

are traceable to informers. A certain Hirschel Meyer, through his denunciations, caused his coreligionists much trouble previous to their expulsion from Vienna in 1670.

The practise of giving malicious information lasted longest in Poland, where moserim, with the approval of the government, were punished by having the tongue or ears cut off. In Posen a Jewish informer is said to have been sentenced to death, in accordance with the verdict of a Jewish court, so late as the last decades of the eighteenth century (Perles, "Gesch. der Juden in Posen," in "Monatsschrift," xiv. 166). The informer who escaped punishment was excommunicated; and he then sought refuge in baptism. The number of those who, after baptism, appeared as accusers of their former coreligionists, and who, like Nicolaus Donin, Joshua al-Lorki, and Pfefferkorn, brought unspeakable suffering upon them, is very large.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Kaufmann, *Zur Gesch. des Delatorenwesens* (first published in *J. Q. R.* viii.), in *Allg. Zeit. des Jud.* lxi. 403, 414; Kayserling, *Das Castilianische Gemeindestatut, in Jahrbuch für die Geschichte der Juden*, iv. 272; Hamburger, *R. B. T.* iii., Supplement, p. 5.

J.

M. K.

**MOSER, MOSES:** German merchant known as a friend of Heine; born 1796; died at Berlin Aug. 15, 1838. He was educated for a business career, and was for a time an assistant of the banker Moses Friedländer in Berlin. Afterward he became the confidential cashier of Moritz Robert there. Moser had considerable mathematical talent; and he also studied philology. With Gans and Zunz he helped to found the Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft des Judenthums. He thus became friendly with Heine, who had a high opinion of his ability and character, and called him "a living appendix to Nathan der Weise." Many of Heine's most intimate letters were addressed to Moser, who was his closest friend up to the year 1830.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** G. Karpeles, *Heinrich Heine, Aus Seinem Leben und Seiner Zeit*, pp. 66 *et seq.*

S.

J.

**MOSSES.—Biblical Data:** The birth of Moses occurred at a time when Pharaoh had commanded that all male children born to Hebrew captives should be thrown into the Nile (Ex. ii.; comp. i.). Jochebed, the wife of the Levite Amram, bore a son, and kept the child concealed for three months. When she could keep him hidden no longer, rather than deliver him to death she set him adrift on the Nile in an ark of bulrushes. The daughter of Pharaoh, coming opportunely to the river to bathe, discovered the babe, was attracted to him, adopted him as her son, and named him "Moses." Thus it came about that the future deliverer of Israel was reared as the son of an Egyptian princess (Ex. ii. 1-10).

When Moses was grown to manhood, he went one day to see how it fared with his brethren, bondmen to the Egyptians. Seeing an Egyptian maltreating a Hebrew, he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand, supposing that no one who would be disposed to reveal the matter knew of it. The next day, seeing two Hebrews quarreling, he endeavored to separate them, whereupon the Hebrew

who was wronging his brother taunted Moses with slaying the Egyptian. Moses soon discovered from a higher source that the affair was known, and that Pharaoh was likely to put him to death for it; he therefore made his escape to the Sinaitic Peninsula and settled with Hobab, or Jethro, priest of Midian, whose daughter Zipporah he in due time married. There he sojourned forty years, following the occupation of a shepherd, during which time his son Gershom was born (Ex. ii. 11-22).

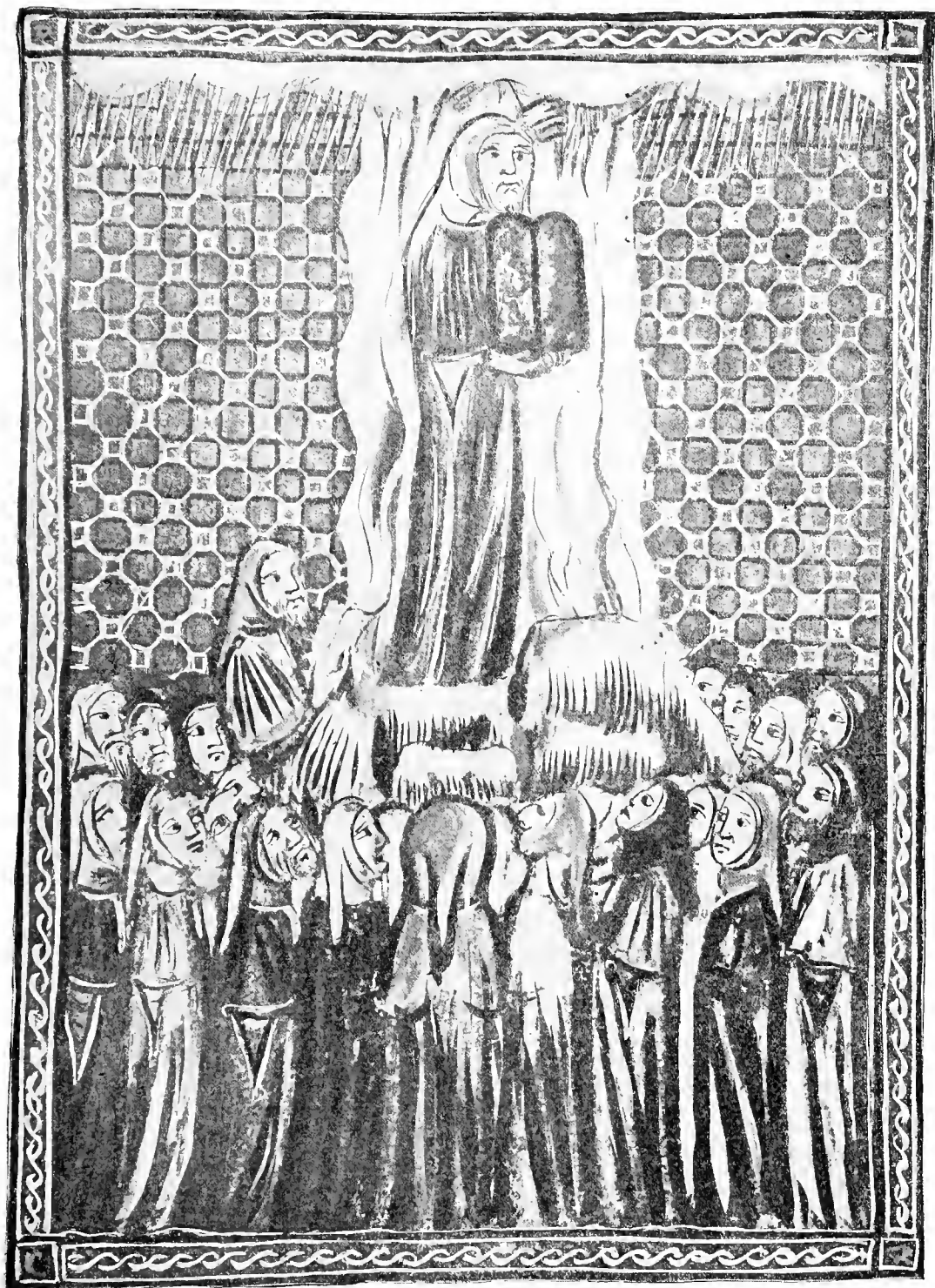
One day, as Moses led his flock to Mount Horeb, he saw a bush burning but without being consumed. When he turned aside to look more closely at the marvel, YHWH spoke to him from the bush and commissioned him to return to Egypt and deliver his brethren from their bondage (Ex. iii. 1-10). According to Ex. iii. 13 *et seq.*, it was at this time that the name of YHWH was revealed, though it is frequently used throughout the patriarchal narratives, from the second chapter of Genesis on. Armed with this new name and with certain signs which he could give in attestation of his mission, he returned to Egypt (Ex. iv. 1-9, 20). On the way he was met by YHWH, who would have killed him; but Zipporah, Moses' wife, circumcised her son and YHWH's anger abated (Ex. iv. 24-26). Moses was met and assisted on his arrival in Egypt by his elder brother, Aaron, and readily gained a hearing with his oppressed brethren (Ex. iv. 27-31). It was a more difficult matter, however, to persuade Pharaoh to let the Hebrews depart. Indeed, this was not accomplished until, through the agency of Moses, ten plagues had come upon the Egyptians (Ex. vii.-xii.). These plagues culminated in the slaying of the Egyptian first-born (Ex. xii. 29), whereupon such terror seized the Egyptians that they urged the Hebrews to leave.

The children of Israel, with their flocks and herds, started toward the eastern border at the southern part of the Isthmus of Suez. The long procession moved slowly, and found it necessary to encamp three times before passing the Egyptian frontier at the Bitter Lakes. Meanwhile Pharaoh had repented and was in pursuit of them with a large army (Ex. xiv. 5-9). Shut in between this army and the Red Sea, or the Bitter Lakes, which were then connected with it, the Israelites despaired, but YHWH divided the waters of the sea so that they passed safely across; when the Egyptians attempted to follow, He permitted the waters to return upon them and drown them (Ex.

**In the  
Wilder-  
ness.**

xiv. 10-31). Moses led the Hebrews to Sinai, or Horeb, where Jethro celebrated their coming by a great sacrifice in the presence of Moses, Aaron, and the elders of Israel (Ex. xviii.). At Horeb, or Sinai, YHWH welcomed Moses upon the sacred mountain and talked with him face to face (Ex. xix.). He gave him the Ten Commandments and the Law and entered into a covenant with Israel through him. This covenant bound YHWH to be Israel's God, if Israel would keep His commandments (Ex. xix. *et seq.*).

