

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE LEVITES AND THE REVOLTS

The "Hebrews" of Exodus were of various degrees of Hebrew-ness. Many were quite Egyptian. Many others were assimilated to Egyptian culture. The most important larger group were traditionally loyal Elohist. Few could have been Yahwist, inasmuch as Moses was only then expounding the new cult.

In what would have been Goshen, at Tell ed-Dab'a, a town of the Middle Bronze Age has recently been excavated. It reveals a heavy non-Egyptian, Palestinian aspect. Skeletal remains, etymology, and artifacts disclose a heterogeneous population of Semitic and other backgrounds [1]. This would support our theory that the proto-Israelites were a geographically separate and autonomous people, to some degree maintaining their old ethnic identity, living among Egyptians and other peoples from East and West, intermarrying, holding a full range of occupations, but now caught up in a xenophobic, anti-semitic period and forced to supply *corvées* and employ birth-control. It is not surprising to learn that the Book of Exodus, as befits a historical work of those times, has much in it of the popular Egyptian language [2].

The some three million souls that the Bible asserts left Egypt are far too many. It is not that aggregated tribes of 500,000 or even more have never moved long distances; they have. The Cimbri and Teutons migrated in this number over a period of years at the end of the second century B.C. from the North Sea region to southern France and Italy; after seriously threatening Roman power, they were annihilated by the Roman legions of Marius.

NUMBERS LEAVING EGYPT

The number of persons in Exodus has been estimated variously from 2000 to 6,000,000 [3]. The great range of figures adds

confusion to the theory of Exodus. We should at least estimate, if we cannot know, how many persons left Egypt and how many were alive to muster for the handing down of the Ten Commandments at the Holy Mountain a couple of months later. Avoiding such estimates, although usual, leaves many questions open and lends an air of unreality to the grand project of Moses and the Israelites. Therefore, reasoning from what little is known and what would have been possible, I shall try to establish how many people were involved at the several stages of Exodus.

The conditions of Exodus, as we have described them, were peculiar. The Exodus of three millions in one group in a few days would imply a line of marchers stretching from Goshen to Horeb; ten abreast with beasts of burden or one wagon, three meters apart, say, would produce a column 900 kilometers long. The flocks and herds would flank the marchers. If so many did leave Goshen, perhaps as a horde fleeing from the disasters, believing that the Israelites possessed secret knowledge of an undestroyed "Promised Land" (as likely a reconciliation of Bible and reality as one might conjecture), the refugees would have dropped to a figure nearer the one out of fifty that a rabbinical source says completed the march.

Even in this case, I would distinguish between the two types of persons abandoning their region, and allow for only 60,000 or so organized marchers at the end of the first two days. I would assume that of the three millions of refugees, some 300,000 may have been affiliated to the Exodus movement, but turned back on the vague promise, half-welcomed, of making up a second wave of Exodus at a later time. This has happened often in tribal migrations and in the wagon-train movements of the American western settlements. Another 240,000 Hebrews more or less would have refused to go from the very first [4], and it would have been with these that the departing Hebrews had their rumored conflicts.

The 60,000 who arrived at Pi-ha-khiroth near the frontier would include more warriors than is typical of a tribal migration. Many would have left their families. Men of working age would be the most anxious to leave. But when the pursuing Egyptian army

was espied, many, especially of the Egyptians and physically weaker elements, would have deserted and fled to all quarters during the long bright night. A drop of some 10,000 persons would be expected at this critical point.

Next came the crossing. Here the legends, as well as logic, would dictate another serious loss, perhaps another 10,000.[5] The panic would be extreme, the time very short, the waters appearing from all quarters of the compass in cross-tides, the muck deep in places, exhaustion general.

The many days of march between the "Sea of Reeds" and Mount Sinai (or Horeb) would have cost another 10,000 lives from weariness, thirst, starvation, and illness. And the assaults of the Amalekites would have cost yet another 10,000 lives, first from the slaughter of Hebrew rear elements and then, much less, of warriors in battle.

The survivors of Exodus, then, would have numbered 20,000 of which probably a full 10,000 were warriors. This figure of 10,000 is one out of sixty of the figure of 600,000 males of battle age carried, as "planned hope" and "lost vision," in *Exodus* and the *Book of Numbers*. The Bible mentions that the Israelites did not march as a single body but in phased stages; too large a number were involved to proceed in a single, or even in two, marching units.

These would then be reinforced by the followers of Jethro, a tribe, or part of one, of the Midianites, who had been struck by their own disasters, and who accepted Yahweh and little else in the way of conditions for becoming Children of Israel. Perhaps 5000 were thus joined to the 20,000 from Egypt.

The 25,000 would still be a considerable and formidable people. Most were warriors, too. It would explain the prompt organizational step that Moses and the Levites took. The twelve tribes of Israel were filled out around cadres of the same name, in almost every case greatly outnumbered by the new elements - Egyptian, Asiatic and non-tribal Hebrews. The tribes were then assigned quotas of fighting men, organized by the decimal

system, which would be called upon by Moses and Joshua when the hour for battle struck.

IMPEDIMENTA

I have already explained, in Chapter One, that the Exodus was not a pell-mell flight of a horde of slaves, but that it was well-organized, with a highly competent and determined Hebrew leadership under Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Hur, and others [6]. As soon as he had finished his last session with the Pharaoh and Egyptian councillors, Moses hurried to Goshen, a few hours away. He may have cut across to a planned rendezvous with the advance elements already moving out. So far as he could tell, he had done his job well; the Egyptian forces were under orders not to interfere with the movement.

The people of Exodus were carrying all that they could. The headquarters materiel transported by Moses and the Levites consisted of more than one ordinarily imagines. On the wagon and in the coffin or ark-box carrying Joseph's remains would be the most secret and precious items. It would not hold much. They would also have collected and carried a complete collection of tools, including construction, metal working, medical and sculpturing instruments; metal rods; gold, silver, bronze; copper and lead, and preferably alloys of lead and copper already smelted; perhaps meteoritic iron or even iron from the Caucasus or Anatolia; levers and ratchets; nails; amber or a substitute; glass rods; magnets; surveying instruments; sun dials; water clocks; straps and ropes of various kinds; various small wheels; buckles and pills; artificial and volcanic glass; drugs; poisons; phosphorus (white and red); flint; a large quantity of papyrus; clay tablets; styluses; bales of cloth, especially canvas and wool, and skins of animals; cut hard and soft wood, especially cedar and shittum; written tablets and papyri, containing history, formulas, and instructions; military equipment including tools for its repair - swords, lances, slings, and missiles; staves; possibly some apparatus and models that Levites were working on or knew about; plus a variety of then known and now-forgotten implements and provisions, various idiosyncratic fancies and expressions of ideas of varying

utilitarian possibilities, and, of course, rations for weeks of time, including tons of unleavened bread.

The collecting process had gone on for months. The Bible mentions almost none of this effort. In a number of passages, both in the Bible and the legends, we are offered a strange picture - of the Hebrews first borrowing valuables from their Egyptian neighbors for the trip and then being given them, with a strong implication of blackmailing and looting the frightened people - both Egyptian and Hebrew - who were staying behind, and stripping the ruined houses and settlements.

The implication, too, is that these activities were ordered by the leaders for the purpose of supplying the expedition. It would be in accord with the Bible's mode of expression, also, to lay the activity upon the departing people, whereas, in fact, the Levites and their helpers probably engaged in the work systematically, going to the known sources of the required or desired materials. Livestock was probably rounded up from wherever it was corralled or had strayed, the clip of the ears notwithstanding.

Calculating solely the transportation of the materiel of the headquarters and of the special assault and guard troops, perhaps a hundred carts, a hundred mules, donkeys and horses, and many litters would be needed. After the Levites, the Judah tribe seems to have been organized and of high morale. Moses and the Levites would march in the vanguard preceded by reconnaissance patrols of Levites and Judahs. The throng of followers was too great to organize properly and probably a detachment of Judahs was used as a rear guard, with a small Levite staff, under instructions to delay and hamper any pursuit or harassment but not to fight uselessly for the unorganized crowd of followers.

In the passage of the Red Sea, by which is meant the tongue of waters and lakes extending north of the Red Sea, the headquarters detachment and the special troops, with Moses, would move through first, hoping that some or most of the people would pass before the waters returned.

The sight of the heavily loaded caravan marching out would have been impressive. Reports and rumors of it and its contents would have been immediately relayed to the Egyptian armed forces headquarters and the Pharaoh at Memphis from road guards and small military posts that were not overrun before they could flee. Most unnerving of all might have been the sudden intelligence that a number of trusted officials and technicians had decamped with the Hebrews. The astronomers would have been quite discredited by events; the military would call the next move; logically, it was to pursue and recapture the materiel and slay or take prisoner Moses and the elite element. The pursuit was launched.

When the pursuing force and head of the Empire were lost, the regime of the Middle Kingdom collapsed and the Hyksos entered immediately. They would become aware promptly of the mass exodus when they found the land of Goshen stripped of valuables, livestock and goods. Soon afterwards, the Jews found a detachment of desert warriors at their rear, slaughtering the lagging elements. They showed knowledge of the Jew's history in Egypt. Moses detailed his best troops to engage them and accompanied them. I think that these Amalelite-Hyksos were not encountered by chance; they were on the same mission as the Egyptian forces, to retake the spoils of Egypt.

Moses took part in the first battle, standing on a prominence with Aaron and Hur, holding his rod of Yahweh aloft to encourage the Israelite fighters; before the day was over, he needed their help to keep his arm up. His staff would be the famous staff that performed before the Pharaoh. The three men may have been able to induce an electric charge from the ground and bring about a discharge into the clouds and dust that hovered very low above them. An effect of this kind would tend to intimidate the enemy and revive the Israelite morale. It would be especially effective because the troops were battling in near-darkness under the cosmic clouds. Every time Moses lowered his arms, the enemy gained an advantage, it is said [7].

TECHNICIANS AND SECURITY POLICE

More practically, now, we can consider the nature of the Levi's, the Levites, who were critical in the management of Exodus and the succeeding wanderings and conquests. Not a tribe, not priests, the Levites may have included representatives of all the tribes, says the article in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* [8]. I said in the first chapter, too, that the Levites may have been assimilated Hebraic Jews, many or most of mixed ancestry.

