

CHAPTER TWO

THE SCENARIO OF EXODUS

Amidst the escalating terrors of the plagues, the Egyptian government struggled to control the total situation. Boldly exploiting the disasters, Moses and his followers hastened to organize the Exodus. Negotiations proceeded in an ever more tense setting, The antagonist of the God-King Pharaoh Thaoi Thoum was the man Moses. What Moses was really like and what his background was will be portrayed later. In anticipation, here one may consider that Moses was a Hebraic Egyptian raised in a royal household, on the princely level of an adopted son of a princess. He had a named father whom he never saw. He was exiled by his pharaoh-father, and was now back on the scene of his earlier life, dealing with a pharaoh who, considering Egyptian royal incest practices, could have been his step-brother, his step-uncle, or his step-father, or even a combination thereof, and whom he had once known well.

Much that the Bible contains about the behavior of the Egyptian elite seems to come from an inside view. Professional journalists assigned to world capitals would probably agree that the exchanges between the Hebrew and the Egyptian leaders sound true. The general format could hardly have been corrupted, although Moses' reports must have been extensively rewritten. Whoever was writing the scene originally (and it was probably Moses) dealt familiarly with their conduct. Moses "knew his way around."

HIGH-LEVEL NEGOTIATIONS

When it came time to deal with the Pharaoh, there appears to have been no trouble in gaining access to the greatest ruler on earth. Moses, if an ordinary agitator, would have been jailed or executed offhand. His background, scientific reputation, and government connections prevented this fate. And that is

precisely what Aaron and the Jews had counted on in seeking him out as their leader (not to mention Yahweh, who insisted that Moses be his spokesman and that of Israel.)

Moses had found an ethnic connection; very well. The Pharaoh's government wanted to solve the problem of growing unrest in Goshen and elsewhere. "That the Levites, who promote the state of unrest, are not interfered with is apparently due to the uncanny air of power which the Egyptians scent as emanating from Moses." So writes Buber [1]. "Ben David has asserted that Moses possessed some knowledge of electricity," reported Salverte.[2] "Some knowledge" is an understatement; we shall see him as the world's best electrical scientist until Benjamin Franklin. Actually, I think, the Egyptians wanted Moses to help them not only to settle the unrest, but also because he came out of exile already known to them as one of their top-ranking scientist-magicians, and his predictions, noisomely ethnic as they were, gave them another input on what was happening in the natural world.

The negotiations over the permit for the Jews to leave their homes in Goshen, Egypt, were based upon conditions and motives clear to both sides. The Hebrews were primarily interested in economic freedom, not religious freedom; Yahweh wanted to help them, but it is always "Let My people go, that they may serve Me." Moses, that is, was interested in theocratic power.

Moses did not plead the economic cause. It would be useless to do so: no ruler in the world would let a useful subject people resign from the nation where they had resided for centuries. Imagine, for instance, the response of the Habsburg Emperor of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire in the face of such a demand. He would laugh and be pleased to hear that so much work was being exacted, especially considering that the same complaining people had houses, flocks, and lambs to slaughter in most homes when sacrifices were called for.

Furthermore, the Hebrews had religious freedom. They were not being denied their God (significantly, the Egyptians refer to the Hebrew god as "Elohim".) True, at one point in the

negotiations Moses actually made his strongest argument: that some Egyptians would stone the Jews if they conducted large public religious celebrations. The Pharaoh does not object to this argument; he is in fact sympathetic (and mind you, the Hebrew Bible is saying this!). But he feels that this problem of free public worship can be overcome by means other than letting the Jews move out of Egypt with all of their worldly goods, and without compensation.

The Pharaoh Thoum is not quoted in support of his father's policy, but it must have still remained the official policy: the Jews were to be suppressed and mistrusted, lest, as the Bible itself quotes the father: "If war befall us, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." [3]

Were the negotiations conducted in good faith? No, not on the Pharaoh's side nor on Moses. Moses intended all along to take his following out of Egypt forever, but he let the Pharaoh believe it would only be a brief trip to conduct sacrifices in the wide-open spaces. The Pharaoh never did believe this and made Moses appear insincere by counter-offers that would have let the Hebrews sacrifice freely within Egypt. Then again he said he would let the men alone go forth to sacrifice; only the men, after all, conducted sacrifices. Then again, later, all the people might go, but without their herds. He says bluntly, well along in the negotiations: "You have evil purposes in mind. "

Moses never believed the Pharaoh, either; all along the voice of Yahweh dinned in his ears that the Pharaoh would be impossibly obdurate. Pharaoh Thoum guaranteed on three separate occasions the permit, only to rescind it after the occasion for the permit - a plague had passed.

So far as the script reads, there were fourteen encounters between Moses and Pharaoh, plus three unsuccessful attempts by Moses to see him. The initiative was taken by Moses on seven occasions and by Pharaoh on seven. The scenario is plausible; an expert on labor bargaining or diplomacy would readily grant this. Most of the initiatives of Moses occurred in the early part and middle of the series, when Pharaoh was apparently incensed and confused. The calls by Pharaoh came

mostly later. And in the last stages both parties responded to the events unpretentiously, for matters were quite out of control. When the final permission to leave came, the Hebrews were already in motion.

So Moses pleaded what he knew best and what the Egyptians knew that he knew best. And he played upon the foreknowledge of disaster that he possessed, and here again the Pharaoh and his staff knew that Moses could advance evidence in his favor. Moses identified the agent of these forces of impending disaster as the Israelite god. The Egyptians were wondering whose god was agitating the world.

