

**44** Then he instructed his house steward as follows, "Fill the men's bags with food, as much as they can carry, and put each one's money in the mouth of his bag. <sup>2</sup>Put my silver goblet in the mouth of the bag of the youngest one, together with his money for the rations." And he did as Joseph told him.

<sup>3</sup>With the first light of morning, the men were sent off with their pack animals. <sup>4</sup>They had just left the city and had not gone far, when Joseph said to his steward, "Up, go after the men! And when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why did you repay good with evil? <sup>5</sup>It is the very one from which my master drinks and which he uses for divination. It was a wicked thing for you to do!'"

<sup>6</sup>He overtook them and spoke those words to them. <sup>7</sup>And they said to him, "Why does my lord say such things? Far be it from your servants to do anything of the kind! <sup>8</sup>Here we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money that we found in the mouths of our bags. How then could we have stolen any silver or gold from your master's house! <sup>9</sup>Whichever

**מד** ויצו את אשר על ביתו לאמר  
מלא את אמתחת האנשים אכל פאשר  
יוכלון שאת ושים כסף איש בפי  
אמתחתו: <sup>2</sup>ואת גביעי הכסף  
תשים בפי אמתחת הקטן ואת כסף  
שברו ויעש כדבר יוסף אשר דבר:  
<sup>3</sup>הבקר אור והאנשים שלהו המה  
והמריהם: <sup>4</sup>הם יצאו את העיר לא  
הרחיקו ויוסף אמר לאשר על ביתו קום  
רדף אחרי האנשים והשגתם ואמרת  
אלהם למה שלמתם רעה תחת טובה:  
<sup>5</sup>הלוא זה אשר ישתה אדני בו והוא  
נחש ונחש בו הרעתם אשר עשיתם:  
<sup>6</sup>וישגם וידבר אלהם את הדברים  
האלה: <sup>7</sup>ויאמרו אליו למה ידבר אדני  
כדברים האלה הלילה לעבדיך מעשות  
כדבר הזה: <sup>8</sup>הן כסף אשר מצאנו בפי  
אמתחתינו השיבנו אליך מארץ כנען  
ואיך נגנב מבית אדניך כסף או זהב:  
<sup>9</sup>אשר ימצא אתו מעבדיך ומת וגם-

JOSEPH'S INSTRUCTIONS (vv. 1-5)

**1. Then he instructed** These preparations no doubt take place during the night while the brothers sleep.

**Fill the men's bags** By supplying them in excess of what their money can buy, Joseph makes them appear all the more ungrateful when they are apprehended for alleged theft.

**put each one's money** The restoration of their money this time is puzzling, because it plays no role in the accusation that is soon to be made against them.

**2. goblet** A "libation vessel" for wine, larger than an ordinary cup and used also as a receptacle for oil in the menorah of the Tabernacle. Here, the goblet serves both as a drinking vessel and as a divining instrument (v. 5).

**3. the first light of morning** This explains why Joseph is still at home when the brothers later return (v. 14).

**4. the city** The city is said to be situated "in the region of Goshen." See Comment to 45:10.

**repay good with evil** In verse 50:20, Joseph tells his brothers that God used their evil intentions to good end.

**5. It is the very one** The one they saw him using at dinner. They cannot claim it is their own property.

**he uses for divination** It is not stated that Joseph actually believes in divination, but he wants the brothers to think he does.

THE STEWARD'S ACCUSATION AND SEARCH (vv. 6-12)

**8. How then could we have stolen** This inference from a minor premise ("Here") to a major one ("How then") is known in rabbinic terminology as *kal va-homer*. There are 10 instances of this type of reasoning in the Bible, listed in Gen. R. 92:7.

of your servants it is found with shall die; the rest of us, moreover, shall become slaves to my lord." <sup>10</sup>He replied, "Although what you are proposing is right, only the one with whom it is found shall be my slave; but the rest of you shall go free."

<sup>11</sup>So each one hastened to lower his bag to the ground, and each one opened his bag. <sup>12</sup>He searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest; and the goblet turned up in Benjamin's bag. <sup>13</sup>At this they rent their clothes. Each reloaded his pack animal, and they returned to the city.

