five silver shekels of this money to his children. Korah discovered one of these three treasuries. On account of his wealth he became proud, and his pride brought about his fall. He believed Moses had slighted him by appointing his cousin Elizaphan as chief of the Levite division of Kohathites. Amram, as the firstborn, had privileges of which his sons availed themselves, for Aaron is high priest and Moses is king; but have not I, the son of Izhar, the second son of Kohath, the rightful claim to be prince of the Kohathites? Moses, however, passed me by and appointed Elizaphan, whose father was Uzziel, the youngest son of my grandfather. Therefore will I now stir up rebellion against Moses, and overthrow all institutions founded by him. He saw with his prophetic eye that Samuel, a man as great as both Aaron and Moses together, would be one of his descendants; and furthermore that twenty-four descendants of his, inspired by the Holy Spirit, would compose psalms and sing them in the Temple. This brilliant future of his descendants inspired him with great confidence in his undertaking, for he thought to himself that God would not permit the father of such pious men to perish. His eye did not, however, look sharply enough into the future, or else he would also have known that his sons would repent of the rebellion against Moses, and would for this reason be deemed worthy of becoming the fathers of prophets and Temple singers, whereas he was to perish in this rebellion. The names of this unfortunate rebel corresponded to his deed and to his end. He was called Korah, "baldness," for through the death of his horde he caused a baldness in Israel. Korah, however, was not the only one who strove to overthrow Moses. With him were, first of all, the Reubenites, Dathan and Abiram, who well deserve their names, for the one signifies, "transgressor of the Divine law," and the other, "the obdurate. In the union of the Reubenites with Korah was verified the proverb, "Woe to the wicked, woe to his neighbor. The hatred Korah felt against Moses was still more kindled by his wife. When, after the consecration of the Levites, Korah returned home, his wife noticed that the hairs of his head and of his body had been shaved, and asked him who had done all this to him. He answered, "Moses," whereupon his wife remarked: He was quite ready to make that sacrifice. Shortly before this Moses had read to the people the law of the fringes in the borders of their garments. Korah now had garments of purple made for the two hundred fifty men that followed him, all of whom were chief justices. Arrayed thus, Korah and his company appeared before Moses and asked him if they were required to attach fringes to the corners of these garments. That the people might now be in a position to form a proper conception of the oppressive burden to these tasks, Korah told them the following tale that he had invented: When this woman set out to plow her field, Moses appeared and said: She was, however, mistaken. When the firstling of the sheep was born, Aaron appeared and demanded it, for the firstborn belongs to the priest. She had a similar experience with the wool. But not content with this, he reappeared later and demanded one sheep out of every ten as a tithe, to which again, according to the law, he had a claim. This, however, was too much for the long-suffering woman, and she slaughtered the sheep, supposing that she might now feel herself secure, in full possession of the meat. But wide of the mark! Aaron appeared, and, basing his claim on the Torah, demanded the shoulder, the two cheeks, and the maw. Let the meat then be consecrated to the sanctuary. It shall then be all mine. Such men," said Korah, concluding his tale, "are Moses and Aaron, who pass their cruel measures as Divine laws. They did not, moreover, stop short at words, but tried to stone Moses, when at last he sought protection from God and called to Him for assistance. Hence he said to them: If you can obliterate the boundary between light and darkness, then only you remove the boundary of separation between Israel and the

rest, but not otherwise. Other nations have many religions, many priests, and worship in many temples, but we have one God, one Torah, one law, one altar, and one high priest, whereas ye are two hundred fifty men, each of whom is imbued with the desire of becoming the high priest, as I too should like to be high priest, if such a thing were possible. But I exhort ye not to burden your souls with a deadly sin, for none but the man God will choose as high priest out of the number of you will remain alive, all others will pay with their lives at the offering of incense. He had a prophetic presentiment that he was destined to be the forefather of prophets and Temple singers, and for this reason thought he was specially favored by God. He admonished them to be satisfied with the honors God had granted them, and not to strive for priestly dignity. He concluded his speech with a last appeal to Korah to cause no schism in Israel, saying; "Had Aaron arbitrarily assumed the priestly dignity, you would do right to withstand his presumption, but it was God, whose attributes are sublimity, strength, and sovereignty, who clothed Aaron with this dignity, so that those who are against Aaron are in reality against God. Moses, seeing that it was useless to reason with Korah, sent a messenger to Dathan and Abiram, summoning them to appear before his court. He did this because the law required that the accused be summoned to appear before the judge, before the judgement may be passed upon him, and Moses did not wish these men to be punished without a hearing. These, however, made answer to the messenger sent by Moses, "We will not come up! They went not up, but, as their end showed, down, to hell. What benefit didst thou bring to us? Even in Egypt didst thou try to assume the leadership, just as thou doest not. Thou didst beguile the people in their exodus from Egypt, when thou didst promise to lead them to a land of milk and honey; in their delusion they followed thee and were disappointed. Now dost thou attempt to persuade us as thou didst persuade them, but thou shalt not succeed, for we will not come and obey thy summons. In his anger he said to God: I well know that these sinners participated in the offerings of the congregation that were offered for all Israel, but as they have withdrawn themselves from the community, accept not Thou their share of the offering and let it not be consumed by the heavenly fire. It was I whom they treated so, I who took no money from the people for my labors, even when payment was my due. It is customary for anyone who works for the sanctuary to receive pay for his work, but I traveled to Egypt on my own ass, and took none of theirs, although I undertook the journey in their interests. It is customary for those that have a dispute to go before a judge, but I did not wait for this, and went straight to them to settle their disputes, never declaring the innocent guilty, or the guilty innocent. He went to all the other tribes, saying to them: No, I wish only that this honor may fall to the lot of each in turn, whereas Moses is now king, and his brother high priest. Moses now feared that God would destroy all the people because they had joined Korah, hence he said to God: If a nation rebels against a king of flesh and blood because ten or twenty men have cursed the king or his ambassadors, then he sends his hosts to massacre the inhabitants of the land, innocent as well as guilty, for he is not able with certainty to tell which among them honored the king and which among them cursed him. In Egypt they betrayed the secret of my slaying an Egyptian: They now well deserve excommunication, and the destruction of all their property. These, not at all cowed, were not restrained from their wicked intention, but stood at the doors of their tents, abusing and calumniating Moses. Moses hereupon said to God: Sun and Moon appeared before God, saying: The mouth of hell approached the spot upon which Dathan, Abiram, and their families stood, and the ground under their feet grew so precipitous that they were not able to stand upright, but rolled to the opening and went quickly into the pit. Not these wicked people alone were swallowed by the earth, but their possessions also. Nowhere upon earth remained a trace of them or of their possessions, and even their names disappeared from the documents upon which they were written. They did not, however, meet an immediate death, but sank gradually into the earth, the opening of which adjusted itself to the girth of each individual. The lower extremities disappeared first, then the opening widened, and the abdomen followed, until in this way the entire body was swallowed. While they were sinking thus slowly and painfully, they continued to cry: We acknowledge that Moses is rightful king and true prophet, that Aaron is legitimate high priest, and that the Torah has been given by God. Now deliver us, O our teacher Moses! Without regard to these followers of Korah, who were swallowed up by the earth, the two hundred and fifty men who had offered incense with Aaron found their death in the heavenly fire that came down upon their offering and consumed them. But he who met with the most terrible form of death was Korah. Consumed at the incense offering, he then rolled in

