

# The Legends of the Jews

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## Volume I

### ***BIBLE TIMES AND CHARACTERS FROM THE CREATION TO JACOB***

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#### **EXCERPTS OF THOSE LEGENDS DEALING WITH HAM (MARKED IN BOLD)**

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#### **NOAH**

##### NOAH LEAVES THE ARK (pp. 164–167)

Though the earth assumed its old form at the end of the year of punishment, Noah did not abandon the ark until he received the command of God to leave it. He said to himself, "As I entered the ark at the bidding of God, so I will leave it only at His bidding." Yet, when God bade Noah go out of the ark, he refused, because he feared that after he had lived upon the dry land for some time, and begotten children, God would bring another flood. He therefore would not leave the ark until God swore He would never visit the earth with a flood again.[48]

When he stepped out from the ark into the open, he began to weep bitterly at sight of the enormous ravages wrought by the flood, and he said to God: "O Lord of the world! Thou art called the Merciful, and Thou shouldst have had mercy upon Thy creatures." God answered, and said: "O thou foolish shepherd, now thou speakest to Me. Thou didst not so when I addressed kind words to thee, saying: 'I saw thee as a righteous man and perfect in thy generation, and I will bring the flood upon the earth to destroy all flesh. Make an ark for thyself of gopher wood.' Thus spake I to thee, telling thee all these circumstances, that thou mightest entreat mercy for the earth. But thou, as soon as thou didst hear that thou wouldst be rescued in the ark, thou didst not concern thyself about the ruin that would strike the earth. Thou didst but build an ark for thyself, in which thou wast saved. Now that the earth is wasted, thou openest thy mouth to supplicate and pray."

Noah realized that he had been guilty of folly. To propitiate God and acknowledge his sin, he brought a sacrifice.[49] God accepted the offering with favor, whence he is called by his name Noah.[50] The sacrifice was not offered by Noah with his own hands; the priestly services connected

with it were performed by his son Shem. There was a reason for this. One day in the ark Noah forgot to give his ration to the lion, and the hungry beast struck him so violent a blow with his paw that he was lame forever after, and, having a bodily defect, he was not permitted to do the offices of a priest.[51]

The sacrifices consisted of an ox, a sheep, a goat, two turtle doves, and two young pigeons. Noah had chosen these kinds because he supposed they were appointed for sacrifices, seeing that God had commanded him to take seven pairs of them into the ark with him. The altar was erected in the same place on which Adam and Cain and Abel had brought their sacrifices, and on which later the altar was to be in the sanctuary at Jerusalem.[52]

After the sacrifice was completed, **God blessed Noah and his sons. He made them to be rulers of the world as Adam had been,[53] and He gave them a command, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply upon the earth," for during their sojourn in the ark, the two sexes, of men and animals alike, had lived apart from each other, because while a public calamity rages continence is becoming even to those who are left unscathed. This law of conduct had been violated by none in the ark except by Ham, by the dog, and by the raven. They all received a punishment. Ham's was that his descendants were men of dark-hued skin.[54]**

As a token that He would destroy the earth no more, God set His bow in the cloud. Even if men should be steeped in sin again, the bow proclaims to them that their sins will cause no harm to the world. Times came in the course of the ages when men were pious enough not to have to live in dread of punishment. In such times the bow was not visible.[55]

God accorded permission to Noah and his descendants to use the flesh of animals for food, which had been forbidden from the time of Adam until then. But they were to abstain from the use of blood. He ordained the seven Noachian laws, the observance of which is incumbent upon all men, not upon Israel alone. God enjoined particularly the command against the shedding of human blood. Whoso would shed man's blood, his blood would be shed. Even if human judges let the guilty man go free, his punishment would overtake him. He would die an unnatural death, such as he had inflicted upon his fellow-man. Yea, even beasts that slew men, even of them would the life of men be required.[56]

#### THE CURSE OF DRUNKENNESS (pp. 167–170)

Noah lost his epithet "the pious" when he began to occupy himself with the growing of the vine. He became a "man of the ground," and this first attempt to produce wine at the same time produced the first to drink to excess, the first to utter curses upon his associates, and the first to introduce slavery. This is the way it all came about. Noah found the vine which Adam had taken with him from Paradise, when he was driven forth. He tasted the grapes upon it, and, finding them palatable, he resolved to plant the vine and tend it.[57] On the selfsame day on which he planted it, it bore fruit, he put it in the wine-press, drew off the juice, drank it, became drunken, and was dishonored--all on

one day. His assistant in the work of cultivating the vine was Satan, who had happened along at the very moment when he was engaged in planting the slip he had found. Satan asked him: "What is it thou art planting here?"

Noah: "A vineyard."

Satan: "And what may be the qualities of what it produces?"

Noah: "The fruit it bears is sweet, be it dry or moist. It yields wine that rejoiceth the heart of man."

Satan: "Let us go into partnership in this business of planting a vineyard."

Noah: "Agreed!"

Satan thereupon slaughtered a lamb, and then, in succession, a lion, a pig, and a monkey. The blood of each as it was killed he made to flow under the vine. Thus he conveyed to Noah what the qualities of wine are: before man drinks of it, he is innocent as a lamb; if he drinks of it moderately, he feels as strong as a lion; if he drinks more of it than he can bear, he resembles the pig; and if he drinks to the point of intoxication, then he behaves like a monkey, he dances around, sings, talks obscenely, and knows not what he is doing.[58]

This deterred Noah no more than did the example of Adam, whose fall had also been due to wine, for the forbidden fruit had been the grape, with which he had made himself drunk.[59]

**In his drunken condition Noah betook himself to the tent of his wife. His son Ham saw him there, and he told his brothers what he had noticed, and said: "The first man had but two sons, and one slew the other; this man Noah has three sons, yet he desires to beget a fourth besides." Nor did Ham rest satisfied with these disrespectful words against his father. He added to this sin of irreverence the still greater outrage of attempting to perform an operation upon his father designed to prevent procreation.**