<sup>14</sup>When Judah and his brothers reentered the house of Joseph, who was still there, they threw themselves on the ground before him. <sup>15</sup>Joseph said to them, "What is this deed that you have done? Do you not know that a man like me practices divination?" <sup>16</sup>Judah replied,

אֲנַחְנוּ נִהְיֶה לְאֹדְנֵי לְעֶבְדֵיכֶם: <sup>10</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר  
גַּם-עֲתָה כְּדַבְרֵיכֶם כִּן-הוּא אֲשֶׁר יִמְצָא  
אֹתוֹ יִהְיֶה-לִּי עֶבֶד וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ נְקִיִּים:  
<sup>11</sup>וַיִּמְהָרוּ וַיּוֹרְדוּ אִישׁ אֶת-אֲמֹתָתוֹ  
אֶרְצָה וַיִּפְתְּחוּ אִישׁ אֲמֹתָתוֹ:  
<sup>12</sup>וַיִּחְפֹּשׂ בַּגְּדוֹל הַחֵל וּבִקְטָן כְּלָה וַיִּמְצָא  
הַגְּבִיעַ בְּאֲמֹתָתָהּ בְּנִימָן: <sup>13</sup>וַיִּקְרְעוּ  
שְׂמֹלְתָם וַיַּעֲמֹס אִישׁ עַל-חֲמֹרוֹ וַיֵּשְׁבוּ  
הָעִירָה:

<sup>14</sup>וַיָּבֹא יְהוּדָה וְאָחִיו בֵּיתָה יוֹסֵף וְהוּא  
עוֹדְנוֹ שָׁם וַיִּפְּלוּ לְפָנָיו אֶרְצָה: <sup>15</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר  
לָהֶם יוֹסֵף מָה-הַמַּעֲשֶׂה הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר  
עֲשִׂיתֶם הֲלוֹא יָדַעְתֶּם כִּי-יִנְחֹשׁ יִנְחֹשׁ  
אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר כְּמֹנִי: <sup>16</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה מִה-

**9. shall die** The proposed punishments reflect no known Egyptian law. It is possible that because the brothers are convinced of their innocence, they propose a penalty for themselves that is harsher than the law actually requires.

**the rest of us** The brothers accept the principle of collective responsibility.

**10. what you are proposing** The opening words of the steward's response—literally, "also now according to your words so it is"—could mean, "The penalties you invoke are indeed the law, but I shall be lenient," or, "I accept the logic of your argument to the effect that you are generally honest."

**shall go free** The word *n'kiyim* is a legal term for "cleared of offense or obligation."

**11. hastened** Their haste is a demonstration of innocence as well as an attempt to dispose of the entire business as quickly as possible.

**12. He searched** The steward adroitly manipulates the situation. One can imagine the ris-

ing self-confidence of the brothers after each successive search yielded nothing.

#### THE RETURN TO JOSEPH (vv. 13–17)

**13. they rent their clothes** The horror of their predicament leaves them speechless. They can only do what they caused their father to do years before (37:34).

**14. Judah** He takes the lead, because he took on the safety of Benjamin as his personal obligation.

**who was still there** Joseph has not yet left the house for his place of work because it is still very early in the morning (v. 3). His presence, therefore, does not raise any suspicion of trickery.

**on the ground** This addition to the usual phrase expresses their state of utter despair.

**15. Joseph said** Feigning anger, he addresses them collectively, implying that they are all involved in the theft. His "leniency," soon to

#### CHAPTER 44

**12.** Benjamin's mother, Rachel, had stolen Laban's idols and hidden them in her baggage. Will Benjamin be accused of acting similarly

(Gen. R. 92:8)? Joseph's trap is now set. How will the brothers respond? Will they abandon Benjamin out of resentment of Jacob's favoring him? Or have they learned how to be brothers?

“What can we say to my lord? How can we plead, how can we prove our innocence? God has uncovered the crime of your servants. Here we are, then, slaves of my lord, the rest of us as much as he in whose possession the goblet was found.”<sup>17</sup> But he replied, “Far be it from me to act thus! Only he in whose possession the goblet was found shall be my slave; the rest of you go back in peace to your father.”

