

EXODUS

SH'MOT

1 These are the names of the sons of Israel^[DS1] who came to Egypt with Jacob, each coming with his household^[DS2]: 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 brothers, and all that generation. 7But the Israelites^[DS3] were fertile and prolific; they multiplied and increased very greatly, so that the land was filled with them.

8A new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph. 9And he said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people^[DS4] are much too numerous for us. 10Let us deal shrewdly with them, so that they may not increase; otherwise in the event of war they may join our enemies in fighting against us and rise from the ground." 11So they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor^[DS5] and they built garrison cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Rameses. 12But the more they were oppressed, the more they increased and spread out, so that the [Egyptians] came to dread the Israelites.

13The Egyptians ruthlessly imposed upon the Israelites 14the various labors that they made them perform. Ruthlessly they made life bitter for them with harsh labor at mortar and bricks and with all sorts of tasks in the field.

15The king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, 16saying, "When you deliver the Hebrew women, look at the birthstool: if it is a boy, kill him; if it is a girl, let her live." 17The midwives, fearing God, did not do as the king of Egypt had told them; they let the boys live. 18So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, letting the boys live?" 19The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women: they are vigorous. Before the midwife can come to them, they have given birth." 20And God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and increased greatly. 21And [God] established households for the midwives, because they feared God~~because the midwives feared God, He established households for them~~^[DS6]. 22Then Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, "Every boy that is born you shall throw into the Nile, but let every girl live."

2A certain man~~member~~^[DS7] of the house of Levi went and married a Levite~~woman of Levi~~^[DS8]. 2The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw how beautiful he was, she hid him for three months. 3When she could hide him no longer, she got a wicker basket for him and caulked it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child into it and placed it

among the reeds by the bank of the Nile. 4And his sister stationed herself at a distance, to learn what would befall him.

5The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe in the Nile, while her maidens walked along the Nile. She spied the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to fetch it. 6When she opened it, she saw that it was a child, a boy crying. She took pity on it and said, "This must be a Hebrew child." 7Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get you a Hebrew nurse^[DS9] to suckle the child for you?" 8And Pharaoh's daughter answered, "Yes." So the girl went and called the child's mother. 9And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will pay your wages." So the woman^[DS10] took the child and nursed it. 10When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, who made him her son. She named him Moses, explaining, "I drew him out of the water."

11Some time after that, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his kinsfolk and witnessed their labors. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew^[DS11], one of his kinsmen^[DS12]. 12He turned this way and that and, seeing no one about^[DS13], he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13When he went out the next day, he found two Hebrews^[DS14] fighting; so he said to the offender, "Why do you strike your fellow?" 14He retorted, "Who made you chief and ruler^[DS15] over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Moses was frightened, and thought: Then the matter is known! 15When Pharaoh learned of the matter, he sought to kill Moses; but Moses fled from Pharaoh. He arrived in the land of Midian, and sat down beside a well.

16Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock; 17but shepherds came and drove them off. Moses rose to their defense, and he watered their flock. 18When they returned to their father Reuel, he said, "How is it that you have come back so soon today?" 19They answered, "An Egyptian was our champion! He rescued us from the shepherds^[DS16]; he even drew water for us and watered the flock." 20He said to his daughters, "Where is he then? Why did you leave the man~~this champion~~^[DS17]? Ask him in to break bread." 21Moses consented to stay with the man~~in that household~~^[DS18], and he~~Reuel~~^[DS19] gave Moses his daughter Zipporah as wife. 22She bore a son whom he named Gershom, for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land."

23A long time after that, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites were groaning under the bondage and cried out; and their cry for help from the bondage rose up to God. 24God heard their moaning, and God remembered His~~the~~ covenant^[DS19] with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. 25God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them.

3Now Moses, tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, drove the flock into the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2An angel of the Eternal appeared to him in a blazing fire out of a bush. He gazed, and there was a bush all aflame, yet the bush was not consumed. 3Moses said, “I must turn aside to look at this marvelous sight; why doesn’t the bush burn up?” 4When the Eternal saw that he had turned aside to look, God called to him out of the bush: “Moses! Moses!” He answered, “Here I am.” 5And He[God] said, “Do not come closer! Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground!”; 6and continued [DS20], “I am,” He said, “the God of your father’s [house],— [DS21] the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

7And the Eternal continued, “I have marked well the plight of My people in Egypt and have heeded their outcry because of their taskmasters; yes, I am mindful of their sufferings. 8I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians and to bring them out of that land to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the region of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9Now the cry of the Israelites has reached Me; moreover, I have seen how the Egyptians oppress them. 10Come, therefore, I will send you to Pharaoh, and you shall free My people, the Israelites, from Egypt.”

