



## Torah Nuggets – Rabbin Deborah Brandt

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### Bamidbar – In The Wilderness<sup>1</sup>

**Numbers 1:1-4:20**

**Haftorah – Hosea 2:1-2:22**

**Brit Hadasha - Romans 9:22-23**

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In the Sinai **Desert**, G-d says to conduct a census of the twelve tribes of Israel. Moses counts **603,550** men of draftable age (20 to 60 years); the tribe of Levi, numbering 22,300 males age one month and older, is counted separately. The **Levites** are to serve in the Sanctuary, replacing the **firstborn**, whose number they approximated, who were disqualified when

they participated in the worshipping of the Golden Calf. The 273 firstborn who lacked a Levite to replace them had to pay a five-shekel “ransom” to **redeem** themselves.

When the people broke camp, the three Levite clans dismantled and **transported** the Sanctuary, and reassembled it at the center of the next encampment. They then erected their own tents around it: the Kohathites, who carried the Sanctuary’s vessels (the Ark, menorah, etc.) in their specially designed **coverings** on their shoulders, camped to its south; the Gershonites, in charge of its tapestries and roof coverings, to its west; and the families of Merari, who transported its wall panels and pillars, to its north. Before the Sanctuary’s **entranceway**, to its east, were the tents of Moses, Aaron, and Aaron’s sons.

Beyond the Levite circle, the **twelve tribes** camped in four groups of three tribes each. To the east were Judah (pop. 74,600), Issachar (54,400) and Zebulun (57,400); to the south, Reuben (46,500), Simeon (59,300) and Gad(45,650); to the west, Ephraim (40,500), Manasseh (32,200) and Benjamin(35,400); and to the north, Dan (62,700), Asher (41,500) and Naphtali(53,400). This formation was kept also while **traveling**. Each tribe had its own *nassi* (prince or leader), and its own **flag** with its tribal color and emblem.

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**Reoccurring themes in the Book of Numbers** include the continual murmuring of Israelites and the divine punishment on them as a result. YHVH made promises to care for them and lead them into the Promised Land. Instead of having faith and trust in him, with few exceptions, the Israelites exhibited doubt and unbelief in YHVH. As a result, the entire older generation, with the exception of faithful Joshua and Caleb, perished in the wilderness never to realize the promises YHVH had made to them concerning the Promised Land. This is a poignant lesson for all believers in their faith walk. The spiritual application of this lesson is not missed by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in chapter four of that book. When YHVH makes promises, his people need to embrace those promises with enthusiastic and optimistic faith and never let them go. After all, if we cannot trust our Creator, then who or what can we trust?

In this book, we see revealed the grace of YHVH, that he is longsuffering and slow to anger (14:20–38), but that he is also just, and as a father, he disciplines those he loves. His judgments are measured and progressive. The more his children refuse to obey him and resist him, the stronger the judgments. Eventually, the older generation of Israelites died off in the wilderness. This teaches us that death is the final judgment against the sin of rebellion and unbelief. There are no eternal rewards or spiritual inheritance for those who refuse to take hold of YHVH's promises and to go forward in faith and faithful obedience to him.

We see the work and person of the future Yeshua the Messiah in the Book of Numbers, as well. As Provider, he meets all of Israel's needs both physical and spiritual. Paul reveals that Yeshua was the spiritual Rock that gave them water in the wilderness (1Cor 10:4). Twice, Israel received water from the rock (Exod 17:1–7 and Num 20:1–13). Additionally, the secular prophet, Balaam, prophesied about the Messiah who was to rise out of Israel like a star (Num 24:17). Nathan Lawrence Hoshana Rabbah

### **God's Divine Order In The Camp**

God is a God of order and we will see as we study Numbers that every Tribe had its job to do, and it was God who decided who would do what job, not men.

The Levites Served in the Sanctuary

Each Tribe was told where they would encamp and each had their own flag with color and emblem.

### **A Census of Israel's Warriors**

**Num 1:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying,**

Num 1:2 "Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, every male, head by head

Num 1:3 from twenty years old and upward, whoever *is able to* go out to war in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

**Num 1:4 "With you, moreover, there shall be a man of each tribe, each one head of his father's household.**

Num 1:5 "These then are the names of the men who shall stand with you: of Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur;

Num 1:6 of Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai;

Num 1:7 of Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab;

Num 1:8 of Issachar, Nethanel the son of Zuar;

Num 1:9 of Zebulun, Eliab the son of Helon;

Num 1:10 of the sons of Joseph: of Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud; of Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur;

Num 1:11 of Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni;

Num 1:12 of Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai;

Num 1:13 of Asher, Pagiel the son of Ochran;

Num 1:14 of Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel;

Num 1:15 of Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan.

**Num 1:16 "These are they who were called of the congregation, the leaders of their fathers' tribes; they were the heads of divisions of Israel."**

**Notice it was God who told Moses who the leaders were to be.**

Num 1:17 So Moses and Aaron took these men who had been designated by name,

Num 1:18 and they assembled all the congregation together on the first of the second month.

Then they registered by ancestry in their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, head by head,

Num 1:19 just as the LORD had commanded Moses. So he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai.

