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ARTICLE VII.

THE BOOK OF ENLIGHTENMENT.

BY JACOB, THE SON OF AARON, SAMARITAN HIGH PRIEST,
NABLUS, PALESTINE.¹

V. THE PASSOVER WHEN THE DATE FALLS ON THE SABBATH.

To the question, Suppose that the Passover should fall *p. p. 346* on the Sabbath, why is it that sacrifices must take place on the day Friday after sunset, and what are the reasons therefor? my answer here follows.

And my success comes from God.
Praise be to him who is a generous Giver,
Who directs to the right path,
Who does according to his own will,
And as he chooses to do.

In answer to this question, namely, of offering the sacrifice of the Passover when it falls on the Sabbath, and why we are obliged to kill the sacrifice on Friday, I would say, first, that on the Sabbath all manner of work is absolutely prohibited, in accordance with the words of the decalogue, "Do not do any work on it, for he who does any work on it shall die." References of this nature are many in which work is prohibited on the Sabbath. On this account our learned men (may the Lord grant them forgiveness) inferred that the Passover should be done on Friday, as he

¹ Translated from the Arabic by Professor Abdullah Ben Kori, of Pacific University, Forest Grove, Oregon; edited by Rev. William E. Barton, D.D., Oak Park, Illinois.

said, "Do not leave anything of it until the morning." Then he added, "and whatever may be left of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire"; for this addition is surely meant to be performed in case the Passover falls on the Sabbath, for why should God repeat in the same line the same prohibition given before? He said, also, in another place, in Deut. xvi. 4: "There shall not be left any of the flesh which thou shalt sacrifice on the first day until the morning." This, also, would indicate to us that the sacrifice would take place only at sunset. It surely explains what must be done in case the Passover falls on the Sabbath. For the sacrifices then may be eaten on the Sabbath; and should there be left any bones or parts of it or flesh, they must all be burned in the night of Sunday. The following reference is given in regard to the sacrifice of the Passover when it happens on the Sabbath: "On the first month on the fourteenth day of the month, between the two evenings, ye shall have the Passover for the Lord" (Lev. xxiii. 5). Now God did not mention "between the two evenings," except when he had in view the falling of the Passover on the Sabbath. The evenings with us number three: first, the going down of the sun in a westerly direction; second, the immersion of the disk of the sun into the sea; and, third, the disappearance of the redness of the western skies from the sun. Now, whenever the Passover falls on the Sabbath, the killing of the sacrifices takes place as the sun goes down, that is, after six o'clock of the fourteenth. The ordinance of the Sabbath must not be violated; therefore, whatever may be left of the sacrifice is placed under watch until the night of the Sabbath after sunset, and should be burned then on the altar, in the manner that we have already mentioned. *And to God belongs the best wisdom.*

Mount Gerizim.

A few words affirming that Mount Gerizim is the chosen place; and replying to the Jews, who claim that the place was intended to be chosen, and was chosen, only at the hand of Solomon; and convincing all with testimonies taken from the Law, well known and of legal nature, in a brief manner. *And to God belongs the best wisdom.*

Our opponents claim that the chosen place appears only at the hand of Solomon, and that there was no real temple in Israel before the time of that king. Thus they attribute to the exalted Creator (to whom be praise) but little knowledge of the past and future, for surely he could not have known about the chosen place or he would have indicated it to his chosen, to whom he made great revelations. But God is higher, far above these things, for they are contradicted strongly by passages of the Law. What otherwise did God mean by his command to Abraham (to whom be peace) in Gen. xii. 1: "Now move out of thy land, and of the place of thy birth, and of the house of thy father, and into the land which I shall reveal unto thee"? Then it is said about Abraham: "And Abraham went into the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the plain of Moreh. Then the angels of the Lord appeared to him and announced to him the grant of this land unto his seed" (ver. 9). From this same chapter we read: "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto Abraham and said unto him, To thy seed will I give this land." And this took place while our lord Abraham was living in the land of Ur. And when God tried Abraham, asking him to sacrifice his son, our lord Isaac (upon whom be peace), God's command was given in this manner (Gen. xxii. 2): "Take thy only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and go with him, journeying unto the land of Moreh," etc.