The largest lessons in anthropology and theology are sometimes forgotten in the haste of students to address the details of Exodus. No rulers would ever conduct any kind of discussions in which plagues were the topic, without watching the sky; they were talking of gods and the gods had one true home and one main realm - the sky. This had been true since the days of creation, thousands of years before, by ancient reckoning in many cultures.

The Pharaoh did not dispute the existence of Yahweh, indeed he reasoned and behaved as a typical sceptical and sophisticated ruler: "Maybe their god, which is not unlike our gods, Amen, Thoth, and Horus, has gotten something going for them." His obduracy, of which the Bible makes much, is to a certain degree rational and prompted by his knowing full well that the Hebrew complaint was almost entirely political and economic.

It was Moses' scientific renown, coupled with the increasingly terrible natural manifestations, that prompted the Pharaoh to conduct the negotiations on Moses' religious grounds. He wanted any information (and so did his advisers) that would help cope with the deteriorating general situation caused by a raging great god. He begged Moses, not on one occasion alone, but twice, to intercede with the Lord on his behalf and to ask the Lord to bless him. One would say that the ruler was converted, not so much to Judaism, as to Moses as a verified expert and predictor.

This came later with the breaking down of the hard heart of Pharaoh. Most commentators on the Exodus and indeed most careful readers of the Bible are baffled by a large problem. It has incited theologians and philosophers to perform remarkable feats of rationalization ever since the mosaic tradition came to be reassembled and committed to writing 3000 years ago.

Why did Yahweh, time after time, harden the Pharaoh's heart? Why did Yahweh predict repeatedly, beginning with his first appearance at the Burning Bush, that Pharaoh would not let the Hebrews go, and that he, Yahweh, would not let the Pharaoh let the people go? Why was it necessary to visit every single plague upon the helpless country? Why is everyone concerned - Moses, Yahweh, the Pharaoh and all others who participated in or reported the events - willing and ready to let the plagues run their full course?

Childs, for example speaks of the "strange atmosphere which surrounds the plague stories," of "the extravagant length of the stories," and of "a pervading quality of historical distance" not characterizing miracles such as that of Elijah on Carmel [4]. He wonders at the "mystery of Pharaoh's resistance" and "the ultimate strangeness of the plague narrative." [5] Childs then demonstrates that the narrative was edited to impose the idea of Moses as a prophet upon the events, but that Moses was not behaving like a true prophet; rather, Moses, too, was watching the events.

That is, the Bible was assembled to portray the history of the world as the working of divine will. Its editors took up Moses as a prophet of the divine will. It therefore had to shape the account of the plagues to incorporate Moses as their prophet. This procedure later led many, including scholars such as Gressmann, to see Moses as the miracle worker and magician. But, in fact, the narrative is independent of Moses.

The narrative is independent of Pharaoh, too. "Repeated efforts to illuminate the concept of hardness" [6] of Pharaoh have failed. And Yahweh moves inexorably, while insisting that these humans play out their pathetic roles.

There can be only one reason for these behaviors, and theologians, not knowing it, have labored vainly to explain otherwise: the great natural force - the body in the sky - that was operative would hear no plea, see no reason to cease, change not its course until it had completed its approach, destruction and departure in its own time, inevitably, remorselessly, heartlessly.

Further the Bible is reporting after the fact; it had to give meaning to the fact; it had therefore to implant free will where there was no free will, call for solutions when there was only resolution, and present history in the catastrophic model of Greek tragedy, where the characters are set into motion as if they were free, while affirming in the end that there was no alternative to what they did or what happened to them.

Loudly, clearly, and predictably, the Bible sends forth the signals of desperate creatures from a world in distress. Under such circumstances, the hardness of Pharaoh is understandable, just as it is understandable why in the end he surrenders permission for the Exodus to occur.

Buber asks "Why does Pharaoh permit himself to be convinced? We find ourselves face to face with a historical mystery." [7] Nor does Buber try to answer his own question. It is just as well. He has already destroyed, in his impeccable unbelieving theological style, the grounds for its solution. "The negotiations between Moses and Pharaoh and the associated plagues, can scarcely... be fitted into historical reality." [8] How could a king negotiate with "a representative of the slaves," he asks. He proceeds farther, with what he - and most other scholars - regards as the only way to demystify the plagues, to diminish them: "masses of small frogs which come out of the river (it is summer, and the season for the flood);" a winter hailstorm; next year a swarm of locusts; one spring a sandstorm of hitherto unknown fury bringing darkness for days; a children's epidemic which cuts down the king's own son: "Go forth! he cries" to the "hated one standing before him." [9]

If, by contrast, our version of the events is accepted, we may give credence to Jewish legends that other nations besides the Hebrews were mutinying [10]. Moreover, riots had broken out

prior to the final earthquake and passover, a riot of the "first-born." Was a group of highly-placed Egyptians in incipient rebellion [11] ?

The final night of the Passover may refer to the passover from Egypt into Sinai, or the passover of the Lord's Angel to destroy Egypt, or the Yahweh's passover of the protected Hebrew area "on his way" to the Egyptian concentrations, but certainly not merely to a traditional shepherd's festival to usher in spring (Buber, sic!).