נֹאמֵר לְאֲדֹנָי מִה־נִּדְבָר וּמִה־נִּצְטָדֵק  
הָאֱלֹהִים מָצָא אֶת־עֵינֵן עֲבָדֶיךָ הַנְּנוּ  
עֲבָדִים לְאֲדֹנָי גַּם־אֲנָחְנוּ גַּם אֲשֶׁר־נִמְצָא  
הַגְּבִיעַ בְּיָדוֹ: <sup>17</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר חֲלִילָה לִּי  
מַעֲשׂוֹת זֹאת הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר נִמְצָא הַגְּבִיעַ  
בְּיָדוֹ הוּא יִהְיֶה־לִּי עֶבֶד וְאַתֶּם עֲלוּ  
לְשָׁלוֹם אֶל־אֲבִיכֶם: פ

be displayed (v. 17), thus appears to be all the more generous.

**practices divination** See Comment to verse 5. Because no mention is made of the goblet, it may be assumed that Joseph simply boasts of his ability to detect a thief by divination.

**16. the crime of your servants** Judah is perhaps falsely confessing collective guilt regarding the theft of the goblet to save Benjamin from being singled out for punishment. Alternatively, he is expressing the ancient belief that suffering is divine punishment for sin, even if the sin could not be identified, and his words are a res-

ignation to misfortune. It also could be a veiled reference to their sale of Joseph.

**slaves** Judah wisely makes no reference to his earlier rash statement regarding the death penalty (v. 9).

**17. Far be it from me** Joseph now confronts the brothers with a dilemma. They can save their own lives, but that would be an act of disloyalty to Benjamin and a disaster to their father. Or they can remain with Benjamin, but they would then be unable to bring food to their father and their families, who would die of starvation.

<sup>18</sup>Then Judah went up to him and said, "Please, my lord, let your servant appeal to my lord, and do not be impatient with your servant, you who are the equal of Pharaoh. <sup>19</sup>My lord asked his servants, 'Have you a father or another brother?' <sup>20</sup>We told my lord, 'We have an old father, and there is a child of his old age, the youngest; his full brother is dead, so that he alone is left of his mother, and his father dotes on him.' <sup>21</sup>Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set eyes on him.' <sup>22</sup>We said to my lord, 'The boy cannot leave his father; if he were to leave him, his father would die.' <sup>23</sup>But you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, do not let me see your faces.' <sup>24</sup>When we came back to your servant my father, we reported my lord's words to him.

<sup>25</sup>Later our father said, 'Go back and pro-

18 ויגש אליו יהודה ויאמר בני אדני  
ידבר נא עבדך דבר באזני אדני ואל-  
יחר אפך בעבדך בני כמוך כפרעה:  
19 אדני שאל את עבדיו לאמר היש-  
לכם אב או אח: 20 ונאמר אל אדני יש-  
לנו אב זקן וילד זקנים קטן ואחיו מת  
ויותר הוא לבדו לאמו ואביו אהבו:  
21 ותאמר אל עבדך הורדהו אלי  
ואשימה עיני עליו: 22 ונאמר אל אדני  
לא יוכל הנער לעזוב את אביו ועזוב  
את אביו ומת: 23 ותאמר אל עבדך  
אם לא ירד אחיכם הקטן אתכם לא  
תספון לראות פני: 24 ויהי בני עלינו אל-  
עבדך אבי ונגדלו את דברי אדני:  
25 ויאמר אביו שבו שברו לנו מעט-

### THE BROTHERS' LAST TRIAL (continued)

#### JUDAH'S SPEECH (44:18-34)

The encounter between Joseph and his brothers reaches its climactic moment.

**18. appeal to** Literally "speak in the ears of," which is idiomatic for "have a hearing."

**the equal of Pharaoh** The phrase is not mere flattery but a subtle reminder of Joseph's power to grant a pardon by virtue of his exalted position.

**20. his full brother is dead** In 42:13, they said, ambiguously referring to Joseph, "one is no more." Now Judah cites Jacob's words of 42:38.

**21. I may set eyes on him** Judah had inferred from Joseph's request to bring Benjamin an assurance that no harm would befall the lad. He now may be subtly calling into question Joseph's integrity and fair play.