Moses and the Israelites sojourned at Sinai about a year (comp. Num. x. 11), and Moses had frequent communications from YHWH. As a result of these



MOSES ON MOUNT SINAI.  
(From the Sarajevo Haggadah of the fourteenth century.)

the Tabernacle, according to the last chapters of Exodus, was constructed, the priestly law ordained, the plan of encampment arranged both for the Levites and the non-priestly tribes (comp. Num. i. 50-ii. 34), and the Tabernacle consecrated. While at Sinai Joshua had become general of the armies of Israel and the special minister, or assistant, of Moses (Ex. xvii. 9). From Sinai Moses led the people to Kadesh, whence the spies were sent to Canaan. Upon the return of the spies the people were so discouraged by their report that they refused to go forward, and were condemned to remain in the wilderness until that generation had passed away (Num. xiii.-xiv.).

After the lapse of thirty-eight years Moses led the people eastward. Having gained friendly permission to do so, they passed through the territory of Esau (where Aaron died, on Mount Hor; Num. xx.

human instrument in the creation of the Israelitish nation; he communicated to it all its laws. More meek than any other man (Num. xii. 3), he enjoyed unique privileges, for "there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deut. xxxiv. 10).

J.

G. A. B.

—**In Rabbinical Literature:** Of all Biblical personages Moses has been chosen most frequently as the subject of later legends; and his life has been recounted in full detail in the poetic haggadah. As liberator, lawgiver, and leader of a people which was transformed by him from an unorganized horde into a nation, he occupies a more important place in popular legend than the Patriarchs and all the other national heroes. His many-sided activity also offered more abundant scope for imaginative embellishment. A cycle of legends has been woven around



TRADITIONAL TOMB OF MOSES: SCENE DURING A PILGRIMAGE.  
(From a photograph by the American Colony, Jerusalem.)

22-29), and then, by a similar arrangement, through the land of Moab. But Sihon, king of the Amorites, whose capital was at Heshbon, refused permission, and was conquered by Moses, who allotted his territory to the tribes of Reuben and Gad. Og, King of Bashan, was similarly overthrown (comp. Num. xxi.), and his territory assigned to the half-tribe of Manasseh.

After all this was accomplished Moses was warned that he would not be permitted to lead Israel across the Jordan, but would die on the eastern side (Num. xx. 12). He therefore assembled the tribes and delivered to them a parting address, which forms the Book of Deuteronomy. In this address it is commonly supposed that he recapitulated the Law, reminding them of its most important

**Death of Moses.** features. When this was finished, and he had pronounced a blessing upon the people, he went up Mount Nebo

to the top of Pisgah, looked over the country spread out before him, and died, at the age of one hundred and twenty. יְהוָה Himself buried him in an unknown grave (Deut. xxxiv.). Moses was thus the

nearly every trait of his character and every event of his life; and groups of the most different and often contradictory stories have been connected with his career. It would be interesting to investigate the origin of the different cycles, and the relation of the several cycles to one another and to the original source, if there was one. The present article attempts to give, without claiming completeness, a picture of the character of Moses according to Jewish legend and a narrative of the most important incidents of his life.

(The following special abbreviations of book-titles are used: "D. Y." = "Dibre ha-Yamim le-Mosheh Rabbenu," in Jellinek, "B. H." ii.; "S. Y." = "Sefer ha-Yashar"; "M. W." = "Midrash Wayosha'," in Jellinek, *l.c.*)

Moses' influence and activity reach back to the days of the Creation. Heaven and earth were created only for his sake (Lev. R. xxxvi. 4). The account of the creation of the water on the second day (Gen. i. 6-8), therefore, does not close with the usual formula, "And God saw that it was good," because God foresaw that Moses would suffer

through water (Gen. R. iv. 8). Although Noah was not worthy to be saved from the Flood, yet he was saved because Moses was destined to

**The Beginnings.** descend from him (*ib.* xxvi. 15). The angels which Jacob in his nocturnal vision saw ascending to and descending from heaven (Gen. vii. 12) were really Moses and Aaron (Gen. R. lxviii. 16). The birth of Moses as the liberator of the people of Israel was foretold to Pharaoh by his soothsayers, in consequence of which he issued the cruel command to cast all the male children into the river (Ex. i. 22). Later on Miriam also foretold to her father, Amram, that a son would be born to him who would liberate Israel from the yoke of Egypt (Soṭah 11b, 12a; Meg. 14a; Ex. R. i. 24; "S. Y.," Shemot, pp. 111a, 112b; comp. Josephus, "Ant." ii. 9, § 3). Moses was born on Adar 7 (Meg. 13b) in the year 2877 after the creation of the world (Book of Jubilees, xlvii. 1). He was born circumcised (Soṭah 12a), and was able to walk immediately after his birth (Yalk., Wayelek, 940); but according to another story he was circumcised on the eighth day after birth (Pirke R. El. xlviii.). A peculiar and glorious light filled the entire house at his birth (*ib.*; "S. Y." p. 112b), indicating that he was worthy of the gift of prophecy (Soṭah *l.c.*). He spoke with his father and mother on the day of his birth, and prophesied at the age of three (Midr. Peṭirat Mosheh, in Jellinek, "B. H." i. 128). His mother kept his birth secret for three months, when Pharaoh was informed that she had borne a son. The mother put the child into a casket, which she hid among the reeds of the sea before the king's officers came to her (Jubilees, *l.c.* 47; "D. Y." in Jellinek, "B. H." ii. 3; "S. Y." p. 112b). For seven days his mother went to him at night to nurse him, his sister Miriam protecting him from the birds by day (Jubilees, *l.c.* 4). Then God sent a fierce heat upon Egypt ("D. Y." *l.c.*), and Pha-

**Pharaoh's Daughter.** rael's daughter Bithiah (comp. I. Chron. iv. 18; Tarnut [Thermutis], according to Josephus, *l.c.* and Jubilees, *l.c.*), who was afflicted with leprosy, went to bathe in the river. Hearing a child cry, she beheld a casket in the reeds. She caused it to be brought to her, and on touching it was cured of her leprosy (Ex. R. i. 27). For this reason she was kindly disposed toward the child. When she opened the casket she was astonished at his beauty (Philo, "Vita Mosis," ii.), and saw the Shekinah with him (Ex. R. i. 28). Noticing that the child was circumcised, she knew that the parents must have been Hebrews (Soṭah 12b). Gabriel struck Moses, so as to make him cry and arouse the pity of the princess (Ex. R. i. 28). She wished to save the child; but as her maids told her she must not transgress her father's commands, she set him down again (Midr. Abkir, in Yalk., Ex. 166). Then Gabriel threw all her maids down (Soṭah 12b; Ex. R. i. 27); and God filled Bithiah with compassion (Yalk., *l.c.*), and caused the child to find favor in her eyes ("M. W." in Jellinek, *l.c.* i. 41). Thereupon she took the child up, saved him, and loved him much (Ex. R. *l.c.*). This was on the sixth day of the month of Siwan (Soṭah 12b); according to another version, on Nisan 21 (*ib.*). When the sooth-

sayers told Pharaoh that the redeemer of Israel had been born and thrown into the water, the cruel edict ordering that the children be thrown into the river was repealed (Ex. R. i. 29; Soṭah *l.c.*). Thus the casting away of Moses saved Israel from further persecution. According to another version (Gen. R. xcvi. 5), 600,000 children had already been thrown into the river, but all were saved because of Moses.

Bithiah, Pharaoh's daughter, took up the child to nurse him; but he refused the breast ("M. W." *l.c.*). Then she gave him to other Egyptian women to nurse, but he refused to take nourishment from any

of them (Josephus, *l.c.* ii. 9, § 5; "S. Y." p. 112b; Soṭah 12b; "D. Y." p. 112b; Meg. 13a). These names were: Jared, Abi Gedor, Heber, Abi Soko, Jekuthiel, Abi Zanoah, and Shemaiah ("Shama' Yah" = "God has heard"), the last one being given to him by Israel. He was also called "Heman" (*l.c.*, חֶמָן; Num. xii. 7) B. B. 15a).

Moses was a very large child at the age of three (Ex. R. i. 32; comp. Josephus, *l.c.*; Philo, *l.c.*); and it was at this time that, sitting at the king's table in the presence of several princes and counselors, he took the crown from Pharaoh's head and placed it on his own ("D. Y." *l.c.*; for another version see "M. W." *l.c.*). The princes were horrified at the boy's act; and the soothsayer said that this was the same boy who, in accordance with their former predictions, would destroy the kingdom of Pharaoh and liberate Israel (Josephus, *l.c.*; "M. W." *l.c.*). Balaam and Jethro were at that time also among the king's counselors (Soṭah 11a; Sanh. 106). Balaam advised the king to kill the boy at once; but Jethro (according to "D. Y." *l.c.*, it was Gabriel in the guise of one of the king's coun-

**Removes** selsors) said that the boy should first be examined, to see whether he had sense enough to have done such an act intentionally. All agreed with this

**Pharaoh's** advice. A shining piece of gold, or a precious stone, together with a live coal, was placed on a plate before the boy, to see which of the two he would choose. The angel Gabriel then guided his hand to the coal, which he took up and put into his mouth. This burned his tongue, causing him to stutter (comp. Ex. iv. 10); but it saved his life ("M. W." *l.c.*; "D. Y." *l.c.*; "S. Y." *l.c.*; Ex. R. i. 31).

**Crown.** Moses remained in Pharaoh's house fifteen years longer ("D. Y." *l.c.*; "M. W." *l.c.*). According to the Book of Jubilees (*l.c.*), he learned the writing of the Assyrians (the "Ketab Ashurit"; the square script?) from his father, Amram. During his sojourn in the king's palace he often went to his brethren, the slaves of Pharaoh, sharing their sad lot. He

helped any one who bore a too heavy burden or was too weak for his work. He reminded Pharaoh that a slave was entitled to some rest, and begged him to grant the Israelites one free day in the week. Pharaoh acceded to this request, and Moses accordingly instituted the seventh day, the Sabbath, as a day of rest for the Israelites (Ex. R. i. 32; "S. Y." p. 115a).