the shape of a ball of fire to the opening in the earth, and vanished. There was a reason for this double punishment of Korah. Now, however, both those who perished by fire and those who were swallowed up by the earth witnessed their leader share their punishment. This terrible death did not, however, suffice to atone for the sins of Korah and his company, for their punishment continues in hell. They are tortured in hell, and at the end of thirty days, hell again casts them up near to the surface of the earth, on the spot where they had been swallowed. Whosoever on that day puts his ear to the ground upon that spot hears the cry. In reference to them she announced the prophecy, "The Lord bringeth low, to Sheol, and lifteth up. Out of all the company of Korah and their families only four persons escaped ruin, to wit: Truly to these two women applies the proverb: When he arrived home and spoke of it to his wife, she said to him: Either Moses remains master and thou art his disciple, or Korah becomes master and thou art his disciple. His wife quieted him, however, entreating him to stay at home. To be quite sure of him, however, she gave him wine to drink, whereupon he fell into a deep sleep of intoxication. His wife now carried out her work of salvation, saying to herself: My husband made a solemn vow never again to take part in dissensions. Thou that livest and endurest to all eternity canst punish him hereafter if ever he prove false to his vow. His wife then went to Moses in his stead. Moses at first evaded her, for he wished to have nothing to do with women, but as she wept and lamented bitterly, she was admitted and told Moses all that had occurred. He now accompanied her to her house, at the entrance of which he cried: For when the earth yawned to swallow Korah and his company, these cried: God was, however, satisfied with their good thought, and in the sight of all Israel, for their salvation, a pillar arose in hell, upon which they seated themselves. There did they sit and sing praises and song to the Lord sweeter than ever mortal ear had heard, so that Moses and all Israel hearkened to them eagerly. They were furthermore distinguished by God in receiving from Him the prophetic gift, and they then announced in their songs events that were to occur in the future world.

*The Legends of the Jews By Louis Ginzberg [] Volume III: From the Exodus to the Death of Moses Title Page Preface Contents Chapter I Chapter II. Chapter III.*

Moses in his meekness did not, however, wait for them to come to him, but hastened to them. When, however, he heard that they had killed only the men but not the women, his wrath was kindled against the leaders of the army, for, "Upon the leaders falls the blame for the faults of the people. It was not, however, proper for him to pronounce a law in the presence of his teacher Moses, and he was accordingly punished for his lack of reverence to his teacher Moses. God had previously said that whenever Joshua wanted to inquire of God, he was "to stand before Eleazar the priest, and inquire of him by judgement of the Urim and Tummin. Phinehas, to make sure that this might not be repeated in the future, put the earthly as well as the heavenly ban upon all those who should drink the wine of the heathens, for the latter used it only as libations to their idols and for immoral purposes. In pronouncing this ban, he called upon the Ineffable Name and upon the holy writing of the two tables against its transgressors. If they come from God, they are a blessing, otherwise they bring ruin. The world had two great sages, Balaam among the Gentiles, and Ahithophel among the Jews, but both of these, on account of their wisdom, lost this world as well as the world beyond. There were two great heroes in the world, Samson in Israel, and Goliath among the Gentiles, but both met death on account of their strength. There were two wealthy men in the world, Korah among the Jews, and Haman among the Gentiles, and both perished on account of their wealth. A similar fate overtook the two and a half tribes that stayed on the hither side of the Jordan. These had grown very rich in cattle through the spoils of the Midianites, and therefore preferred the pasture land on the hither side of the Jordan as their inheritance. But later on their wealth brought them destruction, because, choosing on their brethren, they were afterwards the first that were driven from their dwelling place into exile. Moses did not indeed call them to account for this, but showed them in unmistakable words that it was their duty first to consider men and then animals, by saying in his reply to these tribes, "Build you cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep. One was called Ataroth, "garlanded with fruits;" a second, Dibon, "flowing with honey;" a third, Jazer, "help," for its possession was a great help to those who owned it. These other cities in this region that were names on account of the excellence of the soil were: Nimrah, "gaily colored," for the ground of this city was gaily colored with fruits; Sebam, "perfume," whose fruits scattered a fragrance like perfume; and Nebo, "produce," because it was distinguished for its excellent product. His name was, however, not preserved in this way, for after the death of the conqueror, the old name of Kenath returned again. Moses in this instance illustrates the proverb, "Whosoever loves pious deeds, never has enough of them. For the people said to God: Thou didst promise us a long course of life as a reward for fulfilling the commandments, but supposing now that a man hath slain another unintentionally, and the avenger of the blood slays him, he will die before his time. He was, however, mistaken, for shortly after these laws had been revealed to him, God informed him that he was to look upon the promised land from Mount Abarin, as he should never enter it. Moses thereupon put on sackcloth, threw himself upon the ashes, and prayed not less than fifteen hundred prayers for the annulment of the Divine resolve against him. He drew a circle about himself, stood in the center of it, and said, "I will not move from this spot until judgement shall have been suspended. God quickly called before Him the Angel Akraziel, who is the celestial herald, and bade him proclaim the following in heaven: Consider how much I had to bear for the sake of Israel until they became the people of Thy claim and of Thy possession. I suffered with them, shall I not then take part in their rejoicing? With them I suffered pain, shall not I behold their good fortune as well? But Thou tellest me that I may not cross the Jordan! All the time that we were in the desert I could not sit quietly in the academy, teaching and pronouncing judgement, but not that I should be able to do so, Thou tellest me that I may not. The prayer of the individual for the community was answered, but not so the prayer of the community for the one individual! O Lord of the world! The king shall not enter it degraded to the rank of a common citizen. To the first man didst Thou give a command that could easily be obeyed, and yet he disobeyed it, and thereby merited death; but I have not transgressed any of Thy commandments. Let me, I