Now Abraham obeyed the command of the Lord, and brought his son to the place indicated to him by God; and after his son was redeemed, he said in the same chapter, "God is seen," which is to mean to-day, "In a mountain God is seen," meaning in a mountain God answers prayers quickly. This is as much as was said about the mountain in the days of our lords Abraham and Isaac (upon whom be peace). Concerning what was said about it in the days of our lord Jacob (upon whom be peace), we may write that when Jacob went to his uncle Laban, he slept in the chosen place and had a dream, in which he saw a ladder reaching the high heavens; and when he arose from his sleep he said: "No doubt this is the house of God and the gate of heaven" (Gen. xxviii. 17). Then he made a vow to God, which was conditional upon God's favor and mercy. Compare Gen. xviii. 20-22: "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God be with me, and preserve me on this road which I am passing, and if he give me bread to eat, and clothes to wear, and if I return in peace to the house of my father, God will be my master, and this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, shall be the house of God. Also whatever thou giveth to me I shall surely tithe it for thee." And after his return from his uncle's in possession of his desire and fulfillment of his purpose which he prayed from his Lord, it is said in Genesis xxxiii. 18, "And Jacob entered the city of Nablus [Shechem] in peace." There he fulfilled what he had vowed upon himself to the exalted Lord. From these testimonies it becomes plain unto us, and we fully realize that the standing of Mount Gerizim is above all others. To it the prayer of Moses refers in his hymn which he sung by the sea as in Ex. xv. 17: "Thou shalt bring them, and plant them in the mountain of thy inheritance, in the place which the Lord has

chosen for his dwelling, which thy hand has prepared, O God." Then he prayed for the upbuilding of this place, as, in the same verse, we read, "O Lord, build it up by thy might."

These passages do affirm unto us that there was then in existence a chosen place, known to our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (upon whom be peace). If, however, we should surrender, and say, as our opponents do, that our lord Abraham went to Jerusalem, and there he offered his son Isaac as a sacrifice; that our lord Isaac slept and dreamed there, and made a vow in the same, why was not Jerusalem singled out and made known as a chosen place? Why was it left for David and Solomon to discover that their great forefathers had been in error in supposing Mount Gerizim to be the real sanctuary? Such a belief is faulty, and cannot be trusted by a sane mind, namely, that our most high and exalted Jehovah would command his prophets to go to places which are unchosen and unknown. God (may his name be praised) is above all such insinuations. The Jews err, and God is infallible. So much is enough for those who desire the truth, and I pray God for his help in avoiding false testimony and fallacious argumentation. *Verily he knows the unknown, and covers the sins of those who groan from their iniquities.*

VI. THE FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS.

I was asked by some, How long did the children of Israel remain in the wilderness, and were the forty years solar or lunar? Did they offer the Passover sacrifice and eat the unleavened bread, or did they not offer the sacrifice of the Passover and eat unleavened bread, or did they practice circumcision during their stay in the wilderness, as our oppo-

nents claim? Did they offer the daily sacrifices or not, and the monthly sacrifices, and those of the feast, while they had with them the Shekinah, and fire was kept continually on the altar?

The children of Israel fulfilled all the ordinances which they were commanded in the Torah, among them the Passover ordinance, for it is one of the greatest ordinances. Our fathers used to perform it according to the rules and regulations, and ate it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs throughout the forty years. Our opponents claim that our fathers ceased from celebrating the Passover during the period of forty years which they spent in the wilderness. Against this statement I appeal to God! How could they attend to this ordinance while they were in Egypt, surrounded by the most oppressive conditions, and then neglect it when they entered the wilderness with perfect liberty, and while Moses (upon whom be peace) was with them? How could they cease from performing an ordinance which was given to them as long as the world lasts, being at the time in a place where no one would oppose them?

Cattle for Sacrifice in the Wilderness.

I am asked, Whence did they obtain the sacrifices, since they were in the wilderness and had no cattle? Nay, they had their cattle with them, and it is the same with which they left Egypt. Compare Ex. xii. 38: "Also went with them a mixed multitude, and sheep and oxen and cattle in a large number." Of these they used to offer their daily sacrifices, and whatever sacrifices were required, according to the times and seasons. They made the unleavened bread from the manna which was daily brought down upon them, and was their food for a period of forty years. If the opponents say

that manna cannot be called bread, I will answer that such a name be applied to it, for the Lord did so design it before bringing it down to them: "Behold, I am raining upon you bread from heaven" (Ex. xvi. 4).

Now, as to the period of forty years complete, I would say that the manna was given them during that period, less two months of the first year. And it is said that it did not cease from them except when they encamped in the plain of Moreh, by the side of Mount Gerizim. The verse "They ate the manna until they entered into the boundaries of the land of Canaan" (Ex. xvi. 35), means that the same ceased from being given to them when they arrived at the boundaries of the land of Canaan. As the verse "The children of Israel ate manna forty years" means the forty years were fulfilled, including the month and a half or two which transpired of the first year without the manna. On the fifteenth day of the forty-first year, when they began to eat of the fruits of the land, the falling of manna ceased. Then they surely must have crossed the Jordan on the tenth of the first month of that year, which, according to tradition, may have been Tuesday, or more accurately Wednesday. They stopped in the Gilgal on Thursday, and they ate manna in it, and on Friday they went out and gathered three omers of manna for each, which, according to our traditions, is due to the fact that the blessed feast of the Passover took place in that period. Some of our best chroniclers say that the Passover took place on Monday. Thus their first feast in the Holy Land was the Passover, and that on Monday, for they ate it of unleavened bread made of the flour of the land which they baked; and this is the true version of it, I think.