**The Levites were set apart for the work of the Tabernacle**

Num 1:49 "Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, nor shall you take their census among the sons of Israel.

**Num 1:50 "But you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all its furnishings and over all that belongs to it. They shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings, and they shall take care of it; they shall also camp around the tabernacle.**

Num 1:51 "So when the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle encamps, the Levites shall set it up. But the layman who comes near shall be put to death.

Num 1:52 "The sons of Israel shall camp, each man by his own camp, and each man by his own standard, according to their armies.

Num 1:53 "But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there will be no wrath on the congregation of the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the testimony."



**The Camping Order**  
**Rabbi Dr. Hillel Ben David**  
**Arrangement of the Camp**

**Num 2:1** Now the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,

Num 2:2 "The sons of Israel shall camp, each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' households; they shall camp around the tent of meeting at a distance.

**Num 2:3** "Now those who camp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah, by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Judah: Nahshon the son of Amminadab,

Num 2:4 and his army, even their numbered men, 74,600.

Num 2:5 "Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of Issachar, and the leader of the sons of Issachar: Nethanel the son of Zuar,

Num 2:6 and his army, even their numbered men, 54,400.

Num 2:7 "Then comes the tribe of Zebulun, and the leader of the sons of Zebulun: Eliab the son of Helon,

Num 2:8 and his army, even his numbered men, 57,400.

Num 2:9 "The total of the numbered men of the camp of Judah: 186,400, by their armies. They shall set out first.

**Num 2:10 "On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben** by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Reuben: Elizur the son of Shedeur,

Num 2:11 and his army, even their numbered men, 46,500.

Num 2:12 "Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Simeon, and the leader of the sons of Simeon: Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai,

Num 2:13 and his army, even their numbered men, 59,300.

Num 2:14 "Then *comes* the tribe of Gad, and the leader of the sons of Gad: Eliasaph the son of Deuel,

Num 2:15 and his army, even their numbered men, 45,650.

Num 2:16 "The total of the numbered men of the camp of Reuben: 151,450 by their armies. And they shall set out second.

Num 2:17 "Then the tent of meeting shall set out *with* the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps; just as they camp, so they shall set out, every man in his place by their standards.

**Num 2:18 "On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim** by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Ephraim *shall be* Elishama the son of Ammihud,

Num 2:19 and his army, even their numbered men, 40,500.

Num 2:20 "Next to him *shall be* the tribe of Manasseh, and the leader of the sons of Manasseh: Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur,

Num 2:21 and his army, even their numbered men, 32,200.

Num 2:22 "Then *comes* the tribe of Benjamin, and the leader of the sons of Benjamin: Abidan the son of Gideoni,

Num 2:23 and his army, even their numbered men, 35,400.

Num 2:24 "The total of the numbered men of the camp of Ephraim: 108,100, by their armies. And they shall set out third.

**Num 2:25 "On the north side shall be the standard of the camp of Dan** by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Dan: Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai,

Num 2:26 and his army, even their numbered men, 62,700.

Num 2:27 "Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Asher, and the leader of the sons of Asher: Pagiel the son of Ocran,

Num 2:28 and his army, even their numbered men, 41,500.

Num 2:29 "Then *comes* the tribe of Naphtali, and the leader of the sons of Naphtali: Ahira the son of Enan,

Num 2:30 and his army, even their numbered men, 53,400.

Num 2:31 "The total of the numbered men of the camp of Dan *was* 157,600. They shall set out last by their standards."

Num 2:32 These are the numbered men of the sons of Israel by their fathers' households; the total of the numbered men of the camps by their armies, 603,550.

Num 2:33 The Levites, however, were not numbered among the sons of Israel, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

**Num 2:34 Thus the sons of Israel did; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so they camped by their standards, and so they set out, every one by his family according to his father's household**

Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin, in his book "Insights In The Torah", suggests that the camping order generally goes according to mother, according to strength. Thus Leah had six sons and thus had two camps, Reuben and Judah. Since one of her sons, Levi, was near the Mishkan, the



firstborn of Zilpah (Gad), Leah's handmaid, was substituted for Levi. Judah, with the greatest number of warriors, went first. Reuben, Leah's firstborn took his position on the south. Yosef, the firstborn of Rachel, had two sons: Menashe and Benyamin. Ephraim received the blessing of the firstborn, from Ya'aqov. Ephraim was therefore given the task of leading the west side of the camp.

Dan, the second strongest numerically, the firstborn of Bilhah, took guard over the backside of the camp.

Thus two camps were given to Leah, one to Rachel, and one to the sons of the handmaids.

The four flags to the four winds, at the head of the three tribes, were not tribal flags. Of the three tribes on each side, those three might have been called after the center tribe who might have been the flag bearer but that was not that tribe's flag. Each center tribe had their own flag.