Moses did not commit murder in killing the Egyptian (Ex. ii. 12); for the latter merited death because he had forced an Israelitish woman to commit adultery with him (Ex. R. i. 33). Moses was at that time eighteen years of age ("D. Y." *l.c.*; "M. W." *l.c.*; "S. Y." *l.c.*). According to another version, Moses was then twenty, or possibly forty, years of age (Ex. R. i. 32, 35). These divergent opinions regarding his age at the time when he killed the Egyptian are based upon different estimates of the length of his stay in the royal palace (Yalk., Shemot, 167; Gen.

R. xi.), both of them assuming that he

**Flees from Egypt.** fled from Egypt immediately after the slaying (Ex. ii. 15). Dathan and Abi-

ram were bitter enemies of Moses, insulting him and saying he should not act as if he were a member of the royal house, since he was the son not of Batya, but of Jochebed. Previous to this they had slandered him before Pharaoh. Pharaoh had forgiven Moses everything else, but would not forgive him for killing the Egyptian. He delivered him to the executioner, who chose a very sharp sword with which to kill Moses; but the latter's neck became like a marble pillar, dulling the edge of the sword ("M. W." *l.c.*). Meanwhile the angel Michael descended from heaven, and took the form of the executioner, giving the latter the shape of Moses and so killing him. He then took up Moses and carried him beyond the frontier of Egypt for a distance of three, or, according to another account, of forty, days ("D. Y." *l.c.*; "S. Y." p. 115b). According to another legend, the angel took the shape of Moses, and allowed himself to be caught, thus giving the real Moses an opportunity to escape (Mek., Yitro, 1 [ed. Weiss, 66a]; Ex. R. i. 36).

The fugitive Moses went to the camp of King Nikanos, or Kikanos, of Ethiopia, who was at that time besieging his own capital, which had been traitorously seized by Balaam and his sons and made impregnable by them through magic. Moses joined the army of Nikanos, and the king and all his generals took a fancy to him, because he was courageous as a lion and his face gleamed like the sun ("S. Y." p. 116a; comp. B. B. 75a). When Moses had spent nine years with the army King Nikanos died, and the Hebrew was made general. He took the city, driving out Balaam and his sons Jannes and Jambres, and was proclaimed king by the Ethiopians. He was obliged, in deference to the wishes of the people, to marry Nikanos' widow, Adoniya (comp. Num. xii.), with whom he did not, however, cohabit ("D. Y." *l.c.*; "S. Y." p. 116b). Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses on account of the Cushite (Ethiopian) woman whom he had married. He was twenty-seven years of age when he became king; and he ruled over Ethiopia for forty years, during which he considerably increased the power of the country. After forty years his wife, Queen Adoniya, accused him before the princes and gen-

crals of not having cohabited with her during the many years of their marriage, and of never having worshiped the Ethiopian gods. She

**King in Ethiopia.** called upon the princes not to suffer a stranger among them as king, but to make her son by Nikanos, Munahas or Munakaros, king. The princes complied with her wishes, but dismissed Moses in peace, giving him great treasures. Moses, who was at this time sixty-seven years old, went from Ethiopia to Midian (*ib.*).

According to Josephus' account of this story (see **MOSES IN HELLENISTIC LITERATURE**), after Moses' marriage to the daughter of the Ethiopian king, he did not become King of Ethiopia, but led his troops back to Egypt, where he remained. The Egyptians and even Pharaoh himself were envious of his glorious deeds, fearing also that he might use his power to gain dominion over Egypt. They therefore sought how they might assassinate him; and Moses, learning of the plot, fled to Midian. This narrative of Josephus' agrees with two haggadic accounts, according to which Moses fled from Egypt direct to Midian, not staying in Ethiopia at all. These accounts are as follows: (1) Moses lived for twenty years in Pharaoh's house; he then went to Midian, where he remained for sixty years, when, as a man of eighty, he undertook the mission of liberating Israel (Yalk., Shemot, 167). (2) Moses lived for forty years in Pharaoh's house; thence he went to Midian, where he stayed for forty years until his mission was entrusted to him (Gen. R. xi.; comp. Sifre, Deut. xxxiv. 7).

On his arrival at Midian Moses told his whole story to Jethro, who recognized him as the man destined to destroy the Egyptians. He therefore took Moses prisoner in order to deliver him to Pharaoh ("D. Y." *l.c.*). According to another legend, Jethro took him for an Ethiopian fugitive, and intended to deliver him to the Ethiopians ("S. Y." *l.c.*). He kept him prisoner for seven ("D. Y." *l.c.*) or ten ("S. Y." *l.c.*) years. Both of these legends are based on another legend according to which Moses was seventy-seven years of age when Jethro liberated him. According to the legend ("D. Y." *l.c.*)

**Relations with Jethro.** which says that he went to Nikanos' camp at the age of thirty, and ruled over Ethiopia for forty years, he was only seven years in Jethro's hands ( $30 + 40 + 7 = 77$ ). According to the other legend ("S. Y." *l.c.*) he was eighteen years old when he fled from Egypt; he remained for nine years in the camp of Nikanos; and was king over Ethiopia for forty years. Hence he must have been Jethro's captive for ten years, or till his seventy-seventh year.

Moses was imprisoned in a deep dungeon in Jethro's house, and received as food only small portions of bread and water. He would have died of hunger had not Zipporah, to whom Moses had before his captivity made an offer of marriage by the well, devised a plan by which she no longer went out to pasture the sheep, but remained at home to attend to the household, being thereby enabled to supply Moses with food without her father's knowledge. After ten (or seven) years Zipporah reminded her father that he had at one time cast a man into the dungeon, who must have died long ago; but if

he were still living he must be a just man whom God had kept alive by a miracle. Jethro went to the dungeon and called Moses, who answered immediately. As Jethro found Moses praying, he really believed that he had been saved by a miracle, and liberated him. Jethro had planted in his garden a marvelous rod, which had been created on the sixth day of the Creation, on Friday afternoon, and had been given to Adam. This curious rod had been handed down through Enoch, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to Joseph, at whose death it came into the possession of Pharaoh's court. Jethro, who saw it there, stole it and planted it in his garden. On the rod were engraved the name of God (יהוה) and the initials of the ten plagues destined for Egypt. Jethro asked every one who wished to marry one of his daughters to pull up the rod; but no suitor had yet succeeded in doing so. Moses, on being set at liberty, walked in the garden, saw the rod, and read the inscription. He easily pulled it out of the ground and used it for a staff (see **AARON'S ROD**). Jethro thereby recognized Moses as the deliverer of Israel, and gave him the virtuous Zipporah as wife, together with much money ("S. Y.," "D. Y.," and "M. W." *l.c.*). Jethro stipulated that the first-born son of the marriage should adopt Jethro's pagan belief, while all the other children might be reared as Jews; and Moses

**The Circumcision of Gershom.** agreed thereto (Mek., Yitro, 1 [ed. Weiss, p. 65b]). According to "M. W." *l.c.*, one-half of the children of this marriage were to belong to Judaism and one-half to paganism. When therefore his son Gershom—who subsequently became the father of Jonathan—was born, Moses, under his agreement with Jethro, could not circumcise him ("S. Y." *l.c.*). Moses, therefore, went with his wife and child (another version says that both of his sons were then already born) to Egypt. On the way he met Satan, or Mastema, as he is called in the Book of Jubilees (xlviii. 2), in the guise of a serpent, which proceeded to swallow Moses, and had ingested the upper part of his body, when he stopped. Zipporah seeing this, concluded that the serpent's action was due to the fact that her son had not been circumcised (Ned. 31b-32a; Ex. R. v.), whereupon she circumcised him and smeared some of the blood on Moses' feet. A voice ("bat kol") was then heard commanding the serpent to disgorge the half-swallowed Moses, which it immediately did. When Moses came into Egypt he met his old enemies Dathan and Abiram, and when they asked him what he was seeking in Egypt, he immediately returned to Midian ("M. W." *l.c.*).

As the shepherd of his father-in-law he drove his sheep far into the desert (Ex. iii. 1), in order to prevent the sheep from grazing in fields not belonging to Jethro (Ex. R. i. 3). Here God appeared to him and addressed him for seven consecutive days (*ib.* iii. 20). Moses, however, refused to listen, because he would not allow himself to be disturbed in the work for which he was paid. Then God caused the flaming bush to appear (Ex. iii. 2-3), in order to divert Moses' attention from his work. The under-shepherds with Moses saw nothing of the marvelous spectacle, which Moses alone beheld (Ex. R. ii. 8). Moses then interrupted his work, and stepped

nearer the bush to investigate (*ib.* ii. 11). As Moses was at this time entirely inexperienced in prophecy, God, in calling him, imitated the voice of Amram, so as not to frighten him. Moses, who thought that his father, Amram, was appearing to him, said: "What does my father wish?" God answered: "I am the God of thy father" (Ex. iii. 6), and gave him the mission to save Israel (*ib.*). Moses hesitated

to accept the mission (comp. Ex. iii. 11) chiefly because he feared that his elder brother, Aaron, who until then had been the only prophet in Israel,

might feel slighted if his younger brother became the savior of the people; whereupon God assured him that Aaron would be glad of it (Ex. R. iii. 21-22). According to another version (*ib.* xv. 15), Moses said to God: "Thou hast promised Jacob that Thou Thyself wouldst liberate Israel [comp. Gen. xlv. 4], not appointing a mediator." God answered: "I myself will save them; but go thou first and announce to My children that I will do so." Moses consented, and went to his father-in-law, Jethro (Ex. iv. 18), to obtain permission to leave Midian (Ned. 65a; Ex. R. iv. 1-4), for he had promised not to leave Midian without his sanction. Moses departed with his wife and children, and met Aaron (comp. Ex. iv. 27), who told him it was not right to take them into Egypt, since the attempt was being made to lead the Israelites out of that country. He therefore sent his wife and children back to Midian ("S. Y." p. 123a; Mek., Yitro, 1 [ed. Weiss, p. 65b]). When they went to Pharaoh, Moses went ahead, Aaron following, because Moses was more highly regarded in Egypt (Ex. R. ix. 3); otherwise Aaron and Moses were equally prominent and respected (Mek., Bo, 1 [ed. Weiss, p. 1a]). At the entrance to the Egyptian royal palace were two leopards, which would not allow any one to approach unless their guards quieted them; but when Moses came they played with him and fawned upon him as if they were his dogs ("D. Y." *l.c.*; "S. Y." *l.c.*). According to another version, there were guards at every entrance. Gabriel, however, introduced Moses and Aaron into the interior of the palace without being seen (Yalk., Shemot, 175). As Moses' appearance before Pharaoh resulted only in increasing the tasks of the children of Israel (comp. Ex. v.), Moses returned to Midian; and, according to one version, he took his wife and children back at the same time (Ex. R. v. 23).