Those who claim that those who entered into the wilderness or were born during the forty years were not circumcised

make a terrible mistake. What prohibited them from doing so? for they were commanded with this ordinance from the times of our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace). They understood how absolute and definite are the punishments of those who do not perform it. Passages to that effect are numerous, for whosoever is born among the Israelites, and is not circumcised on the eighth day, is not counted with the people, and that soul is destroyed from the number of its people. What our opponents claim in this matter is unacceptable and irrational, and so much is enough in this brief treatise. *I pray thee, God, for the attainment of my desire and the grace of avoiding falsehood and error. Amen, O God, and Amen.*

VII. THE FASTS OF MOSES.

A question concerning the fasting of our lord Moses: Was it forty days during the first fasting, and forty days during the second only, or did he undergo three fastings, namely three forties, according to what our learned men have informed us? *May God's pleasure be upon them all.*

When did these fastings begin, and when did they end? The answer is given through a plain Scriptural statement. *And God possesses the best knowledge.*

The fastings of our lord Moses (may peace be his portion) were three in number, each lasting forty days. The first one is mentioned in the surah beginning with *Alah-Alai-Haharah*, where, in Ex. xxiv. 18, we read: "And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights." Now when Moses (upon whom be peace) departed from the presence of God, and went down and saw what the people were doing, and beheld that accursed calf, with that frightful scene around it, he threw the two tablets from his hand and broke

them at the base of the mountain, doing what we read was done with the worshipers of the calf, for God destroyed them in that time. Thus we read in Ex. xxxii. 30, 31: "And in the morning Moses said to the people, Ye have sinned a great sin, and I am about to ascend before God and pray, and perhaps I will intercede for your sins; therefore Moses returned to God." There he fasted for the second time forty days, while interceding for the people, until God had accepted his prayers and had forgiven the people. We know this from Deut. ix. 18: "Then I prayed before Jehovah, as before, and during forty days and forty nights I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of your sins which ye have committed to do the evil thing before Jehovah to offend him."

We know, besides, that God commanded him to make two other tablets like the first one and commanded him to engrave them, as it is revealed in Ex. xxxiv. 1: "Jehovah said unto Moses, Hew thee two tablets of stone like the two first ones," etc. And in the second line of the same chapter we read: "And be ye ready in the morning, and ascend in the morning unto Mount Sinai." It is well known that this command of God (may his name be praised) was given after the second fasting of forty days. Compare Deut. x. 1: "At that time Jehovah said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first." Moses hewed unto himself the second two stone tablets on that day, and on the following he went with them up into the mountain, for we read in Ex. xxxiv. 2: "And be ye ready in the morning, and go up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and stand there before me upon the top of the mountain. Let no man go up with thee."

While on this mountain he fasted forty days for the third time. For we read in the same chapter, namely, Ex. xxxiv. 27-28: "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write thou these

words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with Jehovah forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." It is known, also, from the Torah, that the first fasting of the apostle Moses (may the peace of God be upon him) began on Friday, which is known with us as the day *Kohleh-Ha-Ibrim* ("the gathering of Hebrews"); for on Monday God commanded him in Ex. xix. 10-11, "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes. And be ready against the third day; for the third day Jehovah will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai." The third day would be Wednesday, which is with us the Pentecost day, and on that day the righteous God (may he be praised) uttered the ten commandments, which day became with them a great day, whose importance has kept well known until our days. It is named "the Day of Mokratah." On that selfsame day Moses pronounced, in the hearing of the people, the ten commandments, as stated in Ex. xix. 25: "So Moses went down unto the people, and spoke unto them." He gave them an exposition of God's statutes and what God had addressed to him, for we read in Exodus, "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob and announce to the children of Israel"; and we read also: "And Moses came and explained to the people all the commandments of the Lord and all his statutes." He also did what is given in Ex. xxiv. 4: "And Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel." And that morning was the morning of the fifth day, which was

Thursday, as mentioned by the learned doctor Sadakah in his exposition book. On that day they offered sacrifices upon the altar, and what Moses has written of the commands of God was read to them.

VIII. THE WRITING OF THE COMMANDMENTS.

We have been asked, What was the use of writing the commandments of God and reading them to the people after the people had been addressed directly with them, and after they had answered, "All the words which Jehovah hath said will we do" (Ex. xxiv. 3)?