What is a tribe, and what is a nation? The Hebrews of Egypt became in basic ways the Jewish Nation in Exodus. A tribe is sovereign; it may be part of a confederation of tribes, but it can go its own way when it feels it must. Moses put an end immediately to any pure confederation.

It would have been exceedingly difficult to mobilize and lead the Hebrews from Egypt, and organize them into the masters of a promised land, without strong central leadership. This implied a group to wield the central power and carry out the central plan. Such were the Levites who had in many cases developed their skills under the Egyptian imperial administration. Only among the Levites were Egyptian names found in later times[9]. The Exodus marked the end of the Dynasty. In Egypt, the other Hebrews were terrorized and driven to work without pay, "all except the tribe of Levi who were not employed in the work with their brethren...Since they had not been with their brethren at the beginning" they were not disturbed [10].

The Levites appear in modern terms as a kind of technical police and fire brigade. They seem to be in families, yet not a blood clan. They served as individuals. They are competent. They are not as beloved or revered by the people, I think, as were the priests. At first, they are not permitted priestly functions. They have orders to "shoot to kill" should anybody approach the holy premises. In fact, they turn out to be something like the special forces that the Department of Defense organizes from time to time with high technical qualifications because of the special weaponry involved. They were indeed handling deadly equipment. They were in charge of the mobile worship-weapon

system: the tabernacle, tent, altar, and ark. Various wagons were assigned to them for transporting this national equipment [11].

"Historians are still unable to explain satisfactorily such problems as the relationship that existed between the Levites and the hereditary priesthood." [12] Moses developed the Levites as a special arm of Israel. Satisfied that his older "half-brother" Aaron should have the priesthood and guarantee its security, he appointed the Levites, the best educated secular element of the Hebrews, many of whom had served the Egyptians along with Moses himself, to manage the Tabernacle with its equipment and the most precious goods of the people. No wonder there was puzzlement about the Levites centuries later as the environment became more orderly, uniform, and electrically balanced. Why should the Levites have shaved from head to foot, for example, if electric shock were not a danger? From elite troops, the Levites became property and stage managers, with a right to read the Torah following upon the preeminent right of the Kohens or priesthood. However, as one reads in *Deuteronomy* [13], during some lengthy period, after Moses, the Levites performed the duties of the priests themselves.

Moses decided, in the name of Yahweh, of course, that death would be visited upon a priest who approached the Ark with unclean hands - death by accidental or deliberate electrocution in some instances. Down to today, significantly, the Law does not get read in the Synagogue before a Levite washes the hands of the Kohen who is to begin the reading. A psychiatrist's reasons for this ritual purification (and individual problems of the genre) in an uncontrolled liberal society are usually adequate, but shaving one's body completely, wearing special clothes, removing one's shoes before the altar, *and* washing one's hands begin to make up a complex that primordially might have to do with precautions against unwanted electrical connections. And the technical expert is he who insures precautions.

Thus the Levites were to serve, but also to control the priests and their equipment. Exceptions from their control were Aaron, of course, and Aaron's son, Eleazer, subsequently High Priest. The reason is given in one place "that there may be no plague

among the people of Israel in case the people of Israel should come near the sanctuary." [14] Here the intent to avoid a dew of dangerous chemicals and radiation seems clear. The plagues would be widespread outbursts of skin lesions and sores (mistakenly called leprosy), but would include plagues of vomiting, diarrhea and eye diseases, all of which occur with radiation poisoning. These are related in turn to the plagues of Egypt preceding the Exodus, when the red dust poisoned the water and covered the land. The natural excitation, emergence and proliferation of frogs, insects and vermin that would also be lifted and dropped in the cyclonic winds would be connected by observers with the chemically caused plagues.

Yahweh exempted the Levites from the Mobilization and Census of the people because they were his retinue, says a legend [15]. Only Levites from 30-50 years of age were called to active duty. They were divided in eight sections.

Levites were to consecrate themselves to Yahweh in lieu of the consecration of the first-born. The implication is strong here that the Jews were supposed to sacrifice their first-born, of all children and animals, to Yahweh. The Levites might always impress upon the people that they and they alone were responsible for and to be credited for removing a great load of sacrifice from everyone else. Too, one may consider whether there is a threat contained in this relationship, in the fear that the Levites may renounce this surrogation and ask Yahweh for a resumption of the obligation upon all.

Yahweh spoke to Moses and said:

I myself have chosen the Levites from among the sons of Israel, in place of the first-born, those who open the mother's womb among the sons of Israel; these Levites therefore belong to me. For every first-born belongs to me. On the day when I struck all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I consecrated for my own all the first-born of Israel, of both man and beast. They are mine; I am Yahweh [16].

Yahweh said to Moses:

Take a census of all the first-born among the sons of Israel, all the males from the age of one month and over; take a census of them by name. Then you will present the Levites to me, Yahweh, in place of the first-born of Israel; in the same way you will give me their cattle in place of the first-born cattle of the sons of Israel.

As Yahweh ordered, Moses took a census of all the first-born of the sons of Israel. The total count, by name, of the first-born from the age of one month and over came to twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy three.

Then Yahweh spoke to Moses and said,

Take the Levites in place of all the first-born of Israel's soils, and the cattle of the Levites in place of their cattle; the Levites shall be my own, Yahweh's own. For the ransom of the two hundred and seventy three of the sons of Israel in excess of the number of Levites, you are to take five shekels for each, reckoning by the sanctuary shekel, twenty gerahs to the shekel; you must then give this money to Aaron and his sons as the ransom price for this extra number.

Moses received this money as the ransom for this extra number unransomed by the Levites. He received the money for the first-born of the sons of Israel, one thousand three hundred and sixty-five shekels, sanctuary shekels. Moses handed over this ransom money to Aaron and his sons, at the bidding of Yahweh, as Yahweh had ordered Moses [17].

From first to last Moses depended upon the Levites for maintaining his absolute power. According to legend, the Levites were the most faithful to Yahweh in Egypt where so many of the population lost their religious ardor. (I think that they may have had the most skilled and curious religious cultists.) They passed Yahweh's test at Massah ("proof") and at the waters of Meribah ("contention") where they rallied around Moses when rioting began over the shortage of water and before Moses had had time to discover it beneath the rocks [18].

Nevertheless, leadership in domestic security and war went to Joshua, son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, not a Levite. He was Moses' personal bodyguard from the beginning of Exodus.

His devotion, diligence, and aggressiveness were all that Moses could ask for, and sometimes more. He had neither sons nor daughters; when spies were sent to survey Canaan and report back whether Israel should then and there descend upon the Promised Land, Joshua was criticized by the other spies for having little to lose by going into battle [19].

Legend gives several surprising comments on Joshua, more consistent with this book's findings than with ordinary opinion. Joshua grew up without knowing his antecedents; he was raised by strangers, and his father's name, "Nun," means "fish," because, the legend says, he was cast into the waters, and swallowed by a whale, then spit up. "The government appointed him to the office of hangman. As luck would have it, he had to execute his own father." [20] He was called a fool because of his general ignorance and the spies called him a "head-cutter." [21]

BLAME THE PEOPLE

At first, Moses, Yahweh and Aaron were concerned that they would not be able to assemble and march out the mass of people. The Egyptian taskmasters were instructed to demand more work of the Hebrews for their unruliness; there was a general uneasiness, a feeling that the Exodus might not come off, and that all Hebrews would suffer severe discriminatory penalties. Moses and his following prevailed; the plagues were most impressive.

When Moses and the Levites could not control the situation, blame for it is projected upon the people. Because of their unseemly complaints to Yahweh, "His anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burned among them, and consumed some outlying parts of the camp." The people cried to Moses, who prayed to Yahweh, "and the fire abated." [22] Moses no doubt consulted the Ark and recognized that a temporary excess of electricity was leaving the Earth via tent poles and metals and exposed rock floorings. The electrical fire would travel to and enhance cooking-fires in or by the tents.

Having practiced several tricks with Yahweh at the Burning Bush - using an electric jumping rod and phosphorus - Moses employed them on a group of Hebrew leaders at a conference arranged by Aaron. They were impressed enough to hear his proposition, and liked it. But he had other difficulties from the beginning with organizing the people for Exodus. A change seemed gradually to come over him.

When the people cried in terror at the sight of the pursuing Egyptians and reproached those who had brought them out of Egypt, Moses spoke to calm them and to "see the salvation of the Lord which he will work for you today." [23]

The problem of bitter water three days into the wilderness from the Sea of Passage caused murmurings against Moses that he stopped by casting a certain tree made known to him by Yahweh into the waters, which made them potable [24].

When the people groaned with hunger and talked of returning to Egypt, Moses and Aaron addressed them, saying that all was the work of Yahweh:

"For what are we, that you murmur against us?...Your murmurings are not against us but against the Lord." [25]

Quail fell in great numbers, as did *manna*, that could be baked into bread. Moses became angry when people tried to hold the manna overnight and, as he had warned them, it turned foul and wormy.

Then thirst assailed the Israelites. To their reproaches and threats to stone him, Moses retorted "Why do you find fault with me?" and, upon the advice of Yahweh, found water beneath rock. The Levites, we learn, earned high praise for helping Moses to suppress the protesters.

When a protest was raised, the complaint was turned against the people. To strengthen their own position, Moses and Aaron displaced responsibility upon Yahweh, let the people know how

sinful they were to attack the Lord, and then punished them whenever they could.

The Books of Moses are generally unfair to the Jewish people, giving little credence to their opinions, requiring of them self-abasement, piling up rites endlessly, dwelling upon their "unfaithfulness" and exalting the wrath of God. As I labored to fix my mind and feelings within the mental, social, and physical state of the Exodus and Wanderings, I was often diverted by free associations to find myself once again amidst the English dissenters of the 17th century, the American colonial puritans of the same age, and the westward movements of the New Englanders. All of these, which I had studied when young, were attempts by groups to relive the Pentateuch; in some ways they are better analogies than the anthropological and historical comparisons of the Mosaic Jews with other semitic and nomadic groups, which are so common, for we have more information on precisely those matters which are left vague in the Bible - namely the reasons for the resistance to mosaic theocracy, the limits of the theocrats as nation-builders, and the souls and aspirations of the common men and women who were caught up in the new Israels.