#### CHAPTER 44

The reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers is one of the great scenes in all of literature. It is preceded by a deeply moving speech by Judah, who uses the word "father" 14 times in 17 verses. Joseph is moved to tears and to self-revelation by Judah's words. He realizes that his keeping Benjamin in prison would be doing to his brother and father what the brothers had done to him and their father years ago.

**18. Judah went up to him** He drew close emotionally as well as physically (Gen. R. 93:4). The author of *S'fat Emet* understands

these words to mean, "Judah approached himself." He discovered who he really was, not the compromiser who had said "Let us sell him . . . not do away with him ourselves" (Gen. 37:27), causing his father boundless grief, but the advocate for compassion and family harmony. Judah knows that his father still favors one brother, Benjamin, over the other brothers. Such knowledge, however, no longer drives him to jealousy. He understands that he cannot change his father; he can only change his reaction to his father's deeds. Judah, although not the eldest of the brothers, emerges as the family spokesman and leader.

"Have everyone withdraw from me!" So there was no one else about when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. <sup>2</sup>His sobs were so loud that the Egyptians could hear, and so the news reached Pharaoh's palace.

<sup>3</sup>Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still well?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dumfounded were they on account of him.

<sup>4</sup>Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come forward to me." And when they came forward, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, he whom you sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup>Now, do not be distressed or reproach yourselves because you sold me hither; it was to save life that God sent me ahead of you. <sup>6</sup>It is now two years that there has been famine in the land, and there are still five years to come in which there shall be no

*no one else about* No outsider may share this intensely intimate moment of reconciliation. Furthermore, Joseph would not want the Egyptians to know that his own brothers had sold him into slavery.

*2. the news reached Pharaoh's palace* Literally, "the house of Pharaoh heard." The report quickly reached the royal court.

*3. I am Joseph. Is my father still well?* The terrifying picture Judah has painted of the aged father makes Joseph cry out. His words are more exclamation than inquiry, for he already knew the answer (43:27).

מֵעָלַי וְלֹא-עָמַד אִישׁ אִתּוֹ בְּהִתְוֹדַע יוֹסֵף אֶל-אָחָיו: <sup>2</sup>וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-קֹלוֹ בְּבִכּוֹ וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּשְׁמַע בֵּית פַּרְעֹה:

<sup>3</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אָחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הָעוֹד אָבִי חַי וְלֹא-יָבִיאוּ אֶחָיו לַעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהָלוּ מִפְּנָיו:

<sup>4</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אָחָיו גִּשְׁוּ-נָא אֵלַי וַיִּגְשׂוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-מָכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי מִצְרַיִמָּה: <sup>5</sup>וְעַתָּה אֵל-תַּעֲצְבוּ וְאֵל-יִחַר בְּעֵינֵיכֶם כִּי-מָכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי הַנֶּה פִּי לְמַחְיָה שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם לְפָנֵיכֶם: <sup>6</sup>כִּי-נִזְוָה שְׁנָתַיִם הָרַעַב בְּקָרֶב הָאָרֶץ וְעוֹד חֲמֵשׁ שָׁנִים אֲשֶׁר אֵין-חֲרִישׁ

REASSURANCE (vv. 4-8)

*4. your brother Joseph, he whom you sold* His words are both reassurance and rebuke: I shall behave as a brother should—even though you were not brotherly.

*5. you sold* The brothers had indeed acted with evil intent.

*God sent* The hidden, guiding hand of divine providence had been behind it all.

*to save life* That I should be the agency of your survival.

*6. no yield from tilling* Literally, "no plowing and harvesting."

CHAPTER 45

*3. Is my father still well?* Why had Joseph not communicated with his father during his years of authority in Egypt? Was he angry at his father, whose favoritism had put him through so much? Or was he reluctant to shame his brothers by telling his father what had happened? (For that matter, there is no record of Jacob having been in touch with his own parents during his years at Laban's house. Did Jacob resent his father Isaac's favoritism as well?)