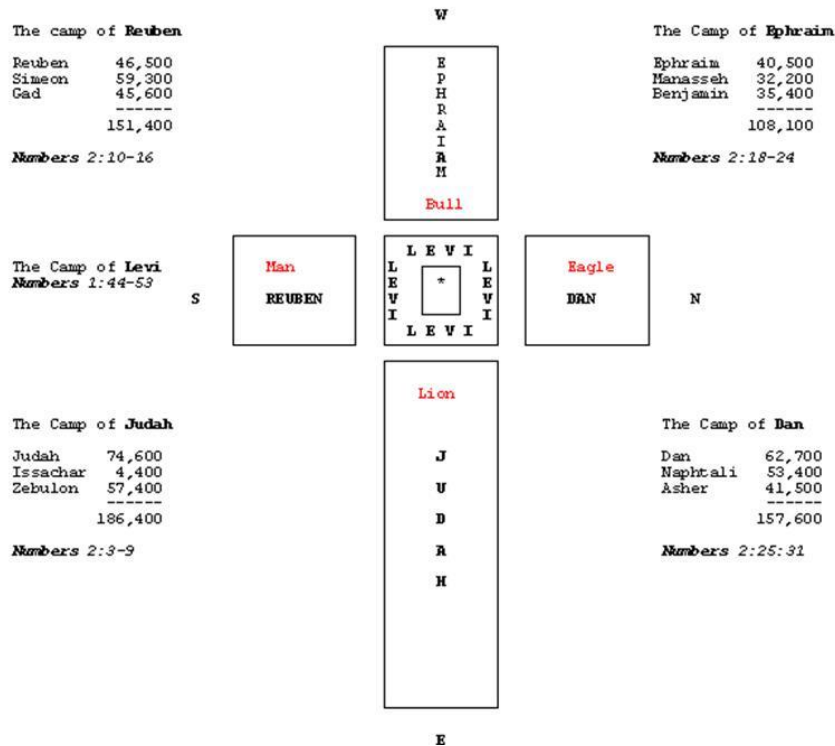
So Dan's personal flag [so to speak] bore the snake. Their "North side" flag bore the *eagle*. [If I didn't mix those up.]

***Ibn Ezra**<sup>[42]</sup> These were signs upon each and every standard. The Talmudic Sages said that the banner of Reuben had the form of a person on it.<sup>[43]</sup> Their statement is based on a Midrashic interpretation concerning the mandrakes found by Reuben.<sup>[44]</sup> The Talmudic Sages also tell us that there was an image of lion on the standard of Judah, for Jacob had compared Judah to a lion.<sup>[45]</sup> They also tell us that the banner of Ephraim (the son of Joseph) had the image of an ox upon it, in keeping with the verse "His firstling bullock".<sup>[46]</sup> The flag of Dan had the image of an eagle. Thus the banners were similar to the cherubim which the prophet Ezekiel saw.<sup>[47]</sup>*

The tribes camped around the sanctuary according to how Jacob had ordered them to carry his coffin from Egypt up to Israel. So, yes, by that with which Jacob blessed the tribes, that was their "personal" flag.

The reason for the flags was because when all Israel saw HaShem descend, so to speak, upon Mt. Sinai, He was accompanied by legions of angels and they appeared to Israel in that square formation with the angels, themselves, bearing flags and different colored fires. The four flags to the four winds, the twelve flags of the tribes, the colors of the flags, that was all to emulate what Israel saw by the angels.

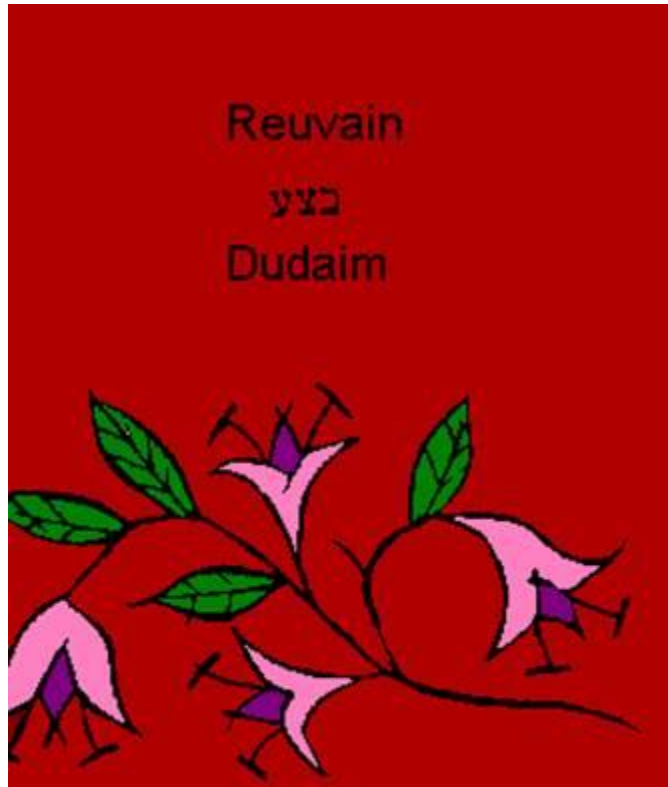
***Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs III:23 R. Berekiah and R. Bun** in the name of R. Abbahu said: There are four lordly creatures. The lord among the birds is the eagle; the lord among cattle is the ox; the lord among beasts is the lion; and the lord over all of them is man. The Holy One, blessed be He, took them and engraved them the Throne of Glory, as it says, The Lord hath established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all (Ps. CIII, 19). The fact that He has established His throne above the lordly ones proves that 'His kingdom ruleth over all'.*