Despite the considerable successes of the Jews in surviving as a people within the Mosaic framework and despite their occasional successes, under David and Solomon, for example, in setting up a larger national state, they could not establish an enduring nation over the centuries. It used to be believed that the position of Israel between great nations such as Egypt and Assyria made their military position difficult. But this is *post facto* reasoning; military history reveals a Roman Republic that wrested central Italy from numerous apparently stronger neighbors; a revolutionary France surrounded by enemies, which defeated them all; a Germany surrounded by enemies that required a concerted alliance including overseas America to contain it; and a contemporary Israel that has had to be restrained by distant great powers from conquering an empire in the Near East.

I am permitted, therefore, to think that the dominating influence of mosaism in Jewish history was a principal source of Israelite misfortunes over many centuries. By way of analogy, it was only the breaking away from mosaic theocracy - the taking in of other peoples, the revolt of democratic sects such as the Baptists of Roger Williams in Rhode Island, the coming of new democratic sects such as the Quakers, the rise of free science and a commercial life free of religious and state regulation - that permitted the explosive expansion of American culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries within a unified and great domain.

Because the people of Israel were downgraded and thwarted and kept as Children of God and Moses, the Jewish nation labored between an absolute monarchic vision and the squabbling tribes. The change in Moses, from a supplicating organizer of a loose aggregate of new believers to a religiously inspired autocrat, occurred in the first few weeks of Exodus and might have been predicted from his character. He was afraid at first that the people would not follow him, but once in control of the people he set about becoming their absolute master.

It was no doubt Moses who led the Israelites to believe that they had been abominably enslaved in Egypt. This was required to counter-balance the call of Egypt to which many of the Israelites responded wistfully and by rebellion over many years. It was also a useful myth to inspire gratitude for Moses and Yahweh. The slogan is dinned into their ears: Yahweh (and Moses) led you out of slavery in Egypt. Obey them gratefully.

As soon as possible, Moses proclaimed a "Royal Covenant"[26] to replace the implied covenant with Pharaoh. A new authority, Yahweh, had to replace the old. (Thus were the mosaic Puritan covenanters of New England, who were fracturing their bond with the royal authority of England.)

About a dozen insurrectionary crises are registered in the Bible and legends[27]. In organizing the Exodus within Goshen, Hebrews clashed amongst themselves and with gentiles. A legend goes so far as to say that all Hebrews who refused to

leave Egypt were massacred under cover of the plague of darkness. The leaders wanted no one to know of the dissent in the Hebrew ranks. The Bible gives only a hint of this; Moses and his cohort are opposed by many doubters and realists.

Next, Pi-ha-Khiroth; fights break out as so many desert the Exodus. The Levites acquitted themselves well here, but there was no way of avoiding a great many desertions. The sea was crossed and a great feast of singing and dancing by all, led by Miriam and including angels, took place. But after the ball was over, Israel petitioned Moses for a return to Egypt. The legend recites the story in a reasonable way:

Hardly had they seen that the Egyptians met death in the waters of the sea, when they spoke to Moses, and said: "God has led us from Egypt only to grant us five tokens: To give us the wealth of Egypt, to let us walk in clouds of glory, to cleave the sea for us, to take vengeance on the Egyptians, and to let us sing him a song of praise. Now all this has taken place, let us return to Egypt." Moses answered: "The Eternal said, 'The Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever.'" But the people were not yet content, and said, 'Now the Egyptians are all dead, and therefore we can return to Egypt.' Then Moses said, 'You must now redeem your pledge, for God said, 'When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.'" Still the people remained headstrong, and without giving heed to Moses, they set out on the road to Egypt, under the guidance of an idol that they had brought with them out of Egypt, and had even retained during their passage through the sea. Only through sheer force was Moses able to restrain them from their sinful transgression [28].

Might this indeed have been Moses' greatest error, that he did not turn his expedition around, and, leaving a force to repel the oncoming Hyksos-Amalekites, go back to conquer Egypt in the name of Yahweh?

Then there are protests and demonstrations when the first crisis of thirst occurs, only several days into the desert. The word "murmuring" in the Bible must be distrusted; it means protest,

demonstrations, a crisis requiring defense and resolution by Moses and the armed forces.

Next comes the food crisis. It lets one imagine that most sheep and cattle were lost in the first week of Exodus. Now came the quail - a gift and a punishment from Yahweh. Great flights of the birds fell - probably not quail alone. But the high doses of pollutants to which they had been subjected and which helped to bring them to earth poisoned many of the people. The Anger of God rose and "he slew the strongest of them, and laid low the wicked men of Israel." [29] Quail can carry a viral infection, it is argued, but a legend says that they came in a great wind, and the results were dramatically sudden.

The *manna* was certainly a godsend; it was not only nourishing but probably contained a specific antidote to radiation poisoning as does honey [30]. Next came the second crisis of thirst. Here, on the rock at Mount Horeb, Moses produced water with his rod.

In the third month of the Exodus, Israel was encamped below Mount Sinai. Moses ascended the mountain and, upon his long-delayed return, was greeted by the spectacle of the Golden Calf. This revolt will be described shortly. Then came the mysterious fire of Taberah, so unconnected with a specific misconduct of the people that the most general explanation is required; the Wrath of Yahweh was kindled and burned down portions of the camp. It was an electrical fire. Dissent and complaint were blamed. A legend speaks persuasively on the subject of the fire. The fire wrought havoc upon the *idolatrous tribe* of Dan and upon the Egyptian and foreign mixed multitude [31]. Yet we learn that as a result of this dissent and fire, Moses decided upon the election of the new elders by means of a lottery.

Then Aaron and Miriam personally remonstrated and demanded a showdown with Moses. Yahweh called Aaron and Miriam to the tent. Miriam emerged a "leper." Moses was appeased and kept both at their appointed functions. The people could see that

not even the close-in family could affect the bond of Yahweh with Moses.

A legend says that Miriam and Aaron "talk against Moses" because his wife is a foreigner, a Kushite, hardly true, since Zipporah was from Jethro, the Midianite, not out of Ethiopia. Perhaps it is his second wife, we suggested earlier, also a foreigner. Perhaps Miriam wants Moses to begin a hereditary line of seers of Hebrew tribal extraction. Moses refuses and has Yahweh punish them. A foreign wife is preferable to a Jewish wife; she is without familial and tribal support, without hereditary linkage to Jacob. Moses is not interested in a succession; perhaps he does not foresee the survival of Israel, as we imply later on. He is not "a family man" as we have already indicated.

Next came the Report of the Spies [32]. All who disputed Moses' intimation that the time might have come for an incursion into the Promised Land were executed. Many others died in a plague, for once again harkening to the Call of Egypt. "Let us choose a captain and go back to Egypt, they said." Further all must now wander a full forty years and never would those who had departed from Egypt live to see the Promised Land except Caleb and Joshua who had refused to agree to the majority report.

According to legend, when the people thought that Moses was going to go against the Report of the Spies, "in their bitterness against their leaders they wanted to lay hands upon Moses and Aaron, whereupon God sent His cloud of glory as a protection to them under which they sought refuge." The crowd even cast stones into the cloud in trying to smite them [33].

Moses here does something only a true Machiavellian ruler would do; he punishes the spies for their pessimistic report and punishes the people for believing it. But he believes it himself, and he tells the people that now they must continue wandering because of their lack of faith in him and Yahweh. He also talks Yahweh out of exterminating the Jews for their general pessimism and nostalgia for Egypt.

Later on occurs the serious revolt led by Korah. For this episode, we reserve ample space a little later on. After Aaron's death, bitter civil warfare broke out again, between those who wanted to return to Egypt and those, especially the Levites, who insisted upon continuing toward Palestine [34]. The legend says that they actually retreated eight stations to Moserah. The Tribe of Benjamin lost most of its warriors and six other tribes lost heavily. Several divisions of Levites were mauled and did not recover until the time of David, some centuries later. Peace was made in a great mourning ceremony for Aaron.

Once more there is a grave insurrection, this time at Beth Peor, just before Moses' death, and of this too we shall shortly speak. When Joshua assumed command before the entry into the Promised Land, he instituted severe measures to unify the Israelites. He had all households destroy their god-images, masks, and other sacred representations [35]. And he ordered by command of Yahweh a general circumcision; the Bible says that those born in the desert had not been circumcised [36]. This is odd, coming so long after Moses had appeared to demand it; it does indicate, I think, that circumcision was a relatively new practice without heavy sanctions of opinion and tradition or else that a great many non-Hebrews had joined Israel on exceptional terms, or both. The population was now consecrated to the Holy War in Palestine.

Ringling in their ears were the words of Moses' last address to the people of Israel: "You have been rebellious against Yahweh from the day that I knew you." [37] True words, spoken by Moses-Yahweh, implying once more that Moses and Yahweh came late to know the Hebrews. Moses was not born and bred a Hebrew.

REVOLT OF THE GOLDEN CALF

Moses had gone up to Mount Sinai, at the command of Yahweh, and there received for the first time the Law and the tablets engraved by the finger of Yahweh. Returning from the lengthy isolation on the mountain, he discovered to his consternation that in his absence the people had melted down their gold and

fashioned a calf of it, and around this marvelous image were worshipping, eating, dancing and singing.

For they had beset Aaron, demanding: "Up, make us gods, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us out of the Land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." So Aaron asked for their gold jewelry and melted it and fashioned it into a molten calf. And the people said: "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the Land of Egypt." Whereupon Aaron "built an altar before it" and declared a feast day for the Lord.

The people then betook themselves to the seventy members of the Sanhedrin (the ruling council of elders) and demanded that they worship the bull that had led Israel out of Egypt. 'God,' said they, had not delivered *us* out of Egypt, but only Himself, who had in Egypt been in captivity.' The Sanhedrin remained loyal to their God, and were hence cut down by the rabble [38].

This legend indicates that the Revolt was even more bloody than the Bible depicts (as well as testifying to the cometary bull).

In his fury, Moses cast down and broke the tablets given him by Yahweh. He seized the calf. Aaron blamed the people: "You know the people, that they are set on evil." [39] The people were scattered all about; the military aspect of the camp was quite lost. Moses stationed himself at the gate of the camp and called: "Who is on the Lord's side? Come to me."

The sons of Levi gathered around and Moses' orders were brief and harsh: "Put every man his sword on his side, and go to and from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor." Within the day, the Levites slaughtered three thousand men of Israel. Moses had the image of the bull burned and ground into powder. Then, mixing the gold powder with water, he forced the heretics to drink it. Order was restored. Moses spoke to the people, reproaching them but promising to intercede with the Lord regarding their great sinning. But

Yahweh sent a plague upon the people because of the Golden Calf[40].