pray, enter into the Land, live there two or three years, and then die. How often did Israel sin before Thee, and when I begged and implored mercy for them, Thou forgavest them, but me Thou wilt not forgive! For my sake Thou forgavest the sins of sixty myriads, and not thou wilt not forgive my sin? But know, furthermore, that until now fate had been in thy power, but now fate is no longer in thy power. Rise up from the Throne of Justice, and seat Thyself upon the Throne of Mercy, so that in Thy mercy, Thou mayest grant me life, during which I may atone for my sins by suffering that Thou shalt bring upon me. Hand me not over to the sword of the Angel of Death. In my youth Thou didst begin by showing me Thy power in the bush of thorns, and now, in my old age, I beseech Thee, treat me not as an earthly king treats his servant. When a king of flesh and blood had a servant, he loves him as long as he is young and strong, but casts him off when he is grown old. Thou didst create everything, and in Thy hand doth it lie to kill and to give life, there is none who can do these works, nor is there strength like Thine in the future world. Let me then proclaim Thy majesty to the coming generations, and tell them that through me Thou didst cleave the Red Sea, and give the Torah to Israel, that throughout forty years Thou didst cause manna to rain from heaven for Israel, and water to rise from the well. Why then should I die? Adam stole the forbidden fruit and ate of it, and it was on this account that Thou didst punish him with death, but did I ever steal aught from Thee? I slay and restore to life, but canst thou perchance revive the dead? I glorified the Torah with twenty-two letters, and with all these letters did I glorify thee. I sent thee to Pharaoh, and thou didst lead Israel out of Egypt; through thee did I bestow the Sabbath upon Israel, and the law of circumcision; I gave thee the Ten Commandments, I covered thee with the cloud, I gave thee the two tables of stone, which thou didst break; I made thee unique in the world; I gave thee the Torah as an inheritance, and honored thee more than all the seventy elders. Thou didst set me on high, and didst bestow upon me so many benefits that I cannot enumerate one of a thousand, and all the world knows how Thou didst exalt me and honor me, and all the world knows as well that Thou art the One God, the only One in Thy world, that there is none beside Thee, and that there is nothing like Thee. Thou didst create those above and those below, Thou art the beginning and the end. Who can enumerate Thy deeds of glory? Do one of these, I beseech Thee, that I may pass over the Jordan. There in a tomb fashioned by men, on a bier made by men, and by the hands of men wouldst thou be buried; but now shalt thou be buried in a tomb fashioned by God, on a bier made by God, and shalt be buried by the hands of God. And as in this world I appointed thee over the sixty myriads of Israel, so in the future world shall I appoint thee over the fifty-five myriads of pious men. Thy days, O Moses, will pass, when thou art dead, but thy light will not fade, for thou wilt never have need of the light of sun or moon or stars, nor wilt thou require raiment or shelter, or oil for thy head, or shoes for thy feet, for My majesty will shine before thee, My radiance will make thy face beam, My sweetness will delight thy palate, the carriages of My equipage shall serve as vehicles for thee, and one of My many scepters upon which is engraved the Ineffable Name, one that I had employed in the creation of the world, shall I give to thee, the image of which I had already given thee in this world. He now betook himself to Earth and said: Perhaps for thy sake will He take pity upon me and let me enter into the land of Israel. Art not thou the son of Amram that erstwhile came to me with a staff, beat me, and clove me into twelve parts, while I was powerless against thee, because the Shekinah accompanied thee at thy right hand? What has happened, then, that thou comest before me now pleading? He went first to his disciple Joshua, saying: Pray now thou to God for me, and perhaps God will take pity upon me, and let me enter into the land of Israel. Moses then went to the seventy elders and the other leaders of the people, he even implored every single man among Israel to pray for him, saying: But then one hundred and eighty four myriads of angels under the leadership of the great angels Zakun and Lahash descended and snatched away the words of the suppliants, that they might not reach God. When Israel now saw how the angels dealt with their prayers, they went to Moses and said, "The angels will not let us pray for thee. Standing behind the curtain that is drawn before the Lord, I heard that thy prayer in this instance is not to be answered. I cannot cancel both vows, if therefore thou chooseth to live, Israel must be ruined. The feet that trod the heavens, the face that beheld the Face of the Shekinah, and the hands that received the Torah, shall not be covered with dust! Up to now it was thy duty to guide the people, but not the time it ripe for thy disciple Joshua to relieve thee of the office destined for him. From the first day of Shebat to the sixth of Adar, the day before his death, he went and served Joshua from morning until evening, as a disciple his mater. These

thirty-six days during which Moses served his former disciple corresponded to the equal number of years during which he had been served by Joshua. The way in which Moses ministered to Joshua was as follows. Then he took his undergarment, his cloak, his turban, his golden helmet, and his crown of pearls, examined them to see if they were in good condition, cleaned and polished them, arranged them aright, and laid them on a golden chair. He then fetched a pitcher of water and a golden basin and placed them before the golden chair, so to wash himself. After all these preparations had been made, he bade the herald proclaim: Every one of them said, in tears, "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child! In the meantime approached the hour when Joshua was wont to arise, whereupon Moses entered his room and extended his hand to him. With the measure wherewith thou didst mete out to me, do I mete out to thee; as with a pleasant face thou didst serve me, so shall I serve thee. After he was through with all this, he laid upon Joshua, who still resisted, his rays of majesty, which he had received from his celestial teacher Zagzagel, scribe of the angels, at the close of his instruction in all the secrets of the Torah. When Joshua was completely dressed and ready to go out, they reported to him and to Moses that all Israel awaited them. When Israel saw Joshua precede Moses, they all trembled, arose, and made room for these two to proceed to the place of the great, where stood the golden throne, upon which Moses seated Joshua against his will. All Israel burst into tears when they saw Joshua upon the golden throne, and he said amid tears, "why all this greatness and honor to me? On this day he wrote thirteen scrolls of the Torah, twelve for the twelve tribes, and one he put into the Holy Ark, so that, if they wished to falsify the Torah, the one in the Ark might remain untouched. Moses thought, "If I occupy myself with the Torah, which is the tree of life, this day will draw to a close, and the impending doom will be as naught. He then bade the tribes come to him, and from his hand receive the scrolls of the Torah, admonishing the men and women separately to obey the Torah and its commands. The most excellent among the thirteen scrolls was fetched by Gabriel, who brought it to the highest heavenly court to show the piety of Moses, who had fulfilled all that is written in the Torah. It is this scroll of the Torah out of which the souls of the pious read on Monday and Thursday, as well as on the Sabbath and holy days. Moses on this day showed great honor and distinction to his disciple Joshua in the sight of all Israel. A herald passed before Joshua through all the camp, proclaiming, "Come and hear the words of the new prophet that hath arisen for us to-day! Moses then gave the command to fetch hither a golden throne, a crown of pearls, a royal helmet, and a robe of purple. He himself set up the rows of benches for the Sanhedrin, for the heads of the army, and for the priests. Then Moses betook himself to Joshua, dressed him, put the crown on his head, and bade him be seated upon the golden throne to deliver from it a speech to the people. Joshua then spoke the following words which he first whispered to Caleb, who then announced it in a loud voice to the people. Awaken and proclaim aloud, ye orders of creation; awaken and sing, ye mountains everlasting. Exult and shout in joy, ye hills of earth, awaken and burst into songs of triumph, ye hosts of heaven. Sing and relate, ye tents of Jacob, sing, ye dwelling place of Israel. Sing and hearken to all the words that come from your King, incline you heart to all His words, and gladly take upon yourselves and your souls the commandments of your God. Open your mouth, let your tongue speak, and give honor to the Lord that is your Helper, give thanks to your Lord and put your trust in Him. For He is One, and hath no second, there is none like Him among the gods, not one among the angels is like Him, and beside Him is there none that is your Lord.