### Tribal Banners

***Midrash Rabbah - Numbers II:7 ACCORDING TO THE ENSIGNS (II, 2).***<sup>[49]</sup> *There were distinguishing signs for each prince; each had a flag and a different color for every flag, corresponding to the precious stones on the breast*<sup>[50]</sup> *of Aaron. It was from these that governments*<sup>[51]</sup> *learned to provide themselves with flags of various colors. Each tribe had its own prince and its flag whose color corresponded to the color of its stone. [In Aaron's breastplate]*

**Reuben's** stone was ruby and the color of his flag was red; and embroidered thereon were mandrakes.<sup>[52]</sup>



**Simeon's** was topaz and his flag was of a green color; the town of Shechem was embroidered thereon.<sup>[53]</sup>



Shimon

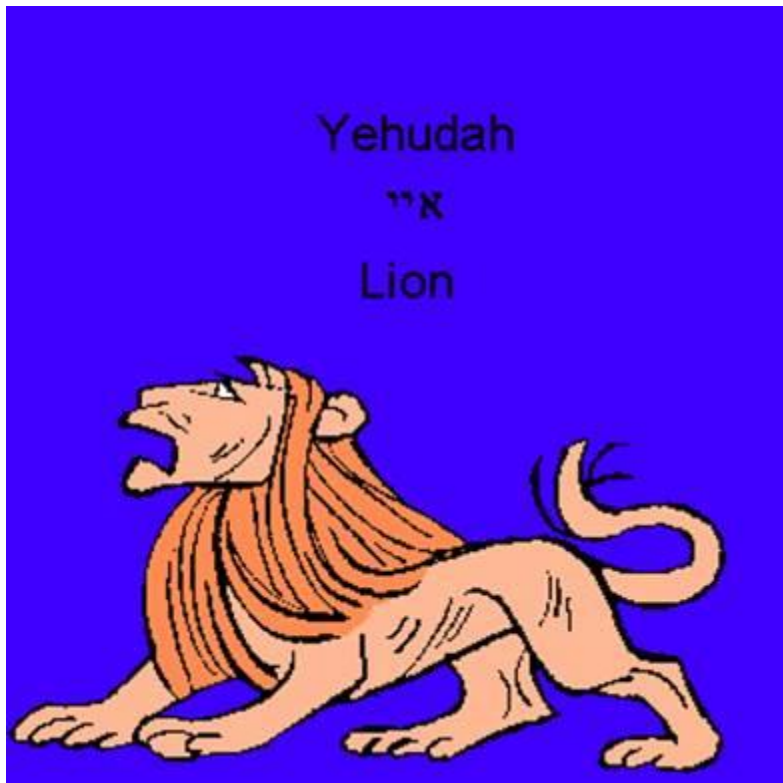
City of Sh'chem



Levi's<sup>[54]</sup> was smaragd (emerald) and the color of his flag was a third white, a third black, and a third red; embroidered thereon were the Urim and Thummim.<sup>[55]</sup>



**Judah's** was a carbuncle and the color of his flag was something like the heavens; embroidered on it was a lion.<sup>[56]</sup>



**Issachar's** was a sapphire and the color of his flag was black like stibium (antimony), and embroidered thereon was the sun and moon, in allusion to the text, And of the children of Issachar, men that had understanding of the times<sup>[57]</sup> (I Chron. XII, 33).



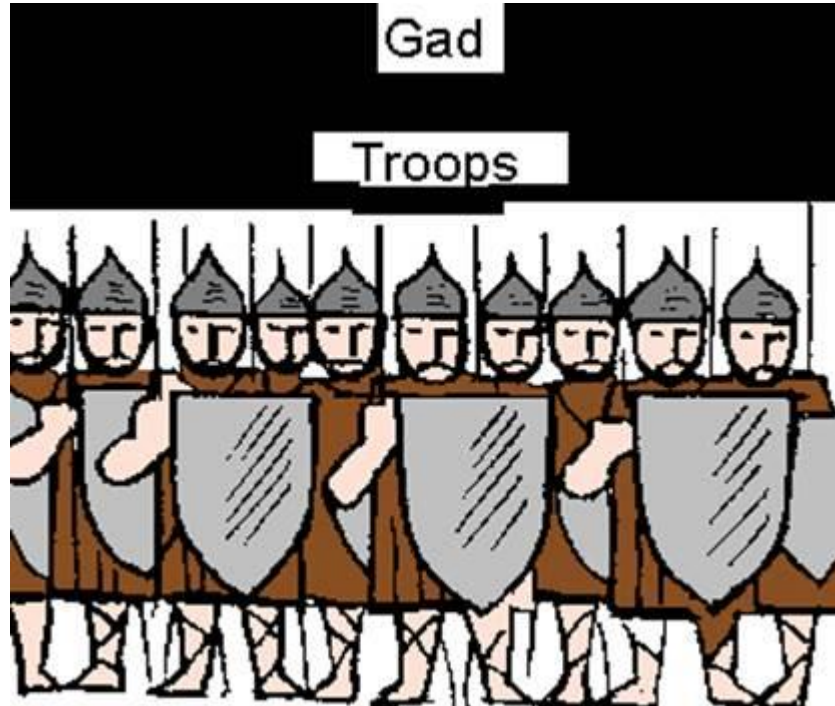
**Zebulun's** was an emerald and the color of his flag was white,<sup>[58]</sup> with a ship embroidered thereon, in allusion to the text, Zebulun shall  dwell  at the shore of the sea (Gen. XLIX, 13).