11But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and free the Israelites from Egypt?” 12And He[God] said, “I will be with you; that shall be your sign that it was I who sent you. And when you have freed the people from Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.”

13Moses said to God, “When I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers, ancestors [DS22] has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is His [God’s] name?’ [DS23] what shall I say to them?” 14And God said to Moses, “Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh.” He—continued/continuing, “Thus shall you say to the Israelites, ‘Ehyeh sent me to you.’” 15And God said further to Moses, “Thus shall you speak to the Israelites: The Eternal, the God of your fathers, ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,—has sent me to you:

This shall be My name forever,

This My appellation for all eternity.

16“Go and assemble the elders [DS24] of Israel and say to them: The Eternal, the God of your fathers, ancestors—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,—has appeared to me and said, ‘I have taken note of you and of what is being done to you in Egypt, 17and I have declared: I will take you out of the misery of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.’ 18They will listen to you; then you shall go with the elders of Israel to the king of Egypt

and you shall say to him, ‘The Eternal, the God of the Hebrews, became manifested Himself [DS25] to us. Now therefore, let us go a distance of three days into the wilderness to sacrifice to the Eternal our God.’ 19Yet I know that the king of Egypt will let you go only because of a greater might. 20So I will stretch out My hand and smite Egypt with various wonders which I will work upon them; after that he shall let you go. 21And I will dispose the Egyptians favorably toward this people, so that when you go, you will not go away empty-handed. 22Each woman shall borrow from her neighbor and the lodger in her house objects of silver and gold, and clothing, and you shall put these on your sons and daughters, thus stripping the Egyptians.”

4But Moses spoke up and said, “What if they do not believe me and do not listen to me, but say: The Eternal did not appear to you?” 2The Eternal One said to him, “What is that in your hand?” And he replied, “A rod.” 3He[God] said, “Cast it on the ground.” He cast it on the ground and it became a snake; and Moses recoiled from it. 4Then the Eternal said to Moses, “Put out your hand and grasp it by the tail”—he put out his hand and seized it, and it became a rod in his hand—5“that they may believe that the Eternal, the God of their fathers, ancestors [DS26], the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, did appear to you.”

6The Eternal said to him further, “Put your hand into your bosom.” He put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, his hand was encrusted with snowy scales! 7And He[God] said, “Put your hand back into your bosom.”—He put his hand back into his bosom; and when he took it out of his bosom, there it was again like the rest of his body.—8“And if they do not believe you or pay heed to the first sign, they will believe the second. 9And if they are not convinced by both these signs and still do not heed you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and it—the water that you take from the Nile—will turn to blood on the dry ground.”

10But Moses said to the Eternal, “Please, O my Lord [DS27], I have never been a man of good with words [DS28], either in times past or now that You have spoken to Your servant; I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.” 11And the Eternal said to him, “Who gives manhumans speech [DS29]? Who makes him them [DS30] dumb or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Eternal? 12Now go, and I will be with you as you speak and will instruct you what to say.” 13But he said, “Please, O my Lord, make someone else Your agent.” 14The Eternal became angry with Moses, and He said, “There is your brother Aaron the Levite [DS31]. He, I know, speaks readily. Even now he is setting out to meet you, and he will be happy to see you. 15You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth—I will be with you and with him as you speak, and tell both of you what to do—16and he shall speak for you to the people. Thus he shall serve as your

spokesman, with you playing the role of God to him. ¹⁷And take with you this rod, with which you shall perform the signs.”

¹⁸Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro and said to him, “Let me go back to my kinsmenfolk ^{DS32} in Egypt and see how they are faring.” And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.”

¹⁹The Eternal One said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, for all the menauthorities ^{DS33} who sought to kill you are dead.” ²⁰So Moses took his wife and sons, mounted them on an ass, and went back to the land of Egypt; and Moses took the rod of God with him.