It was on this night before they departed from Egypt, incidentally, that the Hebrews baked bread for the feast. The haste before the departure, say many biblical authorities, prompted instructions to take unleavened bread, whence has come the matzos of ages since and today. Folklore, however, has long told us that bread dough will not rise in a thunderstorm. The Hebrews could not get their dough to rise, owing to intense electrostatic disturbances, but baked the flat dough into bread anyhow. The earth heaved and, as with the greatest earthquakes, electrical storms broke out in the darkness. The two are interconnected. Yahweh "appeared in Egypt, attended by nine thousand myriads of the Angels of Destruction who are fashioned some of hail and some of flames, and whose glances drive terror and trembling to the heart of the beholder;" but Yahweh took the main task of destruction upon himself [12].

A rabbinical source [13] maintains that 49 out of 50 Hebrews perished in the plague of darkness, and a legend declares that the faction readying for the flight slew their fellow Hebrews who would not go along [14]. Eusebius quotes a passage ascribed to Artapanus about the last night before Exodus: there was "hail and earthquakes by night, so that those who fled from the earthquakes were killed by the hail, and those who sought shelter from the hail were destroyed by the earthquakes. And at that time all the houses fell in, and most of the temples." [15]

Velikovsky adds, too, a source from the midrashim: "The seventh plague, the plague of barad (meteorites): earthquake, fire, meteorites." He points out that the Egyptians have always

regarded this night, the 13th of the month, and the number 13, as unlucky, a superstition the Jews did not share, and that the Aztecs, across the seas in Mexico, marked the 13th day of the month as "Earthquake day" when the sun began a new age [16], and all work ceased on this day, that was passed in a kind of catatonic fear.

WHY PHARAOH PURSUED THE HEBREWS

Given the chaos and the final consent to the inevitable, it may seem surprising that the Hebrews should be pursued. Yet "when the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed towards the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us." [17] Or, as a Jewish legend has it, "Now that the children of Israel had gone from them, the Egyptians recognized how valuable an element they had been in their country." [18] It was not the whole Jewish people as a working force that they pursued; it could not have been; it would have been unreasonable, impolitic, rash, and inconsequential, given the sad circumstances of the country. The target of the pursuit was Moses, the Levites, and the knowledge, designs, metals, jewels, and equipment with which they were absconding.

Political science is largely a study of non-rational behavior; still, a fear of loss of secret knowledge in the Exodus cannot be deemed non-rational, even if the chase was doomed. A parallel may be drawn. According to Heilbron [19], in the "world's greatest collections" there are some 315 electricians of the period between 1600 and 1790 whose publications are noticed. Calculating with 40 years as the average duration of a scholarly career, the average of published producers per generation for Euro-America, which had an average population of perhaps fifty millions over the whole period, was then 67. In any year, that is, one might expect one or two active electricians per million people. In Egypt and the Near East, before the Exodus catastrophe, there lived perhaps twelve million people. Supposing a higher electrification of the environment and a greater theocratic interest in electricity, the ratio of experts to population was probably greater. The Egyptian government might reasonably view with alarm and suspicion the subversive activities of Moses and his Levite followers, even if there were

only a dozen of them. The Soviet and American governments strenuously sought to seize and employ a small group of German scientists at the end of World War II.

Also, the Egyptian leadership wanted to prevent a junction of the Jews with foreign enemies. The Egyptians would have just learned of the movements of the Hyksos tribesmen towards Egypt. "Putting two and two together " and, as sometimes happens in military intelligence, coming out with five as the answer, the Egyptian high command would have reported to the Pharaoh at this very moment that the Jews were heading for a rendezvous with these forces out of Arabia, and together they would turn upon Egypt. Moses, it would appear obvious, had been in touch with them while in exile [20]. Little did Egyptian intelligence realize that the Jews themselves were soon to enter into desperate battles with elements of the same Hyksos who, in the Bible, are called Amalekites [21].

In the midst of the chaos, the idea finally possessed the top elite of Egypt that they were losing some of the best applied scientific talents of the country all at once, at the moment when they were most critically needed, together with some of the most advanced technical apparatus in Egypt. Whether the Egyptians knew that the lands of their foreign enemies were also stricken is immaterial; they would have behaved in the same way. They must have felt a fearful loss of power, already experienced from the natural and "divine" forces. But now, as politicians often feel when otherwise powerless, "Here is a matter we can do something about."

We shall go deeply into the matter, but might presently declare what lay behind the changed mind of the Egyptians. In Egypt during the Middle Empire, electricity was a central concern of the government. Among many functions ascribed to the pyramids, one stands out as the most plausible: they were electrical guidance and control equipment. The great gods Horus, Thoth, and Amon, the nearest to Israel's Yahweh, were thunderbolting and cosmic fire gods. The word "pyramid" is Greek and "pyr" means "fire" as in "funeral pyre."

Especially later on, the distinction among fires lessened and electrical fire and combustion are given the same word. The Great Pyramid compound at Giza was caled *Khuti* , "the Lights". Egypt was flat and the best way to observe and utilize electricity was by the pyramidal design; the pyramid was a superior artificial mountain from whose peak (a metallic cap), St. Elmo's fire would frequently be discharged skywards. At times, a whole pyramid would light up, miraculously without signs of burning afterwards.

The pyramids had long been the rock and strength of the Pharaohs and Egyptian elite, too. They were of the Old and Middle Kingdoms, of the age of thunderbolting electric gods, and must have been centers of atmospheric science and of electrical phenomena. Religion and science were tied to the pyramids, and the genealogy, traditions, and faith of the royal family and elite.