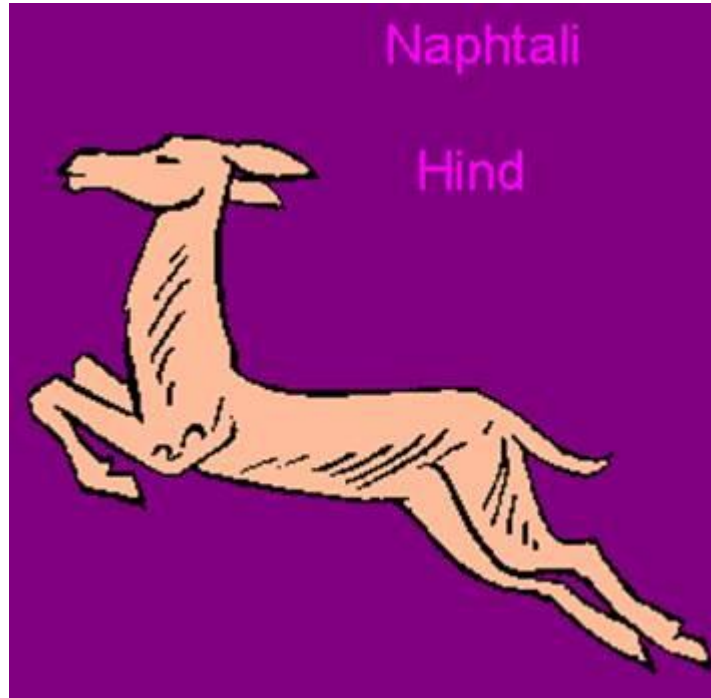
**Dan's** was jacinth and the color of his flag was similar to sapphire,<sup>[59]</sup> and embroidered on it was a serpent, in allusion to the text, Dan shall be a serpent in the way (Gen. XLIX, 17).



**Gad's**<sup>[60]</sup> was an agate and the color of his flag was neither white nor black but a blend of black and white; on it was embroidered a camp, in allusion to the text, Gad<sup>[61]</sup>, a troop shall troop upon him (ibid. 19).



**Naphtali** was an amethyst and the color of his flag was like clarified wine of a not very deep red; on it was embroidered a hind, in allusion to the text, Naphtali is a hind let loose (ibid. 21).





**Asher's** was a beryl and the color of his flag was like the precious stone with which women adorn themselves; embroidered thereon was an olive-tree, in allusion to the text, As for Asher, his bread shall be fat (ibid. 20).

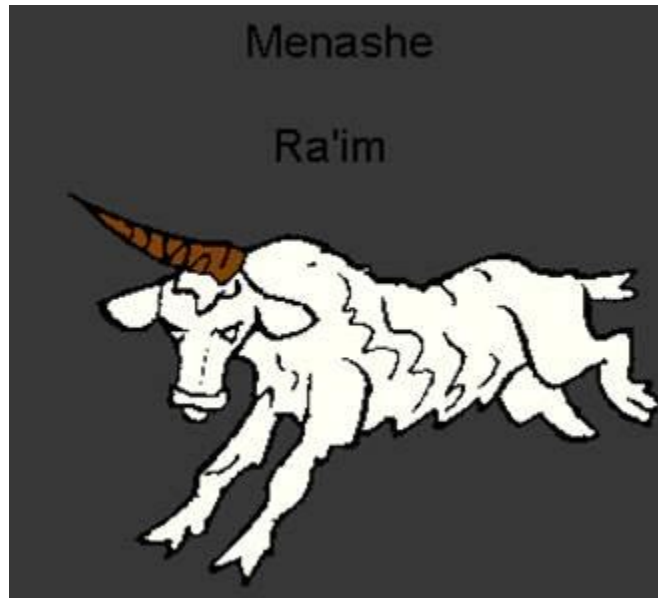


**Joseph's** was an onyx and the color of his flag was jet black; the embroidered design thereon for both princes, Ephraim and Manasseh, was Egypt, because they were born in Egypt.

On the flag of **Ephraim** was embroidered a bullock, in allusion to the text, His firstling bullock (Deut. XXXIII, 17), which applies to Joshua<sup>[62]</sup> who came from the tribe of Ephraim.