²¹And the Eternal said to Moses, “When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the marvels that I have put within your power. I, however, will stiffen his heart so that he will not let the people go. ²²Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Eternal: Israel is My first-born son ^{DS34}. ²³I have said to you, “Let My son go, that he may worship Me,” yet you refuse to let him go. Now I will slay your first-born son.”

²⁴At a night encampment on the way, the Eternal encountered him and sought to kill him. ²⁵So Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son’s foreskin, and touched his legs with it, saying, “You are truly a bridegroom of blood to me!” ²⁶And when He^[God] let him alone, she added, “A bridegroom of blood because of the circumcision.”

²⁷The Eternal One said to Aaron, “Go to meet Moses in the wilderness.” He went and met him at the mountain of God, and he kissed him. ²⁸Moses told Aaron about all the things that the Eternal had committed to him and all the signs about which he^{He} had been instructed him. ²⁹Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the Israelites. ³⁰Aaron repeated all the words that the Eternal had spoken to Moses, and he performed the signs in the sight of the people those assembled ^{DS35}, ³¹and the people were assembly was ^{DS36} convinced. When they heard that the Eternal had taken note of the Israelites and that ^[God]He had seen their plight, they bowed low in homage.

5 Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Eternal, the God of Israel: Let My people go that they may celebrate a festival for Me in the wilderness.” ²But Pharaoh said, “Who is the Eternal that I should heed Him him ^{DS37} and let Israel go? I do not know the Eternal, nor will I let Israel go.” ³They answered, “The God of the Hebrews has become manifested Himself ^{DS38} to us. Let us go, we pray, a distance of three days into the wilderness to sacrifice to the Eternal our God, lest ^[God]He strike us with pestilence or sword.” ⁴But the king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why do you distract the people from their tasks? Get to your labors!” ⁵And Pharaoh continued, “The

people of the land are already so numerous, and you would have them cease from their labors!”

⁶That same day Pharaoh charged the taskmasters and foremenoverseers ^{DS39} of the people, saying, ⁷“You shall no longer provide the people with straw for making bricks as heretofore; let them go and gather straw for themselves. ⁸But impose upon them the same quota of bricks as they have been making heretofore; do not reduce it, for they are shirkers; that is why they cry, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God!’” ⁹Let heavier work be laid upon the menlaborers ^{DS40}; let them keep at it and not pay attention to deceitful promises.”

¹⁰So the taskmasters and foremenoverseers of the people went out and said to the people, “Thus says Pharaoh: I will not give you any straw. ¹¹You must go and get the straw yourselves wherever you can find it; but there shall be no decrease whatever in your work.” ¹²Then the people scattered throughout the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. ¹³And the taskmasters pressed them, saying, “You must complete the same work assignment each day as when you had straw.” ¹⁴And the foremenoverseers of the Israelites, whom Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten. “Why,” they were asked, “did you not complete the prescribed amount of bricks, either yesterday or today, as you did before?”

¹⁵Then the foremenoverseers of the Israelites came to Pharaoh and cried: “Why do you deal thus with your servants? ¹⁶No straw is issued to your servants, yet they demand of us: Make bricks! Thus your servants are being beaten, when the fault is with your own people.” ¹⁷He replied, “You are shirkers, shirkers! That is why you say, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the Eternal.’ ¹⁸Be off now to your work! No straw shall be issued to you, but you must produce your quota of bricks!”

¹⁹Now the foremenoverseers of the Israelites found themselves in trouble because of the order, “You must not reduce your daily quantity of bricks.” ²⁰As they left Pharaoh’s presence, they came upon Moses and Aaron standing in their path, ²¹and they said to them, “May the Eternal look upon you and punish you for making us loathsome to Pharaoh and his courtiers—putting a sword in their hands to slay us.” ²²Then Moses returned to the Eternal and said, “O my Lord ^{DS41}, why did You bring harm upon this people? Why did You send me? ²³Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has dealt worse with this people; and still You have not delivered Your people.”

6 Then the Eternal One said to Moses, “You shall soon see what I will do to Pharaoh: he shall let them go because of a greater might; indeed, because of a greater might he shall drive them from his land.”

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²God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am the Eternal. ³I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai, but I did not make Myself known to them by My name יהוה. ⁴I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. ⁵I have now heard the moaning of the Israelites because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. ⁶Say, therefore, to the Israelite people: I am the Eternal. I will free you from the labors of the Egyptians and deliver you from their bondage. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary chastisements. ⁷And I will take you to be My people, and I will be your God. And you shall know that I, the Eternal, am your God who freed you from the labors of the Egyptians. ⁸I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession, I the Eternal.” ⁹But when Moses told this to the Israelites, they would not listen to Moses, their spirits crushed by cruel bondage.