Even today, thousands of miles and thousands of years away, more people belong to the "pyramid cult" than, say, to the Episcopalian Church. Millions of people believe in pyramid electricity. Associations with roots in secret pyramid knowledge number their members by the millions. Books on pyramids are continually being published. Hundreds of general stores in America have recently carried pyramid devices, which are said to prolong life, to sharpen razor blades, and perform other marvels.

These facts should suffice to stress the obstacles facing someone like Moses who did not deny the religious and scientific phenomena that are observed by means of the pyramids, such as the voice of the gods and the electrical "temperature" of the environment, but who argued that they might also be observed by means of a small electrical device of the type of the Leyden jar, which could even be portable. The great pyramid compared with the tiny electric device was like the early giant computers compared with the miniature computer of today.

So, his argument would go, when the peak of the pyramid lit up, a compactly constructed arc (ark) would also activate, and when

a lower pyramid would light up, the ark would signal faster, and that "eyes" would appear on both) and that when the pyramid edges began to light up from the top edge and run down, the ark would talk "a blue streak" and its surroundings would become dangerous. And in the end, in both cases, fire would leap down and run around the premises [22]. The Ark, then, must be defined in a preliminary way here; very much is made of it later on, as the secrets of Moses' science took concrete form in the Ark of the Covenant, among other things.

The ground ark, unlike the pyramid or mountain altar, makes its own divine fire. It does not depend upon a single point high up to provide the electrical discharge. In a small machine, grounded by one pole and pointed to the sky at the opposing pole, the two being insulated from each other, an opposing charge is accumulated at the poles and, when sufficiently charged, the poles exchange a spark, a light, a divine fire. Unlike the pyramid, or mountain, the Ark can be moved to where its sources of strength are greatest and its effects can be most effective for psychological or other purposes.

The Ark is not weak. Set up properly, and given the electrical conditions of today, a sparking machine, a large Leyden jar, can accumulate and discharge tens of thousands of volts. It was something, both in actuality and potentiality, that would indeed interest the rulers of an empire. We may recall that it was only the awareness that a nuclear chain reaction might be created and fashioned into a bomb that prompted the American President and his closest advisers to launch the huge and top secret Manhattan project.

In this chapter, I will provide only a single indication of the Ark at work, for the weapon is treated heavily later on. This is a passage from a legend of the Jews, and has some of the typical markings of a fairytale:

It was through the Ark that all the miracles on the way through the desert had been wrought. Two sparks issued from the Cherubim that shaded the Ark, and these killed all the serpents and scorpions that crossed the path of the Israelites, and furthermore burned all thorns that threatened to injure the wanderers on their march through the desert.

The smoke rising from these scorched thorns, moreover, rose straight as a column, and shed a fragrance that perfumed all the world, so that nations exclaimed: 'Who is it that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant [23] ?

It may be useful to continue in this fanciful vein. Probably the Egyptian leaders knew about the Leyden jar effect. They seem to have had an interest in studying such phenomena. But they were probably "isolationists," disinclined to making new weapons for foreign adventures and also without inclination to change the established order and rites. There were probably budgetary priorities involved. A new temple or pyramid would have the same effect on defense spending as a large aircraft carrier does now, Moses was perhaps a "hawk" in foreign affairs, coming from an internationalist Near East background, and would have been keen on weapons systems that could be carried abroad.

Thus, if for some time Moses and some fellow-scientists, mostly Hebrew and Thoth religious pragmatists, had been experimenting with ark devices, and urging applications of the devices for military expeditions, domestic propaganda operations, and even "home-made altars" for middle-class funeral parks, the Egyptian conservatives would be deeply concerned and hostile. And they would exile Moses for this kind of trouble-making far quicker than for the accidental homicide of a labor foreman (which is the reason the Bible gives for his being condemned to death by the Pharaoh and forced into exile). And, too, it is typical of human behavior that when Moses had gotten his own electrical system going, he had the same obsessions about its being duplicated in other forms, about its falling into the hands of the enemy, or regarding even its being understood by ordinary people.

THE ORGANIZED MOVE

The instant that Moses heard the voice of Yahweh at the Burning Bush, two deep motives in his ambitious character joined. One was to act upon the knowledge of the tremendous changes about to occur to the world. The other was to tie in his

actions, not with an Egyptian bureaucracy of which he had been heartily sick and disenchanted, but with a restless people with whom he was also connected. This kind of switch is common, witness George Washington.

Furthermore, Moses was in a unique position. He knew the sources of technical support personnel that others did not. These were the Levites. He was a Levi himself. They were assimilated Egyptian Hebrews. "Levites don't work like other Israelites," goes the legend [24]. They knew the Egyptian technology. They had probably flourished in Egypt since the time of Joseph, not a tribe but a skill echelon; skills are housed in families and clans, not in tribes which are more like nations. Many Levites had Egyptian names. The ill-fated Levite, Korah, was reported to have been Treasurer to the Pharaoh. Maccoby calls them a "leader and liaison class." [26]

The idea of a Hebrew sub-proletarian mass is nonsense. How could the descendents of Joseph be mere slaves? (Unless, indeed, they were like the generally competent Greek slaves whom the Roman took.) Recalling the earlier quotation of the Pharaoh's father, how could the Jews as a nation "Join our enemies and fight against us and escape" without their having in the first place a potential social organization? Look only at the preparations for departure. Give the scheme, as detailed in the Bible - including even the elaborate instructions for stripping the awed Egyptians of their jewelry and roasting the last dinner before moving out to a logistical expert, and ask his opinion.