**When Noah awoke from his wine and became sober, he pronounced a curse upon Ham in the person of his youngest son Canaan. To Ham himself he could do no harm, for God had conferred a blessing upon Noah and his three sons as they departed from the ark. Therefore he put the curse upon the last-born son of the son that had prevented him from begetting a younger son than the three he had." The descendants of Ham through Canaan therefore have red eyes, because Ham looked upon the nakedness of his father; they have misshapen lips, because Ham spoke with his lips to his brothers about the unseemly condition of his father; they have twisted curly hair, because Ham turned and twisted his head round to see the nakedness of his father; and they go about naked, because Ham did not cover the nakedness of his father. Thus he was requited, for it is the way of God to mete out punishment measure for measure.**

**Canaan had to suffer vicariously for his father's sin. Yet some of the punishment was inflicted upon him on his own account, for it had been Canaan who had drawn the attention of Ham**

to Noah's revolting condition. Ham, it appears, was but the worthy father of such a son.[61] The last will and testament of Canaan addressed to his children read as follows: "Speak not the truth; hold not yourselves aloof from theft; lead a dissolute life; hate your master with an exceeding great hate; and love one another." [62]

As Ham was made to suffer requital for his irreverence, so Shem and Japheth received a reward for the filial, deferential way in which they took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders, and walking backward, with averted faces, covered the nakedness of their father. Naked the descendants of Ham, the Egyptians and Ethiopians, were led away captive and into exile by the king of Assyria, while the descendants of Shem, the Assyrians, even when the angel of the Lord burnt them in the camp, were not exposed, their garments remained upon their corpses unsinged. And in time to come, when Gog shall suffer his defeat, God will provide both shrouds and a place of burial for him and all his multitude, the posterity of Japheth.

Though Shem and Japheth both showed themselves to be dutiful and deferential, yet it was Shem who deserved the larger meed of praise. He was the first to set about covering his father. Japheth joined him after the good deed had been begun. Therefore the descendants of Shem received as their special reward the tallit, the garment worn by them, while the Japhethites have only the toga.[63] A further distinction accorded to Shem was the mention of his name in connection with God's in the blessing of Noah. "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem," he said, though as a rule the name of God is not joined to the name of a living person, only to the name of one who has departed this life.[64]

The relation of Shem to Japheth was expressed in the blessing their father pronounced upon them: God will grant a land of beauty to Japheth, and his sons will be proselytes dwelling in the academies of Shem.[65] At the same time Noah conveyed by his words that the Shekinah would dwell only in the first Temple, erected by Solomon, a son of Shem, and not in the second Temple, the builder of which would be Cyrus, a descendant of Japheth.[66]

#### NOAH'S DESCENDANTS SPREAD ABROAD (pp. 170–174)

**When it became known to Ham that his father had cursed him, he fled ashamed, and with his family he settled in the city built by him, and named Neelatamauk for his wife. Jealous of his brother, Japheth followed his example. He likewise built a city which he named for his wife, Adataneses. Shem was the only one of the sons of Noah who did not abandon him. In the vicinity of his father's home, by the mountain, he built his city, to which he also gave his wife's name, Zedeketelbab. The three cities are all near Mount Lubar, the eminence upon which the ark rested. The first lies to the south of it, the second to the west, and the third to the east.**

Noah endeavored to inculcate the ordinances and the commands known to him upon his children and his children's children. In particular he admonished them against the fornication, the uncleanness, and all the iniquity which had brought the flood down upon the earth. He reproached them with

living apart from one another, and with their jealousies, for he feared that, after his death, they might go so far as to shed human blood. Against this he warned them impressively, that they be not annihilated from the earth like those that went before. Another law which he enjoined upon them, to observe it, was the law ordaining that the fruit of a tree shall not be used the first three years it bears, and even in the fourth year it shall be the portion of the priests alone, after a part thereof has been offered upon the altar of God. And having made an end of giving his teachings and injunctions, Noah said: "For thus did Enoch, your ancestor, exhort his son Methuselah, and Methuselah his son Lamech, and Lamech delivered all unto me as his father had bidden him, and now I do exhort you, my children, as Enoch exhorted his son. When he lived, in his generation, which was the seventh generation of man, he commanded it and testified it unto his children and his children's children, until the day of his death." [67]

In the year 1569 after the creation of the world, Noah divided the earth by lot among his three sons, in the presence of an angel. Each one stretched forth his hand and took a slip from the bosom of Noah. Shem's slip was inscribed with the middle of the earth, and this portion became the inheritance of his descendants unto all eternity. Noah rejoiced that the lot had assigned it to Shem. Thus was fulfilled his blessing upon him, "And God in the habitation of Shem," for three holy places fell within his precincts--the Holy of Holies in the Temple, Mount Sinai, the middle point of the desert, and Mount Zion, the middle point of the navel of the earth.

**The south fell to the lot of Ham, and the north became the inheritance of Japheth. The land of Ham is hot, Japheth's cold, but Shem's is neither hot nor cold, its temperature is hot and cold mixed.[68]**

This division of the earth took place toward the end of the life of Peleg, the name given to him by his father Eber, who, being a prophet, knew that the division of the earth would take place in the time of his son.[69] The brother of Peleg was called Joktan, because the duration of the life of man was shortened in his time.[70]

In turn, the three sons of Noah, while they were still standing in the presence of their father, divided each his portion among his children, Noah threatening with his curse any who should stretch out his hand to take a portion not assigned to him by lot. And they all cried, "So be it! So be it!" [71]

**Thus were divided one hundred and four lands and ninety-nine islands among seventy-two nations, each with a language of its own, using sixteen different sets of characters for writing. To Japheth were allotted forty-four lands, thirty-three islands, twenty-two languages, and five kinds of writing; Ham received thirty-four lands, thirty-three islands, twenty-four languages, and five kinds of writing; and Shem twenty-six lands, thirty-three islands, twenty-six languages, and six kinds of writing--one set of written characters more to Shem than to either of his brothers, the extra set being the Hebrew.[72]**