The answer is like this: A man will agree with another upon some thing. He writes first the agreement and reads it to him. The second party agrees or disagrees to the agreement, and that is why the people answered, "We will do," in Hebrew, *Nesheh*. They said the second time, "We shall obey and do," equivalent to *Nechmoa Unecheh* in the Hebrew. And when the young man of Israel had killed the offerings of oxen upon the altar which the apostle had built, the latter took the blood, and put half of it in basins, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar; but the half which was kept in the basin he sprinkled over the children of Israel. Thus the blood fell upon their clothing and the ten commandments *Eshret Hadebarim* were inscribed upon the people according as they were heard from the mouth of the Almighty God, who made a covenant with them, according to Ex. xxiv. 8: "And he said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah has made with you concerning all these words." In another place, namely, Ex. xxxiv. 27, we read: "According to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel." This covenant was made with them, that they might not commit any transgression in the command-

ments of the High God (whose name is exalted). It is the fourth commandment of the seven which God had made with the children of Israel. And *God knows best, and to him belongs the best wisdom.*

Now, after the fulfillment of all these things, God said, in Ex. xxiv. 12: *Elah, Elai Haharah*, namely, "Come up to me to the mountain." This, therefore, according to the revelation, was on Friday, upon which his first fastings took place. On the morning of the forty-first day he descended the mountain, and found what the people had done in reference to the calf, and took the same, and burned it on that very day. It is well known what he did on that day. On the following morning he returned to the mountain to intercede for the people and for their transgressions, as we have already stated. He remained there fasting for forty days, and on the fulfillment of the forty days he descended, and hewed out the two tablets on the day of his descent. On the morning he returned and ascended the mountain, to obtain the writing upon the second two tablets. Compare Ex. xxxiv. 2: "And be ready by the morning, and come up by the morning unto Mount Sinai." Thus the whole period previous to this amounted to eighty-two days. After he had fasted another forty days, the period totalled one hundred and twenty-two days plus the day on which he descended. Now, as four days had proceeded, namely, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and as doubtless one day or two were omitted from one month, the descent of the apostle Moses (upon whom may be the best peace), after the end of the third forty days, was, in all probability, on the morning of the ninth day of the seventh month, that is, on the day known with us as *Teshet Iomey Hateshobah*, that is, "the nine days of repentance."

On that day Moses commanded the people to fast on the tenth of the seventh month, known with them as "the day of the great atonement," in Hebrew *Iom Hakeforim*. This is in accordance with what our learned doctor of blessed memory, Sadakah, has said. This account would be true if the third month had fallen on Monday. If it had fallen on the Sabbath, then the omission of only one day in the four months we have mentioned could have taken place, for it is impossible that four months should occur without the omission of a single day, as our learned men claim that the new moon of the first month in which the Passover was celebrated in Egypt took place on Thursday. This is quite proved. Thus, following in the least these accounts, we would think that one month in these six months had been omitted; and it is said that the six days which are mentioned in Ex. xxiv. 16, "And a cloud covered it for six days," were included in the fasting of the apostle Moses in his first fasting. *And God has the best knowledge of all these things.*

This is what my tired understanding and weak mind have been able to record concerning this question, and I pray God for forgiveness if any addition or subtraction has been made.

IX. THE REVELATION OF THE TORAH.

I have been asked by some concerning the noble Torah, as to the time of its revelation, and whether it was revealed all at once, or at different times according to the events. What Biblical explanations could be given which are of a convincing nature?

Let it be known unto thee, O questioner, that the holy Torah was revealed in one roll by the supreme righteous God, written in the handwriting of the Almighty, in characters that are well known, containing all the verses and di-

visions and commands and prohibitions and explanations and other knowledge from the very beginning to the end. This is according to what our most learned high priest Hasam Assoory of Tyrus has written in his book, known as the book of "Tabach." They err, those among our people (whom may God diminish) claiming that the commandments of the Torah and its prohibitions were addressed to the apostle Moses (upon whom be peace), who wrote them down himself. Now their claim is wrong, from various points of view.

Take, for instance, the question of the manna. It was given to the people on the sixteenth day of the second month of the first year of their departure from Egypt, and continued to be given unto them while they were in the wilderness for a period of forty years, both solar and lunar, until they have arrived in the land of Canaan. Compare Ex. xvi. 35: "And the children of Israel ate the manna for forty years, until they arrived in an inhabited land. They ate the manna until they arrived at the borders of Canaan." Consider, for instance, the question of sprinkling the water which he commanded to be done in the ninth day of the first month of the second year of their departure from Egypt. Examples of this nature can be multiplied. Thus it is plain that the apostle Moses (upon whom be peace) received delivered unto him all the Torah written in all perfection. Of this there are various proofs.

First. God does not create anything unless he provides for its necessity and usefulness. To verify my statement concerning the Torah, I will begin citing Ex. xxiv. 12, "Ascend unto me to the mountain, and be there: and I will give thee the two tablets, and the law and the commandments, which I have written down for their instruction." The words "the law" and "the commandments" refer to the roll of the Law,

which is the Torah, without the least doubt. We can prove that this one referred to is found in the same book, chapter xxxii. 32, "Otherwise blot me out from thy roll which thou hast written." The word *Sepher* means "roll" wherever it is found, although some interpreters render it by the word "book."