There are several references to the Egyptians who were neighbors. The Hebrews were not in ghettos. Many did not want to leave, and probably many that did leave, and their Egyptian friends, were leaving in fear of being enveloped by the successive disasters.

Israel, the core element, that is to say, was organized down to the last battle ration and, indeed, so says the Bible, moved out girded for battle. Slaves are never permitted weapons. The Hebrews, says a legend, bore swords and "five sorts of arms." [27] Moses knew long before Machiavelli "why unarmed prophets fail." Further, slaves are not permitted genealogies, but

a legend about the first battle of the Jews in the desert, with the Amalekites, the Hyksos, has the enemy luring unsuspecting Jews out of the camp by calling out their family names that they uncovered among the captured Egyptian archives [28].

Compare them with the Huns, the Tartars, the Teutons, the American wagonÄtrains, the SudÄAfrikaaners of the Great Trek Ä and say whether the popular imagination of a throng of fleeing people could be correct. We note, too, that a "mixed multitude" accompanied the Hebrews. Apparently many friends and gentile relatives thought that they would be better off leaving with the resolute and wellÄorganized Hebrews than to remain in Egypt.

It is conceivable, then, that a people moving out under such duress, with such immense natural and human forces pressing in upon them, would have among its leaders men who would seek to seize amidst the confusion the most valuable technological devices that they knew about and could possible use in the journey and battles ahead of them.

Legend has it that Moses was a poor man in the desert. For, many Jews were carrying jewels and metal that were .. given" them by the Egyptians, out of superstitious hope promoted by the Jews themselves, that their departure would end the plagues. But Moses was burdened down with the remains of the great Joseph. it is well, however, that the charismatic leader think not of material dross. Carrying the dust of Joseph was possession of legitimate authority. The Bible uses the same word for the coffin of Joseph as for the Ark. And Joseph's coffin, like the later Ark, may well have carried Mose's most closely guarded secrets.

Indeed as one re-examines the relation between Moses and the people, one gets an impression of a kind of expeditionary contract that is subordinated to the Lord's covenant with Israel, of which Moses is executor. It is glued by a common resolve and a professed religious unity, but nevertheless a kind of agreement which we can imagine to have been worded: We have heard of you, Moses, and you've heard of us. You say that

you can do this for us? We can do this for you. Now let's get going.

The people are continuously recalling Moses to his promises: "Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, 'Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." [29] Some Bible-editors, totally committed to Yahweh and the leaders, berate the people continually for "complaining". Moses in turn is saying: You must follow me because I speak for God. You cannot turn back on God (me, Moses). At the Sea of Reeds, with the Egyptian force fast advancing upon them, they say to Moses in effect, the whole thing was your idea! (And with a Yiddish humor, the first in history: "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?" [30] Evidently, from a kind of well-qualified expedition manager, Moses was quickly transformed by events into a charismatic leader.

OPENING AND CLOSING THE WATERS

"And the waters of the Red Sea divided, and not they alone, but all the water in heaven and on earth, in whatever vessel it was, in cisterns, in wells, in caves, in casks, in pitchers, in drinking cups, and in glasses, and none of these waters returned to their former estate until Israel had passed through the sea on dry land." [31]

The legend makes a point. The earth tilted in its attraction' to the passing comet. The Almagest sky map of the astronomer Ptolemy shows a bit of sky to the south unseen today and fails to show a bit of sky to the north; the map was probably copied from maps drawn before the Exodus [32]. Probably all Egyptian temples shifted several degrees north to catch the sun in a new position on the winter solstice following the Exodus [33].

In Upper Egypt, at 32°34'E/21°46'N, at Ovadi es Sebova (South), excavators discovered three temple foundations; one, the original, rested against the hillside from before Exodus; two were constructed later on. A shift of 5°01' between temple I and the temples II-III is evident. When the temple by Amenhotep III was built, the innermost target of the solstitial sun of winter had

to be shifted to catch the sunrise on the eastern horizon farther north. One may reason that the axis of the Earth shifted, carrying Egypt further North by 5°01' or that a great earthquake moved the hill and its attached temple counterclockwise [34].



Figure 3. Pharaoh's Army Drowned (*Click on the picture to get an enlarged view. Caution: Image files are large.*)

The waters that confronted the Israelites were unexpected. Else the Exodus would not have gone in that direction; they would have known that they would be trapped. But the Red Sea sent a tidal wave north that ran through the belt of lakes between it and the Mediterranean. (Today it is the route of the Suez Canal.) The Israelites watched with distress the oncoming Egyptian army. The light in the sky never faded on that gloomy night before the sea [35].

"Then the Angel of God who went before the host of Israel moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness; and the night passed without one coming near the other all night." The Hebrew version carries "and the night disappeared in light..."[36]

"God caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind, the wind He always makes use of when he chastises the nations," as in the Deluge, the Destruction of the Tower of Babel, of Samaria,

of Jerusalem, of Tyre [37]. Battles of Egyptian and Israelite Angels waged in the skies. The Egyptian soldiers were met by strong winds, fiery darts, lightning flashes, thunder, hailstones and coals of fire [38]. The chariot wheels and the hooves of the horses were burned by divine fire and got stuck in a boiling mud [39]. (America's worst earthquake was around New Madrid in Missouri, in 1811, and an observer tells of his horses suddenly sinking up to their bellies in new black mud.)[40] It would appear that, even while all the aspects of the plague of the first-born repeated themselves, a tidal motion was added because here waters were involved. The accompanying Figure 4 displays several possible movements of the waters and of the two masses of human beings.