After staying six months in Midian he returned to Egypt (*ib.*), where he was subjected to many insults and injuries at the hands of Dathan and Abiram (*ib.* v. 24). This, together with the fear that he had aggravated the condition of the children of Israel, confused his mind so that he uttered disrespectful words to God (Ex. v. 22). Justice ("Middat ha-Din")

wished to punish him for this; but as God knew that Moses' sorrow for Israel had induced these words he allowed Mercy ("Middat ha-Rahamim")

to prevail (*ib.* vi. 1). As Moses feared that Middat ha-Din might prevent the redemption of Israel, since it was unworthy of being redeemed, God swore to him to redeem the people for Moses' sake (*ib.* vi. 3-5, xv. 4). Moses in treating with Pharaoh always



showed to him the respect due to a king (*ib.* vii. 2). Moses was really the one selected to perform all the miracles; but as he himself was doubtful of his success (*ib.* vi. 12) some of them were assigned to Aaron (*ib.* 1). According to another version, Aaron and not Moses undertook to send the plagues and to perform all the miracles connected with the water and the dust. Because the water had saved Moses, and the dust had been useful to him in concealing the body of the Egyptian (*ib.* ii. 12), it was not fitting that they should be the instruments of evil in Moses' hand (*ib.* ix. 9, x. 5, xx. 1). When Moses announced the last plague, he would not state the exact time of its appearance, midnight, saying merely "ka-hazot" = "about midnight" (*ib.* xi. 4), because he thought the people might make a mistake in the time and would then call him a liar (Ber. 3b, 4a). On the night of the Exodus, when Moses had killed his paschal lamb, all the winds of the world were blowing through paradise, carrying away its perfumes and imparting them to Moses' lamb so that the odor of it could be detected at a distance of forty days (Ex. R. xix. 6). During this night all the first-born, including the female first-born, were killed, with the exception of Pharaoh's daughter Batya, who had adopted Moses. Although she was a first-born child, she was saved through Moses' prayer ("S. Y." p. 125b). During the Exodus while all the people thought only of taking the gold and silver of the Egyptians, Moses endeavored to carry away boards for use in the construction of the future Temple (comp. Gen. R. xciv. 4 and Jew. Encyc. vii. 24, *s.v.* JACOB) and to remove Joseph's coffin (Ex. R. xviii. 8). Serah, Asher's daughter, told Moses that the coffin had been lowered into the Nile; whereupon Moses went to the bank of the river and cried: "Come up, Joseph" (according to another version, he wrote the name of God on

At the a slip of paper, which he threw into the Nile), when the coffin immediately rose to the surface (Soṭah 13a; Ex. R. xx. 17; "D. Y." *l.c.*; "S. Y." p. 126). Another legend says that Joseph's coffin was among the royal tombs, the Egyptians guarding it with dogs whose barking could be heard throughout Egypt; but Moses silenced the dogs and took the coffin out (Soṭah *l.c.*; Ex. R. *l.c.*; comp. JOSEPH IN RABBINICAL LITERATURE).

On arriving at the Red Sea Moses said to God when commanded by Him to cleave the water: "Thou hast made it a law of nature that the sea shall never be dry," whereupon God replied that at the Creation He had made an agreement with the sea as to the separation of its waters at this time (Ex. R. xxi. 16; comp. "M. W." p. 38). When the Israelites saw Pharaoh and his army drown in the Red Sea (Ex. xiv. 30-31) they wished to return to Egypt and set up a kingdom there; but Moses prevented them, urging them on by force. He also removed the idols which the Israelites had brought with them from Egypt (Ex. R. xxiv. 2).

The giving of the tables of the Law and of the Torah in general to Moses is a favorite subject for legends. In contrast to the pithy sentence of R. Jose (Suk. 5a) to the effect that Moses never ascended into heaven, there are many haggadot which de-

scribe in detail how Moses made his ascension and received the Torah there. Moses went up in a cloud which entirely enveloped him (Yoma 4a). As he could not penetrate the cloud, God took hold of him and placed him within it (*ib.* 4b). When he reached heaven the angels asked God: "What does this man, born of woman, desire among us?" God replied that Moses had come to receive the Torah, whereupon the angels claimed that God ought to give the Torah to them and not to men. Then God told Moses to answer them. Moses was afraid that the angels might burn him with the breath of their mouths; but God told him to take hold of the throne of glory. Moses then proved to the angels that the Torah was not suited to them, since they had no passions to be subdued by it. The angels thereupon became very friendly with Moses, each one of them giving him something. The angel of death confided to him the fact that incense would prevent the plague (Shab. 88b-89a; Ex. R. xxviii.). Moses subsequently caused Aaron to employ this preventive (Num. xvii. 11-13). Moses, following the custom of the angels, ate nothing during his forty days' sojourn in heaven (B. M. 87b), feeding only on the splendor of the Shekinah. He distinguished day

from night by the fact that God instructed him by day in the Scripture, and by night in the Mishnah (Ex. R. xlvii. 9). God taught him also everything which every student would discover in the course of time (*ib.* i.). When Moses first learned the Torah he soon forgot it; it was then bestowed upon him as a gift and he did not again forget it (Ned. 35a).

The Torah was intended originally only for Moses and his descendants; but he was liberal enough to give it to the people of Israel, and God approved the gift (Ned. 38a). According to another version, God gave the Torah to the Israelites for Moses' sake (Ex. R. xlvii. 14). Moses' burnt tongue was healed when he received the Law (Deut. R. i. 1). As Moses was writing down the Torah, he, on reaching the passage "Let us make man" (Gen. i. 26), said to God, "Why dost thou give the Minim the opportunity of construing these words to mean a plurality of gods?" whereupon God replied: "Let those err that will" (Gen. R. viii. 7). When Moses saw God write the words "erek appayim" (= "long-suffering"; Ex. xxxiv. 6), and asked whether God was long-suffering toward the pious only, God answered, "Toward sinners also." When Moses said that sinners ought to perish, God answered, "You yourself will soon ask me to be long-suffering toward sinners" (Sanh. 111a). This happened soon after Israel had made the golden calf (*ib.*). Before Moses ascended to heaven he said that he would descend on the forenoon of the forty-first day. On that day Satan confused the world so that it appeared to be afternoon to the Israelites. Satan told them that Moses had died, and was thus prevented from punctually fulfilling his promise. He showed them a form resembling Moses suspended in the air, whereupon the people made the golden calf (Shab. 89a; Ex. R. lxi.). When, in consequence of this, Moses was obliged to descend from heaven (Ex. xxxii. 7), he saw the angels of destruction, who were ready to

destroy him. He was afraid of them; for he had lost his power over the angels when the people made the golden calf. God, however, protected him (Ex. R. xli. 12). When Moses came down with the tables and saw the calf (Ex. xxxii. 15-20), he said to himself: "If I now give to the people the tables, on which the interdiction against idolatry is written (Ex. xx. 2-5), they will deserve death for having made and worshipped the golden calf." In compassion for the Israelites he broke the tables, in order that they might not be held responsible for having transgressed the command against idolatry (Ab. R. N. ii.).

**Worship of the Golden Calf.** Moses now began to pray for the people, showing thereby his heroic, unselfish love for them. Gathering from the words "Let me" (Ex. xxxii. 10) that Israel's fate depended on him and his prayer, he began to defend them (Ber. 32a; Meg. 24a). He said that Israel, having been sojourning in Egypt, where idolatry flourished, had become accustomed to this kind of worship, and could not easily be brought to desist from it (Yalk., Ki Tissa, 397). Moreover, God Himself had afforded the people the means of making the golden calf, since he had given them much gold and silver (Ber. l.c.). Furthermore, God had not forbidden Israel to practise idolatry, for the singular and not the plural was used in Ex. xx. 2-5, referring, therefore, only to Moses (Ex. R. xlvii. 14).

Moses refused God's offer to make him the ancestor of a great people (Ex. xxxii. 10), since he was afraid that it would be said that the leader of Israel had sought his own glory and advantage and not that of the people. He, in fact, delivered himself to death for the people (Ber. l.c.). For love of the Israelites he went so far as to count himself among the sinners (comp. Isa. liii. 12), saying to God: "This calf might be an assistant God and help in ruling the world." When God reproved him with having himself gone astray and with believing in the golden calf, he said: "Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people" (Ex. xxxii. 11; Num. R. ii. 14; Deut. R. i. 2). Moses atoned for the sin of making the calf; he even atoned for all the sins of humanity down to his time, freeing men from their burden of sin (Yalk., Ki Tissa, 388, from the Tanna debe Eliyahu; this, as well as the interpretation of Isa. liii. as referring to Moses [Soṭah 14a], must be either ascribed to Christian influence or regarded as a polemic against the Christian interpretations referring to Jesus). Moses loved the people (Men. 65a, b), showing his affection on every occasion. During the battle with Amalek he sat on a stone, and not on a cushion which he could easily have procured, because, Israel being at that time in trouble, he intended to show thereby that he suffered with them (Ta'an. 11a). When he begged God, before his death, to recall the oath that he (Moses) should never enter Palestine, God replied, "If I recall this oath I will also recall the oath never to destroy Israel," whereupon Moses said: "Rather let Moses and a thousand like him perish than that one of the people of Israel should perish" (Midr. Peṭirat Mosheh, in Jellinek, "B. H." i. 121). Moses requested that the Shekinah might rest in

Israel only in order that Israel might thereby be distinguished among all peoples (Ber. 7a); that if they sinned and were penitent, their intentional sins might be regarded merely as trespasses (Yoma 36b); and that when Israel should suffer under the yoke of the nations, God would protect the pious and the saints of Israel (B. B. 8a). All the injuries and slanders heaped upon Moses by the people did not lessen his love for them.