Although the Golden Calf disappeared into frightful memory, this was not the last of non-Mosaic Judaism, and most Jews were lost to Israel and Yahwism for the worship of Baal and other gods in the centuries to come. The Northern Ten Tribes, breaking away from the united kingdom to find a northern Kingdom of Israel “worshipped all the hosts of heaven and served Baal.” King Jeroboam founded at Dan and Bethel sanctuaries that rivaled the Temple of Jerusalem. He set up in each a golden calf image to Yahweh, and appointed non-Levites as temple custodians [41]. They were destroyed in 723 or 722 B.C.

Similar events occurred in the Southern Kingdom under Manasseh. Then, shortly before the Babylonians descended upon them and carried them off into exile, Josiah restored Yahweh against much popular opposition. Many Jews fled then and later to Egypt where they worshipped Anat-Yahweh, Venus, “Queen of Heaven.”[42]

What did the Golden Calf represent, if not Anat-Yahweh (as it is called in a Psalm)? It was the child of the comet Venus-Baal-Ishtar-Athene-Minerva-Isis-Devi and a hundred other names from all over the world. The same calf became the sacred cow of the Hindus who were moving just then into India.

The young bull was the apparition of the great comet at some points of its approach and retreat from near collision with the Earth, when it looked like a cow, bull and calf. “Only if we realize the planetary-cometary significance of the *egel* (meaning ‘young bull’, but also ‘roundness’), do we find any sense in the reaction of the People of Israel to the calf.” “... and... they cried: This is thy God, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt!”[43] One legend says that, while passing through the Red Sea, the people saw the Celestial Throne and most distinctly the ox among the four creatures around the throne (lion, man, eagle, ox) and therefore they thought to worship the ox as the helper of God in the Exodus [44]. Another report, already cited,

says that the bull was inscribed on the chariot of the Lord as he drove across the skies in aid of the Hebrews.

The comet was regarded as the offspring of the greater god Jupiter-Zeus-Marduk-Amon-Yahweh in many places, and confused with these divinities, who were universally fire-and-thunder gods.

Moses would not have it so: His Yahweh spoke from heaven and mountains, true, but was a god of electric fire. He filled the heavens but not visibly. He was among his chosen people, went with them in those days in an awe-inspiring physical sense. Still, apparent in the verses of the Bible is the fright of Moses that somehow Yahweh would not act for him in the aftermath of the revolt. He pleads for assurances; he has to repeat the whole act again, returning to the mountain and descending once more, this time in a subdued triumph.

No Golden Calf could fight for the Jews like the Ark of the Covenant. No astrology could have provided a people with so personal a god as did the electrical science of Moses. Yahweh was always moving, always up to something new. All, even in the remote outskirts of the camp, had their attention focussed upon Moses and the Tabernacle.

Moses had every reason to become furious. The shock of betrayal was great. The people were ungrateful, too. They must have hated him to think him dead and become so happy. The fragility of his charisma was apparent. All of his plans seemed wrecked, the designs of the sacred machinery and of the religious center, detailed even to the priestly clothing and ornate draperies. The gold that the leaders had caused to be begged, borrowed, and stolen in Egypt was now unclean, and could not be reused for the instruments of the sanctuary. If the dancing and singing were not enough, a mere glance at the young bull exhibited its sexual connotations. Why was it a young bull - to replace Moses, the old bull? (Moses had already designed an altar with four corner-horns of undesignated species fashioned of wood in one piece with the altar.)^[45] Many of his subordinate leaders had been massacred in the attempted *coup d'etat*. For it

was such; Levites, among others, were involved. A cometary image would replace Moses as the center of sacramental behavior; half of his power would be gone. His electrical science would be demysticized, desacralized.

The reprisals of the counter-revolution were severe. Perhaps thousands were slaughtered. All weapons were seized[46]. The gold-poisoned drink killed many. The legend says it was a form of "capital punishment." [47] A plague of Yahweh raged among the guilty people, until all who were involved were dead or had fled into the desert; Moses exterminated all those who had been unclean. As for the loyal and the non-participating, and for himself, he discussed seriously with Yahweh the question whether they too were unworthy to survive.

After the Revolt, Moses had his tent removed from inside to outside the camp. He posts Levite guards before it and says it is a tent of coming together. Actually it marked a new phase of reaction. He needed greater personal safety. He felt more strongly than ever in isolation from and aversion to the people. Perhaps he thought, too, that one day Yahweh would set the whole camp ablaze with a fire from his "Mercy Seat" and strong winds.

KORAH'S REBELLION

A 13th century English painting of the Rebellion of Korah [48] shows the rebels being assailed from the heavenly canopy by many pointy little tongues of flame. "These tongues remind us of 'little quadrants of light... constantly jumping' along a wire at the Harvard College Observatory at Pike's Peak, Colorado, as described in a report [50].

Korah's revolt posed a grave threat to Moses' absolute rule. The boldness with which the rebels moved in upon Moses and close-in loyal supporters indicates a large confidence in their chances of success. It happens at the semi-permanent encampment at Kadesh, whence a short time before the spies had been sent out. Korah, himself, is rumored to have been Treasurer to the Pharaoh of Egypt. He was both a Levite and a

Kohathite, therefore of the division of Levites directly responsible for the management of the sanctuary, except that the most critical jobs were given to Aaron and his priesthood. Legend has it that Korah was angered at having been passed over by Moses for the leadership of the Kohathites. Moses probably had already had trouble with Korah.

Top leaders, at least 250 says the Bible, were openly lined up with Korah. They had a large popular following, which Moses appreciated. And when the leaders confronted him at the Tabernacle the day after the rebellion began, they brought with them their popular following. Moses invoked the crowd to disperse, and it did so, possibly because he threatened them with a plague and also because he seemed to be striking a deal with the rebels.

The philosophy behind the rebellion was well thought out. The rebels declared to Moses: "You have gone too far! For all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?" Notwithstanding that he is the one accused of exalting himself, Moses transfers the problem to a grasping for the top offices: Isn't it enough, you Levites, says Moses, that you do special services for Yahweh and are near him. "Would you seek the priesthood also? Therefore it is against the Lord that you and all your company have gathered together; what is Aaron that you murmur against him?"[51]

Moses promptly changes the grounds of debate. He does not address the main charge that he, Moses, acts as alone holy, whereas the doctrine of Yahweh is that all Israel is holy, each man in his own special relationship to God, as the Covenant with Yahweh would imply. Moses points out that Levites are in fact privileged and separated from the people of Israel. Thus he begins to isolate them from the people and limit their demands.

Moses then, I think, carries out a secret plan which he had held in abeyance for just this eventuality. No doubt he had conducted experiments with animals, and, I would guess, with prisoners who were caught in holy wars and brought to receive judgement

within the courtyard or even before the "mercy seat" of Yahweh[52].

He announced to the rebel chieftains that, since they claimed equality before Yahweh, they should arrange to present themselves fittingly, lighted bronze censers in hand, with Aaron, before the Holy of Holies to see whom Yahweh would select to receive a sign of his favor. The decision would be up to Yahweh; this is repeatedly stressed. And they must not bring their weapons.

The rebels consented and repaired to their tents. Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and their most faithful assistants went to work. They set the Ark to accumulate its maximum charge short of sparking, Given both the atmospheric charge held by the cherubim and the ground charge gathered by the outer golden sheath of the box and focussing in the rod that extended above the outer box at the rear center of the mercy seat, a voltage of from 20,000 to 100,000 could be accumulated.

The total Tabernacle area was about 15,000 square feet, and was fenced off and guarded. The area enclosing the Altar of Incense before the curtain of the Holy of Holies was some four hundred square feet. Many, perhaps all, of the rebel chieftains, could press into the inner sanctum and the rest would crowd at the entrance. The tent would have been pitched originally on all area where ground currents of negative ions could readily be attracted.

Lightning is the discharge of the electrical potential (termed "voltage") between two points of different charges, when the setting is between air and ground or is air-to-air. Average amperage (current) may be about 20,000[53]. Electrical charges are measured in coulombs. Current is measured in joules or amperes. Resistance is measured in ohms. Electrical discharges can peel a sapling, undress a person, and pluck chickens. The effects of electroshock upon the human body depends upon the individual constitution, both genetic and acquired, and upon the intensity of the current (amperage) which enters the body and where it passes in relation to the heart or brain. "Fatal traumas

from potentials of 10-24 V are described in the literature." [54] The current in such cases is perforce low, even under 100 Amperes. In most deadly instances, voltages of under 400 are involved. "As the great majority of electrical fatalities are due to currents passing between an arm (usually the right) and the legs, the current passes through the chest and affects the organs within it." [55] The longer the "juice is on," the greater the danger.

Earth current can be a source of great danger. If a current of 50,000 amperes enters the soil at a point and spreads out uniformly in all directions, the current density, and hence the voltage drop, along the ground surface will be appreciable even at a considerable distance from the flash. The furrows which sometimes radiate from the point actually struck show that the voltage-drop may be sufficient to produce actual discharges through the soil. The voltage between two points on the earth separated by the length of an animal's stride might therefore be quite sufficient to pass an appreciable current up one leg and down the other. There are many cases of cattle-killing which can be explained in no other manner. When 126 sheep out of a flock of 152 are killed by a single flash it is hardly conceivable that they were all hit by the main channel [56].

But we need not speak only of lightning. Closer at hand and more controllable was the artificial lightning of Moses. Granted that an electrocution of a herd of livestock is possible by lightning, we may surmise that a deliberate mass electrocution of humans would be possible, especially 3400 years ago, when electrical conditions of nature were disturbed. In the earliest beginnings of modern electrical science, and in a mood of dangerous play that forms an ironic and tragic contrast with the Old Testament setting, we find enough ideas and procedures to understand the behavior of Moses and the Israelites. It is worth citing in detail the new scientists of the mid-eighteenth century in connection with Korah's Revolt.

Mr. George Graham shewed how several circuits for the discharge of the Leyden phial might be made at the same time, and the fire be made to pass through them all. He made a number of persons take hold of a plate of metal, communicating with the outside of the phial; and all together, likewise, laid hold of a brass rod with which the

discharge was made; when they were all shocked at the same time, and in the same degree [57].