The plan of march of the Israelites was southeastward through a known gap in the shallow lakes that stretched between the Mediterranean and Red Seas. When they arrived at the jump-off point at Pi-ha-khiroth, they were met by a wall of water. It was the tidal wave moving north from the Red Sea, following the comet and the tilt of the earth.

They waited out the night in sight of the pursuing Egyptian force. The earth's tilt paused. The tilted waters continued to rise [41] and rush north. But gaps opened. The Israelites passed through, Moses and his Levite troops in the vanguard. The Egyptians perceived the gaps, too, and headed somewhat south of the Israelite passageway, intending to gain time.

Then the tidal flood drops from its heights and reverses to the south. It catches some of the Israelites and the main body of the Egyptians and their leaders, including the Pharaoh. Even before the flood engulfs them, the Egyptian forces are deep in mire - perhaps in the old bed of a lake, perhaps in a new earthquake fissure eruption. The Israelites who remain alive continue southeastwards (Figure 5) leaving Egypt behind. They learn then something of what would have happened if they had taken the northern route to Canaan by the Great Sea.

The peoples have heard, they tremble:
Pangs have seized upon the inhabitants of Philistia.
Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed;
The leaders of Moab, trembling seize them;

all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.
 Terror and dreadfall upon them;
 because of the greatness of Thy arm,
 they are as still as a stone.
 Till Thy people, o Lord, pass by,
 Till the people pass by whom Thou hast purchased.[42]

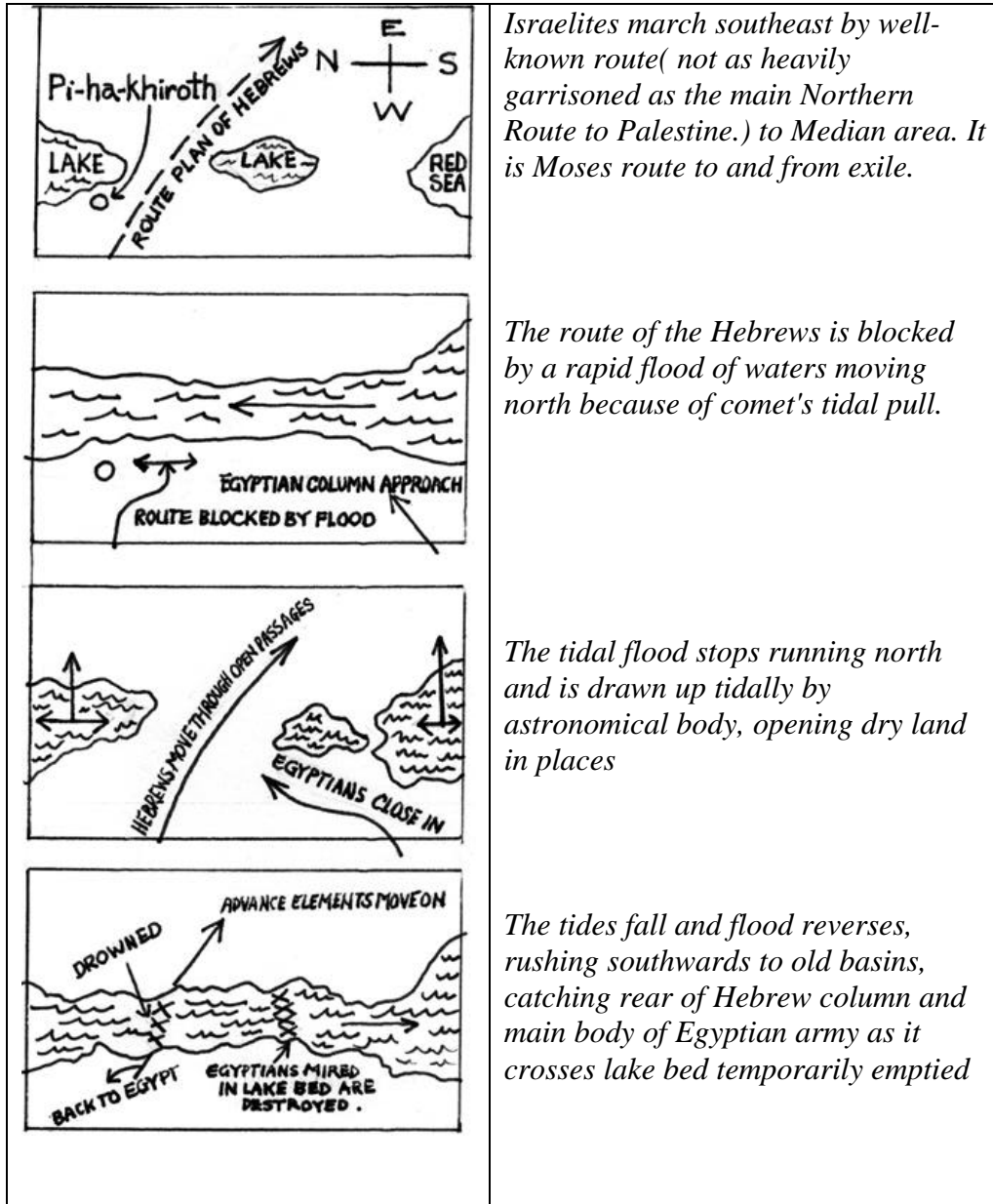


Fig 4. The Tidewaters Passage

(Present-day maps of these waters may not be helpful, although a careful hydrological study might reveal ancient basins and flood channels.)



