

## **The Steinsaltz Neviim**

# **The Steinsaltz Neviim**

*Neviim Translation and Commentary*

Commentary by

**Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz**



**Steinsaltz Center**



**KOREN**

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The Steinsaltz Neviim

Commentary by

Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz

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*Steinsaltz Center is the parent organization*

*of institutions established by Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz*

POB 45187, Jerusalem 91450 ISRAEL

Telephone: +972 2 646 0900, Fax +972 2 624 9454

[www.steinsaltz-center.org](http://www.steinsaltz-center.org)

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THE STEINSALTZ NEVIIM DEDICATION

*Dedicated in celebration of Rabbi Steinsaltz's 80th Birthday*

*Rabbi Steinsaltz,*

You are a guiding light to the Jewish people.  
We are profoundly grateful for all you have taught us  
and all that you continue to teach us.

May your years continue to be fruitful.

*Ad Me'a VeEsrin Shana*

With sincere affection and admiration,

**William A. Ackman**

**Lotte z"l and Lou Bravmann**

**Linda and Ilan Kaufthal**

**Ria and Tim Levart**

**Pamela and George Rohr**

JOSHUA

*This book is dedicated to*

the memory of my father

***Jesse E. Lasken*** ז"ל

who taught me that there is  
always more to learn.

בן בג בג אומר הפוך בה והפוך בה דכולה בה  
ובה תחזי וסיב ובלה בה ומינה לא תזוע  
שאיין לך מדה טובה הימנה (אבות ה:כב)

**Diane Lasken Katz**

JUDGES

*This book is dedicated by*

**the Bravmann family**

**in loving memory of**

*Lotte* z"l

SAMUEL

ויגדל שמואל ויהוה היה עמו.... (שמואל א ג:ט)  
“And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him...”  
(I Samuel 3:19)

**We lovingly dedicate this volume  
in honor of our grandson**

*Sam*

שמואל בן יצחק צבי נ"י

**May he grow to be  
a source of light and strength to his people.**

**Pamela and George Rohr**



KINGS

*This book is dedicated*

**in honor of our children**

*Jeremy and Carli*

*Corey and Gemma*

*Jessie*

*Jolie*

וְהָיָה לְבַבְכֶם שָׁלֵם עִם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְלֶכֶת בְּחֻקָּיו וְלִשְׁמֹר מִצְוֹתָיו... (מלכים א ח:סא)

**“And may your hearts remain perfect with Hashem our God, to  
follow his decrees and to keep His commandments...”**

**(I Kings 8:61)**

**Tim and Ria Levart**

ISAIAH

*We dedicate this volume in honor of our grandchildren*

*Joseph*

*Sydney*

*Jack*

*Fred*

*Ella*

*Leo*

*Maximilian*

*Billy*

**May they always be blessed with good health and happiness  
and may they be imbued with the Isaiaic vision of social justice.**

**Linda and Ilan Kaufthal**

JEREMIAH

*This book is dedicated to*

**my parents and grandparents,  
and to their parents and grandparents,  
and those who came before.**

**It is they on whose shoulders I stand.  
If it were not for them, their sacrifices and wisdom,  
I would be but dust in the wind.**

**William A. Ackman**

EZEKIEL

*This book is dedicated to our teacher*

## *Rabbi Steinsaltz*

בְּהַר מְרוֹם יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶשְׂתַּלְנּוּ וְנִשְׂא עֲנָף וְעִשָּׂה פְרִי וְהָיָה לְאֶרֶז אֲדִיר  
וְשָׁכְנוּ תַחְתָּיו כָּל צִפּוֹר כָּל-כָּנָף בְּצֵל דָּלְיוֹתָיו תִּשְׁכְּנָה (יחזקאל יז:כג)

“On the mountain of the height of Israel I will plant it,  
and it will bear boughs and produce fruit, and it will become a stately  
cedar; beneath it will dwell every bird, every winged creature;  
in the shadow of its branches they will dwell.”

(Ezekiel 17:23)

**You have enabled all of us to grow,  
always challenging us to take a step ahead.  
Thank you for illuminating the texts of our people;  
our souls are nourished through your wisdom.  
You have given us a gift that will  
endure for generations.**

TREI ASAR

ויאמר אליהם עברי אנכי ואת יהוה אלהי השמים אני ירא  
אשר עשה את הים ואת היבשה (יונה א:ט)

“And he [Jonah] said to them: I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord,  
God of the heavens, who made the sea and the dry land.” (Jonah 1:9)

**We lovingly dedicate this volume  
in honor of our grandson**

*Jonah*

**יעקב יונה בן יצחק צבי נ"י**

**May he grow to be  
a source of light and strength to his people.**

**Pamela and George Rohr**

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# Introduction to The Steinsaltz Neviim

Scholars and lay readers alike are aware that writing a new commentary on the Bible requires assistance and blessings from Above, as well as substantial effort from below. Two fundamental challenges stand before one who seeks to write a commentary on the Bible: First, the aspiration to relate to the loftiest and holiest text and to explain it faithfully risks hubris. Second, a huge number of commentaries on the Bible have been composed over the course of the past three thousand years by the greatest people in our history. Who has the audacity to attempt to join this holy assembly or even grasp its coattails?

Sanction for undertaking this daunting task can be found in Rashi's statement to his grandson Rashbam, himself the author of an important commentary on the Torah. Rashbam reports Rashi to have said that if he had had the strength, he would have written another commentary in accordance with the "plain meanings that are renewed every day" (Rashbam, Genesis 37:2).

In every generation and on each passing day, fresh light can be shed on the verses of the Bible and new perspectives can be found. Not only are new answers offered to old questions, but in every era additional questions are raised by students of the Bible, due to both the diversity of the personalities, and the differing interests and perspectives, of each era. Throughout the ages, the great commentaries have discussed a wide range of different issues. To this day, thank God, there are many scholars and students of the Bible raising unique questions and challenges that require attention, analysis, and investigation. All these illuminate the eternal words of the Torah through a range of viewpoints and give rise to "plain meanings that are renewed every day."

This commentary seeks to offer the reader the plain meaning of the text, the *peshat*. Ostensibly, this is the simplest level of interpretation, but the elucidation of the plain meaning is actually the most difficult type of interpretation. Other kinds of interpretation, based on allusion [*remez*], midrashic hermeneutics [*derash*], or esoteric, mystical traditions [*sod*], are free to forge links between the text and the sources from which they draw and are not constrained by the language and concepts of the Bible. In contrast, discovering the plain meaning of the text requires the interpreter to adhere closely to the literal meaning of the words while paying attention to syntax and context.