Scientists elsewhere produced similar effects:

In France as well as in Germany experiments were made to try how many persons might feel the shock of the same phial. The Abbé Nollet, whose name is famous in electricity, gave it to one hundred and eighty of the guards, in the King's presence; and at the grand convent of the Carthusians in Paris, the whole community formed a line of nine hundred toises (1754 meters), by means of iron wires between every two persons (which far exceeded the line of one hundred and eighty of the guards) and the whole company upon the discharge of the phial, gave a sudden spring, at the same instant of time, and all felt the shock equally [58].

Joseph Priestley's own experiment is especially worthy of attention. It is contained in an essay entitled "Entertaining Experiments performed by means of Leyden Phial."

A great deal of diversion is often occasioned by giving a person a shock when he does not expect it; which may be done by concealing the wire which comes from the outside of the phial under the carpet, and placing the wire which comes from the inside in such a manner in a person's way, that he can suspect no harm from putting his hand upon it, at the same time that his feet are upon the other wire. This, and many other methods of giving a shock by surprise, may easily be executed by a little contrivance; but great care should be taken that these shocks be not strong, and that they be not given to all persons promiscuously.

When a single person receives the shock, the company is diverted at his sole expense; but all contribute their share to the entertainment, and all partake of it alike, when the whole company forms a circuit, by joining their hands; and when the operator directs the person who is at one extremity of the circuit to hold a chain which communicates with the coating, while the person who is at the other extremity of the circuit touches the wire. As all the persons who form this circuit are struck at the same time, and with the same degree of force, it is often very pleasant to see them start at the same moment, to hear them compare their sensations, and observe the very different accounts they give of it [59].

Priestley's happy sublimated imagination was far removed from mosaism. (He was, in fact, a founder of Unitarianism.) He could go on and on with games, given a few basic electrical principles.

This experiment may be agreeably varied, if the operator, instead of making the company join hands, direct them to tread upon each others toes, or lay their hands upon each others heads; and if, in the latter case, the whole company should be struck to the ground, as it happened when Dr. Franklin once gave the shock to six very stout robust men, the inconvenience arising from it will be very inconsiderable. The company which the Doctor struck in this manner neither heard nor felt the stroke, and immediately got up again, without knowing what had happened. This was done with two of his large jars (each containing about six gallons) not fully charged [60].

A number of drawings of mass shockings are to be found. The one in figure 18 from Japan is chosen precisely for its lack of explicitness. Made far removed, culturally and geographically, from the scene of the experiments, it would inform or persuade us of nothing scientific. Therefore it suggests how the memory of Moses' electrical operations might be distorted, sublimated, and finally misunderstood over the centuries. The drawings we possess of Korah's rebels show them dying mysteriously, victims of the invisible Yahweh.

In the deep shadows of the past, grim real games were going on. We can watch them only half-understanding. We imagine only the simplest devices and system, even though the applications may have been more sophisticated.

Moses and his officers, early in the morning, poured water over the rock floor of the tent, wetting it thoroughly to make it as fully conductive from the earth as possible. A copper wire was laid down and around the floor of the area. Then the carpets ordinarily covering the floor were replaced, hiding the wire [61]. The wire connected at the Ark on a metal rod extending from the outside golden plate of the Ark. Thus a very large negative charge could gather and be prepared to discharge if contacted or approached close enough by a positive charge.



Figure 18. Mass Electroshock. (Click on the above picture for an enlarged view. *Caution: Image files are large.*)
(Source: Figure 13.2 from Heilbron. *op cit*)

The positive charge was in fact gathering from the atmosphere on the golden cherubim and inner lining of the Ark. The whole inner metallic complex of cherubim and lining were separated by a screen of wood or glass from the stored negative charges of the outside lining and its upright rod.

It is apparent now that the Ark is charging up heavily but is being prevented from discharging upon itself by the insulation. We recall that the wire beneath the carpet is disconnected, so we imagine that it was carried around to the Ark and affixed to a heavy metal bar. The movement of this bar is controlled by the priest Eleazer, son of Aaron, who can push it into a lock against the positively charged wing tip of a cherub. He is insulated by gloves, masks, heavy clothing and non-conducting wood tongs. This is usual equipment for tending the Ark.

The rebels assembled the next morning, lighted censers in hand [62], before the Tent. Their large following had come as well, and Yahweh was enraged. They were threatened and dismissed by Moses. The sight of Joshua and many armed men frightened them, too. But also and even before the test of the rebels with censers, Korah and the two men who were rebels but refused to appear with the assembly at the tent had been killed dramatically

at the instance of Moses. These two men had called out to Moses defiantly: "Are you going to bore the eyes of these men?"[63]

Aaron stood beside the Holy of Holies on an insulator, with insulating footgear and clothing, out of contact with any of the possible lines of electrical charge. He welcomed the rebels, who crowded, elbow to elbow, into the tent. They prostrated themselves before Yahweh, head, arms, knees, feet and censers touching the ground. Eleazer pushed the bar into the wing lock. Most, if not all, of the rebels were promptly electrocuted as the charges raced towards each other and coursed through each man, striking upwards at the brain and heart. Those merely stunned and shocked would be dispatched by the swords of Joshua's guards, moving in from their insulated corners, after the charges were spent, or the connecting bar was pulled out.

"Fire came forth from Yahweh and consumed the two hundred and fifty men offering the incense."[64] Thus the Bible. "The souls, not the bodies of the sinners were burned..."[65] Thus the legend.

Perhaps this method of mass execution was not followed [66]. The Ark might provide a second method by individual sparks. In both is involved the ancient and primitive means of administering justice through the trial by ordeal. Such is the trial of a woman for adultery, for instance, in the Bible[67]. The accused is traumatized, and is deemed guilty or innocent depending upon the outcome of the test or ordeal: "Yahweh will show who is holy, and will cause him to come near to him."[68]

Electrocution by the Ark of so many, individually, would be much more difficult. Since each leader was to be judged by Yahweh, each in turn would be marched to the altar and struck down. Men who were physiologically resistant to fatal shock would be dealt with by sword. (The Abbé Nollet in 1746 "gave the shock with porcelain, and observed that some persons were much more sensible to it than others in whatever part of the circuit they were placed.")[69] Those who refused the test would be dispatched by the sword; for the refusal was taken to be a

confession of guilt. A ring of guards around the tent prevented any break-out of the group.

From a rubbed and electrified jar, Von Kleist, dean of the cathedral in Camin, in 1745, took "a nail, or a piece of thick brass wire" that carried a charge; "it throws out a pencil of flame so long, that, with this burning machine in my hand, I have taken above sixty steps, in walking about my room." [70] Around the same time, Monnier discovered that "the Leyden Phial would retain its electricity a considerable time after it was charged, and to have found it do so for thirty-six hours, in time of frost. He frequently electrified his phial at home, and brought it in his hand, through many streets, from the college of Harcourt to his apartments in the King's gardens, without any considerable diminution of its efficacy." [71]

Heilbron sums up this development: "Physicists soon learned that an electrified phial need not explode to be intriguing: when doing nothing at all, innocently insulated, it unaccountedly preserved its punch for hours or days. Even when grounded it remained potent, provided that its top wire was not touched." [72]

The English experimenter, Wilson, equally early (and all of these experiments and many more occurred before Franklin's discovery of positive and negative charges), found that the first discharge of a simple Leyden jar was the most explosive and dissipated the load quickly. "Whereas, when water was used, the subsequent explosions were more in number, and more considerable; and when the phial was charged with nothing but a wire inserted into it, the first explosion and the subsequent ones were still more nearly equal." [73]

Aaron, of course, came out well from the ordeal. The manner of Korah's death, by turning into a ball of flame that rolled into a cleavage of the Earth, is not too far removed from what might have happened in several cases, with help from the special police, and could have been a report displaced from these to Korah, the most important figure, as often happens in the garbling of news reports.

Now Eleazer was told by Yahweh "to take up the censers out of the blaze; then scatter the fire far and wide." [74] Afterwards, the censers were melted down and fashioned into a plate for the altar. Thereafter nobody save of the seed of Aaron would dare to "come near to burn incense before the Lord ," lest he die. This grim reminder was an endless source of sorrow to the families of the deceased, the legend says [75].

The next day a mob approaches the tent of Moses, "murmuring" as was their wont, whereupon the cloud of Yahweh appeared dispersing them. "Wrath has gone forth from Yahweh, the plague has begun." [76] Some 14,700 people were killed in this manifestation, says the Bible, before Aaron, with *his* blessed censer, could move out and halt the plague. The implication is that the cloud was directed into the crowd of people, for Yahweh told Moses to get out of the way before he consumed them. The cloud was of some type of poison, evidently, probably white phosphorus grenades cast into their midst by Moses' soldiers. Faced with declaring this, or assigning the action to Yahweh, the Bible, as it commonly does, simplified and moderated the action by laying it upon Yahweh; ruthlessness becomes justice when done by him.

To confirm the end of the three-day tragedy, another contest is rigged. This time a beam is split into twelve rods, Aaron receiving the rod of Levi, and the tribes a rod marked for each of them. After a night by the Ark, Aaron's rod has grown blossoms and almonds. Let us say that it has been sundered in a most interesting fashion, which we have already described. Thus Aaron receives one more sign that he is to remain High Priest; Yahweh does not fear nepotism as did Korah and his rebels.

Following Korah's rebellion, Moses dowses, after Miriam's well dries up.

"Moses then fetched out of the Tabernacle the holy rod on which was the Ineffable Name of God, and accompanied by Aaron, betook himself to the rock to bring water out of it."

He refused to find water from any random rock, despite the jeers of those who said he knew how to find water not because of

Yahweh but because he had once been a shepherd. He insisted upon a chosen rock and succeeded in two attempts [77].

FREUD AND THE MURDER OF MOSES

Sigmund Freud, inventor of the psychoanalytic method, and principal creator of the theory of psychoanalysis, could not resist, in the last years of his life, the temptation to publish his highly speculative book, *Moses and Monotheism*. Correctly he foresaw that he would offend Christians and Jews - and, of course, the world of biblical scholarship.

