

"AL HAPEREK"

A Renewed Meeting with Tanach

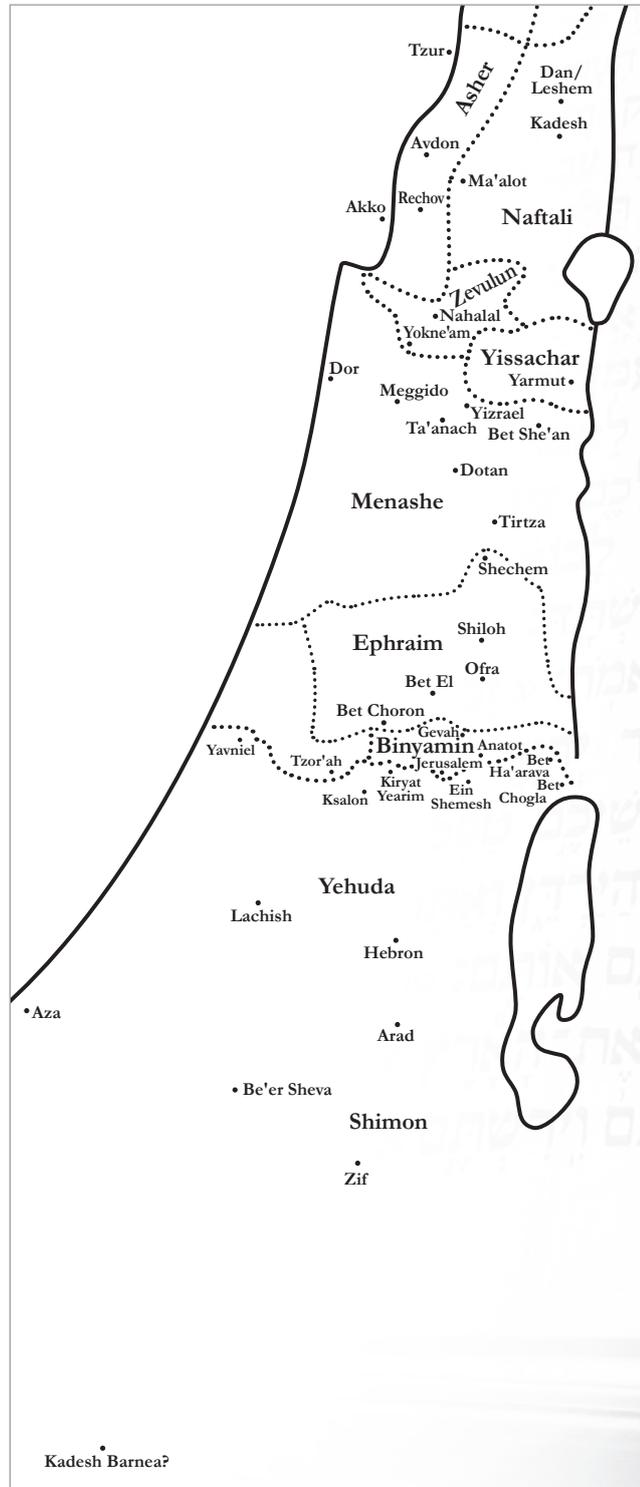
Yehoshua Perakim 19-20

Having completed the division of the Land amongst the tribes, Yehoshua now begins to fulfill another commandment given to him by Moshe: dedicating the cities of refuge.

"וַיִּקְרָאוּ בְּסֵפֶר בְּתוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים" General Overview <

Perek 19

- ❶ The description of the Land's distribution amongst the tribes is completed in perek 19. Use the map for a visual depiction of these last land divisions.
- ❷ The territory of the tribe of Shimon lies within the territory of Yehuda. How does Yaakov's blessing in Bereshit 49:5-7 help explain this reality?
- ❸ a) Pesukim 40-47 in our perek describe how the tribe of Dan, after difficulties in gaining control of their territory, turned instead to conquering the city of Leshem. When did the conquest of Leshem actually occur? See Shoftim 18:1-2, 7-9, and 26-29 as well as the various commentators on these pesukim.
b) Similar to the tribe of Yehuda, Dan also initiates in the process of conquest. However, there are distinct differences between these two campaigns. What are they?