Although this commentary includes references to many other commentaries, it is not an anthology. It was not intended to provide a comprehensive array of interpretations from across the generations. The aim of the references is to show that a suggested interpretation is based on earlier sources or discusses a similar question. Moreover, this work does not aspire to be revolutionary or novel. Rather, it aims to present what might be called a "transparent" commentary, one whose explanations should go almost unnoticed and serve only to give the reader and student the sense that there is no barrier between him or her and the text. The aim is to let the Torah speak for itself, to allow the prophets to prophesy and the wise men to impart their wisdom. In order to enable the "voice" of the verses to be heard, the annotations are brief, serving as a thin, barely perceptible screen rather than a heavy, concealing coat of armor.

At Mount Sinai, the entire Jewish people heard "a great voice" (Deuteronomy 5:18), which the Sages interpret to mean a voice that has never ceased (*Targum Onkelos; Sanhedrin 17a*). It is my hope that this project will help people hear the voice of the Torah even in our busy, noisy world.

Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz

# Introduction by the Hebrew Editors

The purpose of this commentary is to assist the contemporary reader by bridging the gaps in language, outlook, and culture between us and the world of the Bible. As far as possible, it seeks to clarify ambiguities, elucidate problematic passages, and remove obstacles to understanding while dealing with both explicit and implicit difficulties.

The commentary consists of several parts, which complement but are independent of one another. The literal translation of the verses appears in boldface. Woven into the biblical text in non-bold typeface are brief explanatory comments and elaborations. Below the text are notes that offer more elaborate discussion of topics that appear in the verses as well as insights into the general context and scientific and historical realia that surround the biblical text.

The biblical text is divided into units based on subject matter, which do not always accord with the standard division into chapters. Each unit is prefaced by a heading and a short introduction. This structure should not be viewed as a definitive partition of the biblical text but as a suggestion, part of the commentary, for the reader's convenience and orientation.

The commentary seeks to concisely clarify the language and context at the most basic level so as not to encumber the reader. Consequently, it is not committed to a particular exegetical method and does not systematically defer to any particular commentator. In cases where there are differing explanations of a passage, alternative explanations may be cited. In cases where the halakhic tradition expounds a verse in a manner not consistent with the plain meaning, this will be noted and explained briefly in the annotations themselves or by means of a reference, allowing the plain meaning of the text to be preserved while not disregarding the interpretation of the Oral Law.

It must be stated that even when written without qualification, the interpretations offered are not meant to be seen as authoritative. They are no more than suggestions, occasionally novel ones, which are compatible with the simple meaning of the text and which speak to the average reader. There are no systematic exegetical considerations behind the decision to adopt any particular interpretation.

Much thought and labor have been invested to ensure that the design of this work is as aesthetically pleasing and convenient for the user as possible. This design is the fruit of an ongoing collaboration between the team at the Institute for Talmudic Publications and Koren Publishers. Our thanks to Rabbi Meir Hanegbi, whose wisdom, conviviality, and efficiency contributed greatly to the success of the project. Rabbi Hanokh Ben Arza, may his memory be for a blessing, was the father of the two editors in chief of the Hebrew edition; his spirit and respect for the written word inspired them in their work.

The Editors



# Introduction by the Translators

## ON THE TRANSLATION OF THE NEVIIM

The English translation of *The Steinsaltz Neviim* includes a completely new translation of the Bible based on Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz's Hebrew commentary. Translation is necessarily an act of interpretation. In general, we have done our best, at Rabbi Steinsaltz's behest, to stay as close as possible to the original Hebrew verses so that the English reader will encounter the complexities of the text directly. In the course of translating, we have consulted other English translations, as well as relying heavily upon Onkelos' Aramaic translation and the classic medieval Jewish commentaries of the Torah: Rav Se'adya Gaon, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Ramban, and Rashbam. Our goal throughout has been to produce a translation that is true to the original Hebrew text and commentary, yet at the same time is readable and accessible to a broad range of readers, from those who are familiar with Hebrew and seek to deepen their understanding of the Torah to those who will gain access to the text only by reading it in English. The commentary and notes are written in modern American English. In the spirit of the Hebrew edition, we have tried to preserve the lofty register of the biblical text while providing a commentary that is relevant and inspiring to our own generation. We hope that the Author of the Torah has aided us in achieving this goal.

## THE LAYOUT OF THIS EDITION

On the left-hand side of each set of facing pages is the Hebrew text of the Bible with the traditional cantillation marks, meticulously edited over decades by the team at Koren Publishers, Jerusalem. On the facing page, the Steinsaltz translation of the Bible appears in boldface with the commentary interspersed between the words of the text in non-bold typeface. This enables the reader to easily follow either the direct translation alone or the translation augmented by the elucidated text.

The notes at the foot of the page are divided into two categories. Discussion notes provide background material, internal biblical parallels, alternative explanations, and a wealth of midrashic and philosophical ideas from Jewish commentaries over the generations. Background notes provide linguistic, historical, archaeological, and scientific information that is relevant to places, nations, flora and fauna, and other realia mentioned in the verses. Integrated into both the commentary and the notes are pictures, maps, and other graphics to aid the reader in grasping the biblical text.

References and sources for the commentary appear as endnotes, while the references and sources for the notes are interspersed throughout the notes themselves in parentheses. These references and sources, compiled by the Hebrew editors, include citations of other verses in the Bible, commentary elsewhere in the Bible, insights of the rabbinic Sages in the Talmud and *midrashim*, interpretations of the classical biblical commentaries, and citations of philosophical works and responsa by the early authorities [*rishonim*].

The translation of the verses of the Prophets was undertaken by Rabbi Joshua Schreier and reviewed meticulously by Rabbi Dr. Joshua Amaru. The verses from I Samuel, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel were reviewed by Rabbi Ayal Geffon. Many talented editors and translators participated in the translation of the commentary and notes as listed in the credits. We thank Matthew Miller, Avishai Magence, and the devoted and gifted team at Koren Publishers. We are grateful to Rabbi Meni Even-Israel, Executive Director of the Steinsaltz Center, whose wisdom and guidance have made this publication possible. We also thank Rabbi Dr. Natan Slifkin of the Biblical Museum of Natural History in Beit Shemesh for his help in identifying some animals and providing suitable images.

## TRANSLITERATION

In general, we have tried to keep transliteration to a minimum and have relied upon it only for proper nouns and in places where a point of commentary relates to a Hebrew term. In the case of proper nouns, we have sought a middle ground between a rigorous adherence to Hebrew phonology and the use of anglicized versions of names taken from earlier translations of the Bible. For familiar names of both places and people, where encountering a transliteration would be jarring to many readers, we have used the well-known anglicized versions, such as Canaan, Egypt, Abraham, and Moses. Otherwise, proper nouns are transliterated according to the rules listed below. These transliterations offer the English reader an experience that is closer to that of the Hebrew reader.