¹⁰The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying, ¹¹“Go and tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the Israelites depart from his land.” ¹²But Moses appealed to the Eternal, saying, “The Israelites would not listen to me; how then should Pharaoh heed me, a man of impeded speech—me—who gets tongue-tied!” ^{DS42} ¹³So the Eternal spoke to both Moses and Aaron in regard to the Israelites and Pharaoh king of Egypt, instructing them to deliver the Israelites from the land of Egypt.

¹⁴The following are the heads of their respective clans. ^{DS43}

The sons of Reuben, Israel’s first-born: Enoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi; those are the families of Reuben. ¹⁵The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Saul the son of a Canaanite woman; those are the families of Simeon. ¹⁶These are the names of Levi’s sons by their lineage: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari; and the span of Levi’s life was 137 years. ¹⁷The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, by their families. ¹⁸The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel; and the span of Kohath’s life was 133 years. ¹⁹The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites by their lineage.

²⁰Amram took to wife his father’s sister Jochebed, and she bore him Aaron and Moses; and the span of Amram’s life was 137 years. ²¹The sons of Izhar: Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. ²²The sons of Uzziel: Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri. ²³Aaron took to wife Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ²⁴The sons of Korah: Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. Those are the families of the Korahites. ²⁵And Aaron’s son Eleazar took to wife one of Putiel’s daughters,

and she bore him Phinehas. Those are the heads of the fa-thers’-ancestral houses ^{DS44} of the Levites by their families.

²⁶It is the same Aaron and Moses to whom the Eternal One said, “Bring forth the Israelites from the land of Egypt, troop by troop.” ²⁷It was they who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt to free the Israelites from the Egyptians; these are the same Moses and Aaron. ²⁸For when the Eternal spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt ²⁹and the Eternal One said to Moses, “I am the Eternal; speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I will tell you,” ³⁰Moses appealed to the Eternal, saying, “See, I am of impeded speech—get tongue-tied!” ^{DS45} how then should Pharaoh heed me!”

⁷The Eternal replied to Moses, “See, I place you in the role of God to Pharaoh, with your brother Aaron as your prophet. ²You shall repeat all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh to let the Israelites depart from his land. ³But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, that I may multiply My signs and marvels in the land of Egypt. ⁴When Pharaoh does not heed you, I will lay My hand upon Egypt and deliver My ranks, My people the Israelites, from the land of Egypt with extraordinary chastisements. ⁵And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Eternal, when I stretch out My hand over Egypt and bring out the Israelites from their midst.” ⁶This Moses and Aaron did; as the Eternal commanded them, so they did. ⁷Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three, when they made their demand on Pharaoh.

⁸The Eternal One said to Moses and Aaron, ⁹“When Pharaoh speaks to you and says, ‘Produce your marvel,’ you shall say to Aaron, ‘Take your rod and cast it down before Pharaoh.’ It shall turn into a serpent.” ¹⁰So Moses and Aaron came before Pharaoh and did just as the Eternal had commanded: Aaron cast down his rod in the presence of Pharaoh and his courtiers, and it turned into a serpent. ¹¹Then Pharaoh, for his part, summoned the wise messages ^{DS46} and the sorcerers ^{DS47}; and the Egyptian magicians—priests ^{DS48}, in turn, did the same with their spells; ¹²each cast down his rod ^{DS49}, and they turned into serpents. But Aaron’s rod swallowed their rods. ¹³Yet Pharaoh’s heart stiffened and he did not heed them, as the Eternal had said.

¹⁴And the Eternal One said to Moses, “Pharaoh is stubborn; he refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is coming out to the water, and station yourself before him at the edge of the Nile, taking with you the rod that turned into a snake. ¹⁶And say to him, ‘The Eternal, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you to say, “Let My people go that they may worship Me in the wilderness.” But you have paid no heed until now. ¹⁷Thus says the Eternal, “By this you shall know that I am the Eternal.” See, I shall strike the water in the Nile with the rod that is in my hand, and it will be turned into blood; ¹⁸and the fish in the Nile will die. The Nile will stink so that the Egyptians will find it impossible to drink the water of the Nile.’”