The land appointed as the inheritance of the twelve sons of Jacob was provisionally granted to Canaan, Zidon, Heth, the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. It was the duty of these nations to take care of the land until the rightful owners should come.[73]

No sooner had the children of Noah and their children's children taken possession of the habitations apportioned to them, than the unclean spirits began to seduce men and torment them with pain and all sorts of suffering leading to spiritual and physical death. Upon the entreaties of Noah God sent down the angel Raphael, who banished nine-tenths of the unclean spirits from the earth, leaving but one-tenth for Mastema, to punish sinners through them. Raphael, supported by the chief of the unclean spirits, at that time revealed to Noah all the remedies residing in plants, that he might resort to them at need. Noah recorded them in a book, which he transmitted to his son Shem.[74] This is the source to which go back all the medical books whence the wise men of India, Aram, Macedonia, and Egypt draw their knowledge. The sages of India devoted themselves particularly to the study of curative trees and spices; the Arameans were well versed in the knowledge of the properties of grains and seeds, and they translated the old medical books into their language. The wise men of Macedonia were the first to apply medical knowledge practically, while the Egyptians sought to effect cures by means of magic arts and by means of astrology, and they taught the Midrash of the Chaldees, composed by Kangar, the son of Ur, the son of Kesed. Medical skill spread further and further until the time of aesculapius. This Macedonian sage, accompanied by forty learned magicians, journeyed from country to country, until they came to the land beyond India, in the direction of Paradise. They hoped there to find some wood of the tree of life, and thus spread their fame abroad over the whole world. Their hope was frustrated. When they arrived at the spot, they found healing trees and wood of the tree of life, but when they were in the act of stretching forth their hands to gather what they desired, lightning darted out of the ever-turning sword, smote them to the ground, and they were all burnt. With them disappeared all knowledge of medicine, and it did not revive until the time of the first Artaxerxes, under the Macedonian sage Hippocrates, Dioscorides of Baala, Galen of Caphtor, and the Hebrew Asaph.[75]

#### THE DEPRAVITY OF MANKIND (174–176)

**With the spread of mankind corruption increased. While Noah was still alive, the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth appointed princes over each of the three groups- Nimrod for the descendants of Ham, Joktan for the descendants of Shem, and Phenech for the descendants of Japheth. Ten years before Noah's death, the number of those subject to the three princes amounted to millions.** When this great concourse of men came to Babylonia upon their journeyings, they said to one another: "Behold, the time is coming when, at the end of days, neighbor will be separated from neighbor, and brother from brother, and one will carry on war against the other. Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a great name upon the earth. And now let us make bricks, and each one write his name upon his brick." All agreed to this proposal, with the exception of twelve pious men, Abraham among them. They refused

to join the others. They were seized by the people, and brought before the three princes, to whom they gave the following reason for their refusal: "We will not make bricks, nor remain with you, for we know but one God, and Him we serve; even if you burn us in the fire together with the bricks, we will not walk in your ways." Nimrod and Phenech flew into such a passion over the twelve men that they resolved to throw them into the fire. Joktan, however, besides being a God-fearing man, was of close kin to the men on trial, and he essayed to save them. He proposed to his two colleagues to grant them a seven days' respite. His plan was accepted, such deference being paid him as the primate among the three. The twelve were incarcerated in the house of Joktan. In the night he charged fifty of his attendants to mount the prisoners upon mules and take them to the mountains. Thus they would escape the threatened punishment. Joktan provided them with food for a month. He was sure that in the meantime either a change of sentiment would come about, and the people desist from their purpose, or God would help the fugitives. Eleven of the prisoners assented to the plan with gratitude. Abraham alone rejected it, saying: "Behold, to-day we flee to the mountains to escape from the fire, but if wild beasts rush out from the mountains and devour us, or if food is lacking, so that we die by famine, we shall be found fleeing before the people of the land and dying in our sins. Now, as the Lord liveth, in whom I trust, I will not depart from this place wherein they have imprisoned me, and if I am to die through my sins, then will I die by the will of God, according to His desire."

In vain Joktan endeavored to persuade Abraham to flee. He persisted in his refusal. He remained behind alone in the prison house, while the other eleven made their escape. At the expiration of the set term, when the people returned and demanded the death of the twelve captives, Joktan could produce only Abraham. His excuse was that the rest had broken loose during the night. The people were about to throw themselves upon Abraham and cast him into the lime kiln. Suddenly an earthquake was felt, the fire darted from the furnace, and all who were standing round about, eighty four thousand of the people, were consumed, while Abraham remained untouched. Thereupon he repaired to his eleven friends in the mountains, and told them of the miracle that had befallen for his sake. They all returned with him, and, unmolested by the people, they gave praise and thanks to God.[76]

NIMROD (pp. 177–178)

**The first among the leaders of the corrupt men was Nimrod.[77] His father Cush had married his mother at an advanced age, and Nimrod, the offspring of this belated union, was particularly dear to him as the son of his old age. He gave him the clothes made of skins with which God had furnished Adam and Eve at the time of their leaving Paradise. Cush himself had gained possession of them through Ham. From Adam and Eve they had descended to Enoch, and from him to Methuselah, and to Noah, and the last had taken them with him into the ark. When the inmates of the ark were about to leave their refuge, Ham stole the garments and kept them concealed, finally passing them on to his first-born son Cush. Cush in turn hid them for many years. When his son Nimrod reached his twentieth year, he gave them to**