Of course, determining which names count as familiar and which are not is not an exact science; the policy has been to use the anglicized names of familiar figures such as the names of prophets and books of the Bible, and some other well-known characters and place-names. The transliteration scheme generally follows modern Israeli Hebrew pronunciation, but note the following points:

- For proper nouns no special characters are used to designate sounds that do not exist in English. For example, the name אֶחְיָזָר will not be rendered Aḥiezer (with a diacritic for the letter *het* that is used for the transliteration of Hebrew terms that are not proper nouns) but rather Ahiezer. Consequently, the letter א is rendered as *h* (like the letter ה).
- The letter *h*, representing the Hebrew letter ה, has been omitted at the end of a word unless its omission could lead to mispronunciation. For example, שֶׁלָּה is written Shela, while נִינְוֶה is written Nineveh.
- The soft letter כ is rendered as *kh*.
- No distinction has been made between a letter containing a *dagesh hazak* (elsewhere represented by a double consonant) and one without. For example, it is Hukat as opposed to Hukkat.
- Apostrophes indicating glottal stops are employed only where a name could be mispronounced without them. For example, it is Se'ir as opposed to Seir.
- We have maintained a more technical transliteration scheme for citations, including the diacritic *ḥ* and consonant doubling for cases of a *dagesh*. For example, in the citation *Tanḥuma, Korah 5*, *Tanḥuma* retains the diacritic *ḥ*, whereas *Korah* does not.

On behalf of the team of inspired and dedicated translators, editors, and copy editors with whom it has been a great privilege to work, I express my hope that the decisions we have made have produced a translation that is faithful to the Hebrew, readable, accessible, and useful to the reader.

Jason Rappoport  
Editor in Chief

## Cantillation Marks (*Trop*)

שמות הטעמים וסימניהם

מְרַכָּא טַפְחָא מְנַח אֶתְנַחְתָּא מְרַכָּא טַפְחָא סוּף־פְּסוּק  
מִדְהַפְךָ פִּשְׁטָא מְנַח זְקוּף־קִטְוֹן זְקוּף־גְּדוּל מְנַח | מְנַח רְבִיעַ  
קְדָמָא דְרַגְא תְבִיר מְנַח זְרָקָא מְנַח סְגוּלָּא תְלִישָׁא־גְדוּלָּה  
תְלִישָׁא־קִטְנָה קְדָמָא וְאִזְלָא אִזְלָא־גְרִישׁ גְּרִישִׁים פְּזֹר  
יְתִיב שְׁלִשְׁלֹת גְּלָגֵל קְרִי־פְּרָה מְרַכָּא־כְּפוּלָּה  
לְגַרְמָה | סוּף־פְּסוּק:

אשכנזים:

זְרָקָא מִקַּף־שׁוֹפְר־הוֹלֵךְ סְגוּלָּתָא פְּזֹר־גְּדוּל  
תְלִישָׁא תִילְשָׁא אִזְלָא־גְרִישׁ פְּסָקוּ רְבִיעַ שְׁנֵי־גְרִישִׁין  
דְרַגְא תְבִיר מֵאֲרִיךְ טְרַחָא אֶתְנַח שׁוֹפְר־מְהַפְךָ  
קְדָמָא תְרִי־קְדָמִין זְקוּף־קִטְוֹן זְקוּף־גְּדוּל שְׁלִשְׁלֹת  
גְּלָגֵל קְרִי־פְּרָה תְרִי־טַעֲמֵי יְתִיב סוּף־פְּסוּק:

ספרדים:

Book of  
**Joshua**

# Joshua

## INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA

The book of Joshua, the first book of Prophets, deals primarily with the process of Israel's inheritance of the land of Canaan, from the crossing of the Jordan until the completion of Israel's conquest of the land and its division among the tribes. Despite the myriad details enumerated, some relating to the actions of the people and some listing names and locations, there is a single theme running through the book.

The book of Joshua completes the narrative that began in Deuteronomy, thus connecting it to the five books of the Torah. Indeed, these books are connected in several regards: The Torah concludes with the death of Moses, but the story of the people's return to the land of the patriarchs is not yet complete. Moses was not granted permission to cross the Jordan, and it is therefore Joshua, who was ordained by Moses and who received some of Moses' "grandeur,"<sup>1</sup> who will act in place of Moses. Now Joshua will assume the role that was supposed to belong to Moses as he leads the people into the land and divides it among them.<sup>2</sup>

The Sages teach: Had Israel not sinned, they would have been given only the five books of the Torah and the book of Joshua.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the book of Joshua differs from the other books of Prophets in that it deals with the fulfillment of Israel's mission, while the others are mostly reactions to Israel's sins and issues.



Tribal inheritance of the land

# Book of Joshua

## God Speaks to Joshua about His New Role

JOSHUA 1:1–9

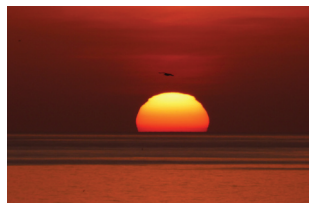
of authority to Joshua had been performed previously, when Moses was still alive. Now, at the true start of Joshua's independent leadership, God addresses him directly, with instructions and words of encouragement, promising him that he will succeed in bringing the nation across the Jordan and in inheriting the land. Joshua's role is not merely political or military; he is also obligated to maintain a constant relationship with God and to cleave wholly to His Torah.

Joshua, who had been Moses' trusted attendant and deputy, now becomes the preeminent leader of Israel. From this point forward, responsibility for leading the people rests squarely upon his shoulders. In order to succeed in his new role, Joshua requires support and encouragement. The technical transfer

- 1 **1 It was after the death of Moses, servant of the Lord, that the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' attendant,<sup>D</sup> his first direct prophecy, saying:**
- 2 **Moses My servant is dead; now you, and this entire people, arise, cross this Jordan<sup>D</sup> River, to the land that I am giving to them, to the children of Israel.**
- 3 After Joshua is commanded regarding his role, he is given a promise: **Every place upon which your foot will tread, I have given it to you, as I spoke to Moses.** Although the Land of Israel has defined borders, as delineated in the next verse,<sup>4</sup> God assures Joshua: If you conquer areas that lie beyond its borders, they shall belong to Israel.<sup>5</sup>
- 4 These are the borders of the land designated for you: **From the Syrian-Arabian wilderness** in the east, and the wilderness of the Sinai Peninsula in the south, which includes the wildernesses of Paran, Tzin, and Shur, **and until this well-known area of Lebanon** in the northwest. Perhaps the phrase "this Lebanon" indicates that Joshua could see this location from where he stood.<sup>6</sup> The borders continue **to the great river,** which is **the Euphrates River,** the northeastern border of the Land of Israel at its most expansive. This includes **the entire land of the Hitites,** a large