*Ma'aseh Book: Book of Jewish Tales and Legends - Vol. 2 By Moses Gaster Jewish Publication Society of America, PS*  
*PRIMARY SOURCE A primary source is a work that is being studied, or that provides first-hand or direct evidence on a topic.*

Therefore Moses made it his concern to seek their resting-place, while the people had but the one thought of gathering in the treasures of the Egyptians. Moses knew that he had been interred in the mausoleum of the Egyptian kings, but there were so many other bodies there that it was impossible to identify it. As soon as he came near them, he knew them to be what he was seeking, by the fragrance they exhaled and spread around. But his difficulties were not at an end. The question arose, how he was to secure possession of the remains. Standing at the edge of the grave, he spoke these words. When Moses came near the coffin, the dogs emitted their warning sound, but he silenced them at once with words, "Come, ye people, and behold the miracle! The real, live dogs did not bark, and these counterfeit dogs produced by magic attempt it! As a reward God gave the Israelites the law, to cast to the dogs the flesh they themselves are forbidden to eat, for the Lord withholds due recompense from none of His creatures. Indeed, the dogs received a double reward, for their excrements are used in tanning the hides from which the Torah scrolls are made, as well as the Mezuzot and the phylacteries. The Egyptians put no manner of obstacle in their way. Pharaoh himself accompanied them, to make sure that they were actually leaving the land, and now he was so angry at his counselors for having advised against letting the Israelites depart that he slew them. For several reasons God did not permit the Israelites to travel along the straight route to the promised land. He desired them to go to Sinai first and take the law upon themselves there, and, besides, the time divinely appointed for the occupation of the land by the Gentiles had not yet elapsed. Over and above all this, the long sojourn in the wilderness was fraught with profit for the Israelites, spiritually and materially. If they had reached Palestine directly after leaving Egypt, they would have devoted themselves entirely each to the cultivation of his allotted parcel of ground, and no time would have been left for the study of the Torah. In the wilderness they were relieved of the necessity of providing for their daily wants, and they would give all their efforts to acquiring the law. On the whole, it would not have been advantageous to process at once to the Holy Land and take possession thereof, for when the Canaanites heard that the Israelites were making for Palestine, they burnt the crops, felled the trees, destroyed the buildings, and choked the water springs, all in order to render the land uninhabitable. Hereupon God spake, and said: I will lead them about in the wilderness for forty years, and meanwhile the Canaanites will have time to repair the damage they have done. They did not venture to attack the Israelites, and the conquest of the land was all the easier. Nor does this exhaust the list of reasons for preferring the longer route through the desert. Abraham had sworn a solemn oath to live at peace with the Philistines during a certain period, and the end of the term had not yet arrived. Besides, there was the fear that the sight of the land of the Philistines would awaken sad recollections in the Israelites, and drive them back into Egypt speedily, for once upon a time it had been the scene of a bitter disappointment to them. Suddenly Ganon came, a descendant of Joseph, of the tribe of Ephraim, and he spake, "The Lord hat appeared unto me, and He bade me lead you forth out of Egypt. Proud of their royal lineage as direct descendants of Joseph, and confident to their valor in war, for they were great heroes, they left the land and betook themselves to Palestine. They Carried only weapons and gold and silver. They had taken no provisions, because they expected to buy food and drink on the way or capture them by force if the owners would not part with them for money. The outcries of the shepherds brought the people of Gath to their aid. A violent encounter, lasting a whole day, took place between the Israelites and the Philistines. The people of Gath realized that alone they would not be able to offer successful resistance to the Ephraimites, and they summoned the people of the other Philistine cities to join them. The following day an army of forty thousand stood ready to oppose the Ephraimites. Only ten of them escaped with their bare life, and returned to Egypt, to bring Ephraim word of the disaster that had overtaken his posterity, and he mourned many days. This abortive attempt of the Ephraimites to leave Egypt was the first occasion for oppressing Israel. Thereafter the Egyptians exercised force and vigilance to keep them in their

land. As for the disaster of the Ephraimites, it was well-merited punishment, because they had paid no heed to the wish of the father Joseph, who had adjured his descendants solemnly on his deathbed not to think of quitting the land until the redeemer should appear. Their death was followed by disgrace, for their bodies lay unburied for many years on the battlefield near Gath, and the purpose of God in directing the Israelites to choose the longer route from Egypt to Canaan, was to spare them the sight of those dishonored corpses. Their courage might have deserted them, and out of apprehension of sharing the fate of their brethren they might have hastened back to the land of slavery. He sent officers with them, whose duty was to bring them back at the appointed time. The exodus took place on a Thursday. They remonstrated and urged them to go back. The Israelites maintained that Pharaoh had dismissed them for good, but the officers would not be put off with their mere assertions. They said, "Willy-nilly, you will have to do as the powers that be command. The maimed survivors went back to Egypt, and report the contumacy of the Israelites to Pharaoh. Meantime Moses, who did not desire the departure of his people to have the appearance of flight before the Egyptians, gave the signal to turn back to Pi-hahiroth. Those of little faith among the Israelites tore their hair and their garments in desperation, though Moses assured them that by the word of God they were free men, and no longer slaves to Pharaoh. Accordingly, they retraced their steps to Pi-hahiroth, where two rectangular rocks form an opening, within which the great sanctuary of Baal-zephon was situated. The rocks are shaped like human figures, the one a man and the other a woman, and they were not chiseled by human hands, but by the Creator Himself. The place had been called Pithom in earlier times, but later, on account of the idols set up there, it received the name Hahiroth. Of set purpose God had left Baal-zephon uninjured, alone of all the Egyptian idols. He wanted the Egyptian people to think that this idol was possessed of exceeding might, which it exercised to prevent the Israelites from journeying on. To confirm them in their illusory belief, God caused wild beasts to obstruct the road to the wilderness, and they took it for granted that their idol Baal-zephon had ordained their appearance. Pi-hahiroth was famous, besides, on account of the treasures heaped up there. The wealth of the world which Joseph had acquired through the sale of corn he had stored up during the seven years of plenty, he had divided into three parts. The first part he surrendered to Pharaoh. The second part he concealed in the wilderness, where it was found by Korah, though it disappeared again, not to come to view until the Messianic time, and then it will be for the benefit of the pious. The third part Joseph hid in the sanctuary of Baal-zephon, whence the Hebrews carried it off as booty. When Amalek and the magicians brought the information to Pharaoh, that the Israelites had resolved not to return to Egypt, his heart and the heart of his whole people turned against them. The very counselors that had persuaded him to dismiss the children of Israel spake now as follows: Or if, besides being smitten with the plagues, we had been compelled to let the Hebrews depart from the land, that, too, we could have been borne with patience. But to be smitten with the plagues, to be compelled to let our slaves depart from us, and to sit by and see them go off with our riches, that is more than we can endure. In general, the time of the exodus of Israel was disastrous for their former masters. In addition to losing their dominion over the Israelites, the Egyptians had to deal with mutinies that broke out among many other nations tributary to them, for hitherto Pharaoh had been the ruler of the whole world. The king resorted to blandishments and promises, to induce the people to make war against the Israelites, saying, "As a rule the army marches forth first, and the king follows in security, but I will precede you; and as a rule the king has the first choice of the booty, and as much of it as he desires, but I will take no more than any one of you, and on my return from the war I will divide my treasures of silver, gold, and precious stones among you. Samael granted Pharaoh assistance, putting six hundred chariots manned with his own hosts at his disposal. These formed the vanguard, and they were joined by all the Egyptians, with their vast assemblages of chariots and warriors, no less than three hundred of their men to one of the children of Israel, each equipped with their different sorts of weapons. The general custom was for two charioteers to take turns at driving a car, but to overtake the Israelites more surely and speedily, Pharaoh ordered three to be assigned to each. The result was that they covered in one day the ground which it had taken the Israelites three to traverse. The mind of the Egyptians was in no wise directed toward spoil and plunder in this expedition. Their sole and determined purpose was to exterminate Israel, kith and kin. As the heathen lay great stress upon omens when they are about to start out on a campaign, God caused all their preparations to proceed smoothly,

