

"AL HAPEREK"

A Renewed Meeting with Tanach

Yehoshua Perakim 21-22

At the conclusion of the apportioning of Eretz Yisrael, the "atypical" tribes receive permission to settle in their individual territories. The tribe of Levi, whose cities are located in the territories of other tribes, are sent to their allotments. The two and a half tribes are also dispatched to their chosen territory east of the Jordan River after having fulfilled their obligation to complete the general conquest with the rest of the tribes.

General Overview < "וַיִּקְרְאוּ בְּסֵפֶר בְּתוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים"

Perek 21

- ❶ The tribe of Levi is divided into families, each of which is settled within the territory of another tribe. Refer to the perek and to the attached map, and check where each family is settled. Which tribe's territory contains the most Levite cities? What is the connection between the list of cities of refuge (Yehoshua 20:7-9) and the Levite cities? See Bamidbar 35:8. According to what criteria are the Levite cities distributed?
- ❷ See Yehoshua 13:1 and 21:41. What is the purpose of these verses? Compare them to the first perek of the book of Shoftim. What difficulty arises from the description there when compared to that in Yehoshua?



Perek 22

- 3 The relationship between the distribution of territory and the settlement of territory east of the Jordan River serves as a narrative framework for the book of Yehoshua. The story appears at the beginning of the book (1:12-18) and in perek 22. See also the following pesukim: Bamidbar 32:1-33, Devarim 3:18-22, and Yehoshua 22:16-20. Was settlement east of the Jordan River part of the original settlement plan, or simply an accommodation made after the fact?
- 4 The word altar (מזבח) is a key term that appears in this perek eleven times and has a different connotation depending on the speaker. Analyze the pesukim to determine what "altar" means for each group participating in the argument.
- 5 Reference to future generations is mentioned twice in the book of Yehoshua, in 4:20-24 and 22:24-28. Why does this subject come up in these two specific events? What is the connection between them?
- 6 See Yehoshua 22:17 and Bamidbar 25:1-13. What light do these pesukim shed on the roles and personalities of the leading characters in this perek?

In-depth Study < "מִפְּנֵי שְׂוֹם שָׁכַל"

- 7 At the conclusions of both the book of Yehoshua and Shoftim, the people of Israel stand on the brink of a national rift. Compare the story told in Yehoshua 22 to the story of Pilegish ba-Giv'ah (the concubine of Gibeah) in Shoftim 20:12-48. Pay special attention to the various speech patterns used in each story and how these patterns influence the outcome of events.

Appendix < "וַיְבִינוּ בְּפִקְרָא"

"And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest; and with him ten princes, one prince of a fathers' house for each of the tribes of Israel . . . Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass concerning the devoted thing, and wrath fell upon all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity"

(Yehoshua 22:13-20).

"The unity that comes from the need of each individual's own advantage, for the purpose of self-love, is a random unity rooted in private individual self-interest, and is short-lived because it has no true center. Even when this unity seems to be spreading, it is only fanning the flames of hate and civil war because each individual is pulling for his own benefit.

But unity that comes from a recognition of the value of the greater good, that stems from mutual fellowship, is rooted in true, universal love, and is everlasting. As its days increase, so too do its strength and vigor . . . and if so, the main praise of unity and peace is that through this all-encompassing unity with oneself and the Other, the attachment and connection of all desires with the desire of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is revealed. Therefore, from the beginning one must have peace with oneself that all one's desires will turn to be united singularly to the Holy One, blessed be His name" (Rav Kook, Olat Re'ayah 1, pp. 257-258).