The words "They looked after Moses" (Ex. xxxiii. 8) are differently interpreted. According to one opinion the people praised Moses, saying: "Hail to the mother who has borne him; all the days of his life God speaks with him; and he is dedicated to the service of God." According to another opinion they reproached and reviled him: they accused him of committing adultery with another man's wife; and every man became jealous and forbade his wife to speak to Moses. They said: "See how fat and strong he has grown; he eats and drinks what belongs to the Jews, and everything that he has is taken from the people. Shall a man who has managed the building of the Tabernacle not become rich?" (Sanh. 110a; Kid. 33b; Ex. R. li. 4; Shek. v. 13). Yet Moses was the most conscientious of superintendents (Ber. 44a), and although he had been given sole charge of the work, he always caused his accounts to be examined by others (Ex. R. li. 1). He was always among the workmen, showing them how to do the work.

When everything was prepared Moses set up the Tabernacle alone (Ex. R. lii. 3). He fastened the ceiling of the tent over it, as he was the only one able to do so, being ten ells tall (Shab. 92a). During the seven days of the dedication he took the Tabernacle apart every day and set it up again without any help. When all was completed he gave a detailed account of the various expenses (Ex. R. li. 4). During the seven days

**In the Tabernacle.** of the dedication, or, according to another account, during the forty years of the wandering in the desert, Moses officiated as high priest. He was also king during this entire period. When he demanded these two offices for his descendants God told him that the office of king was destined for David and his house, while the office of high priest was reserved for Aaron and his descendants (Ex. R. ii. 13; Lev. R. xi. 6; Zeb. 102a).

All the different cycles of legends agree in saying that Moses was very wealthy, probably on the basis of Num. xvi. 15 (comp. Ned. 35a, where this interpretation is regarded as uncertain); they differ, however, as to the source of his wealth. According to one, he derived it from the presents and treasures given to him by the Ethiopians when they took the crown away from him ("D. Y." l.c.). According to another, Jethro gave him a large sum of money as dowry when he married Zipporah ("M. W." l.c.). Still another story relates that Moses received a large part of the booty captured from Pharaoh and, later, from Sihon and Og (Lev. R. xxviii. 4). In contrast to these versions, according to which Moses gained his wealth by natural means, there are two other versions according to which Moses became wealthy by a miracle. One of these narratives says

**Moses and Israel.** When he begged God, before his death, to recall the oath that he (Moses) should never enter Palestine, God replied, "If I recall this oath I will also recall the oath never to destroy Israel," whereupon Moses said: "Rather let Moses and a thousand like him perish than that one of the people of Israel should perish" (Midr. Peṭirat Mosheh, in Jellinek, "B. H." i. 121). Moses requested that the Shekinah might rest in



that Moses became rich through the breaking of the tables, which were made of sapphires (Ned. 35a); and the other that God showed him in his tent a pit filled with these precious stones (Yalk., Ki Tissa, 39b).

Moses was also distinguished for his strength and beauty. He was, as stated above, ten ells tall and very powerful. In the battle against Og, Moses was the only one able to kill that king (Ber. 54b; see OG IN RABBINICAL LITERATURE). His

**Personal** face was surrounded by a halo (comp.

**Qualities.** Ex. xxxiv. 29-35); this was given to him in reward for having hidden his face on first meeting God in the burning bush (*ib.* iii. 2-6; Ber. 7a), or he derived it from the cave in the cleft of the rock (comp. Ex. xxxiii. 22) or from the tables, which he grasped while God was holding one side and the angels the other. Another legend says that a drop of the marvelous ink with which he wrote down the Torah remained on the pen; and when he touched his head with the pen he received his halo (Ex. R. xlvii. 11).

Moses was called the "father of wisdom" on account of his great sagacity (Meg. 13a; Lev. R. i. 15). He possessed forty-nine of the fifty divisions of wisdom (R. H. 21b; Ned. 35a). The question why the pious sometimes have had luck while the sinners are fortunate was solved for him (Ber. 7a). He wished to know also how good deeds are rewarded in the future world, but this was not revealed to him (Yalk., Ki Tissa, 395). Piety was not burdensome to him (Ber. 33b). His prayers were immediately answered (Gen. R. lx. 4). He was so prominent a figure that his authority was equal to that of an entire sanhedrin of seventy-one members (Sanh. 16b), or even of the whole of Israel (Mek., Beshallah, Shir, 1 [ed. Weiss, p. 41a]).

Aside from the Pentateuch, Moses wrote also the Book of Job and some Psalms. He also introduced many regulations and institutions (Shab. 30a; comp. Ber. 54; Ta'an. 27; Meg. 4; Yeb. 79; Mak. 24). On account of the excellence of his prophecy he is called "the father," "the head," "the master," and "the chosen of the Prophets" (Lev. R. i. 3; Esth. R. i.; Ex. R. xxi. 4; Gen. R. lxxvi. 1). While all the other prophets ceased to prophesy after a time, Moses continued to talk with God and to prophesy throughout his life (Ex. R. ii. 12); and while all the other prophets beheld their visions as through nine spectacles ("espaqlarya") or through dim ones, Moses beheld his as through one clear, finely ground

glass (Yeb. 49b; Lev. R. i. 14). Balaam

surpassed him in prophecy in

**His** two respects: (1) Balaam always knew

**Prophetic** when God was about to speak with

**Powers.** him, while Moses did not know be-

forehand when God would speak with him; and (2) Balaam could speak with God whenever he wished, which Moses could not do. According to another tradition (Num. R. xiv. 34), however, Moses also could speak with God as often as he wished. The fact that God would speak with him unawares induced Moses to give up domestic life, and to live separated from his wife (Shab. 87a).

Moses' modesty is illustrated by many fine examples in the Haggadah (comp. Num. xii. 3). When

God pointed to R. Akiba and his scholarship, Moses said: "If Thou hast such a man, why dost Thou reveal the Torah through me?" (Men. 29b; see also AKIBA). When Moses descended from heaven Satan came to ask him where the Torah was which God had given to him. Moses said: "Who am I? Am I worthy to receive the Torah from God?" When God asked him why he denied that the Torah had been given to him, he replied: "How can I claim anything which belongs to Thee and is Thy darling?" Then God said to him: "As thou art so modest and humble, the Torah shall be called after thee, the 'Torah of Moses'" (Shab. 89a; comp. Mal. iii. 22). Moses' modesty never allowed him to put himself forward (e.g., in liberating Israel, in dividing the sea, and subsequently also in connection with the Tabernacle) until God said to him: "How long wilt thou count thyself so lowly? The time is ready for thee; thou art the man for it" (Lev. R. i. 15). When Moses had made a mistake, or had forgotten something, he was not ashamed to admit it (Zeb. 101a). In his prayers he always referred to the merits of others, although everything was granted to him on account of his own merit (Ber. 10b). Whenever the cup is handed to him during the banquet of the pious in the other world, that he may say grace over the meal, he declares: "I am not worthy to say grace, as I have not deserved to enter the land of Israel" (Pes. 119b). The fact that Moses, the foremost leader of Israel, who ceaselessly prayed for it and partook of its sorrows (Num. R. xviii. 5), and on whose account the manna was showered down from heaven and the protecting clouds and the marvelous well returned after the death of Aaron and Miriam (Ta'an. 9a), should not be allowed to share

#### Can Not Enter the Promised Land.

in Israel's joys and enter the promised land ("M. W." *l.c.*), was a problem that puzzled the Haggadah, for which it tried to find various explanations. Moses was anxious to enter the promised land solely because many of the commandments given by God could be observed only there, and he was desirous of fulfilling all the commandments. God, however, said that He looked upon Moses as having fulfilled all the commandments, and would therefore duly reward him therefor (Sotah 14a). Moses prayed in vain to be permitted to go into the promised land if only for a little while; for God had decreed that he should not enter the country either alive or dead. According to one opinion, this decree was in punishment for the words addressed by him to God: "Wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people?" (Ex. v. 22; Ex. R. v. 27). According to another version, this punishment was inflicted upon him for having once silently renounced his nationality. When Moses had helped the daughters of Jethro at the well, they took him home, letting him wait outside while they went into the house and told their father that an Egyptian had protected them (Ex. ii. 19). Moses, who overheard this conversation, did not correct them, concealing the fact that he was a Hebrew ("M. W." *l.c.*). There is still another explanation, to the effect that it would not have redounded to the glory of Moses if he who had led 600,000 persons out of Egypt had been the only one to enter Palestine, while the entire people were des-

tinged to die in the desert (comp. Num. xiv. 28-37). Again, Moses had to die with the generation which he took out of Egypt, in order that he might be able to lead them again in the future world (Num. R. xix. 6). Denying all these reasons, another explanation, based on Scripture, is that Moses and Aaron were not permitted to enter the promised land because they did not have the proper confidence in

God in calling water from the rock (Num. xx. 12). Moses asked that this error should be noted down in the

**Moses Strikes the Rock.** Torah (Num. xx. 12) in order that no other errors or faults should be ascribed to him (Num. R. l.c.). This story of his lack of true confidence in God when calling forth the water is elaborated with many details in the legends.