*5. it was to save life* The narrative here

makes an important theological statement. God could not prevent the brothers from choosing to do something cruel. God's role was to sustain Joseph and guide him to bring something good and life affirming out of the unfairness inflicted on him. Abravanel notes that, although God used the sale of Joseph to further the divine plan, the brothers were still accountable for what they did. The verse seems to imply that the move was not intended to be permanent but would last only for the duration of the famine. The Israelites, however, became comfortable amid the material pleasures of Egypt.

yield from tilling. <sup>7</sup>God has sent me ahead of you to ensure your survival on earth, and to save your lives in an extraordinary deliverance. <sup>8</sup>So, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, lord of all his household, and ruler over the whole land of Egypt.

<sup>9</sup>“Now, hurry back to my father and say to him: Thus says your son Joseph, ‘God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me without delay. <sup>10</sup>You will dwell in the region of Goshen, where you will be near me—you and your children and your grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all that is yours. <sup>11</sup>There I will provide for you—for there are yet five years of famine to come—that you and your household and all that is yours may not suffer want.’ <sup>12</sup>You can see for yourselves, and my brother Benjamin for himself, that it is indeed I who am speaking to you. <sup>13</sup>And you must tell my father everything about my high station in Egypt and all that you have seen; and bring my father here with all speed.”

<sup>14</sup>With that he embraced his brother Benjamin around the neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. <sup>15</sup>He kissed all his brothers

**8. who sent me** For the third time, Joseph repeats his understanding of the true significance of his life. He no longer accuses the brothers of having sold him but says they “sent” him, thereby substituting the beneficial result for their evil purpose.

**father to Pharaoh** No such title is known from ancient Egypt. The term “father” appears in some biblical passages as a title of honor for a prophet, a king, or a high administrator.

**ruler** The word translated as “ruler” (*moshel*) here reminds us of the brothers’ reaction to Joseph’s dreams. They had scornfully asked, “Do you mean to rule over us?”

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE FAMILY (vv. 9–13)

**10. You will dwell** Joseph clearly has in mind a long-term migration from Canaan to Egypt.

וקציר: <sup>7</sup>וישלחני אלהים לפניכם לשום לכם שארית בארץ ולהחיות לכם לפליטה גדלה: <sup>8</sup>ועתה לא אתם שלחתם אתי הנה פי האלהים וישימני לאב לפרעה ולארון לכל ביתו ומשל בכל ארץ מצרים:

<sup>9</sup>מהרו ועלו אל אבי ואמרתם אליו כה אמר בנך יוסף שמיני אלהים לארון לכל מצרים רדה אלי אל תעמוד: <sup>10</sup>וישבתי בארץ גשן והיית קרוב אלי אתה ובניך ובני בניך וצאנך ובקרך וכל אשר לך: <sup>11</sup>וכלכלתי אתך שם פי עוד חמש שנים רעב פחתורש אתה וביתך וכל אשר לך: <sup>12</sup>והנה עיניכם ראות ועיני אחי בנימין פיפי המדבר אליכם: <sup>13</sup>והגדתם לאבי את כל כבודי במצרים ואת כל אשר ראיתם ומהרתם והורדתם את אבי הנה:

<sup>14</sup>ויפל על צוארי בנימן אחיו ויבך ובנימן בכה על צואריו: <sup>15</sup>וינשק לכל

**Goshen** Goshen is most likely located in the area of Wadi Tumeilat, which stretches from the eastern arm of the Nile to the Great Bitter Lake. Egyptian texts confirm the presence of Semites and other Asians in the northeastern part of the country both at the end of the Sixth Dynasty (ca. 2250 B.C.E.) and ca. 1700 B.C.E. in the wake of the Hyksos invasion.

**11. for there are yet five years of famine** This parenthetical note is inserted to overcome Jacob’s anticipated resistance to a massive migration from Canaan.

**12. You can see** These words are intended for the brothers, not the father.

**I who am speaking** Face-to-face, in your language, without an interpreter.

**13. all that you have seen** That is, your awareness of my situation is not derived from rumor but is firsthand.

and wept upon them; only then were his brothers able to talk to him.