without the slightest untoward circumstance. Everything pointed to a happy issue. Pharaoh, himself an adept in magic, had a presentiment that dire misfortune would befall the children of Israel in the wilderness, that they would lose Moses there, and there the whole generation that had departed from Egypt would find its grave. Therefore he spoke to Dathan and Abiram, who remained behind in Egypt, saying: Verily, the congregation of Israel will lift up their voice in the wilderness, and cry, and there they will be destroyed. But his error was profound—he was hurrying forward to his own destruction. When he reached the sanctuary of Baal-zephon, Pharaoh, in his joy at finding him spared while all the other idols in Egypt had been annihilated, lost no time, but hastened to offer sacrifices to him, and he was comforted, "for," he said, "Baal-zephon approves my purpose of drowning the children of Israel in the sea. What affrighted them most, was the sight of the Angel of Egypt darting through the air as he flew to the assistance of the people under his tutelage. They turned to Moses, saying: Now they will requite us for all that hath happened—that their first-born were smitten, and that we ran off with their money, which was thy fault, for thou didst bid up borrow gold and silver from our Egyptian neighbors and depart with their property. Before them was the sea, behind them the Egyptians, on both sides the wild beasts of the desert. Nevertheless our fate in the desert will be sadder than theirs. They at least were mourned, and their bodies ere buried, but our corpses will lie exposed, consumed in the day by drought and by frost in the night. He impressed them with the words, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. They were not agreed as to what they were to do. There were four contending parties. The opinion of the first party was that they seek death by drowning in the sea; of the second, that they return to Egypt; the third was in favor of a pitched battle with the enemy, and the fourth thought it would be a good plan to intimidate the Egyptians by noise and a great hubbub. To the first Moses said, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord;" to the second, "The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever;" to the third, "The Lord shall fight for you;" and to the fourth, "Ye shall hold your peace. The Lord hearkened unto their prayer, for which He had but been waiting. Moses also addressed himself to God, saying: I am like the shepherd who, having undertaken to pasture a flock, has been heedless enough to drive his sheep to the edge of a precipice, and then is in a despair how to get them down again. Pharaoh is behind my flock Israel, in the south is Baal-zephon, in the north Midgol, and before us the sea lies spread out. Thou knowest, O Lord, that it is beyond human strength and human contrivance to surmount the difficulties standing in our way. Thine alone is the work of procuring deliverance for this army, which left Egypt at Thy appointment. We despair of all other assistance or device, and we have recourse only to our hope in Thee. If there be any escape possible, we look up to Thy providence to accomplish it for us. But God cut short his prayer, saying: Sometimes long prayer is good, but sometimes it is better to be brief. If I gathered the waters together unto one place, and let the dry land appear for Adam, a single human being, should I not do the same for this holy congregation?

**Chapter 6 : The Legends of the Jews: Volume III**

*The Legends of the Jews is an epic 7-volume compilation of traditional Jewish stories loosely related to the Bible. Volumes contain the stories, while volumes contain Ginzberg's notes and commentary.*

In his blessing Jacob likened Dan to Judah, hence the tribe of Dan stood at the head of the fourth camp of Israel, and their prince offered his gifts before those of Asher and Naphtali. Jacob in his blessing to Dan thought principally of the great hero, Samson, hence the gifts of this tribe allude chiefly to the history of this Danite judge. Samson was a Nazirite, and to this alluded the silver charger for storing bread, for it is the duty of a Nazirite, at the expiration of the period of his vow, to present bread as an offering. To Samson, too, alluded the bowl, in Hebrew called Mizrak, "creeping," for he was lame of both feet, and hence could only creep and crawl. The spoon of ten shekels of gold recalled the ten laws that are imposed upon Nazirites, and that Samson had to obey. The two oxen corresponded to the two pillars of which Samson took hold to demolish the house of the Philistines; whereas the three kinds of small cattle that were presented as offerings symbolized the three battles that Samson undertook against the Philistines. The charger, one hundred and thirty shekels of silver in weight, corresponds to the nations of the world, whom, however, God repudiated, choosing Israel in their stead. The bowl of seventy shekels corresponds to the seventy pious souls of whom Israel consisted when they moved to Egypt. Both vessels were filled with fine flour. God sent His prophets to the other nations as well as to Israel, but Israel alone declared itself willing to accept the Torah. This nation accepted "the spoon of ten shekels of gold filled with incense," every man among them being willing to accept the Ten Commandments and the Torah. The three burnt offerings corresponded to the three crowns that Israel received from their God, the crown of the Torah, the crown of the Priesthood, and the crown of the Kingdom, for which reason also golden crowns were fashioned on the Ark in which the Torah was kept, on the altar on which the priests offered sacrifices, and on the table that symbolized the kingdom. But the highest of all is the crown of a good name, which a man earns through good deeds, for the crucial test is not the study of the Torah, but the life conforming to it. For this reason also there was a sin offering among the offerings, corresponding to the crown of good deeds, for these alone can serve as an expiation. The two oxen indicate the two Torah that God gave His people, the written and the oral, whereas the fifteen peace offerings of small cattle correspond to the three Patriarchs and the twelve fathers of the tribes, for these fifteen God had chosen. A silver bowl for sprinkling blood recalled Abraham, who was thrown far away from his home. The weight of the bowl was seventy shekels, as Abraham also was seventy years old when God made with him the covenant between the pieces. The charger and the bowl were both filled with fine flour mingled with oil, as also Abraham and Sarah were imbued with a love for good and pious deeds. The spoon of ten shekels of gold alludes to Abraham as well, for Abraham conquered the evil inclination and resisted the ten temptations, whereas the three burnt offerings and the sin offering corresponded to the offerings made by Abraham at the covenant between the pieces. The two oxen for the peace offering indicate Isaac and Rebekah, whereas the three kinds of small cattle allude to Jacob, Leah, and Rachel, but the sum total of the offerings of these three species was fifteen, corresponding to these three and the twelve fathers of the tribes. The silver charger indicated Adam, who lived nine hundred and thirty years, and the numerical equivalent of the letters of Kaarat Kesef, "silver charger," amounts to the same. Corresponding to the weight of "an hundred and thirty shekels," Adam begat his son Seth, the actual father of the future generations, at the age of a hundred and thirty years. The silver bowl alludes to Noah, for, as it weighed seventy shekels, so too did seventy nations spring from Noah. Both these vessels were filled with fine flour, as Adam and Noah were both full of good deeds. The spoon "of ten shekels of gold" corresponded to the ten words of God by which the world was created, to the ten Sefirot, to the ten lists of generations in the Scriptures, to the ten essential constituent parts of the human body, to the ten miracles God wrought for Israel in Egypt, to the ten miracles Israel experienced by the Red Sea. The three burnt offerings were meant to recall the three Patriarchs. The kid of goats indicated Joseph; the two oxen corresponded to Moses and Aaron; the five rams to the five distinguished sons of Zerah: Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara; whereas the five goats and the five lambs symbolized the five senses of