**him.[78]** These garments had a wonderful property. He who wore them was both invincible and irresistible. The beasts and birds of the woods fell down before Nimrod as soon as they caught sight of him arrayed in them,[79] and he was equally victorious in his combats with men.[80] The source of his unconquerable strength was not known to them. They attributed it to his personal prowess, and therefore they appointed him king over themselves.[81] This was done after a conflict between the descendants of Cush and the descendants of Japheth, from which Nimrod emerged triumphant, having routed the enemy utterly with the assistance of a handful of warriors. He chose Shinar as his capital. Thence he extended his dominion farther and farther, until he rose by cunning and force to be the sole ruler of the whole world. the first mortal to hold universal sway, as the ninth ruler to possess the same power will be the Messiah.[82]

His impiousness kept pace with his growing power. Since the flood there had been no such sinner as Nimrod. He fashioned idols of wood and stone, and paid worship to them. But not satisfied to lead a godless life himself, he did all he could to tempt his subjects into evil ways, wherein he was aided and abetted by his son Mardon. This son of his outstripped his father in iniquity. It was their time and their life that gave rise to the proverb, "Out of the wicked cometh forth wickedness." [83]

The great success that attended all of Nimrod's undertakings produced a sinister effect. Men no longer trusted in God, but rather in their own prowess and ability,[84] an attitude to which Nimrod tried to convert the whole world.[85] Therefore people said, "Since the creation of the world there has been none like Nimrod, a mighty hunter of men and beasts, and a sinner before God." [86]

And not all this sufficed unto Nimrod's evil desire. Not enough that he turned men away from God, he did all he could to make them pay Divine honors unto himself. He set himself up as a god, and made a seat for himself in imitation of the seat of God. It was a tower built out of a round rock, and on it he placed a throne of cedar wood, upon which arose, one above the other, four thrones, of iron, copper, silver, and gold. Crowning all, upon the golden throne, lay a precious stone, round in shape and gigantic in size. This served him as a seat, and as he sate upon it, all nations came and paid him Divine homage.[87]

#### THE TOWER OF BABEL (pp. 179–181)

The iniquity and godlessness of Nimrod reached their climax in the building of the Tower of Babel. His counsellors had proposed the plan of erecting such a tower, Nimrod had agreed to it, and it was executed in Shinar by a mob of six hundred thousand men. The enterprise was neither more nor less than rebellion against God, and there were three sorts of rebels among the builders. The first party spoke, Let us ascend into the heavens and wage warfare with Him; the second party spoke, Let us ascend into the heavens, set up our idols, and pay worship unto them there; and the third party spoke, Let us ascend into the heavens, and ruin them with our bows and spears.

Many, many years were passed in building the tower. It reached so great a height that it took a year

to mount to the top. A brick was, therefore, more precious in the sight of the builders than a human being. If a man fell down, and met his death, none took notice of it, but if a brick dropped, they wept, because it would take a year to replace it. So intent were they upon accomplishing their purpose that they would not permit a woman to interrupt herself in her work of brick-making when the hour of travail came upon her. Moulding bricks she gave birth to her child, and, tying it round her body in a sheet, she went on moulding bricks.

They never slackened in their work, and from their dizzy height they constantly shot arrows toward heaven, which, returning, were seen to be covered with blood. They were thus fortified in their delusion, and they cried, "We have slain all who are in heaven." Thereupon God turned to the seventy angels who encompass His throne, and He spake: "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." Thus it happened. Thenceforth none knew what the other spoke. One would ask for the mortar, and the other handed him a brick; in a rage, he would throw the brick at his partner and kill him. Many perished in this manner, and the rest were punished according to the nature of their rebellious conduct. Those who had spoken, "Let us ascend into the heavens, set up our idols, and pay worship unto them there," God transformed into apes and phantoms; those who had proposed to assault the heavens with their arms, God set against each other so that they fell in the combat; and those who had resolved to carry on a combat with God in heaven were scattered broadcast over the earth. As for the unfinished tower, a part sank into the earth, and another part was consumed by fire; only one-third of it remained standing.[88] The place of the tower has never lost its peculiar quality. Whoever passes it forgets all he knows.[89]

The punishment inflicted upon the sinful generation of the tower is comparatively lenient. On account of rapine the generation of the flood were utterly destroyed, while the generation of the tower were preserved in spite of their blasphemies and all their other acts offensive to God. The reason is that God sets a high value upon peace and harmony. Therefore the generation of the deluge, who gave themselves up to depredation, and bore hatred to one another, were extirpated, root and branch, while the generation of the Tower of Babel dwelling amicably together, and loving one another, were spared alive, at least a remnant of them.[90]

Beside the chastisement of sin and sinners by the confounding of speech, another notable circumstance was connected with the descent of God upon earth--one of only ten such descents to occur between the creation of the world and the day of judgment. It was on this occasion that God and the seventy angels that surround His throne cast lots concerning the various nations. Each angel received a nation, and Israel fell to the lot of God. To every nation a peculiar language was assigned, Hebrew being reserved for Israel- the language made use of by God at the creation of the world.[91]

## RELEVANT FOOTNOTES IN VOLUME V

**Volume V: p. 179, note 28**

Noah's sons (including Ham) are similarly mentioned as pious men; Tan. B. I, 31 and Tan. Noah 2; 4 Ezra 3. 11; Clemens' First Epistle, 7. 6; comp-, on the other hand, Jub., loc. cit., and Aggadat Bereshit 10, 24. The title pHS applied to Noah (Gen. 6. 9) signifies one who gives alms, because he cared for all the living during the time of the flood; Tan. B. I, -31; Tan. Noah 5; Yelammedenu quoted by Recanati on Gen., loc. cit.

**Volume V: p. 181, note 37**

Sanhedrin 108b; MHG I, 160. Yalkut Reubeni, Gen. 7. 14, cites, from Sode Raza, the statement that Noah took care of the wild animals, Shem of the domestic, Ham of the birds, and Japheth of the reptiles.