<sup>16</sup>The news reached Pharaoh's palace: "Joseph's brothers have come." Pharaoh and his courtiers were pleased. <sup>17</sup>And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do as follows: load up your beasts and go at once to the land of Canaan. <sup>18</sup>Take your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you shall live off the fat of the land.' <sup>19</sup>And you are bidden [to add], 'Do as follows: take from the land of Egypt wagons for your children and your wives, and bring your father here. <sup>20</sup>And never mind your belongings, for the best of all the land of Egypt shall be yours.'"

<sup>21</sup>The sons of Israel did so; Joseph gave them wagons as Pharaoh had commanded, and he supplied them with provisions for the journey. <sup>22</sup>To each of them, moreover, he gave a change of clothing; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and several changes of

**15. only then** So far the brothers have not uttered a word. It is only after the embrace that they are able to communicate with Joseph, something they were unable to do when he lived among them as a boy (Gen. 37:4).

**PHARAOH'S INVITATION** (vv. 16-20)

**16. The news reached** The point made in verse 2 is now repeated and expanded.

**17. Pharaoh said** Joseph's invitation to his family to settle in Egypt is now endorsed by the king himself.

**18. the fat of the land** The choicest products of the soil.

**19. you are bidden [to add]** The order is given to Joseph to relay to his brothers. The pre-

**22. a change of clothing** To replace the clothes they tore in their grief (Gen. 44:13)? Or as a reversal of what happened years ago, when they stripped Joseph of his clothes and threw him into a pit (Gen. 37:23)?

**but to Benjamin** Despite the risk of rekindling feelings of jealousy, Joseph displays his

vious instructions could be carried out with no outside assistance. This one, however, requires official authorization, the effect of which is to accord Jacob's clan the special status of wards of the king.

**20. never mind** Do not be concerned about leaving behind personal possessions that will cause inconvenience if you take them along; do not allow such considerations to delay you.

**RETURN TO JACOB** (vv. 21-28)

**22. a change of clothing** The term *halifot* (literally, "a change [of clothes]") is specifically employed for a gift of clothing as a valued prize or a token of affection or honor.

**several** Literally, "five" (see 43:34, 45:6,11).

special closeness to his only full brother, repeating the favoritism that caused problems for his father and grandfather (BT Meg. 16b). Ramban views Joseph's public favoring of Benjamin as yet another test of the depth and authenticity of the brothers' repentance.

אָחִיו וַיִּבְרַךְ עֲלֵהֶם וְאַחֲרָי כֵּן דִּבְּרוּ אִחָיו אֹתוֹ:

וַהֲקֵל נִשְׁמַע בֵּית פַּרְעֹה לֵאמֹר בָּאוּ אֲחָיו יוֹסֵף וַיֵּיטֵב בְּעֵינֵי פַרְעֹה וּבְעֵינֵי עֲבָדָיו: <sup>17</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל-יוֹסֵף אָמַר אֶל-אֲחִיךָ זֹאת עֲשׂו טַעֲנוּ אֶת-בְּעִירְכֶם וּלְכוּ בָּאוּ אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן: <sup>18</sup>וּקְחוּ אֶת-אֲבִיכֶם וְאֶת-בְּתֻיכֶם וּבָאוּ אֵלַי וְאֶתְנֶה לָכֶם אֶת-טוֹב אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְאֶכְלוּ אֶת-חֶלֶב הָאָרֶץ: <sup>19</sup>וְאֶתְּהָ צִוִּיתָה זֹאת עֲשׂו קְחוּ לָכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עֲגִלוֹת לְטַפְּכֶם וּלְנָשֵׁיכֶם וּנְשֹׂאתֶם אֶת-אֲבִיכֶם וּבְאֵתָם: <sup>20</sup>וְעֵינֵיכֶם אֶל-תַּחֲסוּ עַל-פְּלִיכֶם כִּי-טוֹב כָּל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לָכֶם הוּא:

<sup>21</sup>וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כִּכְן בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּתְּנוּ לָהֶם יוֹסֵף עֲגִלוֹת עַל-פִּי פַרְעֹה וַיִּתְּנוּ לָהֶם צֹדֵה לְהָרִי: <sup>22</sup>לְכָלֶם נָתַן לְאִישׁ חֲלִפּוֹת שְׂמֹלֹת וּלְבִנְיָמִן נָתַן שְׁלֹשׁ מְאוֹת כֶּסֶף

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clothing.<sup>23</sup> And to his father he sent the following: ten he-asses laden with the best things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with grain, bread, and provisions for his father on the journey.<sup>24</sup> As he sent his brothers off on their way, he told them, "Do not be quarrelsome on the way."