On the flag of the tribe of **Manasseh** was embroidered a wild ox, in allusion to the text, and his horns are the horns of the wild-ox (Deut. XXXIII, 17), which alludes to Gideon son of Joash who came from the tribe of Manasseh.<sup>[63]</sup>



**Benjamin's** was jasper and the color of his flag was a combination of all the twelve colors; embroidered thereon was a wolf, in allusion to the text, Benjamin is a wolf that raveneth (Gen. XLIX, 27). The reason, then, why it is said, ACCORDING TO THE ENSIGNS is because each prince had his own distinguishing sign.



When the camp is arranged, with three tribes on each side, flags play a central role:

And HaShem spoke to Moshe and to Aharon, saying,

***Bamidbar (Numbers) 2:1-2** Everyone by his flag (diglo), with signs (b'otot) according to the house of their fathers shall the Children of Israel encamp. At a distance, around the Tent of Meeting shall they encamp.*

R. Yaakov Kamenetsky<sup>[64]</sup> points out that the purpose of these flags and the structure of the camp cannot be to impart independence or a military configuration to the Children of Israel. They possessed these from the moment of the Exodus:

- And it was on that selfsame day that HaShem took the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies (al tzivotam).<sup>[65]</sup>

- ...and armed did the Children of Israel ascend from the land of Egypt.<sup>[66]</sup>

Furthermore,<sup>[67]</sup> this configuration is part of the people's legacy. As Rashi says, the twelve sons of Yaakov were so positioned when they carried his body to Canaan:

With signs (b'otot) according to the house of their fathers, by the sign that their father Yaakov transmitted to them when they bore him from Egypt, as it is said,

***Bereshit (Genesis) 50:12** And his sons did so for him, as he charged them.*

Yehudah, Yissachar, and Zevulun were to bear him from the east, and Reuven, Shimon, and Gad from the south, etc.<sup>[68]</sup>

The encampment remained in the nation's collective memory, ready to be actualized immediately upon their liberation. As R. Kamenetsky declares:

“Behold, they did not leave like slaves who flee from their masters, but as a free nation. So why did they wait a full year to organize the flags? I wonder!”

However, he says, each flag (degel) and sign (ot) connotes a quality distinct to each tribe.<sup>[69]</sup> In addition, each tribe is an army (tzava) unto itself. The existence of twelve different tribes, with their respective tribal symbols, could lead to disharmony<sup>[70]</sup> within the people.

Once the Mishkan<sup>[71]</sup> was erected and dedicated, however, the twelve tribes were unified by it. Only with the Mishkan at the geometrical and ideological center could the dozen disparate tribes become a united entity. Only with the Mishkan as a central purpose can the tribes' dissimilar characteristics cooperate.

This idea is developed by the Maharal.<sup>[72]</sup> The number twelve signifies the limits of the three-dimensional world, like the twelve edges of a cube. Each of these has a distinct function and connection to HaShem. Even among the nations, there are twelve divisions:<sup>[73]</sup> Avraham's brother Nachor had 12 children,<sup>[74]</sup> as did Canaan<sup>[75]</sup> and Yishmael.<sup>[76]</sup> However, they lack a unifying force.

The tribes of Israel are like the branches of a tree, subdividing from their common root. To combine their varied strengths, they must remain focused on Yaakov and the Torah. Thus the tribes encamp around the Mishkan, just as the twelve brothers encircled Yaakov when they took his body back home.

Like the instruments in an orchestra, diversity within the Jewish People can produce either cacophony or symphony. We need to remember the Torah's harmonizing power. When the Torah is our common mission, our music can fill the universe.

## Haftorah Hosea 2:1-22

### Israel's Unfaithfulness Punished

Hos 2:1 Say to your brothers, "Ammi," and to your sisters, "Ruhamah."

Hos 2:2 "Contend with your mother, contend, For she is not my wife, and I am not her husband; And let her put away her harlotry from her face And her adultery from between her breasts,

Hos 2:3 Or I will strip her naked And expose her as on the day when she was born. I will also make her like a wilderness, Make her like desert land And slay her with thirst.

Hos 2:4 "Also, I will have no compassion on her children, Because they are children of harlotry.

Hos 2:5 "For their mother has played the harlot; She who conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, 'I will go after my lovers, Who give *me* my bread and my water, My wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.'

Hos 2:6 "Therefore, behold, I will hedge up her way with thorns, And I will build a wall against her so that she cannot find her paths.

Hos 2:7 "She will pursue her lovers, but she will not overtake them; And she will seek them, but will not find *them*. Then she will say, 'I will go back to my first husband, For it was better for me then than now!'

Hos 2:8 "For she does not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the new wine and the oil, And lavished on her silver and gold, *Which* they used for Baal.

Hos 2:9 "Therefore, I will take back My grain at harvest time And My new wine in its season. I will also take away My wool and My flax *Given* to cover her nakedness.

Hos 2:10 "And then I will uncover her lewdness In the sight of her lovers, And no one will rescue her out of My hand.

Hos 2:11 "I will also put an end to all her gaiety, Her feasts, her new moons, her sabbaths And all her festal assemblies.

Hos 2:12 "I will destroy her vines and fig trees, Of which she said, 'These are my wages Which my lovers have given me.' And I will make them a forest, And the beasts of the field will devour them.