**Volume V: p. 188, note 54**

Regarding the three sinners, Ham, the dog, and the raven, the following may be noted. Shemhazael (sic!) shortly before the flood had intercourse with the wife of Ham, who, in order to protect his wife, trespassed the commandment of abstinence in the ark, and claimed the bastards Sihon and Og as his own children (comp. Index, s. p.); Yalkut Reubeni, Gen. 7. 7, and R. Bahya, Hukat (end), who cites this legend in an abbreviated form. The dog followed Ham's bad example secretly (as a punishment the male remains attached to the body of the female after copulation). Finally the raven followed this example openly, and called upon the other animals to violate Noah's prohibition. See 2 Alphabet of Ben Sira 35b. Different is the reading *ibid.*, 26b-27a, and in the older sources cited at the beginning of this note. Comp. also MHG I, 162 (end). On the punishment of the raven, comp. vol. I, pp. 38-39, and on that of the dog, note 178 on vol. I, p. 39.

**Volume V: p. 191, note 60**

Gehenna; BHM V, 67. 60 BR 36. 4-5 and 7; Tan. B. I, 49; Tan. Noah 15; PRE 23; Targum Yerushalmi Gen. 9. 24-25; Midrash Haserot 50 (while intoxicated he ventured to have intercourse with his wife, which he would not have done if he were sober, owing to the fact that the lion had hurt him and rendered him incapable of conjugal relations; comp. BR, loc. cit., and vol.1, pp. 165-166; but differently in BR 25. 1, where the evil that had befallen Noah is declared to have been the punishment for his refusal, after leaving the ark, to resume conjugal relations which had been interrupted during his stay there; comp. note 53 and BR, loc. cit., where, according to one view, this abstinence of Noah is highly commended); Sanhedrin 70a (according to one view Ham committed sodomy); Clementine Recognitions, 1. 30; Theophilus, 3.19; Book of Adam 3. 13. The emphasis laid in Jewish sources on the fact that Ham prevented his father from begetting a fourth son seems to be directed against the view found in the Book of Adam, loc. cit., and in other Christian writings, according to which Noah begot several sons after leaving the ark; comp. Griinbaum, Neue Beitrage, 86-87. In the above-mentioned rabbinic sources, as well as in patristic literature (Justin Martyr, Dialogue, 139; Ephraim, I, 56 F, 57 A and B; Theodoretus and Origen, Gen., loc. cit.), opinions

differ as to whether the fault was entirely Ham's (yet he, having been blessed, could not be cursed; comp. note 85 on vol. I, 78) or whether Canaan, Ham's son, had a share in it; comp. the following note. Noah learned of the disgrace perpetrated on him by his son through a dream; Targum Yerushalmi, loc. cit. According to others (Shu'aib, Noah, 5b, quoting a Midrash, perhaps BR 37. 7: ^>ID>rr 133), Noah took it for granted that only his immoral son could have committed this act (comp. vol. I, p. 166). On the interpretation of BR 36. 4 that "tent" is a metaphor for wife (TON^n^riN), comp. Mo'ed Katan 15b and BR 39. 16. A favorite metaphor for wife is house, comp. e. g. Shabbat 118b; Yoma 13a.

**Volume V: p. 191-192, note 61**

BR 36. 7; Tan. B. I, 49; Tan. Noah 15. PRE 23 goes even a step further and asserts, in agreement with some of the Church Fathers (comp. the preceding note, and Ginzberg, Haggada bei den Kirchenv., 8-^87), that it was really Canaan who committed, this disgraceful act (the castration of Noah); Ham, however, divulged the secret. Sferno, Gen, 9. 25, quotes a similar version from Berosus the Chaldean. Comp. also Philo (De Ebrietati, 2, 7, and 10; Quaestiones, 2, 65, 70, 77), who, in agreement with the Rabbis, makes Canaan participate in his father's disgraceful deed, and is also acquainted with the haggadic interpretation of BR 36. 2 and 7 concerning Gen. 9. 18 and 24 (Ham and Canaan, because they are both equally base in character, are designated as father and son; hence ]DpH signifies "the debased"). It is probable that similar statements of the Church Fathers go back, directly or indirectly, to Philo.

**Volume V: p. 199, note 83**

Sanhedrin 98b, top. 8 \* Yashar Noah, 18a and 23a. Comp. note 77 for the older sources concerning Nimrod, "the one who seduced men to evil". Recognitiones, I, 30 and 4. 28-29, asserts that Nimrod whom the Greeks call Ninus, after whom Nineveh is named, taught the Persians to worship fire. For this purpose he made use -of magic, since otherwise he could not lead men astray from God to whom they were naturally devoted. However, the first sorcerer was Ham, who was later called Zoroaster (= "living star", in Greek) by his' worshippers. He was called so because by magical manipulation of a demon he tried to draw sparks from a star, and was burned. The foolish crowd, instead of discerning God's punishment in Ham's death, believed to have perceived a particular significance in his death by fire, and began to worship him as a living star (Zoroaster). Having been reduced to ashes, Zoroaster was worshipped by the Persians as the celestial fire: In Clementine Homilies, 9. 4-6, Nimrod is identified with Zoroaster, and is designated as the one "who chose, giant-like, to devise things in opposition to God, and who, after his death by fire, was worshipped by the ignorant populace. This was the beginning of the worship of idols. Subsequent rulers demanded similar adoration to that which was accorded to Nimrod."

**Volume V: p. 201, note 88**

Eusebius, 484d, and Yerahmeel .32. 88 Yashar Noah, 20b-21a, based on older sources. That Nimrod was the instigator of the building of the tower, see Hullin 89a; 1 Abodah Zarah 53b (where the tower is called "the house of Nimrod") ; Pesachim 94b; 'Erubin 53a; BR 23. 7, 26. 4, and 42. 4; PRE 34;

Josephus, Antiqui., I, 4. 2. Instead of Nimrod some sources (BR 38. 8; Tan. B. I, 53; Tan. Noah 1) speak of other Hamites, such as Cush (but according to BR 42. 4, this is only another name for Nimrod; see further Philo, Quaestiones, 2. 82), Put, Mizraim, and Canaan, who were the builders of the tower. These men are also meant by Lactantius, Institutiones, 2. 15, when he declares that the Hamites were the first idolaters. The three parties among the builders of the tower are already referred to in Sanhedrin 109a; Tan. Noah"18; Alphabet R. Akiba, 46-47 (where two contradictory views of the Talmud are combined into one); Tehillim 1, 12.