Figure 5. The route of Exodus and wandering (Click on the picture to get an enlarged view. *Caution: Image files are large.*)

I have chosen Mt. Horeb at the Eastern end of the Gulf of Aqaba as the "Holy Mountain" of Moses, instead of Mt. Sinai, following Winnett's arguments. (The Mosaic Tradition, p. 86 et passim.) This would be the Midianite (and Kenite) territory, where Moses passed his exile. Gressmann (Mose, 414) agrees and sees the Exodus moving along the Egyptian "Highway of Reeds," which continues, after Horeb, down to Arabia. Bimson places the capital of the XIII Dynasty at Itj-towy, near the Delta ("Israel in Egypt," p. 15, citing Hayes 12 JNES, 1953, 33-8)

UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

It is doubtful that even Moses, when he first conceived of returning to Egypt and exploiting his connections, knowledge, and daring - an event that can be fixed from his sight of the Burning Bush from which Yahweh addressed him - had any idea of how bad conditions would really become. And if, at the beginning, in the typical psychology of the great but frustrated man, thinking in the lonely wilds of his life's purpose, he began to hear from a superhuman being, and only half-believed in what he had heard, but was nevertheless seized by the idea of uniting his return to Egyptian affairs with the need of the

Hebrews for a spokesman, then by the middle of the series of disastrous events, he could well be fully convinced that Yahweh was personally guiding all, and that even Egypt's best scientist-politician could do little without a god.

Although the Jews were compelled by coastal tidal waves and hostile terrified nations to head southwards on the Sinai peninsula, they may also have chosen that direction upon the instigation of Moses. Moses may have believed that "the Promised Land" was where he had already been. For, after all, if the Jews had come from Palestine, and were to return there, it would be a returning home to the old condition, not a discovery of the Promised Land. Biblical scholar Auerbach believes that the goal of Exodus was to settle down at the oasis of Kadesh where Moses saw the Burning Bush.

Although Moses had in mind Kadesh or Midian as the terminus of the Exodus, it is possible, even probable, that he thought of this location as an organization and staging area for the ultimate descent upon Canaan. His great ambitiousness and the dreams and wishful thinking of his officers would point to Canaan; also, he would have foreseen the need to consolidate his forces, to integrate their diverse elements, to train and discipline the people, and to gather resources for the second phase of the movement.

Moses could hardly have imagined the horrible immensity of the natural catastrophe. A legend recites that the plague of hail in Egypt had brought great famine to Jethro's Midianites [43]. Upon arriving in his "promised land" there was little left there but parched earth, dry water holes, flaming mountains, and, Thank God, Yahweh. By now Moses and the leaders must have known that they could go nowhere until they were in better shape all-around and the natural forces had become subdued.

The Bible says, as things get better and then bad again, "Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and their cruel bondage." [44] The words read like a modern sociology textbook: their "slave psychology" couldn't stand up to the idealistic behavior that they had promised. But no one could

have foreseen the catastrophe visited upon gentile and Jew alike. Even princes despaired.

So Moses promised too much, and the people of Israel expected too much. And they paid for promises unperformed and conditions unforeseen. The Bible says that some 2.5 millions plus a great number of outsiders, "a mixed multitude," set out from Egypt. The general view is that this was a greatly exaggerated figure for "how could the desert into which they were moving support such a mass of people?"

The desert did not, unfortunately, support them. Jewish tradition, more believable, says that the vast majority of the people perished in the passage out of Egypt. If the Biblical figure is used, perhaps only one out of a hundred survived. The waters that closed upon the princes of Egypt and their only "strike-force in readiness" washed over most of the pursued as well. A great number may have turned back immediately. Nor did the desert support even the remainder, though well-organized and led.

By that time, Moses must have been as fanatically possessed as any man could be, insane with the problems of a people clinging only to hope and staring wild-eyed and worshipfully at alternative hopes. Whatever he did had to be quite mad. But what he did was rational unto the occasion. He insisted upon his obsessions. He exercised his talents, and those of the Levites and Aaron, and all the capabilities of his instruments.

He worked Yahweh, "the Lord," furiously, wrenching from this Great Father Figure concession after concession, arrangement after arrangement, law upon law, giving up in the end only his right to cross the Jordan River into the Promised Land. And it is said by some, such as Sigmund Freud, that he did not give up this right. Rather, he was put to death in a final revolt against his rule, possibly on the grounds that he, Moses, was impossibly intolerant and unfit for a new society - a leader of a long march that had now to end.

And, with the understanding of Moses' behavior, the parts of the Exodus pursuit come together. In the dire national

emergency, the Pharaoh and his national security council had to do what any modern high command would have done: turn their backs on a country in turmoil and disaster in order to regain control of the men and apparatus, which were needed to control nature (the gods), and to prevent them from being used by foreign enemies.

What followed spelled the ruination of Egypt for centuries. "In the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down upon the host of the Egyptians, and discomfited them so they turned to flee." But then Yahweh gave the word to Moses to wave his hand, and the sea closed down [45].