Brave intellectual that he was, Freud offered frank answers to several moot issues. First of all, he claimed Moses to be Egyptian. So were most of the Levites, the retinue of Governor Moses (for Freud placed Moses most likely as the official in charge of Goshen, with its unruly Hebrew population). Moses was a devout follower of Pharaoh Akhnaton (Freud calls him Iknaton) and, upon the overthrow of this great reformer and monotheistic sun-worshipper, Moses aroused the Hebrews and others in his bailiwick to follow him out of Egypt to a land where they might worship Aton instead of Hammon or Amon or the solar identification of Aton, for Moses was more enlightened, and derived the first abstract god. For his pains, Moses received death in the end. Following the biblical scholar, Ernst Sellin, Freud argues that a rebellion overthrew Moses and he was killed.

The curtain then drops upon this hapless abrogation in the desert. Perhaps a century later, the same group, with the now assimilated Levites, make a religious and political pact with their ethnic relatives, the Midianites. If the Midianite "Jews" of Kadesh agree to a watered-down version of monotheism that takes in the ancient patriarchs such as Abraham and Isaac and accept, without mentioning his name, their one god (Aton?), and upgrade the history of the Exodus, then they - the Egyptian faction, now practically a tribe - would agree that Yahweh, a local volcano god who hovers about Mt. Sinai, become their special god, too, and lead them in a totally chauvinistic, ruthless career of expansion to the north and west. As token of their good will

to their Egyptian brethren, the Midianites must also accept circumcision, which Freud, particularly in this case but also in general, believes to originate as a form of mutilation carrying on from generation to generation the punishment of the young for the murder of the father. The leader of this new Israel would be known in the future rewriting of history as Moses (number 2) and the intervening century or so would be forgotten.

Having concocted this scenario, Freud, a Jew, has brought the Jewish nation to an all-time historical low. They were, in the days of which *Exodus*, *Numbers*, *Leviticus* and *Deuteronomy* chant, mere barbaric Semites, acknowledging the memory of a single Egyptian god, guilty of murdering their greatest leader, and set to follow a frightful marauding God, Yahweh, whose main claim to fame was that he was better than any other god they were likely to encounter in the course of their bloody wars. As for the Exodus, while not a stroll in the desert, it was a group departure when conditions in Egypt were unsettled.

Freud does not hesitate, in this forceful little book, apologetically presented, to promote three of his older scientific theses: religion as a collective neurosis; the unconscious collective memory of humankind as having begun its guilt-laden career with the murder of the father of a horde by the sons for possession of the womenfolk; and the slow release of the load of guilt upon tribes as well as individuals by a suppressed traumatic incident of early times or early life.

Freud uses the *Exodus* as a kind of unreliable case study in which the three concepts are displayed. Moses, says Freud, proclaimed a good god, a universal god, and became identified in people's minds with him. Although, to be sure, every attack upon a father or father-figure repeats the primeval prototype patricide, presumably the more meaningful and great the figure (e.g. Jesus Christ, Julius Caesar, Abraham Lincoln), the greater the burden of guilt thereafter. The killing of Moses was the greatest historical shock for the Jews and they have lived ever since in the guilt of this recollection, which they suppressed and denied even a few years after the rebellion against him.

But over many centuries this guilt has worked itself out by an increasing devotion to the ideals of Moses the First: an ever purer monotheism, a dedication to philosophy and intellectualism, a renunciation of instincts to violence, and an obsessive claim to the lion's share of the early history of universal religion. Little by little, they strove to eliminate the Yahweh in themselves in favor of the unknown universal god. They cannot help but feel the chosen people of God; their unique guilt goes to prove this.

It might be thought that, having gone this far, Freud would bestow his blessings upon Christianity. For Christianity, he points out, is founded upon the murder of the son who is also the father. As grateful recipients of this favor from Jesus, who stands for all sinners and who dies for their sins, the Christians are relieved from the very heavy burden of guilt carried by their fellow-Jews (speaking now of the earliest Christians who were all Jews): Freud offers this possibility. But, he argues, it does not happen so. For, the relief from the burden of their sins only permits Christians to behave badly with less troubled consciences. And especially badly towards the Jews who raised the issue in the first place in this particular form.

Hence Freud ends where he began - and where most scholars feel that he should have stayed - in the anthropological perspective that regards all religions as a more or less uncomfortable treatment of neurosis. But a great mind, like Freud, or Picasso, or Plato, or Leonardo, or Marx, or Dewey, is incapable of a work that is all bad. In the present instance, Freud does not labor under the compulsion of biblical scholars to cover up for Yahweh. He makes Judaism a part of the anthropology of religion. He reveals, by his very errors and wild speculations, the flimsy foundations of biblical exegesis that are made to seem solid by the silent consensus of biblical experts to assume or ignore them.

But there are a number of improbabilities and impossibilities in Freud's study of Moses and the beginnings of the Jewish nation. For some of these he was responsible, such as various exaggerations, as when he exaggerates the unconscious guilt felt

by Jews for the "murder" of Moses; it is most doubtful that the average Jew has, since the Romans became Christian, been more guilt-laden than the average Christian. And one must challenge, too, whether a group-trauma operates in the group over the millennia just as an individual trauma functions in a single lifetime. The old bulls are disposed of in many a mammal group without guilt-feelings. There had to be an interposition of conscience, which would require a more fundamental genetic or environmental change than a repetition of an act that had been going on long before humanization occurred.

Freud's official biographer, Ernest Jones, provides illumination: Freud had thought of his idea for many years. Nearly thirty years earlier he was looking upon Carl Jung as his successor and referred to him as "son and heir." Further, "Jung was to be the Joshua destined to explore the promised land of psychiatry which Freud, like Moses, was permitted to view from afar. Incidentally, this mark is of interest as indicating Freud's self-identification with Moses, one which in later years became very evident." [78] I pointed out earlier how, when in Rome, Freud was drawn to Michelangelo's statue of Moses and contemplated it for a long time.

So the "truth" which Freud revered was hidden from the master of unconscious truths. When the time came to analyze Moses, his genius failed him, for he was talking about "himself." Moses was not to have the traits that are strewn about the biblical record for the edification of the psychoanalyst, nor commit all of the horrendous acts that are described or to be inferred. Moses the First was a good man, like Freud; rather flat in profile, to be sure; and Egyptian, not Christian, because of some inconvenient lapse of time. Moses the Second was the Bad One and the Jews had become unhappily stuck with him and his Yahweh.

For two additional errors in his scenario, Freud was not completely responsible, but they are fatal to his work; they are errors of the same biblical historians who denounce him. The first is the false and evasive notion that the Exodus was not a journey through catastrophe. There was nothing in the

experience, Freud believed, to determine Moses' behavior or a people's character or the events of history or a peculiar religion.

The second error that the professional establishment handed Freud was that Akhnaton lived before Moses. Velikovsky has demonstrated the opposite: Moses came first.[79] This of course is logically fatal to the thesis that Moses was a devoted disciple of Akhnaton and led a utopian community to the practice of his religion. The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, to exemplify what confronted Freud, even in 1974, some sixty years after Freud got his key idea, gives the reigning dates of Akhenaton (their spelling) as 1379 to 1362 B.C. and calls him "possibly the first monotheist in recorded history." (Freud uses the dates 1375 to 1358 B.C.) The same work accords Moses the date "fl(ourished) 13th century B.C." and reports that "Ramses II (1304-c.1237) was probably the pharaoh at the time." Freud puts the Exodus between 1358 and 1350 B.C., dates that he regards as shortly after the death and obloquy of Akhnaton. Hence Moses is supposed to have followed Akhnaton, and closely enough so that the fluid dating might even have permitted Moses to have personally known the guidance of Akhnaton.

Freud, the iconoclast, followed the great majority of traditional scholars on the key fact and went wrong. But how was he to know? Velikovsky had not begun to work on the problem. Freud was one more victim of the chaotic Egyptian chronology. The other psychoanalyst gone egyptological, Velikovsky, had discovered the weak point in Freud's psychic armor, and knew "in his heart" that Hebrew and Egyptian history must be synchronized. So he proceeded with an iron will, indefatigably, to disassemble the "unassailable" structure of ancient Near East chronology. In the process, and with the help of an unsupported, unpaid, self-disciplined, polymathic group of scholars, he ended up engaged in an assault upon the belief system of modern science as well [80].

BETH PEOR

There is usually a suspicion of foul play when a person disappears. Moses, says the Bible, went off alone to die and was

buried by Yahweh in a gorge below Mount Nebo whence he had looked out over the Promised Land. (See figure 19) Strangely, it seems, he was buried facing Beth-Peor, where the last of the collective disturbances that marked his rule had occurred [81].

There the Israelites in large numbers had united with settled Moabites or Midianites in unauthorized religious festivals - particularly, recounts the Bible with some indignation, fertility rites encouraging free love in the fields in the name of the local Baal, with the purpose of inspiring nature to greater productivity.

Freud cited Ernst Sellin, a German scholar, as proving Moses died in a revolt, but gives little detail on the occurrence, referring only to Hosea, a prophet of six centuries later, as insinuating the events. As I read this on a remote island, far from a copy of Sellin's book, I sought to follow the hypothesis by myself, in anticipation of ultimately locating the work.

Hosea writes a diatribe against the Israelites, which he acts out. Imitating, so he says, the behavior of Yahweh towards the Jews, he takes in marriage a prostitute. The history of his relationship to the prostitute whom he has freely and firmly wedded then comes to stand for the history of the wedding and marriage of Yahweh and the whoring people of Israel. I thought that Hosea or Yahweh here could as well be Moses, speaking as he often did for the Lord. And I thought of how Moses might have acted in the circumstances of Beth-Peor.

I concluded that there was a possibility that the old man, Moses, would have met his death in a murder or under undignified circumstances - a stone thrown, a stroke - in the course of suppressing the Baal-Peor heresy [82]. He was fearfully agitated and may have been fatally strained in dealing with the heretics and their Moabite seducers. Moses' loathing of sexual deviancy, his strenuous efforts to keep Yahwism free of sexual imagery (No Zeus bull rapist of Europa he! No Baal bull here!) and his severe attitude in general towards breakdowns of law and order, made him more ruthless than ever: the peoples' chiefs were hanged, murders were committed and sanctified, and plague carried off thousands of Israelites, 24,000 says the Bible. Moses

directed, further, the extirpation of the Midianites [83], first the men in battle followed by massacre, then cold-bloodedly the male children and all women who were not virgins. Their camps and cities were burned, and their livestock and valuables taken as booty.