**Volume V: p. 264, note 309**

Yalkut Reubeni Gen. 26. 2, 36c, quotes a Midrash to the effect that Abraham married three wives, daughters (=descendants) of the three sons of Noah: Sarah the daughter of Shem, Keturah the daughter of Japheth, and Hagar the daughter of Ham. That Hagar was an Egyptian (=a daughter of Ham) is mentioned in Scripture.

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The Legends of the Jews

by Louis Ginzberg

VOLUME II

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EXCERPTS OF THOSE LEGENDS DEALING WITH HAM  
( MARKED IN BOLD )

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**Volume II, p. 14–15**

While Joseph was languishing thus, his brethren determined to kill him. They would finish their meal first, they said, and then they would fetch him forth and slay him. When they had done eating, they attempted to say grace, but Judah remonstrated with them: "We are about to take the life of a human being, and yet would bless God? That is not a blessing, that is contemning the Lord.[46] What profit is it if we slay our brother? Rather will the punishment of God descend upon us. I have good counsel to give you. Yonder passeth by a travelling company of Ishmaelites on their way to Egypt. **Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him. The Ishmaelites will take him with them upon their journeyings, and he will be lost among the peoples of the earth.[47] Let us follow the custom of former days, for Canaan, too, the son of Ham, was made a slave for his evil deeds, and so will we do with our brother Joseph.**"[48]

**Volume II, p. 117**

Then Jacob and the members of his family put on the clothes Joseph had sent, among them a turban for Jacob, and they made all preparations to journey down into Egypt and dwell there with Joseph and his family. Hearing of his good fortune, the kings and the grandees of Canaan came to wait upon Jacob and express sympathy with him in his joy, and he prepared a three days' banquet for them.[298]

**Jacob, however, would not go down into Egypt without first inquiring whether it was the will of God that he should leave the Holy Land.[299] He said, "How can I leave the land of my fathers, the land of my birth, the land in which the Shekinah dwells, and go into an unclean land, inhabited by slaves of the sons of Ham, a land wherein there is no fear of God?"[300]**

Then he brought sacrifices in honor of God, in the expectation that a Divine vision would descend upon him and instruct him whether to go down into Egypt or have Joseph come up to Canaan. He feared the sojourn in Egypt, for he remembered the vision he had had at Beth-el on leaving his father's house,[301] and he said to God: "I resemble my father. As he was greedy in filling his maw, so am I, and therefore I would go down into Egypt in consequence of the famine. As my father preferred one son to the other, so had I a favorite son, and therefore I would go down into Egypt to see Joseph. But in this I do not resemble my father, he had only himself to provide for, and my house consists of seventy souls, and therefore am I compelled to go down into Egypt. The blessing which my father gave me was not fulfilled in me, but in my son Joseph, whom peoples serve, and before whom nations bow down."[302]

Then the Shekinah addressed Jacob, calling his name twice in token of love,[303] and bidding him not to fear the Egyptian slavery foretold for the descendants of Abraham, for God would have pity upon the suffering of his children and deliver them from bondage.[304] God furthermore said, "I will go down into Egypt with thee," and the Shekinah accompanied Jacob thither, bringing the number of the company with which he entered Egypt up to seventy.[305] But as Jacob entertained fears that his descendants would stay there forever, God gave him the assurance that He would lead him forth together with all the pious that were like unto him.[306] And God also told Jacob that Joseph had remained steadfast in his piety even in Egypt, and he might dismiss all doubts from his mind on this score, for it was his anxiety on this account that had induced Jacob to consider going down into Egypt; he wanted only to make sure of Joseph's faithfulness, and then return home, but God commanded him to go thither and remain there.[307]

**Volume II, p. 287–289**

Seeing that they had been saved by the king, and the city had been taken by his good counsel, the people became more than ever attached to him. They set the royal crown upon his head, and gave him Adoniah, the widow of Kikanos to wife. But Moses feared the stern God of his fathers, and he went not in unto Adoniah, nor did he turn his eyes toward her, for he remembered how Abraham had made his servant Eliezer swear, saying unto him, "Thou shalt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell." He also remembered what Isaac did when Jacob fled before his brother Esau, how he commanded his son, saying, "Thou shalt not take a wife from

the daughters of Canaan, nor ally thyself by marriage with any of the children of Ham, for the Lord our God gave Ham the son of Noah and all his seed as slaves to the children of Shem and Japheth forever."

At that time Aram and the children of the East heard that Kikanos the king of Ethiopia had died, and they rose up against the Ethiopians, but Moses went forth with a mighty army to fight against the rebellious nations, and he subdued them, first the children of the East and then Aram.

Moses continued to prosper in his kingdom. He conducted the government in justice, righteousness, and integrity, and his people loved and feared him.

In the fortieth year of his reign, while he was sitting upon his throne one day, surrounded by all the nobles, Adoniah the queen, who was seated before him, rose up, and spake: "What is this thing which you, the people of Ethiopia, have done these many days? Surely you know that during the forty years this man hath reigned over you, he hath not approached me, nor hath he worshipped the gods of Ethiopia. Now, therefore, let this man reign over you no more, for he is not of our flesh. Behold, Monarchos my son is grown up, let him reign over you. It is better for you to serve the son of your lord than a stranger, a slave of the king of Egypt."