mankind by means of which the existence of things is determined. The sum total of the gifts of the twelve princes of the tribes had also a symbolical significance. The twelve chargers correspond to the twelve constellations; the twelve bowls of the twelve months; the twelve spoons to the twelve guides of men, which are: The twelve bullocks to the kings, the twelve rams to the princes of the tribes, the twelve kids of the goats to the governors, and the twelve sheep to the government officials. The twenty-four oxen for a peace offering corresponded to the books of the Scriptures, and the divisions of the priests, and were also meant to serve as atonement for the twenty-four thousand men, who, owing to their worship of Peor, died of the plague. None among them wished to outrival the others, but such harmony reigned among them and such unity of spirit that God valued the service of each as if he had brought not only his own gifts but also those of his companions. As a reward for this mutual regard and friendship, God granted them the distinction of permitting them to present their offerings even on the Sabbath day. Moses, however, could not enter the sanctuary while a cloud was upon it, this being a sign "that the demons held sway," but waited until the cloud had moved on. The voice that called Moses came from heaven in the form of a tube of fire and rested over the two Cherubim, whence Moses perceived its sound. This voice was a powerful as at the revelation at Sinai when the souls of all Israel escaped in terror, still it was audible to none but Moses. Not even the angels heard it, for the words of God were destined exclusively for Moses. Aaron, too, with the exception of three cases in which God revealed Himself to him, never received His commands except through the communications of Moses. God always allowed a pause to take place between the different laws to be imparted, that Moses might have time rightly to grasp what was told him. It was on this day, also, that Aaron and his sons received the gifts of the priests, for although even at the revelation on Sinai Israel had set them aside, still they were not given to Aaron and his sons until this day when the sanctuary was anointed. In Egypt none but the tribe of Levi observed the Torah and clung to the token of the Abrahamic covenant, while the others tribes, abandoning both Torah and token of covenant, like the Egyptians, practiced idolatry. In the desert, also, it was this tribe alone that did not take part in the worship of the Golden Calf. Originally, the firstborn had been the servants of the sanctuary, but, owing to the worship of the Golden Calf, they lost this prerogative, and the Levites replaced them. It was for this reason that the Levites were obliged to observe regulations similar to those for the cleansing of lepers, because they took the place of men who by their sins had defiled themselves. The offerings that the Levites brought on this occasion consisted of two bullocks, one for a burnt offering whenever the congregation, seduced by others, commits idolatry; and Israel would not have worshipped the Golden Calf had not the mixed multitude misled them. Therefore, too, did the elders of Israel have to put their hands upon the Levites, according to the prescription that the elders must put their hands upon the sin of the congregation. Aaron, like the elders, participated in the ceremony of the consecration, lifting up every single Levite as a token that he was now dedicated to the sanctuary. When Israel moved out of Egypt, the majority of the people were afflicted with physical defects and diseases, contracted during their work on the structures they had been compelled to erect in Egypt. It was a battered and crippled host that reached Sinai, eager to receive the Torah, but God said: Nor do I want to await the coming of another, sound generation, for I desire no further delay of the revelation of the Torah. They remained in this condition until they worshipped the Golden Calf, when all their diseases returned as a punishment for their defection from God. Only the women, during their stay in the desert, were exempt from the customary ailments to which women are subject, as a reward for being the first who declared themselves ready to accept the Torah. When the Tabernacle had been consecrated, God now said to Moses: Thirteen sins are punished with leprosy by God: When Moses said to God, "But behold, they will not believe me," God replied: They are believers and the sons of believers. Thou who didst suspect them wrongly, put not thy hand into thy bosom, He was just about to commit the offence, when "the leprosy brake forth in his forehead. For slandering Moses Miriam became leprous as snow; and Gehazi was punished by leprosy because he frustrated the purpose of Elisha, who desired to accept nothing from Naaman in order that the cure might redound to the glory of God. Moses admitted that he could not pass judgement on this case before receiving instruction concerning it from God. For Moses had the rare privilege of being certain of receiving revelations from God whenever he applied to Him. For it seems as if Aaron had lost his rank, since he may not at all times enter the sanctuary. The statement of the periods for his admission into the sanctuary is also so

indeterminate that I am not at all sure whether they are to recur hourly, or daily, or annually, every twelve years, perhaps even seventy, or not at all. Whether hour, or day or year, for Aaron may enter the sanctuary at any time, but when he does so, he must observe certain ceremonies. Only by depending upon the merits of these pious men and women might the high priest venture to enter the Holy of Holies without having to fear the angels that filled this space. These were obliged to retreat upon the entrance of the high priest, and even Satan had to flee whenever he beheld the high priest, and did not dare to accuse Israel before God. Although, beside this one, a number of other red heifers were provided in future generations, this one was distinguished by having its ashes kept forever, which, mingled with the ashes of other red heifers, were always used for the purification of Israel. But it is in this world alone that the priest can purify the unclean by sprinkling with this water of purification, whereas in the future world God will sprinkle clean water upon Israel, "that thy may be cleansed from all their filthiness, and from all their idols. After all the princes of the tribes had brought their gifts to the sanctuary, and God had bidden Moses to let them offer each his offering, one a day, throughout twelve days, Aaron, profoundly agitated, thought: It seems as if, owing to my sin, my tribe has been excluded by God from participating in the dedication of the sanctuary. Thou, on the contrary, shalt enjoy a greater glory than all of these, for thou art to light the lamps of the candlestick in the sanctuary. Thou biddest us make a light for Thee that are the light of the world, and with whom light dwelleth. You have the white of the eye and the black of the eye, and it is by means of this dark part of the eye that you are enabled to see, and not through the light part of the white of the eye. How should I, that am all light, have need of your light! Hence there is greater glory destined for thee than for all the other princes of the tribes, for their offerings to the sanctuary shall be employed only so long as it endures, but the lights of the Hanukkah festival will shine forever; and, moreover, thy descendants shall bestow the priestly blessing upon Israel even after the destruction of the Temple. When God bade Moses fashion a candlestick, he found it difficult to execute the command, not knowing how to set to work to construct it in all its complicated details. God therefore said to Moses: Even then Moses was not able to copy the candlestick, whereupon God drew its design upon his palm, saying to him: Moses did as he was bidden, and the candlestick shaped itself out of the fire. As on this occasion, so upon other occasions also did God have to present the things tangibly before Moses in order to make certain laws intelligible to him. In this way, for example, at the revelation concerning clean and unclean animals, God showed one specimen of each to Moses, saying: In scarcely half a year they were twice counted, once shortly before the erection of the Tabernacle, and the second time a month after its dedication. He was ordered to take Aaron as his assistant, so that in case he should overlook some of the men Aaron might remind him of them, for "two are better than one. These twelve men were appointed not only to conduct the census, but also to look after the spiritual welfare of their respective tribes, the sins of which would be upon their heads unless, with all their powers, they strove to prevent them. Moses and Aaron nevertheless adjured the princes of the tribes, in spite of their high rank, not to tyrannize over the people, whereas, on the other hand, they admonished the people to pay all due respect to their superiors. The prince of the tribe of Simeon was named Shelumiel, "my God is peace," to indicate that in spite of the sin of Zimri, head of this tribe, through whom four and twenty thousand men among Israel died, God nevertheless made peace with this tribe. The tribe of Issachar had for its prince Nethanel, "God gave," for this tribe devoted its life to the Torah given by God to Moses. Accordingly Nethanel was called the son of Zuar, "burden," for Issachar assumed the burden of passing judgement on the lawsuits of the other tribes. Corresponding to the occupation of the tribe of Zebulun, its prince was called Eliab, "the ship," son of Helon, "the sand," for this tribe spent its life on ships, seeking "treasures hidden in the sand. When Rachel perceived that she would die at the birth of her son, she called him "son of faintness," supposing that a similar fate would overtake him, and that he was doomed through weakness to die young. The tribe of Asher was distinguished by the beauty of its women, which was so excellent that even the old among them were fairer and stronger than the young girls of the other tribes. For this reason kings chose the daughters of this tribe to be their wives, and these, through their intercession before the kings, saved the lives of many who had been doomed to death. Hence the name of the prince of the tribe of Asher, Pagiel, "the interceder," son of Ocran, "the afflicted," for the women of the tribe of Asher, through their intercession, obtained grace for the afflicted. The prince of the tribe of Gad bore the name Eliasaph, "God multiplied;" son