Hos 2:13 "I will punish her for the days of the Baals When she used to offer sacrifices to them And adorn herself with her earrings and jewelry, And follow her lovers, so that she forgot Me," declares the LORD.

### The Lord's Mercy on Israel

Hos 2:14 "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, Bring her into the wilderness And speak kindly to her.

Hos 2:15 "Then I will give her her vineyards from there, And the valley of Achor as a door of hope. And she will sing there as in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.

Hos 2:16 "It will come about in that day," declares the LORD, "That you will call Me Ishi And will no longer call Me Baali.

Hos 2:17 "For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, So that they will be mentioned by their names no more.

Hos 2:18 "In that day I will also make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, The

birds of the sky And the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword and war from the land, And will make them lie down in safety.

Hos 2:19 "I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in compassion,

Hos 2:20 And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the LORD.

Hos 2:21 "It will come about in that day that I will respond," declares the LORD. "I will respond to the heavens, and they will respond to the earth,

Hos 2:22 And the earth will respond to the grain, to the new wine and to the oil, And they will respond to Jezreel.

Hos 2:23 "I will sow her for Myself in the land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, And I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' And they will say, '*You are my God!*'"

### **Haftorah Reading—Hosea 1:10[2:1]-20[22] Hosea: The Story of YHVH's Unfailing Love for His People**

The opening words of this Haftorah compare the future numbers of the nation of Israel to the sand of the sea, and thus connect with Parashah B'midbar, which gives the numbers of the Israelites in the wilderness (Soncino Pentateuch, p. 581).

The prophet Hosea, a native of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, ministered to that nation (called Ephraim or the House of Israel, as opposed to the Southern Kingdom, called Judah or the House of Judah) for about 38 years during the middle part of the eighth century b.c. (from about 770–725 b.c.). He lived in the final tragic days of the House of Israel and prophesied that Israel's enemy, the Assyrians, would be instruments in YHVH's hands to bring judgment against Israel if that nation did not repent and cease its spiritual harlotry and idolatry. That the book contains references to the Kingdom of Judah is probably due to the fact that the Northern Kingdom fell in 721–722 b.c. while Hosea was still ministering and that he most likely transplanted to Judah where he may have finished writing his book (niv Study Bible, p. 1312).

The theme of the Book of Hosea revolves around the prophet's personal family life. YHVH's prophets were often required to act out in their personal life something that would serve as a prophetic allegory of what would happen to the people of Israel if they failed to repent of their sin and return to YHVH. In Hosea's case, YHVH required him to act out what had already happened to the Northern Kingdom. Because they had turned from YHVH, their spiritual husband, and taken to consorting with foreign spiritual lovers characterized by their forsaking the Torah, turning to serve pagan gods, and succumbing to heathen religious rituals and lifestyles, YHVH instructed the prophet to marry a harlot. In this way, the family life of Hosea would become a spiritual mirror that could be held up in front of the nation so that it could see itself as YHVH saw it. Furthermore, being married to an unfaithful wife gave Hosea direct insight into the emotional turmoil a husband endures when married to an adulterous woman that would provide the passion and impetus when defending YHVH in writing about the spiritual plight of adulterous Israel.



Hosea's life must have been a sad one, for his adulterous wife bore him three children. From the text, it cannot be determined whether they were his children, or another man's. Despite this, Hosea accepted his wife and children with an unconditional love representing YHVH's love for Israel, despite her refusal to be faithful to him. The nation of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) did not heed the prophet's warnings resulting in her falling to her Assyrian enemies. The Soncino Pentateuch aptly summarizes Hosea's life this way, A heavy domestic sorrow darkened Hosea's life. He had married a woman called Gomer; and she rendered him deeply unhappy. He found that he had wasted his love on a profligate woman. She fled from the Prophet's house, and sank lower and lower until she became the slave-concubine of another. But Hosea's love was proof even against faithlessness and dishonour. He, the deeply aggrieved husband, buys her back from slavery, and brings her into his house—as a ward, pitied and sheltered, but subjected to a period of probation that shall show whether her better self can be awakened. (p. 581)

The terms House of Israel and House of Judah are initially used (in chapter one) in this book followed by the simplified terms Ephraim and Judah used throughout the remainder of the Book of Hosea. So that the reader can understand the context of the Haftarah passage, let's define these terms:

**House of Israel:** This term is used 146 times in Scripture. Prior to the division of the united kingdom after the death of Solomon, this phrase referred to all twelve tribes of Israel. Afterwards (during the time of the prophets), it was used in contradistinction to the phrase "House of Judah" in reference to the Northern Kingdom. In the Apostolic Scriptures, Yeshua makes reference to the "lost sheep of the House of Israel" (Matt 10:6; 15:24). Elsewhere in the Apostolic Scriptures this term refers to all twelve tribes of Israel (Acts 2:36; 7:42; Heb 8:10), and in some references it refers to just the Northern Kingdom (Heb 8:8).

The context of the passage of Scripture surrounding this phrase determines its meaning.