Figure 19: Myth of Moses Blessing the Tribes, and His Death. (Click on the above picture for an enlarged view. *Caution: Image files are large.*)

(Bible of San Paolo Fuori le Mura ca. A. D 870., folio 49v)

The verses on executing the Israelite leaders carry a grim double meaning 1) "Take all the chiefs of the people and execute them in full sunlight before the Lord so that My blazing wrath will be turned away from Israel" and 2) "Cut off the heads of the leaders of the people and impale them in the courtyard before My Holy Tent so that my blazing wrath will be turned away from Israel." Further, Moses ordered his officers: "Each of you slay those of your men who attached themselves to Baal-Peor."

The crowd before the court of the Tabernacle was full of grief and rage. To the many deaths occurring with the raging plagues of Yahweh there was added to their grief this harsh remedy to propitiate Yahweh which would also strike down many of their loved ones.

At this juncture, there passed before their eyes the noble Zimri, with his Midianite companion, the lady Cozbi, as they went into his family tent. Phineas, son of Eleazer and grandson of Aaron,

in a fury, seized a spear and followed them. He drove the spear through their bellies. Moses approved. The plague ceased. Moses heard from Yahweh that Phineas' zeal for Yahweh's honor had saved Israel from extinction. Phineas earned the perpetual right to the priesthood for his family by this action. But what Moses had said was good in the eyes of Yahweh was perhaps beyond the sufferance of the people.

It was Moses' last battle on behalf of Yahweh. He knew that he was to die and perhaps wished to leave things tidy [84]. We note in Hosea, moreover, a repeated violent denunciation of the tribe of Ephraim, to which Joshua belongs, and which took for itself perhaps the richest section of the Promised Land. Possibly, Ephraimites accompanied Moses on his last journey.

No matter how Moses met his death, the Bible would adorn it with some elements of the legendary. Founding heroes of a nation are not permitted to die ignominiously or even ordinarily. Romulus, founder of Rome, was reported to have been swept into the skies where he joined his father, Mars. But, as Freud says, a murder by his own people would be shameful, considering what role Moses must be given in the founding of Israel. Hence what would be in any case censored and elaborated for the sake of the sacred egoism of the tribe would in this case invariably result in strong guilt feelings. Proportionately, as the return to Mosaic rule and law would be demanded by the prophets and priests, the guilt feelings would be restimulated, and work their way out in an even more frenzied and dedicated mosaism or Yahwism. This, then, would be the effect of a murder of Moses upon the history of Judaism. It is to be expected that the verses involved are considered as some of the most confusing and esoteric of the Old Testament.

So much was surmised by me from the normal open lines of the Bible. Three months later and five thousand miles distant, a microfilm copy of Sellin's work at the New York Public Library was consulted [85]. What had Sellin discovered? First, in various places the Bible refers to a Messiah, a servant of God, who is to deliver the Jews from their enemies; this person, says Sellin, was Moses. Moses was once the Redeemer and would

return again to save the Jews and establish in Jerusalem "a Kingdom of God for all nations." [86] In line with Hosea, Moses was considered by tradition, writes Sellin, to have been the atonement victim of the Baal Peor heresy. Long before, Moses had asked Yahweh to kill him in atonement for the sins of the people. This was during the Golden Calf Revolt [87]. The tradition of a second coming of Moses persisted into the third century and is even to be located in the New Testament, in the Gospel of Matthew (17:1-13).

The major thesis is summarized by Sellin: "Moses, in Shittim in the Holy place of his God was killed by a trick of his own people after they turned to Baal Peor and Moses had called them to repent or in any event had called down punishment upon them. Maybe his sons encountered death with him as well." [88] Sellin derives this scenario from three places in Hosea's book, and relies upon a reconstruction and some rearrangement of lines at ambiguous points; in these respects his ability is unquestionable and I would accept his new rendering. I repeat the verses here:

"They have dug a deep pit-trap in Shittim." [89]

"The days of terrible ordeal arrive; now come the days of reckoning.

Israel shrieked:

'A fool is the Prophet, a madman in his mind,

Because of the enormous guilt and the great making of enemies.'

Ephraim skulked by the tent of the Prophet and laid snares on all his paths.

In Shittim in the house of his God they have dug a deep pit.

Like vines at the panicle I found Israel, like an early fig on the fig tree.

They came to the Baal of Peor and gave themselves up to shame, and became abominable fornicators.

I have seen Ephraim as a poisonous plant. Ephraim chose as its hunting game the prophet

and Israel led his sons out to be strangled,

The people shall disappear beyond sight like birds .

*May it be the end of child-bearing, of conception, of
pregnant bellies.
Even should their sons grow, I shall take them away until
there will be no one left.
But a curse upon themselves as well, when I come
skulking upon them.
Give them, o Yahweh, what you can and will,
Give them a childless belly and withered breasts." [90]
"But through a prophet I brought Israel out of Egypt,
and, it was shepherded by a prophet.
Ephraim aroused his anger. Israel made him better.
So long as Ephraim read my Torah the prophet was
preeminent in Israel. Though he made atonement
because of Baal he was killed.
I will leave his blood upon you and I will make you pay
his shame." [91]*

From the new rendering emerge certain clues. A great crime has been committed. The prophet who is involved was certainly not Hosea and is not any prophet before Hosea but Moses. Ephraimites are most involved in the sin and the crime. The people are enraged against Moses, a "fool" and "madman", burdened with the guilt of massacring his charges and hated for it. The conspirators hide themselves on the approaches to his tent, seize him, take him to the Holy Tent where stand the altars, and there dig a pit and bury him in it. They kill his family as well. Not since the original sin of Adam and Eve has such a sacrilegious act occurred. Ephraim (and by implication Israel) repeats the original sin; it is the original sin of the history of Israel from its founding to Hosea's time [92]. For it, Israel and especially the Ephraimites are cursed and must pay in days of terrible ordeal and reckoning. The worst curses of Hosea are in these lines. He would have the land and the people return to the desert so that Yahweh might rule as of old.

The Biblical scholar, Gressmann [93], and others, among them Sellin, believe that the judges refused to carry out the orders of Moses for the killing of all the people implicated in the Baal Peor orgies and rites, and that the Levites, obeying Moses, began to carry out the massacre. I think that these deaths must

be the 24,000 who were scourged by Yahweh, as the Bible reports. The scourge or plague now was of the Levites' swords.

My theory is this: While the Levites were dispatched and dispersed upon their murderous mission, the Ephraimites trapped Moses, killed or disarmed his guards, killed him, buried him, and held prisoner Joshua of their own tribe. When Joshua agreed to recognize the *coup d'état* and to take command, as was his right, and as Moses would wish, he was released, and he ordered the Levites to cease operations. The killings by Phineas are passed over in arriving at the new ruling formula, and his sacred role is confirmed.

We note in connection with Joshua's role a legend educed by Elie Wiesel [94]:

"When Moses refused to die, says the Talmud, God made him jealous of Joshua... God's explanation to Moses that he must die, to allow Joshua to take over, meant to Joshua that so long as he himself would not take over, Moses would go on living. For him to rule, his beloved teacher had to die,"

One perceives here what could be a rationalization of Joshua's conduct and a hint of the killing of Moses.

An impressive network of authorities stress that Moses' death took place in public. It is witnessed, or almost witnessed, or circumstantially witnessed, even though the Torah and Bible assert that he finally died alone. Ginzberg [95] thinks that the legendary assertions originated to combat the vulgar demand that Moses not die but be made to ascend to heaven. A typical scenario has all of the people following him until they were dismissed; then the senate followed him until they too were dismissed; then finally a cloud descended over him and he was lost to the view of his last companions, Eleazer the priest and Joshua the generalissimo and heir apparent to Moses' authority.

Can we decipher this legendary scenario? Only within strict limits. Suppose an alternative hypothesis; not Ginzberg's, but one in keeping with the theory of these pages, is suggested: if a great hero is killed and secretly buried by some of the very

people to whom he is and will remain a hero, he must in legend either "really" not be killed and/or ascend to heaven. Thus Jesus is said to have been voluntarily killed and to have ascended to heaven. If he had been killed by his own people who had continued to believe in him, he would have ascended to heaven when his mission was completed without having being killed. But the Christians' discrimination against both Roman and Jewish authorities permit them to assert that he was killed; they need not cover the fact.

A second point may be induced from the scenario. The public is asserted as a witness of Moses' death, at least down to the very last moment, when the two witnesses are left standing outside of the cloud enveloping Moses. If, on the one hand, the Bible has Moses dying quite alone, and the traditions have Moses dying in public, the contradictory insistence now upon the one, and then upon the other, implies that neither is correct and that both are straining for their own kind of credibility. If the solitary death admits the public, it must explain what kind of public was present and what it saw. If the public death admits the solitary, it must implicitly allow the belief that Moses was secretly killed. So the two legends exist in eternal uneasy partial contradiction,

The legends of Moses' death dwell pathetically upon his desire to live, particularly to live to lead Israel into the Promised Land. The legends seem to feel an injustice is being done. We weep in sympathy with the grand old man's frustration and importunities to Yahweh. Why, too, must he die so alone? Why does Yahweh harden his own heart so, we wonder? Then, in a start of realism, we recall that Yahweh is Moses, and lives after Moses in the minds of the tellers of the story. Moses is condemned, dies, and is buried by Yahweh no more than the sons of Aaron are electrocuted by Yahweh for approaching the Ark in an improper frame of mind. Moses is killed by his enemies and his remains are disposed of. Both murder and burial probably occurred within the sacred precincts. Foes and friends join thereafter in a conspiracy to cover up the deed and refashion its circumstances into a sacred lie. Soon the sacred lie transforms itself psychologically into holy myth.

When the Israelites had crossed over the dry bed of the Jordan, Joshua did not immediately press on to attack Jericho. Instead, following the order of Yahweh to "circumcise the sons of Israel again, the second time,"[96] Joshua performed the ceremony and "when they had completed circumcising all the nation, they kept sitting in their place in the camp until they revived." [97] Yahweh, satisfied, said "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you." In these passages, the Bible explains that all the circumcised men out of Egypt were dead but "all the people born in the wilderness... had not been circumcised." [98] Max Weber believes that the operation was performed so as to emulate the circumcised Egyptians and "allegedly in order to escape the scorn of the Egyptians." [99] Neither reason is correct, I think; rather the mass circumcision was an atonement for the collective guilt in the death of Moses, and a fresh affirmation of loyalty to the army of the confederation in preparation for the campaigns ahead.