Second. That the Torah was revealed and came down completely in one roll is proved by the fact that it mentions events before their happening. Compare, for instance, what God has said concerning the river which comes out of the garden and which divides into four parts. The first part surrounds the land of "Hewilah," which is Egypt. The second surrounds the land of the Soudan. The third is that which runs east of the land of Mosul. The fourth is the Euphrates. This statement was given in the beginning of creation, before the existence of either Egypt or Soudan or any other country. Then when God created Eve out of the rib of our father Adam (upon whom be peace), he said in Gen. xxiv. 29: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife." Then there were neither father nor mother and none but Adam and Eve, and this was the first commandment given unto the seed of Adam.

Third. What was meant by the reference to the age of Moses, the son of Amram, in Genesis, "And his days shall be one hundred and twenty years"?

Fourth. The statement concerning the daughters of Lot, wherein it was said, about the first, "And the oldest gave birth to a son whom she called Moab, and he is the father of Moab unto this day"; and of the second, "And the younger gave birth to a son whom she called Ben-Ammi, and he is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day" (Gen. xix.

37-38). Now the saying "unto this day" is to mean that the same could be applied to the end of generations.

Fifth. The report of God of the death of our lord Isaac (upon whom be peace) which should have been given after the story of our lord Joseph (upon whom be peace), for the death of Isaac took place after Joseph had passed twelve years in Egypt.

Sixth. We can find proof in Gen. xxxvi. 31, where it is said: "These are the kings which reigned in Edom, before there reigned a king of the children of Israel." The names of the kings are there given, and the last king was Hadad. He was the same king concerning whom verse 14 of chapter xx. of Numbers is given: "And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom," who was really Hadad, in accordance with the instructions of our learned men. For in Lev. xxxvi. all the kings were said to have died, with the exception of the last one, whose death was not mentioned, and who did not die until after the children of Israel had possessed the land. Besides, everything that was mentioned in the first book, which was Genesis, took place before the time of our lord Moses (upon whom be peace).

Seventh. The question of manna is another proof. It was sent down on the sixteenth day of the second month. The statement which reads, "And the children of Israel ate the manna to the end," was given at the beginning of the fortieth year; and if the Torah had not descended upon Moses in one single year, this statement would not have been written down at the end of the fortieth year.

Eighth. God said that there should be a place of refuge for a man who has killed another man unknowingly, and that the refugee should remain in the place until the death of the high priest. Now this statement was written at the end of

the fourth book, and these places were to be established after the conquest of the holy land. We find it, however, mentioned in the second book, which is Exodus, in the surah beginning with chapter xxi., verse 7. Read, therefore, verse 13, "Make therefore a place of refuge for him, that he may flee thereto." This statement was given at the beginning of the fortieth year, but the children of Israel had no high priest, nor had they the order of the priesthood. Similar examples might be cited to prove our point.

Now, as to those who claim that the Torah was given piece by piece in accordance with the events that happened, then it must have descended on several prophets, beginning with our lord Adam, the father of all mankind (upon whom be peace), and ending with the last, who is Joshua; for the Torah closes with Moses (may peace be his portion), and the installment of Joshua, his successor (upon whom be peace). Now, if any one should say, "Every prophet wrote the happenings of his days during his lifetime, and the same was done by our lord Moses, who wrote everything in the Law," this supposition is liable to faults and exaggerations, and the man cannot help from writing down every statement of the least portion of the contents of the Torah. Supposing that this is true, who, then, wrote down the account of the creation and the things that took place before the life of our father Adam, and who wrote the account of the tower of Babel and what happened to its builders? Surely they did not do it! Who wrote the affair of the daughters of Lot? For their father knew nothing of it, as we read in Gen. xix. 33-35, proving his entire innocence. Surely it could not be true that the daughters themselves reported it! And who might have informed us of the affair of Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah? She surely would not have reported

the truth. And then, again, during the life of Moses, who was present with Balak and Balaam, who may be considered worthy of belief, that he might inform Moses of the same; that the latter might write it down as the Torah gives it in detail, and also concerning the ass of Balaam and the language which he spoke? God indeed understands all languages. He knows what is visible and invisible. I suppose the speech of the ass was in the same speech which Balaam understood, and God used a language which was understood by the people of that land, namely, Hebrew.

We know, also, that the Torah was given in one single roll by reading and understanding its contents; for, if it had been given in accordance with the progress of the events as they happened, it would have been written in the style of a history. But the style is indeed quite different. The visit of Jethro to his brother-in-law, that is, to Moses, was mentioned, as well as the advice he gave to our lord Moses (upon whom be peace) in Ex. xviii. The account concludes with verse 27, "And Moses sent his father-in-law, and he went to his land"; but the exact date of the departure of Jethro is given in Numbers, just on the day the people of Israel left Mount Sinai. Chapter x. 29 says: "And Moses said to Hobab, the son of Raguel, the father-in-law of Moses (for Jethro was called also Hobab), We are about to leave."