<sup>25</sup>They went up from Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. <sup>26</sup>And they told him, "Joseph is still alive; yes, he is ruler over the whole land of Egypt." His heart went numb, for he did not believe them. <sup>27</sup>But when they recounted all that Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to transport him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. <sup>28</sup>"Enough!" said Israel. "My son Joseph is still alive! I must go and see him before I die."

וְחָמֵשׁ חֲלֹפֶת שְׂמֹלֶת: <sup>23</sup> וּלְאָבִיו שְׁלַח  
 כְּזֹאת עֶשְׂרֵה חֲמֹרִים נְשָׂאִים מְטוֹב  
 מִצִּיָּרִים וְעֶשְׂרֵה אֲתֹנֹת נְשָׂאֵת בָּר וְלֵהֶם  
 וּמְזֹן לְאָבִיו לְדֶרֶךְ: <sup>24</sup> וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־אָחִיו  
 וַיֵּלְכוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אֶל־תִּרְגְּזוּ בַדֶּרֶךְ:  
<sup>25</sup> וַיַּעֲלוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֶל־  
 יַעֲקֹב אָבִיהֶם: <sup>26</sup> וַיִּגְדּוּ לוֹ לֵאמֹר עוֹד  
 יוֹסֵף חַי וְכִי־הוּא מִשַּׁל בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ  
 מִצְרָיִם וַיִּפְגַּע לְבֹו כִּי לֹא־הֶאֱמִין לָהֶם:  
<sup>27</sup> וַיִּדְבְּרוּ אֵלָיו אֶת כָּל־דִּבְרֵי יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר  
 דִּבֶּר אֲלֵהֶם וַיֵּרָא אֶת־הָעֲגָלוֹת אֲשֶׁר־  
 שָׁלַח יוֹסֵף לְשֵׂאת אֹתוֹ וַתְּחִי רוּחַ יַעֲקֹב  
 אָבִיהֶם: <sup>28</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב עוֹד־יוֹסֵף  
 בְּנֵי חַי אֲלֵכֶה וְאֶרְאֶנּוּ בְּטָרֵם אָמוֹת:

**46** So Israel set out with all that was his, and he came to Beer-sheba, where he offered

**מו** וַיִּסַּע יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וַיָּבֹא  
 בְּאֶרֶז שֶׁבַע וַיִּזְבַּח זִבְחִים לֵאלֹהֵי אָבִיו

v. 25. סבירין ומטעין "ארצה"

The number five, the number of fingers on each hand, is used throughout the Bible to express completeness or "a small abundance."

**24. quarrelsome** The Hebrew stem רגז means "trembling" and carries overtones of agitation, profound concern, or rage. The translation understands Joseph's words to mean: Do

not engage in mutual recrimination. But the text can also be saying: Have no fear for your safety on the journey to Canaan and back.

**28. go and see him** Jacob does not mention the famine and is not concerned with Joseph's power and glory. His only desire is to visit his son, not to settle in Egypt.

THE MIGRATION TO EGYPT (46:1-47:10)

Jacob's descent to Egypt follows the route of Abraham, which is now laden with national significance.

JACOB AT BEER-SHEBA (vv. 1-4)

**1. Israel set out** Presumably from Hebron, which was his last specified location (37:14).

**Beer-sheba** An important north-south road linked Hebron to this city, a distance of about 25 miles (40 km). Jacob stops here as he did before leaving for Aram-Naharaim (28:11) and as Isaac had done earlier (26:23-25).

**offered sacrifices** Because no mention is made of an altar, it must be assumed that Jacob

**24. Do not be quarrelsome on the way** Do not enter into recriminations over who said "Kill him" and who said "Sell him." The past is past and cannot be undone, and we all have to live with each other.

**26. he did not believe them** This is the fate of a liar; even when telling the truth, a liar is not believed (ARN 30).