**Ephraim:** This name is used 180 times in the Tanakh (Hebrew Scriptures) and is referring to this specific Israelite tribe or as a metaphor for the Northern Kingdom of which the tribe of Ephraim was the leading and largest tribe (Isa 7:9,17; 9:9; 11:13; Ezek 37:19; Hos 4:17; 5:12,13,14; 6:4; 7:1; 10:11 Zech 9:13). When blessing the two sons of Joseph, Jacob placed his right hand of power and strength upon the head of Ephraim signifying the position of primogeniture for him and his descendants (Gen 48:17–19).

**House of Judah:** This term is found 41 times in Scripture and is always referring specifically to the tribe of Judah (e.g., 2Sam 2:4,7,10) or to the Southern Kingdom, which included the tribes of Benjamin and Levi (1Kgs 12:21,23; 2Chr 11:1). In addition, this term can refer to a remnant of Israelites from the northern ten tribes who refused to submit to the spiritual apostasy of Jeroboam and defected to the Southern Kingdom (2Chr 11:16).

The phrase “House of Judah” is used in contradistinction to the phrase “House of Israel” eleven times in Scripture including once in the Apostolic Scriptures (1Kgs 12:21; Jer 3:18; 5:11; 11:10,17; 13:11; 31:27,31; 33:14; Zech 8:14; Heb 8:8).

**Judah:** This name refers to both the tribe of Judah and to the Southern Kingdom. Scriptural context will determine which is meant.

Listed below are other prophetic allegorical terms found in this passage of Scripture with their accompanying definitions. Review these terms and their definitions, and then notice how the authors of the Apostolic Scriptures employ these terms applying them to the “Gentile” believers of the first century.

**No Compassion or Mercy (Lo-ruhamah):** This is the name of one of Hosea’s three children and is a prophetic reference to the House of Israel who, because of their apostasy, would be rejected by YHVH (Hos 1:6).

**Not a People/Not My People (Lo-ami):** This is the name of one of Hosea’s three children and is a prophetic reference to both the Houses of Israel and Judah (Hos 1:9). This same phrase is echoed prophetically elsewhere in Scripture, as well (Deut 32:21; Isa 7:8; Rom 9:25; 1Pet 2:9–10).

**Sand of the Sea:** A metaphor used to describe the number of the descendants of Abraham as a whole (including both Houses of Israel) (Gen 32:12; Isa 10:22; Jer 33:22; Hos 1:10–11; Rom 9:27).

**Scattered or Sown (literally Jezreel or YHVH Scatters or Sows):** This is the name of one of Hosea’s three children and a prophetic reference to the House of Israel who because of their apostasy YHVH sowed or scattered them throughout the nations of the world. In this case, Hosea is specifically addressing the House of Israel (Northern Kingdom) as opposed to the House of Judah (Southern Kingdom) (Hos 1:4–7 compared with Jas 1:1 and 1Pet 1:1; see also Deut 28:64).

**Beasts of the Field:** In Deuteronomy 7:22, we see that the term beasts of the field represent the nations of the earth from which Israel was to stay separate (also Jer 12:9; 27:6; Dan 7:3). The Children of Israel were scattered or exiled and became meat for or were given over to all the beasts of the field (Isa 56:9; Ezek 34:5; Hos 2:12). Scripture likens exiled Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom), who fell into idolatry and mixed with the beast (Gentile) nations, to beasts of the field themselves (Hos 2:16–19; Acts 10:12). In the future, YHVH will make a covenant (a marriage betrothal agreement or ketubah) with the beasts of the field (Hos 2:18; see also Jer 31:31–33; cp. Rom 1:23, 18–25).

➤ **B'rit Chadashah On the twelve tribes of Israel: Luke 22:30; Revelation 7:1–8; 21:12**

Luk 22:28 "You are those who have stood by Me in My trials;

Luk 22:29 and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you

Luk 22:30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

**Rev 7:1** After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree.

Rev 7:2 And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,

Rev 7:3 saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads."

Rev 7:4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

Rev 7:5 from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand *were* sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand,

Rev 7:6 from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand,

Rev 7:7 from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand,

Rev 7:8 from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand *were* sealed.

Rev 21:12 It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names *were* written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.

➤ **On the spiritual priesthood of believers: 1Peter 2:9**

1Pe 2:9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

➤ **On YHVH's "throne room" in heaven (a prototype of the Tabernacle): Revelation 4:1–11**

**Rev 4:1** After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

Rev 4:2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.

Rev 4:3 And He who was sitting *was* like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.

Rev 4:4 Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones *I saw* twenty-four

elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

Rev 4:5 Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

Rev 4:6 and before the throne *there was something* like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.

Rev 4:7 The first creature *was* like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature *was* like a flying eagle.

Rev 4:8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *is* THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."

Rev 4:9 And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever,

Rev 4:10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

Rev 4:11 "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

➤ **The qualifications for spiritual leadership: 1Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9**

**Ti 3:1** It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*.

1Ti 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

1Ti 3:3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

1Ti 3:4 *He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity

1Ti 3:5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

1Ti 3:6 *and* not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

1Ti 3:7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil

Tit 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,

Tit 1:6 *namely*, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.

Tit 1:7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,

Tit 1:8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,

Tit 1:9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