In Exodus the erecting of the tabernacle on the first day of the first month of the second year of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt was mentioned (read Ex. xvi. 33). From these we know that the tabernacle was erected and finished on the first month of the second year, and on the first day of the month. We know also, that whenever the cloud disappeared from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel would move onward, and this was the uniform beginning of

their journeys. So much only is said, but what has been said is again affirmed in Lev. i. 1, "And Jehovah called out Moses, and spoke to him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying," etc. But after the end of the third book and whatever it contained of meanings and advice, Numbers, which is the fourth book, takes up the same question again. It begins: "And Jehovah spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month of the second year after their departure from the land of Egypt, saying, Count up the congregation of the children of Israel," etc., which is plain enough. Therefore, it must be understood that one month after the erection of the tabernacle, God commanded that the children of Israel be numbered, that the census be taken of the tribes of the children of Israel. But nearly one fourth of the book may be read before the question of the completion of the erection of the tabernacle is taken up, in chapter vii. in the first verse, which reads: "And it came to pass on the day when Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it and sanctified it," etc. Now if the events should have been consecutively mentioned in accordance with their time order, this surah and all that follows it as far as chapter ix., verse 15, which reads: "And in the day of the erection of the tabernacle," etc., should either begin the book of Leviticus or be an end to the book of Exodus.

Also the surah beginning with Num. vi. 22, which reads: "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, In this way ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee," etc., should have come before the surah mentioned in Lev. ix. 22, which reads: "Then Aaron lifted up his hand towards the people, and blessed them," etc. The

command of the blessing is given in Num. vi. 22, while the fulfillment of it is previously mentioned in Lev. ix. 22. While the blessing takes place, the water of consecration should be sprinkled over the people, which was the part of Mishael and Elzaphan when they picked up Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, and moved them when they were dead. Thus they were defiled with the defilement of the dead person. Therefore God commanded that this water of consecration be instituted on their account. This was on the eighth day of consecration, but the preparation of the water of consecration took place on the ninth day of the first month of the second year of their departure from the land of Egypt, but the purification of Elzaphan and Mishael must have taken place only on the night of the fifteenth day of the month, which is the night of the Passover, and they could not perform the Passover nor eat it on account of the pollution, therefore God commanded the doing of the second Passover on their account. To prove this we will state that ever since God commanded that the Passover should be performed on the night of the fifteenth of the first month of the second year, this has been so done. So he made plain statements in regard to the second Passover, in Num. ix. 6 and the following verses, during that year to be performed for the benefit of the polluted man, which, according to our learned doctor, were the abovementioned men. This is a remarkable example of mentioning events without regard to their chronological order. Examples of this nature are many, and we do not intend to mention them, for we believe if the apostle Moses (upon whom be peace) had written down the events as they transpired, a due attention would have been given to chronological order.

Concerning Specific Records Made by Moses.

If one should ask, How could you explain Ex. xii. 14? the answer is, God commanded Moses (upon whom be peace) to write the memorial of the blotting out of the Amalekites, and read the same to Joshua (upon whom be peace), to acquaint him with it, although the learned high priest Sadakah, of blessed memory, wrote in regard to this roll, which is mentioned in the aforesaid verse, that Moses had it to remind him of events which he would copy into the Torah when later he compiled the complete work. This statement of the high priest will be refuted later on.

Now the meaning of this verse is the same as that found in Ex. xxiv. 4, namely, "And Moses wrote down all the words of God"; and verse 7 reads: "And Moses took the roll of the covenant, and read it in the hearing of the people." In the same manner we read Num. v. 23.

The Cases where Moses was in Uncertainty concerning the Divine Will.

Now if one should say, Granting that the apostle Moses (upon whom be peace) received the whole Torah, containing all the events, why is it that in Lev. xxiv. 12 we find Moses somewhat undecided as to the case of the son of Shelomith when he blasphemed the name of Jehovah, namely, that Moses put this man in prison until Jehovah should reveal unto them his will? Again, in ix. 7 when he was asked, Why should we cease from offering to God the sacrifices in their season? He answered in the following verse, "Wait until I hear what Jehovah shall command unto you." Again, when they found a man cutting wood on the Sabbath, and brought him before the apostle Moses, he said in Num. xv. 34: "Let

him be kept under guard until it may be known what must be done with him." And nothing was done until an answer was returned, as the holy Torah asserts.

When the apostle Moses (upon whom be peace) received the roll, he placed it in his tent, as it is mentioned in Ex. xxxiii. 7: "And Moses removed the tent, and erected it outside of the encampment, far from the encampment, and called it the meeting tent." In the beginning of the month he received a command from God to read the Torah, and to write a copy of it as it is written in Deut. i. 3: "In the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month," etc. And then verse 5, "Moses had begun to copy this law." He used to be the judge of Israel during those forty years, as we read in Ex. xviii. 16: "I judge between man and man, and acquaint them with the commandments of God and his laws." Whenever he met with difficulties he used to have recourse to God for enlightenment, lest false judgments might be rendered. For he was far above false judgments. As to the time when he received the roll, according to the most learned man, the relative of ours, the one of blessed memory, Hasam Assoory of Tyrus, in his book called "Attabakh," the roll was given to Moses at the end of his forty days' fast, when he received the two tablets which were later on dashed to pieces. My opinion, and I pray God for forgiveness if I am mistaken, is that Moses received it at the end of his second forty days' fast; for in his first fast he received the first two tablets; and during his second fast he received the roll of the law; and during his third forty days' fast he received the second two tablets. This conclusion may be reached from the wording of the law. *And God possesses the best knowledge.*