A whole day the people and the nobles contended with one another, whether to pay heed to the words of the queen. The officers of the army remained faithful to Moses, but the people of the cities were in favor of crowning the son of their former lord as king. The following morning they rose up and made Monarchos, the son of Kikanos, king over them, but they were afraid to stretch forth their hand against Moses, for the Lord was with him. They also remembered the oath they had sworn unto Moses, and therefore they did him no harm. Moreover, they gave many presents to him, and dismissed him with great honor.

When Moses left Ethiopia, in the sixty-seventh year of his age, it was the time appointed by God in the days of old to bring Israel forth from the affliction of the children of Ham. But fearing to return to Egypt on account of Pharaoh, Moses journeyed to Midian.[80]

### Volume II, p. 324

Moses said furthermore: **"I am not an eloquent man, nor can I see of what avail words can be in this matter. Thou art sending me to one that is himself a slave, to Pharaoh of the tribe of Ham, and a slave will not be corrected by words. I consent to go on Thy errand only if Thou wilt invest me with the power of chastising Pharaoh with brute force."** To these words spoken by Moses, God made reply: "Let it not fret thee that thou art not an eloquent speaker. It is I that made the mouth of all that speak, and I that made men dumb. One I make to see, another I make blind; one I make to hear, another I make deaf. Had I willed it so, thou hadst been a man of ready speech. But I desired to show a wonder through thee. Whenever I will it, the words I cast into thy mouth shall come forth without hesitation. But what thou sayest about a slave, that he cannot be corrected by words, is true, and therefore I give thee My rod for Pharaoh's castigation."

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## RELEVANT FOOTNOTES IN VOLUME V

**Volume V: p. 329, notes 46–48**

46 PR 10, 40b; Tan. Ki-Tissa 2. Against this view which praises Judah's interference is directed the statement of R. Meir in Sanhedrin 6b, blaming Judah for his half-hearted stand, for he could have saved Joseph from slavery just as he saved him from death. See also Tosefta Berakot 4. 18 and 1 Alphabet of Ben Sira 13a, as well as note 388 on vol. III, p. 195.

47 Yashar Wa-Yesheb, 81b. Comp. the following note.

48 PRE 38; BR 84. 17; Tan. Wa-Yesheb 2. Against this view comp. vol. II, p. 217, according to which Judah sold Joseph without the knowledge of his brethren.

**Volume V: p. 357, notes 298–300**

298 Yashar Wa-Yiggash, 109.

299 MHG I, 675; comp. the following note.

300 PRE 39; Josephus, Antiqui. t II, 7. 2; Lekah, Gen. 46. 3; MGH I, 676 ("I) and 713-714.

**Volume V: p. 408–409, note 80**

At length the Ethiopians retired to Saba, which was a royal city, afterwards named Meroe (comp. note 226) by Cambyses after the name of his own sister. The place was besieged with great difficulty, since it was both encompassed by the Nile and by two other rivers, besides having a strong wall and great ramparts between the wall and the rivers. However, while Moses was uneasy at the army's lying idle for the enemy dared not come to battle this accident happened, Tharbis was the daughter of the king of the Ethiopians; she happened to see Moses as he led the army near the walls and fought with great courage, and admiring the subtlety of his undertakings, and believing him to be responsible for the success of the Egyptians, she fell in love with him, and sent to him the most faithful of all her servants to discuss with him about their marriage. Moses thereupon accepted the offer on condition that she should deliver the city and gave her the assurance of an oath to take her for his wife, and that when he had taken possession of the city, he would not break his oath to her. The agreement took effect immediately. And when Moses had cut off the Ethiopians, he gave thanks to God, and consummated his marriage, and led the Egyptians back to their own land. Now the Egyptians after they had been saved by Moses, entertained hatred toward him, fearing he would take advantage of his success to raise a sedition, and introduce innovations into Egypt. They therefore told the king that he ought to be slain. The king had similar intentions himself out of envy of Moses\* glorious expedition at the head of his army, as well as out of fear of being brought low by him; and being instigated by the sacred scribes, he was ready to undertake to kill Moses. But when Moses had learned of the plots being hatched against him (the slaying of the Egyptian, the cause of Moses' flight according to Exod. 2. 12-15 is ignored by Josephus in true apologetic fashion), he went away privately, and because the public roads were watched, he took his flight through the desert, where his enemies could not suspect he would travel; and though he was destitute of food, he went on courageously. It is very likely that the story in Josephus, or to be more accurate, in Alexander

Polyhistor, his authority, is based entirely on Artapanus, although the present text of the latter does not contain the incident about Moses' Ethiopian wife. The old rabbinic sources know neither of Moses' wars against the Ethiopians nor of his marriage with an Ethiopian princess. They maintain that the Ethiopian wife of Moses, mentioned in Num. 12. 1, is identical with Zipporah; comp. note 488 on vol. III, p. 250. This view is also held by Demetrius, 439d, and the Hellenist Ezekiel, 348. ShR 1. 27 and Tan. Shemot 5, though late Midrashim, do not know yet of Moses' stay in Ethiopia, and the oldest rabbinic source where reference is made to it seems to be Targum Yerushalmi Num. 12. 1. Comp. Freudenthal, Hellenistische Studien, 143-198, and Isidore Levy, R.E.J., LIII, 201-211



by Louis Ginzberg

### VOLUME III

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#### EXCERPTS OF THOSE LEGENDS DEALING WITH HAM ( MARKED IN BOLD )

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#### Volume III, p. 267

##### THE SPIES IN PALESTINE

On the twenty-seventh day of Siwan Moses sent out the spies from Kadesh-Barnea in the wilderness of Paran, [510] and following his directions they went first to the south of Palestine, the poorest part of the Holy Land. Moses did like the merchants, who first show the poorer wares, and then the better kind; so Moses wished the spies to see better parts of the land the farther they advanced into it. **When they reached Hebron, they could judge what a blessed land this was that had been promised them, for although Hebron was the poorest tract in all Palestine, it was still much better than Zoan, the most excellent part of Egypt. When, therefore, the sons of Ham built cities in several lands, it was Hebron that they erected first, owing to its excellence, and not Zoan, which they built in Egypt fully seven years later.**

