

TRANSLATIONS OF WANDERING ARAMEAN

[1] *The Yeshiva University Haggada, Koren Publishers, Israel 1985*

Come and learn what Lavan the Aramean tried to do to Yaakov our father! For Pharaoh decreed the death of the male children only, but Lavan tried to destroy us all' as it is said:

"An Aramean sought to destroy my father; and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; and he became there a great, mighty and populous nation."

"And he went down to Egypt" – this means compelled by the Divine Word. "And sojourned there" - this teaches us that our father Yaakov did not go down to settle in Egypt but only to stay for a time, as it is written "And they said to Pharaoh, We have to come to sojourn in the land, for your servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan; and therefore, we pray thee, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen."

Few in number" as it is said: "Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the Lord, your God, has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven."

"And became there a nation" this teaches that Yisrael developed their distinctive ways there.

"Great, mighty," as it is said: "And the children of Yisrael were fruitful and increased abundantly, and multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty, and the land was filled with them."

"And populous," as it is said: "I have caused you to increase like the plants of the field, and you did increase and grew great you did come to excellent beauty; your breast were formed and your hair was grown, yet you were naked and bare." "and when I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, I said to you `In your blood live; yea I said to you `In your blood live!

"And the Egyptians dealt cruelly with us and afflicted us and imposed upon us hard bondage"

"And the Egyptians dealt cruelly with us" as it is said: Come, let us deal wisely with them lest they multiply and if should come to pass, that a war should occur, they too will join our enemies, and fight against us and so go up out of the land."

"And afflicted us" as it is said: "Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens, and they built for Pharaoh treasure, Pitom and Raamses."

"And Imposed upon us hard bondage" as it is said: "And Egypt made the children of Yisrael serve with rigor"

And we cried to the Lord, God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and looked upon our affliction, and our toil and our oppression.

"And we cried the Lord, God of our fathers," as it is said: "And it came to pass in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died; and the children of Yisrael sighed by reason of their bondage and they cried out. And their cry came up to God by reason of their bondage"

"The Lord heard our voice" as it said: "And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Avraham, with Yizhak and with Yaakov."

"And Looked upon our affliction" this refers to their separation from their wives, as it is said: "And God saw the children of Israel and God new."

"And our toil," this refers to the sons, as it is said: "Every son that is born you shall cast into the river and every daughter you shall save."

"And our oppression," this refers to the force used, as it is said: "And I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them."

"And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, and with a great terror, and with signs and with wonders."

"And the Lord took us out of Egypt," not by an angel, not by seraph, nor by a messenger, rather the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself, in His glory!

as is said: "For I will pass through the land of Egypt in this night, and I will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments, I am the Lord."

"For I will pass through the land of Egypt," I myself, not an angel;

"And I will smite all the firstborn" I myself, not a seraph;

"And against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments," I myself, not a messenger;

"I am the Lord," - I am He, no other!

"With a mighty hand," this refers to the cattle plague, as it is said: "Behold, the hand of the Lord will be on the cattle in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, the oxen and upon the sheep, there shall be a very grievous plague."

"And with an outstretched arm," this refers to the sword, as it is said: "And a drawn sword in His hand, stretched out over Yerushalayim."

"And with great terror" this refers to the feelings of the peoples when God revealed before their eyes the glory of His Presence, as it is said: "Or had God ventured to go and take Him a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs and by wonders, and by wars and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes!"

"And with signs," this refers to the staff, as it is said: "And you shall take into your hand this staff with which you shall do the signs."

"And with wonders," this refers to the blood, as it is said: "And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth."

[2] *The Passover Haggadah – Chabad Internet Edition*

Go forth and learn what Laban the Aramean wanted to do to our father Jacob. Pharaoh had issued a decree against the male children only, but Laban wanted to uproot everyone - as it is said: "The Aramean wished to destroy my father; and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; and he became there a nation - great and mighty and numerous."

"And he went down to Egypt" forced by Divine decree. "And he sojourned there" - this teaches that our father Jacob did not go down to Egypt to settle, but only to live there temporarily. Thus it is said, "They said to Pharaoh, We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks because the hunger is severe in the land of Canaan; and now, please, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen."

Few in number" as it is said: "Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now, the Lord, your God, has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven."

"And he became there a nation" this teaches that Israel was distinctive there.

"Great, mighty," as it is said: "And the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, and multiplied and became very, very mighty, and the land became filled with them."

"And numerous," as it is said: "I passed over you and saw you wallowing in your bloods, and I said to you `By your blood you shall live,' and I said to you `By your blood you shall live!' I caused you to thrive like the plants of the field, and you increased and grew and became very beautiful your bosom fashioned and your hair grown long, but you were naked and bare."

"The Egyptians treated us badly and they made us suffer, and they put hard work upon us."

"The Egyptians treated us badly," as it is said: Come, let us act cunningly with [the people] lest they multiply and, if there should be a war against us, they will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the land."

"And they made us suffer," as it is said: "They set taskmasters over [the people of Israel] to make them suffer with their burdens, and they built storage cities for Pharaoh, Pitom and Ramses."

"And they put hard work upon us," as it is said: "The Egyptians made the children of Israel work with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard work, with mortar and with bricks and all manner of service in the field, all their work which they made them work with rigor." And we cried out to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our suffering, our labor and our oppression.

"And we cried out to the Lord, the God of our fathers," as it is said: "During that long period, the king of Egypt died; and the children of Israel groaned because of the servitude, and they cried out. And their cry for help from their servitude rose up to God."

"And the Lord heard our voice" as it said: "And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

"And he saw our suffering," this refers to the separation of husband and wife, as it is said: "God saw the children of Israel and God took note."

"Our labor," this refers to the "children," as it is said: "Every boy that is born, you shall throw into the river and every girl you shall keep alive."

"And our oppression," this refers to the pressure, as it is said: "I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them."

"The Lord took us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with a great manifestation, and with signs and wonders."

"The Lord took us out of Egypt," not through an angel, not through a seraph and not through a messenger. The Holy One, blessed be He, did it in His glory by Himself!

Thus it is said: "In that night I will pass through the land of Egypt, and I will smite every first-born in the land of Egypt, from man to beast, and I will carry out judgments against all the gods of Egypt, I the Lord."

"I will pass through the land of Egypt," I and not an angel;

"And I will smite every first-born in the land of Egypt," I and not a seraph;

"And I will carry out judgments against all the gods of Egypt," I and not a messenger;

"I- the Lord," it is I, and none other!

"With a strong hand," this refers to the dever (pestilence) as it is said: "Behold, the hand of the Lord will be upon your livestock in the field, upon the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds and the flocks, a very severe pestilence."

"And with an outstretched arm," this refers to the sword, as it is said: "His sword was drawn, in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem."

"And with a great manifestation," this refers to the revelation of the Shechinah (Divine Presence), as it is said: "Has any God ever tried to take for himself a nation from the midst of another nation, with trials, signs and wonders, with war and with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great manifestations, like all that the Lord your God, did for you in Egypt before your eyes!"

"And with signs," this refers to the staff, as it is said: "Take into your hand this staff with which you shall perform the signs."

"And wonders," this refers to the blood, as it is said: "And I shall show wonders in heaven and on earth."