of Deuel, "God is a witness. God was furthermore witness that this tribe had no wicked motive when they erected an altar on their land. The prince of the tribe of Naphtali was called Ahira, "desirable meadow," son of Enan, "clouds;" for the land of this tribe was distinguished by its extraordinary excellence. Its products were exactly what their owners "desired," and all this owing to the plenty of water, for the "clouds" poured plentiful rain over their land. At the census of the people the tribes were set down in the order in which they put up their camp and moved in their marches.

*Legends of the Jews is a chronological compilation of aggadah from hundreds of biblical legends in Mishnah, Talmud and www.nxgvision.com compilation consists of seven volumes (four volumes of narrative texts and two volumes of footnotes with a volume of index) synthesized by Louis Ginzberg in manuscript of German language.*

Besides gold, let them bring Me twelve other materials for the construction of the Tabernacle: I decked you also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon your arms, and chains about your necks. And I put jewels on your foreheads, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your heads. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert, from storms and from rain. Do not think that you need give anything out of your pockets, for all you have belongs to Me, through whom you received it in you passage through the Red Sea, when you took their wealth from the Egyptians. I demand nothing from the other nations, but from you I do so, because it was I that led you out of Egypt. But you shall erect a sanctuary to Me not in this world only, but in the future world also. At first the Torah dwelt with Me, but now that it is in your possession, you must let Me dwell among you with the Torah. But he was mistaken, for when he was about to leave heaven, God said to Moses: Therefore thou are not to execute the building of the Tabernacle in person, but thou art to give them thy directions to be executed. In this book he found recorded all the generations, from the creation of the world to the resurrection of the dead, and the kings, leaders, and prophets set down beside every generation. Then God said to Moses: As a reward for his martyrdom, his son Bezalel was to build the Tabernacle, and one of his later descendants, King Solomon, was to build the Temple at Jerusalem. Bezalel was not only of a distinguished family, he was himself a man of distinction, possessed of wisdom, insight, and understanding. By means of these three God created the world; Bezalel erected the Tabernacle. Through their aid was the Temple complete, and even in the future world will it be wisdom, insight, and understanding, these three that God will employ to set up the new Temple. Bezalel, furthermore, had wisdom in the Torah, insight into the Halakah, and understanding in the Talmud, but more than this, he was well versed in secret lore, knowing as he did the combination of letters by means of which God created heaven and earth. The name Bezalel, "in the shadow of God," was most appropriate for this man whose wisdom made clear to him what none could know save one who dwelt "in the shadow of God. Hereupon wise Bezalel said to Moses: Thou biddest me first provide furnishings and then build a sanctuary. What shall I do with the furnishings when there is no sanctuary ready to receive them? If Thou considerest him suitable, then surely do I! He called him Reaiah, "to behold," for Bezalel was beheld by God, by Moses, and by Israel, as the one who had been decreed for his activity since the beginning of the world. He called him "the son of Shobal," because he had erected the Tabernacle that towered high, like a dove-cote. He called him Jahath, "the Trembler," because he made the sanctuary, the seat of the fear of God. He called him Ahamai, because, through his work, the sanctuary, Israel, and God were united; and finally Lahad, as the one who brought splendor and loftiness it Israel, for the sanctuary is the pride and splendor of Israel. At the side of Bezalel, the noble Judean, worked Oholiab, of the insignificant tribe of Dan, to show that "before God, the great and the lowly are equal. As the head-workers of the Tabernacle were filled with the holy spirit of God in order to accomplish their task aright, so too were all who aided in its construction, yes, even the beasts that were employed on this occasion possessed wisdom, insight, and understanding. He succeeded in convincing Moses that it was the proper thing to begin with the Ark, saying: In this he followed the example of God, who created light before all the rest of the creation. So Bezalel first constructed the Ark that contains the Torah, the light that illuminates this world and the other world; and only then followed the rest. The Ark consisted of three caskets, a gold one, the length of then spans and a fractional part; within this a wooden one, nine spans long, and within this wooden one, one of gold, eight spans long, so that within and without the wooden was overlaid with the golden caskets. The Ark was an image of the celestial Throne, and was therefore the most essential part of the Tabernacle, so that even during the march it was spread over with a cloth wholly of blue, because this color is similar to the color of the celestial Throne. It was through the Ark, also, that all the miracles on the way through the desert had been wrought. Two sparks issued from the