#### Volume III, p. and note 668 in Volume VI, p. 117

##### SIHON, THE KING OF THE AMORITES

The crushing of those concealed in the caves of the mountain at Arnon was only the beginning of the miracles God wrought for Israel during their conquest of the land. It was at Arnon, too, that Sihon, the king of the Amorites, and his people who, hardly a month after Aaron's death, rushed upon Israel, were completely destroyed by them. [666] This Amorite king, and likewise Og, the king

of Basham, were sons of Ahiah, whose father Shemhazai was one of the fallen angels. [667] In accordance with his celestial origin Sihon was a giant who none could withstand, for he was of enormous stature, taller than any tower in all the world, his thigh-bone alone measuring eighteen cubits, according to the big cubit of that time. [668] In spite of his huge size he was also fleet of foot, wherefore he was called Sihon, "foal," to indicate the celerity with which he moved, for his true name was Arad. [669]

**Note 668 on page 117 of Volume VI.**

Tan. B. V, 3 and 6; DR 1.24; DZ 24-25; Makiri Amos 10-11; Niddah 24b. The above sources do not agree as to the selection of their hero, some expressing their predilection for Sihon and others for Og. Comp. vol. Ill, p. 343. Sihon 's mother was Ham's wife, who committed adultery with Ahiah before and after the deluge, and bore him two sons, Og, who was born before the deluge (see vol. I, p. 160), and Sihon, born after it; Hadar and Da' at Hukkat (end). Concerning the enormous stature of the giants, see vol. I, pp. 125 and 151, as well as vol. Ill, p. 268.

**Volume III, page 452**

**THE BLESSING OF MOSES**

The people now came to Moses and said, "The hour of thy death is at hand," and he replied: "Wait until I have blessed Israel. All my life long they had no pleasant experiences with me, for I constantly rebuked them and admonished them to fear God and fulfil the commandments, therefore do I not now wish to depart out of this world before I have blessed them." [910] Moses had indeed always cherished the desire of blessing Israel, but the Angel of Death had never permitted him to satisfy his wish, so shortly before dying, he enchained the Angel of Death, cast him beneath his feet, and blessed Israel in spite of their enemy, saying, "Save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance: feed them also, and bear them up for ever." [911]

Moses was not the first to bestow blessings, as former generations had also done so, but no blessing was as effective as his. **Noah blessed his sons, but it was a divided blessing, being intended for Shem, whereas Ham, instead of being blessed, was cursed. Isaac blessed his sons, but his blessings led to a dispute, for Esau envied Jacob his blessings. Jacob blessed his sons, but even his blessing was not without a blemish, for in blessing he rebuked Reuben and called him to account for the sins he had committed.** Even the number of Moses' blessings excelled that of his predecessors. For when God created the world, He blessed Adam and Eve, and this blessing remained upon the world until the flood, when it ceased. When Noah left the ark, God appeared before him and bestowed upon him anew the blessing that had vanished during the flood, and this blessing rested upon the world until Abraham came into the world and received a second blessing from God, who said, "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." God then said to Abraham: "Henceforth it no longer behooves Me to bless My creatures in person, but I shall leave the blessings to thee: he whom thou blessest, shall be blessed by Me." Abraham did not, however, bless his own son Isaac, in order that the villain Esau might not have a share in that blessing. Jacob, however, received not only two blessings from his

father, but one other besides from the angel with whom he wrestled, and one from God; and the blessing also that had been Abraham's to bestow upon his house went to Jacob. When Jacob blessed his sons, he passed on to them the five blessings he had received, and added one other.

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**Book IV, pp. 22–23 and Note 9 in Volume VI, p. 182**

One of the sinful, a man by the name of Elah, (5) said in reply thereto: "If thou desirest to bring forth the truth, address thyself to each of the tribes separately." (6) Kenaz began with his own, the tribe of Judah. The wicked of Judah confessed to the sin of worshipping the golden calf, like unto their forefathers in the desert. The Reubenites had burnt sacrifices to idols. The Levites said: "We desired to prove whether the Tabernacle is holy." Those of the tribe of Issachar replied: "We consulted idols to know what will become of us." (7) The sinners of Zebulun: "We desired to eat the flesh of our sons and daughters, to know whether the Lord loves them." The Danites admitted, they had taught their children out of the books of the Amorites, which they had hidden then under Mount Abarim, (8) where Kenaz actually found them. The Naphtalites confessed to the same transgression, only they had concealed the books in the tent of Elah, and there they were found by Kenaz. The Gadites acknowledged having led an immoral life, and the sinners of Asher, that they had found, and had hidden under Mount Shechem, the seven golden idols called by the Amorites the holy nymphs — the same seven idols which had been made in a miraculous way after the deluge by the seven sinners, Canaan, Put, Shelah, Nimrod, Elath, Diul, and Shuah. (9) They were of precious stones from Havilah, which radiated light, making night bright as day. Besides, they possessed a rare virtue: if a blind Amorite kissed one of the idols, and at the same time touched its eyes, his sight was restored. (10) After the sinners of Asher, those of Manasseh made their confession — they had desecrated the Sabbath. The Ephraimites owned to having sacrificed their children to Moloch. Finally, the Benjamites said: "We desired to prove whether the law emanated from God or from Moses." <sup>9</sup>

**Note 9 in Volume VI, p. 182**

According to ps.-Philo, the seven sinners are: Canaan, Put, Selath, Nimrod, Elath, Desuath. James, ad loc., adds Ham, to make up the required seven; but Yerahmeel shows that the last name is Suah (שוּחַ), and accordingly it is safe to assume that Desuath is a corruption of De'dan, Suah. Cornp. Gen. 10.7. On the making of idols in the time after the deluge, see vol. I, pp. 174-175. On the hiding of the idols under Mount Shechem, see vol. I, p. 412.