מִתַּן מַתָּן

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- 4 Dividing the Land among the tribes is the central theme of perakim 13-19. Compare pesukim 13:7, 14:4-5, 18:2 and 19:51 to one another. What problem does the text present at the beginning of this unit, and how is it solved in the closing pasuk?

Perek 20

- 5 In this perek, Yehoshua carries out a commandment made by Moshe in the desert. Yehoshua's complement of Moshe's leadership and his fulfillment of Moshe's commands are two essential principles interwoven throughout the book of Yehoshua. See for example, 8:30-35 and 17:4-6. How can an in-depth grasp of these principles shed light on our understanding of:
- > The relationship between Moshe and Yehoshua?
 - > The connection between Sefer Yehoshua and the Chumash?
- 6 Look at Devarim 19:9-10. On what condition will three more cities of refuge be granted? Read the section (quoted below) from the Talmud Bavli, Masechet Makot, page 9b-10a. What is the difference between the opinion of the Talmud and that of the Torah regarding the cities of refuge? Does Sefer Yehoshua take a stance on this issue?

"Our Rabbis taught: Moshe established [lit: differentiated] three cities across the Yarden [i.e. on the eastern side], and Yehoshua established [three] corresponding cities in the Land of Canaan. They were meant to be opposite to each other, like two rows in a vineyard: Hebron in Yebuda across from Betzer in the desert, Shechem in Har Ephraim across from Ramot in Gilad, Kedesh in Har Naftali across from Golan in the Bashan. 'Thou shall... divide the borders of your Land... into three parts' (Devarim 19:3), that is, into groups of three. That is, the distance between the south [southern border] to Hebron is the same as the distance between Hebron and Shechem, and that distance is the same as between Shechem and Kedesh, and from Shechem to Kedesh is the same as from Kedesh to the north [northern border]. Three [cities of refuge] just for the eastern side of the Yarden, corresponding to three for the [entire] Land of Yisrael? Abaye said, 'In Gilad, murder is commonplace,' as it is written: 'Gilad is a city of those who do sin' (Hoshea 6:8)."

In-depth Study < "מִפְּרֵשׁ וְשׁוֹם שְׂכָל"

- 7 "Except Calev ben Yefuneh, he shall see it; and to him I will give the Land...Yehoshua ben Nun, who stands before you, he will go there" (Devarim 1:36,38). See Yehoshua 14:6-15. At what stage does Calev receive his inheritance? At what stage does Yehoshua receive his? (See perek 19:49-50). What can be learned on both a structural and moral level from this?
- 8 Murder is a forbidden act in general society, and in a Torah-abiding society the murderer loses his right to dwell in the Land of Israel (See Bereshit 4:11-13 and 9:5-6). Look at Bamidbar 35:33-34 and discuss the unique treatment of murder in the Land of Israel.

Appendix < "וַיְבִינוּ בְּמִקְרָא"

Sefer HaHinuch Mitzvah 408:

"The root of the mitzvah is well-known, because Shevet Levi is the chosen one of the tribes and is suited for the service of Beit Hashem. And it does not share with AmYisrael an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Yet, cities they required regardless, to live in, they and their sons and their small children and all their livestock. And because of their great stature and their skillful actions and the grace of their merit, their land was chosen to absorb anyone who took a life unintentionally over the lands of the other tribes. Perhaps their land, which had been sanctified with their holiness, would atone for him. And another reason for the matter is: Since they are men of pure heart who are known for their sterling traits and their venerable wisdom, it is known to all that they will not despise the killer who would be saved by them. And they will not touch him, and even if he would kill one of their loved ones or another blood redeemer [someone seeking revenge for the murder] that suddenly and without malice slew him."