Euphrates River



"The Great Sea toward the setting sun"

country that stretched from northern Syria into Asia Minor. At the time, it was a large kingdom that served as a political counterweight to Egypt. This area, **to the Great Sea,<sup>D</sup>** the Mediterranean, which is **toward the place of the setting sun,** in the west,<sup>7</sup> **will be your borders.<sup>D</sup>**

- 5 **No man will stand against you,** as you will be a successful military leader **all the days of your life; just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.** No one ever attained the closeness to God experienced by Moses, whom He often helped to overcome difficulties and threats immediately, in a miraculous manner, for all to see. By contrast, Joshua's victories would generally be achieved by natural means. Nevertheless, God assures him that as Moses' successor, he will always be accompanied by divine providence and he will merit witnessing His miracles and wonders:<sup>8</sup> **I will not neglect you and I will not forsake you.**
- 6 **Be strong and courageous.** I will strengthen you upon your acceptance of this mission, **as you will bequeath to this people the land that I took an oath to their fathers to give them.** Unlike other historical processes involving one nation overtaking the land of another, which typically span several generations, you will merit completing the main part of your mission.
- 7 Having given Joshua an emboldening promise, God also warns him: **Just be very strong and courageous,<sup>D</sup> to take care to act in accordance with the entire Torah that Moses My servant commanded you.** Cling to the Torah in its entirety, both the Written Torah and the verbal instructions you have received. **Do not deviate from it,** the Torah,<sup>9</sup> or the legacy of Moses,<sup>10</sup> **right or left so that you will succeed wherever you will go.<sup>11</sup>**
- 8 Yet another directive is given, which also contains some advice:<sup>12</sup> **This book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth,<sup>D</sup> and you shall ponder it,<sup>13</sup> or speak about it,<sup>14</sup> day and**

א ויהי אחרי מות משה עבד יהוה ויאמר יהוה אל־יהושע בן־נון משרת משה א  
 ב לאמר: משה עבדי מת ועתה קום עבד את־היהוה הזה וכל־העם  
 ג הזה אל־הארץ אשר אנכי נתן להם לבני ישראל: כל־מקום אשר תדרך  
 ד כַּדְּגֹלְכֶם בו לכם נתתיו פֶּאֶשֶׁר דִּבְרַתִּי אֶל־מֹשֶׁה: מִהַמְּדַבֵּר וְהַלְבִּנוֹן הַזֶּה  
 ה וְעַד־הַנְּהַר הַגָּדוֹל נְהַר־פָּרַת כֹּל אֶרֶץ הַחִתִּים וְעַד־הַיַּם הַגָּדוֹל מְבֹאֵה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ  
 ו הַיְהִי גְבוּלְכֶם: לֹא־יִתְיַצֵּב אִישׁ לְפָנֶיךָ כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ כֹּאֲשֶׁר הָיִיתִי עִם־מֹשֶׁה  
 ו אֲהִיָּה עִמָּךְ לֹא אֶרְפָּךְ וְלֹא אֶעֱזֹבְךָ: חֶזֶק וְאַמֵּץ כִּי אֶתְּהַלֵּךְ אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה  
 ז אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאֲבוֹתֶם לָתֵת לָהֶם: רַק חֶזֶק וְאַמֵּץ מְאֹד לְשַׁמֵּר  
 ח לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכֹל־הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר צִוְּךָ מֹשֶׁה עַבְדִּי אֶל־תְּסוּר מִמֶּנּוּ יְמִין וּשְׂמֹאל  
 לְמַעַן תִּשְׁכַּל בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּלְךָ: לֹא־יִמוּשׁ סֶפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה מִפִּיךָ וְהָגִיתָ בוֹ

DISCUSSION

1:1| **Joshua son of Nun, Moses' attendant:** Although Joshua was granted the strength and authority to lead Israel, to a large extent he did not rule in his own merit but due to his position as Moses' attendant, that is, his deputy, the man who had been executing Moses' orders from the time of Israel's first war with Amalek (Exodus 17:8–16). Joshua, who had always been close to his master, was now chosen to complete Moses' mission. For this reason, various statements and prophecies of Moses appear sporadically throughout the book of Joshua (see 8:31–35, 11:12–23, 23:6). Indeed, they form the basis for all the events described in this book, and responsibility for their fulfillment fell upon Joshua, the political and military successor of Moses (see Ralbag).

1:2| **This Jordan:** The Jordan River is the eastern border of the Land of Israel (Numbers 34:12). Although large tracts of land on the eastern side of the Jordan, which had been occupied by the Emorites, had already been conquered by Israel, this was not the original intention. Israel fought

the Emorite kings and conquered their lands only because those kings blocked their path to the western side of the Jordan. Consequently, the region on the eastern side of the border is considered a kind of annexed territory, which is not classified as the Land of Israel proper in the fullest sense (see 22:19).

1:4| **The Great Sea:** This expression, which appears in various places in the Bible, generally refers to the Mediterranean Sea. Only on rare occasions is it used to denote the ocean, which in ancient times was considered to be the other end of the world (see *Responsa of the Rosh* 4:4; Rosh, Mishna *Para*, chap. 8). The Mediterranean Sea is called the Great Sea as it is significantly larger than the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee, which are on the eastern side of the Land of Israel (see Radak; Numbers 34:6; Ezekiel 47:10–20).

**Your borders:** The borders of the land delineated in this verse constitute the largest expanse of Israel's boundaries. In practice, only on rare

occasions in the history of Israel did its authority approach these limits. Joshua is commanded to enter the land, conquer it, and in due course settle the people within it (see 13:1 onward, and Rashi ad loc.; Ramban, Deuteronomy 11:24; Alsheikh).

1:7| **Just be very strong and courageous:** Immediately after God assures Joshua that He will make him strong and courageous (1:6), this verse employs the same phrase, but with an additional emphasis: Be very strong and courageous in scrupulously obeying the laws of the Torah. His adherence to the Torah and complete fidelity to its commandments are to be the foundation of his success.

1:8| **This book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth:** Some interpret this statement as a blessing: Although you will be preoccupied with other matters, you will never abandon the Torah, and you will manage to reflect upon it day and night (Rashi; Radak; see also *Menahot* 99b). Indeed, the Sages teach

» that



**night.** You must cleave to the Torah always, **so that you will take care to act in accordance with everything that is written in it, as then your way will prosper,<sup>15</sup> and then you will** understand what course of action you must take, and you will **succeed.**

- 9 Did I not command you: Be strong and courageous, do not break down<sup>16</sup> and do not be alarmed?** Along with the words

## Joshua's First Commands in Preparation for Entering the Land

JOSHUA 1:10–18

its own inheritance, the paradigm of each tribe as a complete and independent unit is now weakened.