Cherubim that shaded the Ark, and these killed all the serpents and scorpions that crossed the path of the Israelites, and furthermore burned all thorns that threatened to injure the wanderers on their march through the desert. The smoke rising from these scorched thorns, moreover, rose straight as a column, and shed a fragrance that perfumed all the world, so that the nations exclaimed: It remained there up to the time of the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, when it was concealed under the pavement of the wood-house, that it might not fall into the hands of the enemy. This place remained a secret for all time. Once a priest, noticing about the wood-house that something lay hidden under it, called out to his colleagues, but was suddenly stricken dead before divulging the secret. On the Ark were the Cherubim with their faces of boys and their wings. Their number was two, corresponding to the two tables, and to the two sacred names of God, Adonai and Elohim, which characterized Him as benevolent and as powerful. The face of each Cherub measured one span, and the wings extended each ten spans, making twenty-two spans in all, corresponding to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. During the festivals of the pilgrimage the priest used to raise the curtain from the Holy of Holies to show the pilgrims how much their God loved them as they could see in the embrace of the two Cherubim. A tow-fold miracle came to pass when the Cherubim were brought into the Temple by Solomon: This was because the one table sufficed to bring sustenance to Israel so long as they were maintained by manna in the desert; but as the demand for food was greater after they settled in the promised land, Solomon had ten tables set up. But in the Temple also did the table of Moses retain its ancient significance, for only upon it was the shewbread placed, and it stood in the center, whereas the tables fashioned by Solomon stood five to the south and five to the north. For from the south come "the dews of blessing and the rains of plenty," while all evil comes from the north; hence Solomon said: He hereupon betook himself to God once more to be shown, but in vain, for hardly had he reached earth, when he again forgot. When he betook himself to God the third time, God took a candlestick of fire and plainly showed him every single detail of it, that he might now be able to reconstruct the candlestick for the Tabernacle. When he found it still hard to form a clear conception of the nature of the candlestick, God quieted him with these words "Go to Bezalel, he will do it aright. Moses cried in amazement: Solomon chose the number ten because it corresponds to the number of Words revealed on Sinai; and each of these candlesticks had seven lamps, seventy in all, to correspond to the seventy nations. For while these lamps burned the power of these nations was held in check, but on the day on which these lamps are extinguished the power of the nations is increased. The candlestick stood toward the south, and the table to the north of the sanctuary, the table to indicate the delights of which the pious would partake in Paradise, which lies to the north; the light of the candlestick to symbolize the light of the Shekinah, for in the future world there will be but one delight, to gaze at the light of the Shekinah. On account of its sacredness the candlestick was one of the five sacred objects that God concealed at the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and that He will restore when in His loving-kindness He will erect His house and Temple. These sacred objects are: For when God bade Moses make an altar of shittim wood and overlay it with brass, Moses said to God: Behold, the angels that are of burning flame. Beside them are My store-houses of snow and My store-houses of hail. Doth the water quench their fire, or doth their fire consume the water? Behold, also, the Hayyot that are of fire. Above their heads extends a terrible sea of ice that no mortal can traverse in less than five hundred years. Yet doth the water quench their fire, or doth their fire consume the water? Dead things come before Me, and leave Me imbued with life, and thou art afraid the wood of the altar might be consumed! The rod of Aaron, after it had lain for a night in the sanctuary, "brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and even yielded almonds. Not until Manasseh brought the idol into the Holy of Holies, did these cedars wither and cease to bear fruit. The third incident to which God alludes was the stretching of the staves of the Ark when Solomon set them in the Holy of Holies, and the staves, after having been apart of the Ark for four hundred and eighty years, suddenly extended until they touched the curtain. Solomon erected a new altar for offerings, but knowing how dear to God was the altar erected by Moses, the brazen altar, he at least retained the same name for his altar. But in the following words it is evident how much God prized the altar erected by Moses, for He said: But both altars were used daily, as man must also serve his Maker with both body and soul. On the brazen altar sacrifices were offered, as the body of man, likewise, is nourished by food; but on the golden altar, spices and sweet

incense, for the soul takes delight in perfumes only. The materials employed for the constructions of the Tabernacle, the skins and the wood, were not of the common order. God created the animal Tahash exclusively for the needs of the Tabernacle, for it was so enormous that out of one skin could be made a curtain, thirty cubits long. This species of animal disappeared as soon as the demands of the Tabernacle for skins were satisfied. The cedars for the Tabernacle, also, were obtained in no common way, for whence should they have gotten cedars in the desert? They owed these to their ancestor Jacob. When he reached Egypt, he planted a cedar-grove and admonished his sons to do the same, saying: Plant cedar trees, then, that when God will bid you build Him a sanctuary, you may have in your possession the cedars required for its construction. Among these cedars was also that wonderful cedar out of which was wrought "the middle bar in the midst of the boards, that reached from end to end," and which Jacob took with him from Palestine when he emigrated to Egypt, and then left to remain among his descendants. When the cedars were selected for the construction of the Tabernacle, they intoned a song of praise to God for this distinction. But not all the twenty-four species of cedar might be used for the Tabernacle, nay, not even the seven most excellent among them were found worthy, but only the species shittim might be used. For God, who foresees all, knew that Israel would in the future commit a great sin at Shittim, and therefore ordained that shittim wood be used for the Tabernacle to serve as atonement for the sin committed at Shittim. Shittim furthermore signifies "follies," hence Israel were to construct the place of penance for their folly in adoring the Golden Calf, out of shittim wood, to atone for this "folly. The size of the Tabernacle was seventy cubits, corresponding to the seventy holy days celebrated annually by the Jews, to wit: The number of vessels amounted to seventy also; as likewise God, Israel, and Jerusalem bear seventy names; and as, correspondingly, in the time between the building of the first and of the second Temple, there were seventy consecutive Sanhedrin. Like the Tabernacle, so the altar, too had its symbolical significance. Its length and its breadth were five cubits each, corresponding respectively to the five Commandments on the two tables of the law. Its height was three cubits, corresponding to the three deliverers God sent to deliver Israel from Egypt,-Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. It had four horns in the corners thereof, to atone for the sins of the people that on Sinai receive four horns, "the horn of the Torah," "the horn of the Shekinah," "the horn of Priesthood," and "the horn of the Kingdom. God meant to indicate by the exclusion of iron that "in the future time," "the golden Babylon, the silver Media, and the brazen Greece," would be permitted to bestow the gifts on the new Temple, but not "the iron Rome. And as God will reject the gifts of Rome, so also will the Messiah, to whom all the nations of the earth will have to offer gifts. Egypt will come with her gifts, and although the Messiah will at first refuse to accept anything from the former taskmaster of Israel, God will say to him: After Egypt will follow her neighbor, Ethiopia, with her gifts, thinking that if the Messiah accepted gifts from the former taskmaster of Israel, he will also accept gifts from her. After these two kingdoms will follow all others with their gifts, and all will be accepted save those from Rome. This kingdom will be sorely disappointed, for, depending upon their kinship with Israel, they will expect kind treatment from the Messiah, who had graciously received the other nations not connected with Israel. But God will call out to the Messiah: For when Moses returned from Sinai and saw the Calf fashioned by Aaron, he thought his brother was no better than the rest of the people, and had, like them, devoted himself to idolatry. As soon as these were installed as priests, Moses set to work to instruct them thoroughly in the priestly laws. All these garments had expiatory virtues, and each expiated a definite sin.

## Chapter 8 : The Legends of the Jews

*Among the Jewish kings, too, it was the third, Solomon, whom God distinguished before all others. The number three plays a particularly important part in the life of Moses. He belonged to the tribe of Levi, which is not only the third of the tribes, but has a name consisting of three letters.*

## Chapter 9 : The Legends of the Jews Volume III by Louis Ginzberg

*The Legends of the Jews (Volume III: From the Exodus to the Death of Moses) by Louis GinzbergForty years in the*

*wilderness transformed Hebrew slaves into the Jewish people. In the long wandering to the promised land, much happened that the Bible did not record.*