It was for this roll that our lord Moses removed his tent

outside of the encampment, and placed in it the roll, the tent being called the "meeting tent." Our lord Joshua was its guard, keeping it in this tent in accordance with Ex. xxxiii. 2, where we read: "And his servant Joshua Ben Nun did not go out of the middle of the tent." Do you not see that the apostle took him in his company during the first forty days' fast, as we read in Ex. xxiv. 13: "And Moses and his servant Joshua arose and ascended to the mountain of God," etc.? During the second forty days, Joshua remained at the base of the mountain, gathering his food of the manna, until the descent of Moses with the two tables. What proves that Joshua remained throughout all those days at the foot of the mountain is found in Ex. xxxii. 17; for, when the apostle Moses descended with the two tablets after his fast of forty days, we read: "And Joshua heard the voice of the people in shouting, and he said to Moses, There must be a war cry in the encampment." If he had been present among the people he would not have said this in an inquiring manner.

During the second forty days' fast Joshua did not accompany Moses, nor did anybody else; for we read in Ex. xxxiv. 3: "Let no man go up with thee."

If any one should ask why the high priest Merkah, of blessed memory, said in reference to the decalogue, "And he wrote of them five writings," the meaning is, that the decalogue includes in its explanation the whole Torah. And he who desires to investigate further may look up the commentary of the law written by Aben Hajar, and that of the high priest Merkah, which possess full explanations as to the meaning of the various readings of the law. He declares likewise that the Torah descended as a whole from before the presence of God, written by the very hand of the Almighty, and handed down to his apostle our lord Moses Ben Amram (upon whom may be

the best of regard). Therefore, as can be seen from several passages chosen from his writings, and from the writings of our crowned poet, our lord Moses Ben Amram received the Torah in one roll containing all the ordinances, commandments, and prohibitions, all the news and teachings, which are attributed to have come from God, and which therefore are true and righteous, not liable to addition or detraction, with plain characters inscribed in the very material of the roll with the color of fire, as we read in Deuteronomy,—

“From his right hand they have a fire of law. Blessed art thou, O Israel. Blessed art thou, for what thy Jehovah has granted to thee, for the high station to which he has raised thee, for the abundance of favors which he has bestowed on thee above all others. Thou art the noble race; from thee the world becomes acquainted with virtue and knowledge; from thee the wise men receive their wisdom, and their laws are derived from thy laws; from its sea of abundance they have drunk; upon it they have relied and to its wisdom they have helped themselves, becoming thereby thy disciples.”

Compare Deut. xxxiii. 3: “They shall bow before thy feet, and receive instruction from thy words”; for thy ennobling and thy honor that God spoke in Deut. iv. 6: “Since thy wisdom and prudence is before the eyes of the Gentiles who will hear all these commands, they will say, Verily this people is wise and prudent and far-seeing.” Continue to read to verse 8: “And what people as great and has commands and ordinances as just as those found in this law?” Again, verses 32, 33: “Ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day when God created man on earth; and from one end of the heaven to the other end of heaven, whether anything has ever been as this great thing,

or whether there has ever been heard anything like it? Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of fire as thou hast heard, and remain alive?"

Many similar examples could be multiplied which would make the exposition in this book somewhat lengthy. May God make you and us among those who cover us with the cover of righteousness, who put on the cover of righteousness and clothe themselves with the robe of purity. We have taken the privilege to explain fully in regard to this matter, that the obstinate may be made wise and abandon his way. He is ignorant who belies us by saying that the law did not come down from the righteous presence of God in one roll from beginning to end. He ignores the words of God and the meaning of his law. It may suffice us to say that even our opponents, such as *Haggoyim*, testify that no other book came as a whole from before the presence of God except the holy Torah. So much is enough to him who is not swayed by his lust, who follows truth and receives the divine guidance. *The Most High God is most righteous, and possesses the best knowledge. I pray his forgiveness for all addition and subtraction.*

X. THE TWO STONE TABLETS.

I have been asked by some, concerning the two stone tablets which were broken, When were they prepared, and what happened to the writing after the breaking of the tablets? When were the two second tablets placed in the chest? What was their size? What Scriptural grounds can be adduced to prove the answers?