Joshua must also ensure that the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh, who received their tribal inheritance on the eastern side of the Jordan, fulfill their promise to serve on the army's front lines. The members of these tribes will be loyal soldiers, and they will work to secure Joshua's rule and enforce discipline among the rest of the nation.

- 10 Joshua commanded the officers of the people,** who were responsible for order and discipline among the people,<sup>18</sup> **saying:**
- 11 Pass through the midst of the camp, and command the people, saying: Prepare for yourselves provisions.<sup>D</sup>** This may refer to the manna that they still received, or to other foods and items they had obtained.<sup>19</sup> The officers are to command the people: Complete all your logistical preparations; pack your things and be ready for travel, **for in three more days you are crossing this Jordan, to go and to take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving you to take possession of it.**
- 12 Joshua now attends to another matter: To the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh,** those tribes that requested to inherit their portion on the eastern side of the Jordan rather than in the land of Canaan on the western side of the Jordan,<sup>20</sup> **Joshua said, stating:**
- 13 Remember the matter that Moses servant of the Lord commanded you, saying: The Lord your God is granting you repose, and He has given you this land** on the eastern side of the Jordan.
- 14 Therefore, your wives, your children, and your livestock will inhabit the land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan,** on the eastern side. The lands on the eastern side of the Jordan, which are suitable for pasture, were not originally designated for you by God but were given to you by Moses as per your request, after you promised that you would not settle there

of general encouragement in the previous verses regarding Joshua's mission and Torah observance, God now urges Joshua specifically to be strong on his new path, which will undoubtedly feature challenges.<sup>17</sup> **For the Lord your God is with you wherever you will go.** You are assured that you will not fail.

Joshua acts without delay. Immediately upon receiving his mission, he instructs the officers and the other leaders to prepare the people for their entrance into the land. Joshua's orders are transmitted to the people via the officers, rather than by the heads of the tribes, which had been the accepted manner until now. This point marks the beginning of the loosening of the divisions between the tribes, a process that will become increasingly prominent later on. Although the distinctions between the tribes remain intact, and each tribe will receive

immediately. **But you shall cross, armed, before your brethren, all the mighty warriors** among you, apart from a small guard of men that will remain behind to look after your families and property. Do not abandon the other tribes; you shall cross over the Jordan with them, **and you shall help them** by serving as an independent unit in all their battles,

- 15 until the Lord grants your brethren repose, like you,** just as you sit tranquilly in your land, **and they too take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving them, and only then will you return to the land of your possession, and take possession of it,** become rooted in the land, **which was given to you by Moses the servant of the Lord, across the Jordan, toward the rising sun,** that is, to the east, where the sun rises.
- 16 They, these tribes, answered Joshua, saying: Everything that you commanded us we will do, and to wherever you send us we will go.** We are under your command and will obey your instructions.
- 17 Just as we always heeded Moses, so we will heed you.** The tribes even bless Joshua that he should have powers similar to those of Moses: **Only, may the Lord your God be with you, as He was with Moses.**
- 18 Any man who disobeys you, and does not heed<sup>21</sup> your words in everything that you command him, will be put to death.<sup>D</sup>** We accept your leadership and your orders unconditionally. **Just be strong and courageous** to command the people and insist that your commands are fulfilled.<sup>22</sup>

### DISCUSSION

that Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai says: The book of Deuteronomy was like a banner, or standard, for Joshua. When God revealed Himself to

Joshua, He found him sitting with the book of Deuteronomy in his hand. God said to him: Be strong, Joshua; be courageous, Joshua. "This

book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth" (*Bereshit Rabba* 6:9).

יוֹמָם וּלְיָלֵהּ לְמַעַן תִּשְׁמְדוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכֹל־הַפְּתוּב בּוֹ כִּי־אִז תִּצְלִיחַ אֶת־דְּרָכְךָ וְאִז  
 תִּשְׁכַּל: הֲלוֹא צְוִיתִיךָ חֲזַק וְאַמֵּץ אֶל־תַּעֲרֹץ וְאֶל־תַּחַת כִּי עִמָּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
 כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּלְךָ: וַיִּצְוּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת־שֹׁטְרֵי הָעָם לֵאמֹר: עֲבְרוּ וּ  
 בְקָרְבַּת הַמַּחֲנֶה וְצִוּוּ אֶת־הָעָם לֵאמֹר הֲכִינוּ לָכֶם צֹדָה כִּי בָּעוֹד וּ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים  
 אַתֶּם עֹבְדִים אֶת־הִירְדֵן הִזֵּה לְבֹא לְרִשֶׁת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם  
 נָתַן לָכֶם לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: וְלֹדְאוּבְנֵי וְלִגְדֵי וְלַחֲצֵי שִׁבְטֵי הַמְּנַשֶּׁה אָמַר  
 יְהוֹשֻׁעַ לֵאמֹר: זְכוּר אֶת־הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֶתְכֶם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר יְהוָה  
 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מְנִיחַ לָכֶם וְנָתַן לָכֶם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת: נְשִׁיכֶם טַפְּכֶם וּמִקְנֵיכֶם יֵשְׁבוּ  
 בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָכֶם מֹשֶׁה בְּעֶבֶר הִירְדֵן וְאַתֶּם תַּעֲבְרוּ חֲמִשִּׁים לִפְנֵי אַחֵיכֶם  
 כָּל גְּבוּרֵי הַחֵיל וְעִזְרְתֶם אוֹתָם: עַד אֲשֶׁר־יָנִיחַ יְהוָה וּ לְאַחֵיכֶם פֶּכֶס וּיְרָשׁוּ  
 גַם־הֵמָּה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם נָתַן לָהֶם וּשְׁבַתְּם לָאָרֶץ יְרִשְׁתֶּם  
 וּיְרִשְׁתֶּם אוֹתָהּ אֲשֶׁר וּ נָתַן לָכֶם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד יְהוָה בְּעֶבֶר הִירְדֵן מִזְרַח הַשָּׁמֶשׁ:  
 וַיַּעֲנוּ אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ לֵאמֹר כָּל אֲשֶׁר־צְוִיתָנוּ נַעֲשֶׂה וְאֶל־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁלַחְנוּ נִלְךָ:  
 כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַעְנוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֶּן נִשְׁמַע אֵלֶיךָ רַק יְהִי־הִיא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עִמָּךְ כַּאֲשֶׁר  
 הָיָה עִם־מֹשֶׁה: כָּל־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יְמַדָּה אֶת־פִּיךָ וְלֹא־יִשְׁמַע אֶת־דְּבָרֶיךָ לְכֹל  
 אֲשֶׁר־תִּצְוֶנוּ יוֹמָת רַק חֲזַק וְאַמֵּץ:

DISCUSSION

1:11 | **Prepare for yourselves provisions:** Israel's existence in the wilderness was wondrous in that they lived day to day on the miraculous manna. Now they will face new challenges: They are about to inherit a land whose nature and inhabitants are unfamiliar to them. Consequently, they must prepare and equip themselves with supplies.