Moses was careful not to provoke the people during the forty years of wandering in the desert, because God had sworn that none of the generation which had left Egypt should behold the promised land (Deut. i. 35). When he went to call forth the water he did not know exactly from which rock it would come. The people became impatient and said that there was no difference between the rocks, and that he ought to be able to call forth water from any one of them. Vexed, he replied, "Ye rebels!" (Num. xx. 10) or, according to the Midrash, "fools!" (מורים = *μωροι*). God therefore said to him: "As thou art clever, thou shalt not enter the land together with fools." According to another legend, Moses became angry because some of the people said that, since he had been a herdsman with Jethro, he knew, like all herdsmen, where to find water in the desert, and that now he was merely trying to deceive the people and to make them believe that he had miraculously called water from the rock (Midr. Petirat Aharon, in Jellinek, l.c. i. 93 et seq.; Num. R. xix. 5; Yalk., Hukkat, 763).

When Moses heard that Aaron also had to die he grieved and wept so much as to occasion his own death (Midr. Petirat Aharon, l.c.). This story, as well as the reference to his early death (Yoma 87a), was probably based on Deut. xxxiv. 7, according to which he retained all his faculties and his full strength down to his end; but they contradict the many other versions of his death (see below). When Moses took Aaron up the mountain where the latter was to die, and announced his death to him, he comforted him, saying: "You, my brother, will die and leave your office to your children; but when I die a stranger will inherit my office. When you die you will leave me to look after your burial; when I die I shall leave no brother, no sister, and no son to bury me" (Midr. Petirat Aharon, l.c.; Num. R. xix. 11; Yalk., Num. 763, 787)—for Moses' sons died before him (comp. the note in "Zayit Ra'anan" to Yalk., Num. 787). When Moses witnessed

**At Aaron's Death.** the quiet and peaceful death of Aaron he desired a similar death for himself (ib.). After Aaron's death Moses was accused by the people of having killed him through jealousy; but God cleared him from this suspicion by a miracle (Yalk., Num. 764).

When Moses was about to take vengeance on Midian before his death (comp. Num. xxxi.) he did not

himself take part in the war, because he had at one time sojourned in Midian and had received benefits in that country (Num. R. xxii. 4). When Zimri brought the Midianitish woman Cozbi before Moses (Num. xxv. 6), asking that he might marry her, and Moses refused his request, Zimri reproached him with having himself married the Midianitish woman Zipporah (Sanh. 82a). Later, also, Moses was reproached for this marriage, the Rabbis saying that on account of it he became the ancestor of Jonathan, the priest of Micah's idol (Judges xviii. 30; B. B. 109b). God revealed to Moses before his death all the coming generations, their leaders and sages, as well as the saints and sinners. When Moses beheld Saul and his sons die by the sword he grieved that the first king of Israel should come to such a sad end (Lev. R. xxvi. 7). When God showed him hell he began to be afraid of it; but God promised him that he should not go thither (Num. R. xxiii. 4). He beheld paradise also. A detailed description of Moses' wanderings through paradise and hell is found in the apocalypse "Gedullat Mosheh" (Salonica, 1727; see JEW. ENCYC. i. 679).

The different legends agree in saying that Moses died on Adar 7, the day on which he was born, at the age of 120 years (Meg. 13b; Mek., Beshallah, Wayassa', 5 [ed. Weiss, p. 60a]; comp. Josephus, l.c. iv. 8, § 49), the angel of death not being present (B. B. 17a). But the earlier and the later legends differ considerably in the description and the details of this event. The earlier ones present the hero's death as a worthy close to his life. It takes place in a miraculous way; and the hero meets it quietly and resignedly. He ascends Mount Abarim accompanied by the elders of the people, and Joshua and Eleazar; and while he is talking with them a cloud suddenly surrounds him and he disappears. He was prompted by modesty to say in the Torah that he died a natural death, in order that people should not say that God had taken him alive into heaven on account of his piety (Josephus, l.c.). The event is described somewhat differently, but equally simply, in Sifre, Deut. 305 (ed. Friedmann, p. 129b). For the statement that Moses did not die at all, compare Sotah 13b. "When the angel of death, being sent by God to Moses, appeared before him and said, 'Give me your soul,' Moses scolded him, saying,

**Death of Moses.** 'You have not even the right to appear where I am sitting; how dare you say to me that I shall give you my soul?'

The angel of death took this answer back to God. And when God said to the angel the second time, 'Bring Me the soul of Moses,' he went to the place where Moses had been, but the latter had left. Then he went to the sea to look for Moses there. The sea said that it had not seen Moses since the time when he had led the children of Israel through it. Then he went to the mountains and valleys, which told him that God had concealed Moses, keeping him for the life in the future world, and no creature knew where he was."

This simple story of the old midrash follows the Bible closely, making the mountains and valleys the speakers because, according to Deut. xxxiv. 1-5, Moses died on the mountain and was buried in the valley. In the later legends the death of Moses is

recounted more fantastically, with many marvelous details. But instead of the hero being glorified, as was certainly intended by these details, he is unconsciously lowered by some traits ascribed to him. He appears weak and fearsome, not displaying that grandeur of soul which he might reasonably have been expected to exhibit at his death.

When God said to Moses that he must die Moses replied: "Must I die now, after all the trouble I have had with the people? I have beheld their sufferings; why should I not also behold their joys? Thou hast written in the Torah: 'At his day thou shalt give him his hire' [Deut. xxiv. 15]; why dost thou not give me the reward of my toil?" (Yalk., Deut. 940; Midr. Petirat Mosheh, in Jellinek, *l.c.* i. 115-129). God assured him that he should receive his reward in the future world. Moses then asked why he must die at all, whereupon God enumerated some of the sins for which he had deserved death, one of them being the murder of the Egyptian (Ex. ii. 12; Midr. Petirat Mosheh, *l.c.*). According to another version, Moses had to die so that he might not be taken for a god (*ib.*). Moses then began to become excited (Yalk., Wa'ethanan, 814), saying he

**Wishes** and the birds, which get their daily food  
**to Avoid** only for the sake of remaining alive  
**Death.** (Yalk., Deut. 940). He desired to re-

nounce the entry into the promised land and remain with the tribes of Reuben and Gad in the country east of the Jordan, if only he might remain alive. God said that this could not be done, since the people would leave Joshua and return to him (Midr. Petirat Mosheh, *l.c.*). Moses then begged that one of his children or one of the children of his brother Aaron might succeed him (*ib.* and Num. R. xxi. 15). God answered that his children had not devoted themselves to the Law, whereas Joshua had served Moses faithfully and had learned from him; he therefore deserved to succeed his teacher (*ib.*). Then Moses said: "Perhaps I must die only because the time has come for Joshua to enter upon his office as the leader of Israel. If Joshua shall now become the leader, I will treat him as my teacher and will serve him, if only I may stay alive." Moses then began to serve Joshua and give him the honor due to a master from his pupil. He continued to do this for thirty-seven days, from the first of Shebat to the seventh of Adar. On the latter day he conducted Joshua to the tent of the assembly. But when he saw Joshua go in while he himself had to remain outside, he became jealous, and said that it was a hundred times better to die than to suffer once such pangs of jealousy. Then the treasures of wisdom were taken away from Moses and given to Joshua (comp. Soṭah 13b). A voice ("bat kol") was heard to say, "Learn from Joshua!" Joshua delivered a speech of which Moses understood nothing. Then, when the people asked that Moses should complete the Torah, he replied, "I do not know how to answer you," and tottered and fell. He then said: "Lord of the world, until now I desired to live; but now I am willing to die." As the angel of death was afraid to take his soul, God Himself, accompanied by Gabriel, Michael, and Zagziel, the former teacher of Moses, descended to get it. Moses blessed the peo-

ple, begged their forgiveness for any injuries he might have done them, and took leave of them with the assurance that he would see them again at the resurrection of the dead. Gabriel arranged the couch, Michael spread a silken cover over it, and Zagziel put a silken pillow under Moses' head. At God's command Moses crossed his hands over his breast and closed his eyes, and God took his soul away with a kiss. Then heaven and earth and the starry world began to weep for Moses (Midr. Petirat Mosheh, *l.c.*; Yalk., Deut. 940; Deut. R. xi. 6). Although Moses died in the territory of the tribe of Reuben, he was buried in that of Gad at a spot four miles distant from the place of his death. He was carried this distance by the Shekinah, while the angels said to him that he had practised God's justice (Deut. xxxiii. 22). At the same time the bat kol cried out in the camp of the people: "Moses, the great teacher of Israel, is dead!" (Soṭah 13b).

God Himself buried Moses (Soṭah 14a; Sanh. 39a) in a grave which had been prepared for him in the dusk of Friday, the sixth day of the Creation (Pes. 54a). This tomb is opposite Beth-peor (Deut. xxxiv. 6), in atonement for the sin which Israel committed with the idol Peor (Soṭah 14a). Yet it can not be discovered; for to a person standing on the mountain it seems to be in the valley; and if one goes down into the valley, it appears to be on the mountain (*ib.*).

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W. B.

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—**Critical View:** In 1753 Jean Astruc, a French physician, published at Brussels a little book in which he advanced the theory that Moses had employed certain documents in composing the Book of Genesis. This work was thought by its author to establish the Mosaic authorship of Genesis upon a more secure basis, but it contained the key which, in the hands of a long line of critics, has led to the modern view that the Pentateuch originated from four great documents, all of which were written some centuries after Moses (see PENTATEUCH, CRITICAL VIEW). The oldest of these documents, known as J or the Jahvist, contains in its present state no account of the early life of Moses, but presents him first as a fugitive in the land of Midian.

