

SHEMOT

NJPS These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each coming with his household: ²Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; ³Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; ⁴Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. ⁵The total number of persons that were of Jacob's issue came to seventy, Joseph being already in Egypt. ⁶Joseph died, and all his

RASHI **1 These are the names of the sons of Israel.** Even though the Torah listed them by name during their lifetimes (Gen. 46:8–27), it lists them again after their deaths to show God's love for them, by likening them to the stars. For God musters the stars at their rising and their setting by number and by name: "Who created these? He who sends out their host by count, who calls them each by name" (Isa. 40:26).

5 Joseph being already in Egypt.

Since he and his sons are included in the total of "seventy," what does this additional phrase come to teach us? Don't we already know that he is in Egypt? It comes to let you know about Joseph's righteousness: The very Joseph who was a shepherd with his father's sheep was the same Joseph who was in Egypt, became king, and remained as righteous as he had been.

NAHMANIDES Genesis concludes at this point, being the book of creation, which tells of the origin of the world and the creation of everything, and of those incidents from the lives of all the Patriarchs that would be, as it were, formative for their offspring. For all those incidents that are depicted hint at what would happen to their offspring in the future. After completing the story of creation, the Torah begins a new book to tell the story that follows from those allusions. The unifying theme of the Book of Exodus is the first exile—the one decreed in Gen. 15:13—and of the redemption from that exile. For this reason it begins with a recapitulation of the names and number of those who came down to Egypt, even though this had already been detailed in Gen. 46:8–27, since their descent there was actually the beginning of that exile.

Now, that exile would not be over until the day the Israelites returned both to their place and to the status of their ancestors. When they left Egypt, even though they were emancipated from slavery, they were still considered to be in exile, for they were in "a land not theirs" (Gen. 15:13) and "astray in the wilderness" (14:3). When they came to Mount Sinai and made the Tabernacle, and the Holy One once again caused his Shekhinah to rest among them, they then returned to the status of their ancestors, "when God's company graced their tents" (Job 29:4)—for as our Sages said, "The Patriarchs are the chariot." [A] Then they were considered to be redeemed. That is why the Book of Exodus concludes with the completion of the Tabernacle and its being always filled with the Presence of God.

1 These are the names. The text wishes to count the time of their descent to Egypt as the beginning of the exile, for "they headed the column of exiles" (Amos 6:7), as I have explained in the introduction. So it returns to the beginning of that theme in the verse "he brought with him to Egypt all his offspring" (Gen. 46:7), which is immediately followed by the phrase "These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt" (Gen. 46:8) with which our chapter begins. For even though Genesis and Exodus are two separate books, Exodus is the sequel to Genesis. So only the introductory statement and the concluding one, "The total number of persons that were of Jacob's issue came to seventy" (Gen. 46:27), are repeated here, not the details. A similar repetition links the book of Chronicles, which concludes with the promise of the rebuilding of the Temple, with its sequel, the book of Ezra-Nehemiah, where that story is told. The link between Genesis and Exodus is made the same way. Ibn Ezra says that because Gen. 50:23 tells us that Joseph lived to see his great-grandchildren, Exodus begins by noting that his brothers, too, were few when they came to Egypt, but were fruitful and prolific there. But this is incorrect. Rashi's explanation, that counting them twice likens

[A] This saying implies that the Shekhinah, or Divine Presence, rests on the Patriarchs in some actually physical way (see Nahmanides' comment to Gen. 17:22); this is the status to which their descendants return at Sinai. The "chariot" is a way of describing God's throne, referring to the vision of Ezekiel 1.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS **1 These are the names.** These people were "stars" all their lives, and deserved to be individually recognized; their descendants were not so distinguished (Sforno).

5 Seventy. The number is given to emphasize God's miracle: in only 210 years, the 70 grew into 600,000 (Hizkuni).

שמות

OJPS Now these are the names of the sons of Israel, who came into Egypt with Jacob; every man came with his household: ²Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; ³Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; ⁴Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. ⁵And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls; and Joseph was in Egypt already. ⁶And Joseph

וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים
מִמִּצְרַיִם אֶת יַעֲקֹב אִישׁ וּבֵיתוֹ בָּאוּ:
רְאוּבֵן שְׁמֵעוֹן לֵוִי וַיהוּדָה:³ יִשְׂשַׁכָּר
זְבֻלֹן וּבְנִימִן:⁴ דָּן וְנַפְתָּלִי גָד וְאַשֶׁר:⁵
וַיְהִי כָּל-נַפְשׁ יִצְאָי יִרְף־יַעֲקֹב שְׁבַע־עִים
נַפְשׁ וַיֹּסֵף הֵיחָד בְּמִצְרַיִם:⁶ וַיָּמָת יוֹסֵף

ABARBANEL'S QUESTIONS ♦ Why is the information already provided in Gen. 46:8–27 repeated in Exod. 1:1–8? ♦ Why does v. 5 tell us what we already know, that Joseph is in Egypt?

RASHBAM **1 These are the names.** Because the text wants to emphasize that "the Israelites were fertile and prolific" (v. 7), it was necessary to repeat that, when they came to Egypt, there were no more than 70 of them. But after the death of that generation, they were "fertile and prolific," and "a new king arose" (v. 8) who tried to deal shrewdly with them in order to diminish their numbers—but it did him no good.

IBN EZRA **1 These are the names.** Literally, "and these are the names." Having mentioned at the end of Genesis that Joseph lived to see his great-grandchildren, the text continues now by noting that his brothers, too, were few in number when they came down to Egypt, but were fertile and prolific there. **With Jacob.** Including Jacob. The total of persons "of Jacob's issue" (v. 5) only makes 70 if Jacob himself is included in the total. **With his household.** That is, his "issue." Biblical Hebrew never uses the word "house" as a euphemism for "wife" the way rabbinic Hebrew sometimes does.

2 Reuben. The tribes are listed in birth order. [A]

3 Benjamin. Being the son of one of the Matriarchs, Benjamin is listed before his older brothers who were the sons of the concubines, Bilhah and Zilpah.

5 Of Jacob's issue. OJPS "out of the loins of Jacob." "Loins" is a euphemism here for the genitals. There were a total of 69 males "of Jacob's issue," which is why they were said in v. 1 to have come "with Jacob" (see my comment to that verse); the parallel passage in Gen. 46:8 says more plainly, "Jacob and his descendants." As Deut. 10:22 puts it, "Your ancestors went down to Egypt seventy persons in all," including both Jacob and Joseph and Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

[A] Not exactly. The 11 brothers who came down to Egypt are listed in birth order for each of the four mothers in turn; see the next comment.