1:18 | **Any man who disobeys you...will be put to death:** The warriors of Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh will not be fighting on behalf of their own tribes but for the nation as a whole. Unlike the other tribes, which will set out to conquer their own portions, partially or wholly, the members of these tribes will arrive in the land of Canaan as a military unit

that answers to Joshua alone. They declare before him that they will help prevent any possible breach of discipline within the nation. Just as there had been people who occasionally questioned the leadership of Moses, there is a concern that some might try to undermine Joshua's authority. These tribes therefore seek to strengthen Joshua by declaring that they will be obedient to him. Indeed, the Talmud relates that certain people expressed reservations about Joshua's leadership: The elders of that generation said: The face of Moses was as bright as the face of the sun; the face of Joshua is like the face of the moon. Woe for this embarrassment; woe for this disgrace (*Bava Batra* 75a).

The declaration of the two and a half tribes is especially important in light of such an attitude.

It is likely that these tribes did not hear God's statements to Joshua, yet they repeat the same phrase that God said to Joshua: Be strong and courageous. Unwittingly, the members of these tribes invoke the words of God, serving as an echo to His statements and thus reiterating God's central message to Joshua: You will be the leader of Israel, and the people will follow you with the hope that you will succeed in your mission like Moses, your master and teacher. Interestingly, the Torah itself also contains expressions of support and encouragement regarding Joshua (see Deuteronomy 1:38, 3:28, 31:7).

## The Spies in Jericho

JOSHUA 2:1–24

Joshua's first step taken as leader of Israel is the dispatch of spies to the land of Canaan. His master, Moses, had sent spies on at least two occasions: when he sent the twelve spies to explore the land of Canaan<sup>23</sup> and when he sent spies to Yazer, an Amorite city.<sup>24</sup> The twelve spies were sent for strategic reasons: to familiarize themselves with the main roads and to discover the nature of the land and its inhabitants. From their exploration, which lasted forty days, the spies were unable to obtain more detailed intelligence, mostly because they traveled together, at least for part of the time. The dispatch of spies to Yazer was similarly for tactical purposes, in order to find the access routes to that city.

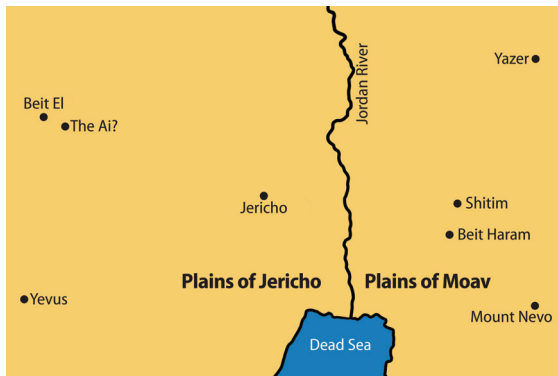
By contrast, the spies sent by Joshua are not dispatched for strategic or tactical reasons pertaining to the conquest of Jericho. The mission of these spies is not clearly defined, but their task appears to be similar to that of some modern spies, whose mission is to evaluate the morale of the local population and the strength of their fighting spirit. Although Joshua will receive divine assistance, as God will accompany him with miracles, he must nevertheless gather intelligence about the morale of Jericho's residents and the other inhabitants of the land in order to evaluate the resistance he will encounter.

The inhabitants of the land do not know when Israel will cross into Canaan, nor where they will turn to first in conquest. It may be assumed that the residents of Jericho do not think that their fortified city will be Israel's first target.

- 2** **1** Joshua son of Nun sent two men from Shitim<sup>B</sup> near the Jordan, where the people were encamped,<sup>25</sup> as spies, covertly,<sup>26</sup> saying: Go see the land, and in particular Jericho. Joshua thereby hinted to the spies that Israel's first objective upon entry into the land would be to conquer the city of Jericho. Several places near Jericho are referred to as the fords of the Jordan,<sup>27</sup> and any one of these could have been used to cross the Jordan River. There were no fortified cities in the vicinity of these fords aside from the city of Jericho, which was exceptional in its strong fortification.<sup>28</sup> They went and they came to the house of a prostitute<sup>D</sup> whose name was Rahav, and they lodged there.



Tel es-Sultan, remains from the biblical Jericho



Shitim, the Jordan River, and Jericho

- 2** It was said to the king of Jericho, saying: Behold, men came here tonight from the children of Israel to spy the land. Perhaps the spies tried to dress like the locals, but even so they

were recognized as foreigners. Since Jericho was not a large city, they were soon spotted, and it was even known where they were lodging.

- 3** The king of Jericho sent to Rahav, saying: Bring out to us the men who came to you, who came to your house, as they came to reconnoiter the land.
- 4** Rahav could have invited the king's messengers inside and surrendered the spies, but she chose the opposite course of action: The woman took the two men, and hid them. The singular form indicates that she hid each spy in a different place, so that they would not be easily discovered.<sup>29</sup> She said to the king's messengers: Yes, the men whom you seek came to me, but I did not know from where they were. I am not supposed to know the identities of the men who enter this place.
- 5** Nevertheless, I have information regarding their whereabouts: It was when the city gate was about to close, at dark,<sup>30</sup> which is not the usual time for entering and exiting the city, that the men departed. I do not know where the men went; chase quickly after them, for you will overtake them.<sup>D</sup> Rahav misled the king's messengers, convincing them to leave quickly in search of the spies outside the city.
- 6** But she took them up to the roof. In many Middle Eastern lands, houses were constructed with flat roofs, which were used during part of the year for sleeping and various other needs. This episode occurred at the beginning of spring.<sup>31</sup> And she hid them in the stalks of flax<sup>B</sup> that were arranged for her on the roof for drying, after having been harvested.<sup>32</sup>
- 7** The men who were searching for the spies chased after them toward the Jordan, to the fords<sup>B</sup> of the Jordan River. These men made the logical assumption that the spies were headed