**Moses in** Nearly all the after-events of the life  
**the Jah-** of Moses, enumerated above, are,  
**vist.** however, given by J, who has a definite and interesting point of view.

Critics differ as to whether Aaron had any place in the original narrative of J or not, Dillmann and Bacon assigning to him an important rôle, while Wellhausen, Stade, Carpenter, and Harford-Battersby hold that such passages as Ex. iv. 13-14 are later interpolations. Be this as it may, J represents Moses as holding the unique position of importance. For example, in J's description of the plagues he pictures Moses as announcing the plague; then he tells how YHWH sent it, usually through some natural agency (comp. Ex. viii. 20-24, the flies; x. 13, 19, the locusts). Similarly, J tells that YHWH "caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind

all the night, and made the sea dry land" (Ex. xiv. 21). Thus he explains the passage of the Red Sea.

It is J who represents Moses as alone enjoying the privilege of intercourse with YHWH face to face. He gives the account of the burning bush (Ex. iii. 2); he relates that Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, with seventy of the elders of Israel, went up into the mountain, and that Aaron and the seventy beheld YHWH from afar off and ate and drank in His presence, but that Moses alone went near unto YHWH (Ex. xxiv. 1-2, 9-11). In Ex. xxxiv. 5 YHWH descended in a cloud and stood to talk with Moses. In J the basis of YHWH's covenant are the ten "words" contained in Ex. xxxiv. J, too, in Num. xiv. 11-17, 19-24 presents one of the most noble pictures of Moses. YHWH was angry, and declared that He would destroy Israel and make of Moses a great nation, but the unselfish leader pleaded against his own interests for the forgiveness of the nation which had so often thwarted him, and the prayer prevailed.

The second prophetic document in point of age, known as E or the Elohist, contains the account of Moses' birth and exposure on the Nile,

**Moses in** together with the incidents which led  
**the Elo-** to his flight to Midian. Aaron and  
**hist.** Miriam also played a part in the original E narrative. E gives especial

attention to the part of Jethro in initiating Moses into the worship of YHWH and in the organization of legal procedure (Ex. xviii. 12 *et seq.*). According to E, before the Exodus the Hebrews dwelt in the midst of the Egyptians (not in Goshen, as in J); and E asserts that on the advice of Moses the Hebrews borrowed freely of the Egyptians just before leaving. E pictures Moses as raising the fateful rod when he would have any plague come, at which sign the plague came. At the Red Sea also Moses lifted this rod and the waters parted. In the E narrative Moses had a "tent of meeting" pitched at a distance from the camp, to which he resorted, accompanied only by Joshua, his minister, and there he talked with YHWH face to face (Ex. xxxiii. 8-11). E makes the basis of the covenant which Moses mediated to be the code in Ex. xx. 24-xxiii. 19. This covenant, however, was not communicated at the tent of meeting, but on the top of the sacred mountain, which E calls "Horeb" and J calls "Sinai." E's narrative contains the chief events of the life of Moses already given. His portrait is dignified and noble, though lacking in the touches of highest heroism which make the picture of J superb.

The writer of the Priestly Code (P), like the two older prophetic writers, includes in his account the chief events in the life of Moses, but

**In the** in accord with his usual habit tells  
**Priestly** these events in a few chronicle-like  
**Code.** words in order to make them the setting of his history of the sacred institutions.

P declares that Amram was the father of Moses, and Jochebed his mother (Ex. vi. 20), and gives to Aaron a prominence much greater than in the older narratives. Moses is a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron is Moses' prophet (Ex. vii. 1). In accord with this view, in P's account of the Egyptian plagues Moses communicates in each case a com-

mand to Aaron, who then stretches out the sacred rod to invoke the affliction. Thus Aaron is associated with Moses at almost every point. P increases everywhere the miraculous element. In his account the simple driving back of the waters of the Red Sea by the east wind becomes an astounding miracle (comp. Ex. xiv. 22). P traces to Moses the sacred institutions; the Levitical law was communicated by YHWH to Moses; Moses received on the mount the pattern of the Tabernacle, which was constructed under his direction; even the duties of the Levites were arranged by him (see LEVITES, CRITICAL VIEW).

The Deuteronomist (D) adds nothing to the knowledge of the character of Moses. The account of the second giving of the Law in Moab, and various notes which expound and interpret the older narratives, constitute the whole Pentateuchal product of this writer.

The cuneiform library of Assurbanipal has furnished a legend of the birth of Sargon of Agade (a

Babylonian king who, according to

**Moses and** Nabonidos, ruled about 3800 B.C.)  
**Sargon.** which is strikingly parallel to the story of the secret birth of Moses and of his exposure on the Nile. The legend runs:

"Sargon, the powerful king, King of Agade am I. My mother was of low degree; my father I did not know. The brother of my father dwelt in the mountain. My city was Azupirani, which is situated on the bank of the Euphrates. My humble mother conceived me; in secret she bore me. She placed me in a boat of reeds; with bitumen my door she closed. She entrusted me to the river, which did not overwhelm me. The river bore me along; to Akki the irrigator it carried me. Akki the irrigator in goodness . . . brought me to land. Akki the irrigator as his son brought me up. Akki the irrigator his gardener appointed me. While I was gardener, Ishtar loved me . . . four years I ruled the kingdom."

The parallelism between this narrative and the story of the exposure of Moses is thought by many scholars to be too close to be accidental.

The name מֹשֶׁה is explained in Ex. ii. 12 (E) as though it were of Hebrew origin, and from מִשֶּׁה ("to draw out"). If this were its real etymology, the name would mean "deliverer," "savior" (comp. Ps. xviii. 17, Hebr.). As an Egyptian princess could not have spoken Hebrew, this etymology has been generally abandoned. A second one dates from the time of Josephus ("Ant." ii. 9, § 6; "Contra Ap." i., § 31), and is built on the Greek form of the name

Μωσῆς. This, Josephus claims, is de-

**Name.** rived from Egyptian "mo" (water) and "uses" (saved)—a theory to which

Jablonski gave a quasi-scientific character by comparing the Coptic "mo" (water) and "ushe" (rescued). An Egyptian name with such a meaning would, however, be formed differently (see "Z. D. M. G." xxv. 141). The etymology now generally received regards it as from the Egyptian "mesh" (child), often used as a part of a theophorous name. This view was suggested by Lepsius, and has been accepted by Ebers, Dillmann, Gesenius, and Buhl, by Briggs, Brown, and Driver in their lexicon, and by others. Guthe ("Gesch. des Volkes Israel," p. 20) also regards it as a fragment of a theophorous name. W. Max Müller has objected that the vowel in "mesh" is short, while that in "Moses" is long, and that the sibilants are not those which the philological

law would require. Accordingly Cheyne ("Encyc. Bibl.") proposes a Semitic origin, regarding the name as that of a North-Arabian tribe. One is inclined to return to the Biblical account and accept the etymology of E. If it may be supposed that the part of the narrative which attributes the naming to Pharaoh's daughter is inaccurate, the name may well be good Semitic, meaning "deliverer." Possibly it was not a name given in infancy, but an epithet which came to him as the result of his work.

It is clear from the different representations of three of the great Pentateuchal documents that some allowance must be made for traditional

**Founder of the Israelitish Nation.** accretion in the narratives of the life of Moses. But modern scholars with much unanimity of opinion regard Moses as a great historical character, the emancipator of Israel, the mediator

of the covenant with YHWH, and the real founder of the Israelitish nation. Though few of the laws can be traced back to him, it is believed that he gave to Israel, by his covenant with YHWH, and by his legal decisions at Kadesh, the beginnings of religious law, and so became the founder of the legal system which prophets and priests developed as time passed on. It is true that Winckler ("Gesch. Israels," ii. 86 *et seq.*, Leipzig, 1900) regards Moses as a YHWH-Tammuz myth, that Cheyne ("Encyc. Bibl.") regards him as a personified clan, and that two other scholars, Renan ("Hist. of the People of Israel," i. 135 *et seq.*) and Stade ("Gesch. des Volkes Israel," pp. 129 *et seq.*), regard his historicity as possible only. The great majority of modern scholars, however, though differing in details, hold not only to the reality of Moses as a historical character, but to the reality of his magnificent work as stated. This is the position of Wellhausen ("I. J. G." pp. 13 *et seq.*), W. R. Smith ("Old Test. in the Jewish Church," 2d ed., pp. 333 *et seq.*), Kittel ("Hist. of the Hebrews," i. 238 *et seq.*), Cornill ("Hist. of the People of Israel," pp. 41 *et seq.*), Budde ("Religion of Israel to the Exile," pp. 12 *et seq.*), Guthe ("Gesch. des Volkes Israel," pp. 19 *et seq.*), A. B. Davidson ("Theology of the Old Test." p. 110), McCurdy ("History, Prophecy, and the Monuments," ii. 93 *et seq.*), Kent ("Hist. of the Hebrew People," i. 36 *et seq.*), Barton ("Sketch of Semitic Origins," pp. 272, 291 *et seq.*), J. P. Peters ("The Old Test. and the New Scholarship," pp. 116 *et seq.*, and "The Religion of Moses," in "Jour. Bib. Lit." 1901, xx. 101 *et seq.*), Paton ("Early Hist. of Syria and Palestine," pp. 137 *et seq.*), and H. P. Smith ("Old Test. History," pp. 53-65). Such a consensus of opinion is significant. See PENTATEUCH.

J.

G. A. B.

—**In Hellenistic Literature:** While the Pentateuch represents Moses as the greatest of all prophets, to whom the Lord made Himself known face to face (Deut. xxxiv. 10; comp. Num. xii. 7), and who, when descending Mount Sinai, had a halo about his head which so filled the people with awe that they could not look at him (Ex. xxxiv. 29), yet there is no attempt made to lift him above the ordinary man in his nature. He lived for forty days and forty nights on the mount without eating and drinking (Deut. ix. 9), but this was owing to the

power God lent him while he received the Law; he died and was buried like any other mortal (ib. xxxiv. 5-6). Owing to the contact of the Jews with the Greeks in Alexandria, Moses was made the subject of many legends, and in many respects lifted to supernatural heights.