The location of Moses' grave was taboo to all except the High Priests and his attendants. In a sense, and as it would appear, Moses died by order of Yahweh. The Bible's insistence upon the unknown grave, while declaring it to be nearby, seems needless unless it is an unwitting confession that Moses was deliberately put into a grave that should be unmentionable and unknown (except in this metaphorical sense). And, as the Bible says, "his eyes had not grown dim and his vital strength had not fled." [100]

Notes (Chapter 7: The Levites and the Revolts)

1. Bimson (1979), 16.
2. A.S. Yahuda, *The Language of the Pentateuch in Its Relation to Egyptian*, vol. 1, London: Oxford U. Press, (1933), 294.
3. Some say that Jacob (Israel) and his twelve sons and families (*Gen. 46:37*) totaling 170 persons in Egypt could not in 430 years grow to 2 millions. They could have grown to 10 or 100 millions or more, theoretically, by the exponentials of population theory. Daiches (p. 82) estimates 2000 to 6000 marched in Exodus, on no evidence. Cf. Ginzberg II, p. 375; 600,000 heads of families plus five children each on horseback, plus a mixed multitude, "exceeding greatly, the Hebrews in number." The "mixed multitude" referred to in *Ex. 12:38* in some translations is termed "persons of mixed ancestry" in the Douay (R.C.) translation and a fn. p.89 defines the term as "half-Hebrew and half-Egyptian." Sir Flinders Petrie (*Egypt and Israel*, p.67) offered an ingenious explanation of the numbers... Instead of translating the Hebrew word for "thousand" as a numeral, he would translate it as "family" or "tent" Thus the number in the tribe of Manasseh in the first census at the Holy Mountain, 32, 200, would really mean 32 tents for 200 people, at six people per tent or family. The total number in exodus would be 5-6000 people. This attractive hypothesis is not accepted by experts in the Hebrew language. G. Mendenhall, 77 *J Bib Lit* (1958) 52-6, says the same word may mean "military units."
4. A legend (IV G fn, 806) claims that only one in fifty Hebrews believed in Yahweh and left Egypt. (Cf. Pseudo-Philo, 14:156)
5. *Psalm 68:22* speaks of the people lost in the depths of the Sea of Passage and promises them redemption and revenge.
6. See also *Ex. 1:9-10*; *Ex. 4:3-4*; *Ex. 16:22*, all indicating an organized movement. But they are not tight tribal groups, more

an insurrectionary movement like the Long March of Mao and the Chinese communists. "The human groups whom he proposes to lead out are only loosely associated with one another; their traditions have grown faint, their customs degenerate, their religious associations insecure." (Buber, 69).

7. *Ex.* 17:8-14.

8. VI *EB* 180-1 *Cf.* Buber, p. 218-9; fn 284, on theory and literature of Levite origins.

9. Freud, 46, and curiously, several XIII Dynasty Pharaohs possessed semitic names (Bimson, 17 fn. 50).

10. III G 248.

11. III G 194.

12. IV *EB*, 180-1.

13. *Deut.* 33:8-11.

14. On Levite functions, *cf inter alia* *Num.* 4:4-15; ch.18; 6:22-7.

15. III G 224, 228.

16. *Num.* 3:11-13.

17. *Num.* 3:40-51.

18. *Ex.* 17:1-7; *Num.* 20:2-13.

19. III G 272.

20. IV G 3; (*cf.* IV G 353-4)

21. IV G 3 fn2.

22. *Num* 11:1-3.

23. *Ex.* 14:13.
24. *Ex.* 15:25.
25. *Ex.* 16:7-8.
26. Buber's term, pp.102-3; 108.
27. Winnett offers a close discussion of the murmurings. For mnemonic purposes, the Biblical editors sought to contain the number at ten. Winnett establishes the important point: the editors labored to change the insurrectionism against Moses into tests of Yahweh.
28. III G., p.36-7.
29. *Ps.* 78:31; *cf. Ps.* 106:13-15; *Ex.* 16:12-13; *Num.* 11:20, 31-2, 33.
30. Ziegler, p. 47.
31. III G 243ff.
32. *Num.* 14:1-4; *cf.* III G 172.
33. III G 277.
34. III G 333ff.
35. Buber, 202.
36. *Joshua*, 5:2-8.
37. *Deut.* 9:24.
38. III G 122-3.
39. *Ex.* 32. 22.
40. *Ex.* 32:35.

41. 2 *Kg.* 17.
42. Velikovsky, *W. in C.*, 297.
43. Gunnar Heinsohn *ltr. II SISR I*(1977), 3.
44. III G 123.
45. *Ex.* 27:2.
46. III G 132.
47. III G 130.
48. *Num.* 16.
49. Daiches, 183.
50. Ziegler, 15.
51. *Num.* 16:8-11.
52. In the early years of modern electrostatics, experimenters used animals and human subjects repeatedly. Grey, in 1731, electrified a boy and suspended him from a rope; he suspended a second boy, unelectrified; then he connected them with a wire and observed with satisfaction that the "fire" (charge) passed to the second boy. (*Cf.* Priestley, pp. 52-3.) Only rarely did someone die; Moses would probably have no qualms about "putting the heat" on prisoners; it would be an easier death than others then in vogue.
53. "Lightning" 10 *EB* 967.
54. Manoilov, 133.
55. 16 *EB* 698, "Electrical shock."
56. Corliss, *op. cit. cf.* Manoilov, 152.
57. Priestley. 122.

58. *Ibid.*, 125-6.

59. *Ibid.*, II 151-2.

60. *Ibid.*, II 152.

61. Joseph Bozulus, an Italian priest and professor, proposed in 1767 to lay two wires underground connecting with a Leyden Jar at one end and close enough at their other ends to let sparks jump in coordination with coded messages sent at the Leyden Jar end. This was one of the first schemes for a telegraph. (Stottely, pp. 226-9.) Heilbron recalls (320) that Le Monnier "passed the shock through a mile of long-suffering Carthusians joined together by grounded iron wires. In fact moist ground may offer a discharge path as good as a human chain."

62. In Galvani's classic discovery of the neural response to electro-shock, the scalpel that discharged to the frog's nerve and caused the leg muscle to contract had been charged accidentally by ionized air emanating from an idle electrostatic machine that happened to be nearby.

63. This follows the New World translation; some Bibles view the "blinding" as a metaphor, e.g. "Do you expect these people to be blind?" (Jerusalem Bible.)

64. *Num.* 16:35. The number seems impossibly large, like the number of those leaving Egypt and other numbers. There may at one time have been a formula for inflating biblical numbers, but no one has yet been able to break the code. Decimal numbers and numbers to the base of 60 are preferred. Here a clue that about 50 might be involved is available in the melting of the censers into an altar plate subsequently (see below, VI-40). The altar would not hold a plate, even a thick one, made up of the bronze of more than fifty melted censers.

65. II G p.303.

66. Martin Buber rather believes (309-10) that Korah and the Rebels were doused with oil, burned, and cast into a pit, than

that they were electrocuted by a powerful battery, as Fisher had suggested (*in Beiträge zur Urgeschichte der Physik in Schweigger's Sinne*, 1833, pp 4 ff), My position would be that such a "voltaic pile" was not beyond Moses' capabilities but was unnecessary, since the electrical trubulence of those times in effect provided continuous "batteries" of nature for electrostatic devices and procedures. As for Martin's theory, it wanders too far from the story, which is obviously attempting to be historical. Velikovsky's similar solution (*W. in C.* p. 56) is similary mistaken; furthermore, he generally interprets electrical fires as petroleum fires.

67. *Num.* 5:16-31.

68. *Num.* 16:5.

69. I Priestley. 125.

70. *Ibid.*, 102-4.

71. *Ibid.* 125.

72. Heilbron, 320.

73. I Priestley, 122.

74. *Num.* 36:37.

75. III G 303.

76. *Num.* 18:46.

77. III G 310-2.

78. Jones, (1 vol. ed.) 246. Cf. I. Velikovsky, *Oedipus and Akhnaton* (1960) 196-202.

79. Velikovsky, A. *in C.* 329 *et passim*, where Akhnaton is made contemporary of Ahab.

80. The literary sources of this paragraph are extensive. Cf. de

Grazia *et al.* (1978), and Society for Interdisciplinary Studies, *A revised Chronology for the Ancient Near East*, Cleveland (Eng.), 1977.

81. *Num* 25:1 ff. "Peor" says a legend, is a second name for an Angel of Death that Moses had once scared away for excessive vindictiveness against the Jews, and by facing Peor, he would continue to frighten the angel away from this same task.

82. *Numbers* 25:3 Baal Peor, it is suggested, is the god or lord of fire. Mendenhall noted there is no satisfactory semitic etymology for the word Peor, but the meaning now seems clear. Peor is the Hittite word for fire. It is the base of the Greek word, *Pyr*, meaning fire, and of course the English word *fire*." (Von Fange, 136.)

83. *Num.* 31.

84. *Deut.* 31:1-2. "The lord spoke to Moses, saying, Avenge the Isralite people on the Midianites; then you shall be gathered to your kin."

85. Ernst Sellin, *Mose and seine Bedeutung fur die Israelitisch-Judische Religionsgeschichte*, Leipzig (1922).

86. Sellin, 81-113, based mostly on a study of Deutero-Isaiah. See also Sellin, *Introduction to the new Testament*, 142-4. The second original sin is rendered below for *Hosea*, 9:10.

87. *Ex.* 32:32.

88. Sellin, 49.

89. *Hosea*,5:2. The accursed Shittim was the point of entry into the Promised Land (*Num.* 33:49; *Joshua* 3:1; *Ex.* 33:1-6; *Hosea* 6:4-6).

90. *Hosea*, 9:7-14.

91. *Hosea*, 12:14-13:1.

92. *Hosea*, 9:10.
93. Citing *Num.* 25:6-15.
94. *Five Biblical Portraits*, South Bend, Ind. :U. of Notre Dame Press, 1981.
95. IV G fn 904.
96. *Joshua* 5:2(New world tr.).
97. *Joshua* 5:8.
98. *Joshua* 5:5.
99. *Ancient Judaism*, 443 fn. 2:92.
100. *Deut.* 34:7.

**[Click here to view
the next section of this book](#)**