Sheaves of flax stalks after harvesting and drying

ב וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נֹנִן מִן־הַשְּׂפִיִּים שְׁנַיִם אַנְשִׁים מְדַגְלִים חָרָשׁ לְאֹמֶר לָכֵן רְאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־יְרִיחוֹ וְיִלְכוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ בֵּית אִשָּׁה זֹנָה וּשְׂמָה רַחֵב וַיִּשְׁכְּבוּ־שָׁמָּה׃  
 ב וַיֹּאמֶר לְמֶלֶךְ יְרִיחוֹ לְאֹמֶר הִנֵּה אַנְשִׁים בָּאוּ הֵנָּה הַלַּיְלָה מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַחֲפֹר אֶת־הָאָרֶץ׃ וַיִּשְׁלַח מֶלֶךְ יְרִיחוֹ אֶל־רַחֵב לְאֹמֶר הֲוָעִיִּאי הָאֲנָשִׁים הַבָּאִים אֵלֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר־בָּאוּ לְבִיתְךָ כִּי לַחֲפֹר אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ בָּאוּ׃ וַתִּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה אֶת־שְׁנֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים וַתַּצְפְּנֵנּוּ וַתֹּאמֶר כִּן בָּאוּ אֵלַי הָאֲנָשִׁים וְלֹא יָדַעְתִּי מֵאֵין הֵמָּה׃ וַיְהִי הַשָּׁעַר לִסְגֹר וּבַחֹשֶׁךְ וְהָאֲנָשִׁים יֵצְאוּ לֹא יָדַעְתִּי אָנָּה הֲלָכּוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים רִדְפוּ מֵהָר אַחֲרֵיהֶם כִּי תִשְׁיָגוּם׃ וְהִיא הֶעֱלֵתָם הַגָּה וַתִּטְמְנֵם בְּפִשְׁתֵּי הָעֵץ הָעֲרֻכּוֹת לָהּ עַל־הַגָּה׃  
 ז וְהָאֲנָשִׁים רִדְפוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם דֶּרֶךְ הַיַּרְדֵּן עַל הַמַּעְבְּרוֹת וְהַשָּׁעַר סָגְרוּ אַחֲרֵי כֵּן׃

for the Israelite encampment beyond the Jordan River, and that the spies would therefore need to find a place where they could cross the river, which was surging at that time of year.<sup>33</sup> Presumably, the two spies were traveling on foot, while the

king's men were in pursuit on horses. They therefore had high hopes of catching the spies. **And they shut the city gate<sup>34</sup> after them when the pursuers departed after them,** to prevent

BACKGROUND

2:1| **Shitim:** Many researchers identify this with Khirbet-el-Kefrein, north of Wadi el-Kefrein, roughly 20 km east of Jericho. Others claim that it is Tel el-Hammam, east of Khirbet-el-Kefrein.

2:6| **The stalks of flax:** Flax threads are produced from flax stalks. The outer shell is removed, and the stalks then undergo a process that includes drying, soaking, and beating. Some claim that the verse is referring to bundles of the fibers found beneath the stem of the flax plant.

2:7| **The fords:** In those places where the water of the Jordan River was shallow due to the accumulation of sediment, the ground would be paved with stones in order to stabilize the surface and enable passage on foot. Along the length of the Jordan, between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, there are dozens of such spots that were used for crossing, mainly near the points where tributaries connected to the river; six of them were in the region of Jericho.

DISCUSSION

2:1| **And they came to the house of a prostitute [zona]:** *Targum Yonatan* translates *zona* as innkeeper. However, it appears that in those days an inn was not merely a place for lodging (see Radak; see also Rashi, 2:1, 11; Abravanel; Ibn Ezra, Joel 4:3). The decision of the spies to lodge in the house of a prostitute was both clever and effective. As foreigners, they realized that they would stand out, even in a commercial city such as Jericho. Even if they traveled in disguise and could speak the native language, they would likely have been accosted and interrogated regarding the intentions of their visit. They therefore chose to lodge in a prostitute's house, where men would enter and exit quietly and discreetly, without anyone inquiring as to their identities, thereby remaining unnoticed. Moreover, a prostitute would know what was truly on people's minds, her knowledge based not on official declarations and speeches of the king or his ministers but on the unbridled, authentic conversation of the city residents. Rahav could therefore faithfully and accurately speak of the mood of Jericho's people. Despite its undignified nature, the house of a prostitute was the most suitable place for the fulfillment of the spies' mission (see Malbim).

2:5| **Chase quickly after them, for you will overtake them:** Rahav chose to deceive the king and his men and cooperate with the enemy's spies. Perhaps she was motivated to do so because she herself was a foreigner in Jericho (see *Tosafot, Megilla* 14b; Radak, 6:25) and therefore did not feel close to the rulers of the city or personally involved in their fate. Perhaps she was a member of a different tribe, or she had arrived in Jericho as part of a passing convoy and decided to stay in the city with her family (see 2:12–13) and, as a foreigner, she eventually became a prostitute.

If Rahav was, in fact, a local, she could still have been motivated by self-interest. It is possible that she was keenly aware of the low morale on the streets of Jericho, more so than the king, and recognized that although these two lone strangers could easily be captured and executed, they represented a large and threatening force that was fast approaching. She therefore estimated that her best course of action was to help her guests, and place her hopes in them and their senders, rather than collaborate with the king, whose days were numbered.



the spies from leaving the city in the event that they were still inside.<sup>35</sup>

- 8 **As for them, the spies, before they had gone to sleep, she, Rahav, went up to them on the roof to speak with them.**
- 9 **She said to the men, whose identity and purpose she now knew: I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that dread of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted from before you.** Morale in Jericho was very low.
- 10 **For we have heard how the Lord dried the waters of the Red Sea for you upon your exodus from Egypt.** The splitting of the Red Sea, which had occurred some forty years earlier, was such a dramatic event that news of it had spread as far as Jericho. **And we have also heard that which you did to the two kings of the Emorites, who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and to Og, whom you utterly destroyed.** Although the inhabitants of Canaan had not yet encountered the Israelites, news of the miraculous splitting of the Red Sea, along with Israel's recent military victories against two powerful kings just east of the Jordan, were enough to strike fear in them. These reports created the impression that Israel was an exceedingly mighty nation. Moreover, the inhabitants of Jericho could see from a distance the size of the Israelite army.
- 11 **We heard and our hearts melted in fear, and a fighting spirit did not remain in any man because of you.** Our courage and valor have disappeared entirely, **because I am sure that the Lord your God, He is God in the heavens above and on earth below.**
- 12 Rahav was aware that when the city was conquered, the lives of all its inhabitants would be endangered. She therefore asked for something in exchange for saving the spies: **Now please take an oath to me by the Lord, since I have done kindness to you, you too will do kindness to my father's house; provide me with a reliable sign** that you will comply with my request,<sup>36</sup>
- 13 **that you will keep alive my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and everything that is theirs.** It is possible that as a prostitute, Rahav had neither a husband nor children; she sought to rescue the other members of her family who were living in the city.<sup>37</sup> **And you will deliver our lives from death.**<sup>D</sup>
- 14 **The men, the spies, said to her: Our lives are instead of yours to die.** We will bear responsibility for the lives of all those you mentioned, **if you and your family do not tell of these matters of ours; it shall be, when the Lord gives us the land, we will act with kindness and truth to you.** We will ensure your safety, just as you ensured ours.<sup>38</sup>
- 15 Rahav did not want the men to remain in her house any longer, as she feared that the king's messengers might return upon failing to find them outside the city. Since the city gates were locked, **she lowered them with a rope through the window,**