The first two tablets were created by God in the beginning, and some claim that this was done on the third day of the creation, according to the high priest Micah. Others

say that the two tablets were prepared when they were needed. We believe that the first statement is more valid. The writing was engraved upon them like the engraving of a signet ring, and was done by the hand of the Almighty. (Compare Ex. xxxi. 18, "written by the fingers of God.") It is said that the two tablets were the creation of God, and that their writings were the writings of the Divine Essence, engraved upon the two tablets which were handed to the apostle Moses by the chief of the angels, that is by Gabriel, the Archangel, at the close of Moses' forty days' fast. Some say that Moses found them before him at his feet at the place wherein he was tenting while on the mountain. This statement, I believe, (and I pray God to shield me from mistakes,) is more correct than that the Power Divine handed them to him without his seeing anything; for he was standing in darkness listening to the address of God coming from the midst of the fire. The writing was plain on either side, and all the characters were horizontal in shape, without being connected the one with the other. Each tablet was a cubit and a half in length and in breadth, but three fourths of a cubit in height. They fitted the chest wonderfully. The thickness of both of them combined equaled two cubits and a half, in accordance with the height of the chest.

When Moses descended from the mountain and arrived at the outskirts of the encampment, he saw the calf and the frolic scene around it (and may such a scene never take place again), and his anger was boundless, and he dashed the two tablets to the earth in their presence and broke them. But, before doing so, he showed the people the two tablets, their bright likeness and wonderful engraving, declaring to them that God was angry at their deed, and hence they were unfit to receive the tablets. At that moment, God (may his

name be exalted) caused the writing to disappear, and commanded Moses (upon whom be peace) to dash them on the ground. If God had not blotted out his writing from the two tablets, it would not have been lawful or possible unto Moses to break them. Thus the same disappeared up to heaven by the power of God, and nobody knew what became of them.

After his second fasting, while he was interceding for this great sin, his prayers having been answered, God commanded him to hew unto himself two tablets like unto the first, having the same shape and size, and to prepare the chest in accordance with their size. He, therefore, following the instruction of God, ascended the mountain and fasted forty days for the third time. And the two tablets were taken away from him and engraved by the hand of God, like the first two, with the ten commandments, only without addition or subtraction.

He came down with them on the ninth day of the seventh month, as we have stated already, and placed them in the chest which he had purposely prepared for them in his tent. And he placed them beside the holy Torah until the tabernacle was erected, when he deposited them in that, which Bezaleel had made, as we read in Exodus, "And he took and placed the testimonies in the chest." But the command was given first in Numbers, "And place the testimonies which I give thee in the chest." This was confirmed later on in Numbers: "And it was there as Jehovah commanded."

And God possesses the best wisdom.

XI. THE TABLETS OF TESTIMONY.

Why were the two tablets called the tablets of testimony and the tablets of stone? They were called the tablets of testimony that they might be a living testimony, written in

the correct and original Hebrew language, and containing all the decalogue, against whomsoever may transgress them or change them or garble them. They were called so also, probably, because the children of Israel testified unto themselves to accept them and to act in accordance with all of what God spoke in Mount Sinai in their hearing and presence. Compare Exodus: "Whatever God commanded us we will obey and do." And that is probably why they were called tablets of stone to indicate that they were solid and of hard nature. The meaning, however, is deep, and God only fathoms its secrets.

XII. THE TRANSCRIPTION OF THE TORAH.

When was the roll of the law read which was given to our lord Moses Ben Amram, when was it transcribed by his noble hand, and when did the children of Israel read the same and learn it, after the death of the apostle?

When the apostle received from God the holy roll, he placed it in his tent outside of the encampment, and God used to speak to him after the fog had encompassed the tent and covered the place where the holy roll was deposited. This was done there when consultation concerning the daily affairs of the people was needed. The commandments, however, were given to him in the tabernacle, between the two cherubim. The roll remained in its place for forty years. It was placed by the side of the chest which Bezaleel had prepared for the two tablets as soon as the tabernacle was erected, as we have stated before. During the first of the eleventh month of the fortieth year, Moses began to copy the holy law, and deposited two copies which he finished in the first month, one with the Levites, the other with the elders. Compare Deut. xxxi. 9: "And Moses wrote this law, and handed it to the

priests, the sons of Levi, and to all the elders of Israel." And he taught them its content, as we find in the same chapter, verse 19. Some say that that verse refers to the hymn, as in the verse we read: "And now write for yourself this hymn." But we believe that the meaning refers to all the content of the law; for, at the end of these words, we read: "And after Moses finished writing down the commandments of this law in the roll," etc., he commanded the Levites to take the roll that came from God, and place it beside the chest of the two tablets. Compare Deut. xxxi. 26: "Take the roll of the Torah, and place it by the side of the chest of the covenant of your God, and let it be unto thee a witness."

The death of our lord Moses took place in the beginning of the twelfth month of the fortieth year, and the children of Israel mourned him during that whole month. And on the first day of the first month they left Arabat Moab, and on the tenth of the same they crossed the Jordan.

It is said they crossed the sea on Wednesday, and heard the voice of God on Wednesday, and crossed the Jordan on Wednesday. *And unto God belongs all wisdom and power.*