Not only were the weaponry and Hebrews now beyond recapture, but the only organized striking force of Egypt perished, with its Commander-in-Chief, in the whirlpools of immense crosstides near Pi-ha-khiroth just as the forward elements of the Jewish column passed beyond the waters. Then it was, as Egypt lay helpless and in ruins, that the furious and equally distressed "King-Shepherds" Hyksos of Arabia, the Biblical Amalekites, fleeing from their own ruined lands, swept into Egypt and subjected the country to their rule. The XIIth Dynasty that had endured over centuries and that had extended Egyptian sovereignty as far north as Byblos (Syria) was ended in this year of Exodus [46]. For hundreds of years to come, the Bible speaks only rarely of Egypt and then merely of the popular nostalgia for the great land. The silence is awesome: we see it in the catastrophe and the Hyksos take-over. And also the actuality of the disaster of the pursuing army. Else we should have had repeated expeditions to recapture these slaves. The American army was quick to pursue the Sioux Indians after the massacre of General Custer and his Seventh Cavalry regiment. The Hebrews, whether they were few or many, would have been marked for implacable pursuit - immediately, soon, or eventually, repeatedly, too, if the Empire of Egypt were not prostrated. For centuries the peoples of Sinai, Transjordan, and Canaan were left free of Egypt and Babylon to fight among themselves.

Perhaps the most aggressive of the peoples was the new nation, the heterogeneous federation of Israelites, forged by the steel-willed Moses in the name of the electric god of war, Yahweh.

In the miraculous turbulent atmosphere of the wilderness, Moses established the illumination and voice of Yahweh upon the Ark. Speaking then for Yahweh, he organized the people, taught it a new law and discipline, and injected it with an inextinguishable monotheism, proofed by fire against enemies within and without. Israel scourged the borderlands before finally descending upon Canaan. Moses, the archetype of the mad scientist and religious prophet, beat down successive rebellions that, if successful, would have dissolved the new identity of Israel into the larger surrounding culture. Then, the terribly oppressive and vindictive old man mysteriously died.

Notes (Chapter 2: The Scenario of Exodus)

1. Buber, 67.
2. *The Philosophy of Magic*, quote by Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled* (1887), I 528.
3. *Ex.* 1:9-10.
4. Brevard S. Childs, *Exodus*, London: SCM Press, 1974, pp. 142-3.
5. *Ibid.* p. 149.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 170ff.
7. Buber, p. 64.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
10. III G 12.
11. II G 365.
12. II G 366.
13. Velikovsky, *W. in C.*, 59.
14. *Cf.* II G345 where Yahweh does this slaying.
15. Velikovsky, *W. in C.*, 4, from Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospels* (transl. 1903), IX, ch. 27.
16. *Ibid.*, 66.
17. *Ex.* 14:5.
18. III G 11.

19. J.L. Heilbron, *Electricity in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1979), 98.
20. That is, Moses had dwelt on the borderlands of Arabia, whence came the Hyksos.
21. Velikovsky, *A. in C.*, 57ff.
22. It is noteworthy that Worth Smith a century ago was able to charge a Leyden Jar with extraordinary success by carrying it to the top of the Great Pyramid. (See Peter Tompkins, *Secrets of the Great Pyramid*, New York: Harper and Row, 1971.)
23. III G157. See below III, 3a.
24. II G 248.
25. III G 286.
26. Hyam Maccoby, "Freud and Moses," *Midstream* (February, 1980), 9-15
27. III G 15.
28. III G 56-7. An alternative explanation is that the Amalekites extracted this information from captured Jews.
29. *Ex.* 14:12.
30. *Ex.* 14:11.
31. III G 20.
32. See p. 225 in 2 *Ency. Brit.* (1973), "Astronomical Maps."
33. Tompkins, pp. 159ff, for instance, incorrectly explained, I think, as following changes in positions of fixed stars, an old theory of Lockyer. *cf.* K. Mohlenbrink, *Der Tempel Salomos*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1932, 79-85.

34. My source is an unpublished study by René Roussel, Albon, France.
35. III G 21; *Ex.* 14:20.
36. *Oxford Annotated Bible*, 85, note p.
37. III G 20.
38. III G 26-8.
39. III G27. *Re pre-Hyksos Chariots cf.* J. Bimson, "Israel in Egypt," IV *SISR* 2 (1979), 17-8.
40. E.M. Shepard, 13 *J. Geology* (Feb. 1905), 45, in Corliss, comp. *Strange Phenomena*, G2-GQE-026, 147.
41. Granted the passing body, there would be no question that the tides would be elevated as well as moved horizontally (See Velikovsky, *W. in C.* p. 86). Priestley in his famous *History and Present State of Electricity with Original Experiments* (2v. London, 1767) describes (73) Grey's simple experiment with a bowl of water. He passed an electrically charged object over the bowl, which drew up the water into a "hill;" at the point of nearest encounter, a spark was exchanged, and the "hill" collapsed, sending out waves.
42. *Ex.* 15:14-16.
43. III G 73-74.
44. *Ex.* 6:9.
45. *Ex.* 14:24-5 The Douay translation indicates the head of the comet is Yahweh: "The Lord cast through the columns of the fiery cloud upon the Egyptian force a glance that threw it into panic."
46. Bimson. "Israel in Egypt," IV *SISR*, no 1, (Aug. 1979), 15.

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