**as her house was at the side of the wall,<sup>D</sup> and she lived in the wall.**



House at the side of a wall

- 16 **She said to them, before they departed: Go to the highlands, lest the pursuers encounter you.** The area near the Jordan is exposed; it is not densely wooded and lacks sufficient hiding places. If you try to move toward it now, you will likely be captured by your pursuers, who may be quite numerous. You should therefore travel in the opposite direction, to the hills west of Jericho, and **hide there three days, until the pursuers' return to the city, and then go on your way to your camp, as by that time your pursuers will have abandoned their search.**
- 17 **The men said to her: We are absolved of this oath of yours that you administered to us.** We will not be required to fulfill the terms of our oath to you if you do not follow these instructions:
- 18 **Behold, when we come into the land, you will tie this cord<sup>39</sup> of scarlet thread in the window through which you have lowered us.** A cord dyed bright red,<sup>40</sup> with a dye extracted from scale insects, will mark your house prominently. **And your father, your mother, your brothers, and your father's entire household, only the members of your family, you will gather to you, into the house.** They will be granted protection in your merit.
- 19 **It shall be that anyone who will exit from the doors of your house outside, his blood shall be on his head,** he shall bear responsibility for causing his own death,<sup>41</sup> **and we will be absolved.** If you wish to protect the members of your family from harm, you must insist that they remain inside the house, as that will be the only guaranteed place of refuge. Anyone who ventures outside will be exposed to the dangers of war. **But anyone who will be with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if a hand will be upon him to harm him.** We accept

יֵצְאוּ הַרְדִּפִּים אַחֲרֵיהֶם: וְהָמָּה טָרַם יִשְׁכְּבוּן וְהִיא עָלְתָה עֲלֵיהֶם עַל-הַגָּג:  
 וְתֹאמֶר אֶל-הָאֲנָשִׁים יַדְעֵתִי כִּי-נָתַן יְהוָה לָכֶם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְכִי-נִפְלְאָה אֵימַתְכֶם  
 עָלֵינוּ וְכִי נִמְגּוּ כָּל-יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵיכֶם: כִּי שָׁמַעְנוּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר-הוֹבִישׁ יְהוָה  
 אֶת-מִי יַם-סוּף מִפְּנֵיכֶם בְּעֹצְמוֹתֵיכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם וְאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתֶם לְשֹׁנֵי מַלְכֵי הָאֲמֹרִי  
 אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן לְסִיחֹן וְלַעֹג אֲשֶׁר הִחְרַמְתֶּם אוֹתָם: וְנִשְׁמַע וַיִּמַּס לְבַבְנוּ  
 וְלֹא-קָמָה עוֹד רוּחַ בְּאִישׁ מִפְּנֵיכֶם כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהִים בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל  
 וְעַל-הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת: וְעַתָּה הַשְׁבְּעוּ-נָא לִי בִיהוָה כִּי-עָשִׂיתִי עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד וְעָשִׂיתֶם  
 גַּם-אִתָּם עִם-בֵּית אָבִי חֶסֶד וְנָתַתֶּם לִי אוֹת אֲמֶת: וְהִחַיְתֶם אֶת-אָבִי וְאֶת-אֲמוֹי  
 וְאֶת-אֲחֵי וְאֶת-אֲחוֹתַי וְאֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם וְהִצַּלְתֶּם אֶת-נַפְשֹׁתֵינוּ מִמוֹת:  
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהּ הָאֲנָשִׁים נִפְשָׁנוּ תַחְתִּיכֶם לְמוֹת אִם לֹא תִגִּידוּ אֶת-דְּבָרֵנוּ זֶה וְהָיָה  
 בְּתַת־יְהוָה לָנוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְעָשִׂינוּ עִמָּךְ חֶסֶד וְאֲמֶת: וְתוֹרְדָם בַּחֶבֶל בְּעַד  
 הַחֲלוֹן כִּי בֵיתָה בְּקִיר הַחוּמָה וּבַחוּמָה הִיא יוֹשֶׁבֶת: וְתֹאמֶר לָהֶם הִרְרָה לָכֶן  
 פֶּן-יִפְגְּעוּ בְכֶם הַרְדִּפִּים וְנִחַפְתֶּם שָׁמָּה שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים עַד שׁוּב הַרְדִּפִּים וְאַחֲרַי  
 תֵּלְכוּ לְדַרְכְּכֶם: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶיהָ הָאֲנָשִׁים נָקִים אַנְחָנוּ מִשְׁבַּעְתְּךָ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר  
 הִשְׁבַּעְתָּנוּ: הִנֵּה אַנְחָנוּ בָּאִים בָּאָרֶץ אֶת-תְּקוּוֹת חוּטֵי הַשָּׁנִי הַזֶּה תִּקְשְׁרֵי  
 בַּחֲלוֹן אֲשֶׁר הוֹרְדִתָּנוּ בּוֹ וְאֶת-אֲבִיךָ וְאֶת-אִמְךָ וְאֶת-אֲחִיךָ וְאֶת כָּל-בֵּית אֲבִיךָ  
 תֹאסֶפִי אֵלֶיךָ הַבֵּיתָה: וְהָיָה כָּל אֲשֶׁר-יֵצֵא מִדְּלַתִּי בֵיתְךָ הַחוּצָה דָּמוּ בְּרֹאשׁוֹ  
 וְאַנְחָנוּ נָקִים וְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה אִתְּךָ בַּבַּיִת דָּמוּ בְּרֹאשׁוֹ אִם-יָד תִּהְיֶה-בּוֹ:

אֲחֵיוֹתַי

DISCUSSION

2:13| **Deliver our lives from death:** Little is known from the Bible itself about Rahav. In the Talmud there are accounts that elaborate on her and her history (see *Megilla* 14b–15a; *Zevahim* 116b). It appears that she was an exceptional individual: A woman of faith, opinionated, and clever enough to comprehend the events unfolding in

the city. She used her insight to take advantage of this chance opportunity and request that her family be spared.

2:15| **As her house was at the side of the wall:** Portions of the walls surrounding Jericho were very thick. Some of these portions were several meters wide, occasionally surrounded by

a moat. Other portions were so thick that small houses could be contained within them, so that some people literally lived inside the city walls. Rahav apparently resided in such a house, and it was therefore easy for her to help the spies escape.