Ben Sira was probably the first to compare him with the angels—a suggestion from Ex. xxxiv. 29 (Ecclus. xlv. 2; the Hebrew text reads "ke-elohim," while the Greek reads *ἀγιοι* = "saints"). Especially favorable to the accretion of legends or fictions around the life of Moses was the fact that he was born in Egypt and brought up by the daughter of the king. This suggested that "he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts vii. 22). But the Jewish men of letters who lived in Alexandria were by no means satisfied with the idea that Moses acquired the wisdom of the Egyptians; they claimed for him the merit of having given to Egypt, Phenicia, and Hellas all their culture. He taught the Jews the letters, and they then became the teachers of the Phenicians and, indirectly, of the Greeks, says Eupolemus (Eusebius, "Preparatio Evangelica," ix. 26). Artapanus, in his history of the Jews, went so far as to identify Moses with Tot-Hermes (the Egyptian messenger and scribe of the gods, who invented the letters, the various arts of peace and of war, as well as philosophy), and with the Greek Musæus, "the teacher of Orpheus." He even ascribed to him the division of the land into its thirty-six districts, with their various forms of worship. As the foster-mother of Moses, Artapanus names Merris, the wife of Chenephres, King of Upper Egypt; being childless, she pretended to have given birth to him and brought him up as her own child.

"Jealousy of Moses' excellent qualities induced Chenephres to send him with unskilled troops on a military expedition to Ethiopia, where he won great victories. After having built the city of Hermopolis, he taught the people the value of the ibis as a protection against the serpents, making the bird the sacred guardian spirit of the city; then he introduced circumcision. After his return to Memphis, Moses taught the people the value of oxen for agriculture, and the consecration of the same by Moses gave rise to the cult of Apis. Finally, after having escaped another plot by killing the assailant sent by the king, Moses fled to Arabia, where he married the daughter of Raguel, the ruler of the district. Chenephres in the meantime died from elephantiasis [comp. Ex. R. i. and Targ. Yer. to Ex. ii. 23]—a disease with which he was the first to be afflicted—because he had ordered that the Jews should wear garments that would distinguish them from the Egyptians and thereby expose them to maltreatment [this is characteristic of the age in which it was written]. The sufferings of Israel then caused God to appear to Moses in a flame bursting forth from the earth [not from the bush!], and to tell him to march against Egypt for the rescue of his people. Accordingly he went to Egypt to deliberate with his brother Aaron about the plan of warfare, but was put into prison. At night, however, the doors of the prison opened of their own accord, while the guards died or fell asleep. Going to the royal palace and finding the doors open there and the guards sunk in sleep, he went straight to the king, and when scoffingly asked by the latter for the name of the God who sent him, he whispered the Ineffable Name into his ear, whereupon the king became speechless and as one dead. Then Moses wrote the name upon a tablet and sealed it up, and a priest who made sport of it died in convulsions. After this Moses performed all the wonders, striking land and people with plagues until the king let the Jews go. In remembrance of the rod with which Moses performed his miracles every Isis temple in Egypt has preserved a rod—Isis symbolizing the earth which Moses struck with his rod" (Eusebius, l.c. ix. 27).

The record closes with a description of the person-

ality of Moses: "He was eighty-nine years old when he delivered the Jews; tall and ruddy, with long white hair, and dignified."

Fantastic and grotesque as these stories are, they are scarcely inventions of Artapanus only. Long contact of the Jews of Alexandria with Egyptian men of letters in a time of syncretism, when all mythology was being submitted to a rationalizing process, naturally produced such fables (see Freudenthal, "Hellenistische Studien," 1875, pp. 153-174), and they have found a place in the Palestinian as well as in the Hellenistic haggadah, in Josephus, Philo ("De Vita Moysis"), and the Alexandrian dramatist Ezekiel (Eusebius, *l.c.* ix. 28), as well as in the Midrash (Ex. R. i.-ii.; Tan., Shemot), the Targum, and the "Sefer ha-Yashar," or the older "Chronicles of Jerahmeel" (xliv.-l.).

Most elaborate is the haggadah from which Josephus drew his story ("Ant." ii. 9, § 2-ii. 10, § 2):

"Egyptian priests skilled in prophesying foretold the birth of a Hebrew who would bring misfortune on Egypt, and thus caused Pharaoh's edict to have every new-born male child drowned in the river" (comp. Sanh. 101b; Ex. R. i.; Targ. Yer. to Ex. i. 14; see JANNES AND JAMBRES). "Amram in his distress at the fate of every new-born child prays to God and receives a revelation" (see AMRAM; MIRIAM). "Thermutis was the name of the princess who saw Moses in the water-cradle and conceived a love for him on account of his striking beauty. The child, however, refused to suckle from any other breast but that of his mother." "Moses excelled all by his tall stature and beauty of countenance as well as by his quickness of apprehension." "Thermutis, being without child, brought him up as her own son, and one day when she presented him to her father as her own child, and heir to the throne—a gift she had received from the river-god—Pharaoh took the child on his lap and placed his diadem upon its head; whereupon it cast it down on the ground and trampled upon it. This was taken as an evil omen by the king, and the priestly soothsayer, finding Moses to be the one who would bring upon the kingdom the misfortune predicted for it, wished to slay him, but Thermutis succeeded in saving his life" (comp. Ezekiel in Eusebius, *l.c.* ix. 29; "Chronicles of Jerahmeel," xlv. 8; Yalk. i. 166). "An attack on Egypt by the Ethiopians caused all to look to Moses for aid, and the king asked his daughter to permit him to go forth as general of an army to Ethiopia. Moses took the short road along the desert, deemed impassable on account of its many flying serpents ('seraphim'), and provided himself with numerous baskets filled with ibises, the destroyers of serpents, by the help of which he removed the dangers of the desert. He thus took the Ethiopians by surprise and defeated them, driving them back to Merve, a fortified city. While he was besieging the city, Thermis, the daughter of the king, saw him upon the walls, fell in love with him, and proposed to him to become his wife. He accepted the offer under the condition that the city should surrender to him; finally he married her" (comp. "Chronicles of Jerahmeel," xlv.-xlvi.; Yalk. i. 168).

This is obviously a midrashic tale connected with Num. xii. 1, but disavowed at a later stage (see Sifre, Num. 99, and Targ. *ad loc.*).

Philo also shows familiarity with these legends; he refers to the beauty of the babe Moses (*l.c.* i. 3) and mentions the fact that the princess, being childless, contrived to make Moses appear as her own child (i. 4-5). Moses' education in science, art, and philosophy, however, is ascribed to Egyptian masters (i. 6); he was grieved by the sufferings of his Hebrew brethren, many of whom died an untimely death and did not have even seemingly burial (i. 7); his prophetic powers were attested at the Red Sea when the Egyptian dead were cast up by the waves and were actually seen by the Israelites, as Moses had announced (iii. 34, with reference to Ex. xiv. 13, 30).

The end of the great lawgiver especially was surrounded with legends. "While, after having taken leave of the people, he was going to embrace Eleazar and Joshua on Mount Nebo, a cloud suddenly stood over him, and he disappeared, though he wrote in Scripture that he died, which was done from fear that people might say that because of his extraordinary virtue he had been turned into a divinity" ("Ant." iv. 8, § 48). Philo says: "He was entombed not by mortal hands, but by immortal powers, so that he was not placed in the tomb of his forefathers, having obtained a peculiar memorial [*i.e.*, grave] which no man ever saw" ("De Vita Moysis," iii. 39). Later on, the belief became current that Moses did not die, but was taken up to heaven like Elijah. This seems to have been the chief content of the apocryphon entitled "Assumptio Moysis," preserved only in fragmentary form (comp. Charles, "The Assumption of Moses," 1897, Introduction; Deut. R. xi.; Jellinek, "B. H." i. 115-129, vi. 71-78; M. R. James, "Apocrypha Anecdota," pp. 166-173, Cambridge, 1893). No sooner was the view maintained that Moses was translated to heaven than the idea was suggested

that his soul was different from that of other men. Like the Messiah, he is said to have been preexistent; he is thus represented in "Assumptio Moysis" (i. 12-14); so too "He was prepared before the foundation of the world to be the mediator of God's covenant, and as he was Israel's intercessor with God during life [xi. 11, 17], so is he to be the intercessor in all the future." While his death was an ordinary one (i. 15, x. 14), "no place received his body"; "his sepulcher is from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof, and from the south to the confines of the north; all the world is his sepulcher" (xi. 5-8). Philo also calls Moses "the mediator and reconciler of the world" (*ib.* iii. 19). Especially in Esene circles was Moses apotheosized: "Next to God," says Josephus ("B. J." ii. 8, § 9), "they honor the name of their legislator, and if any one blasphemes him he meets with capital punishment" (comp. "Ant." iii. 15, § 3). Against such excessive adoration of a human being a reaction set in among the Rabbis, who declared that no man ever ascended to heaven (Suk. 5a).

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T. K.

**MOSES, ASSUMPTION OF.** See APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE.

**MOSES, BLESSING OF.**—**Biblical Data:** Name given to the chapter in Deuteronomy (xxxiii.) containing the prophetic utterances of Moses concerning the destiny of the twelve tribes, which he had led to the boundary of Palestine. Moses begins with praise of YHWH, who had revealed Himself to His beloved nation, and then passes on to the blessing of the different tribes. He mentions first the tribes of the south, beginning with Reuben and Judah, and then those of the north, Dan, Naphtali, and Asher.

In regard to Reuben there is only a prayer: "Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few" (verse 6). Simeon seems to be omitted, but this is