¹⁹And the Eternal One said to Moses, “Say to Aaron: Take your rod and hold out your arm over the waters of Egypt—its rivers, its canals, its ponds, all its bodies of water—that they may turn to blood; there shall be blood throughout the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and stone.” ²⁰Moses and Aaron did just as the Eternal commanded: he lifted up the rod and struck the water in the Nile in the sight of Pharaoh and his courtiers, and all the water in the Nile was turned into blood ²¹and the fish in the Nile died. The Nile stank so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile; and there was blood throughout the land of Egypt. ²²But when the Egyptian **magician-priests** did the same with their spells, Pharaoh’s heart stiffened and he did not heed them—as the Eternal had spoken. ²³Pharaoh turned and went into his palace, paying no regard even to this. ²⁴And all the Egyptians had to dig round about the Nile for drinking water, because they could not drink the water of the Nile.

²⁵When seven days had passed after the Eternal struck the Nile, ²⁶the Eternal One said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the Eternal: Let My people go that they may worship Me. ²⁷If you refuse to let them go, then I will plague your whole country with frogs. ²⁸The Nile shall swarm with frogs, and they shall come up and enter your palace, your bedchamber and your bed, the houses of your courtiers and your people, and your ovens and your kneading bowls. ²⁹The frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your courtiers.’”

8And the Eternal One said to Moses, “Say to Aaron: Hold out your arm with the rod over the rivers, the canals, and the ponds, and bring up the frogs on the land of Egypt.” ²Aaron held out his arm over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. ³But the **magician-priests** did the same with their spells, and brought frogs upon the land of Egypt.

⁴Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Plead with the Eternal to remove the frogs from me and my people, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the Eternal.” ⁵And Moses said to Pharaoh, “You may have this triumph over me: for what time shall I plead in behalf of you and your courtiers and your people, that the frogs be cut off from you and your houses, to remain only in the Nile?” ⁶“For tomorrow,” he replied. And [Moses] said, “As you say—that you may know that there is none like the Eternal our God; ⁷the frogs shall retreat from you and your courtiers and your people; they shall remain only in the Nile.” ⁸Then Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh’s presence, and Moses cried out to the Eternal in the matter of the frogs which ~~He had been~~ inflicted **DSS0** upon Pharaoh. ⁹And the Eternal did as Moses asked; the frogs died out in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields. ¹⁰And they piled them up in heaps, till the land stank. ¹¹But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he became stubborn and would not heed them, as the Eternal had spoken.

¹²Then the Eternal One said to Moses, “Say to Aaron: Hold out your rod and strike the dust of the earth, and it shall turn to lice throughout the land of Egypt.” ¹³And they did so. Aaron held out his arm with the rod and struck the dust of the earth, and vermin came upon **human** and beast **DSS1**; all the dust of the earth turned to lice throughout the land of Egypt. ¹⁴The **magician-priests** did the like with their spells to produce lice, but they could not. The vermin remained upon **human** and beast; ¹⁵and the **magician-priests** said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God!” But Pharaoh’s heart stiffened and he would not heed them, as the Eternal had spoken.

¹⁶And the Eternal One said to Moses, “Early in the morning present yourself to Pharaoh, as he is coming out to the water, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Eternal: Let My people go that they may worship Me. ¹⁷For if you do not let My people go, I will let loose swarms of insects against you and your courtiers and your people and your houses; the houses of the Egyptians, and the very ground they stand on, shall be filled with swarms of insects. ¹⁸But on that day I will set apart the region of Goshen, where My people dwell, so that no swarms of insects shall be there, that you may know that I the Eternal am in the midst of the land. ¹⁹And I will make a distinction between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall come to pass.’” ²⁰And the Eternal did so. Heavy swarms of insects invaded Pharaoh’s palace and the houses of his courtiers; throughout the country of Egypt the land was ruined because of the swarms of insects.

²¹Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Go and sacrifice to your God within the land.” ²²But Moses replied, “It would not be right to do this, for what we sacrifice to the Eternal our God is untouchable to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice that which is untouchable to the Egyptians before their very eyes, will they not stone us! ²³So we must go a distance of three days into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Eternal ~~our God~~ as **our God** ~~He~~ may command us.” ²⁴Pharaoh said, “I will let you go to sacrifice to the Eternal your God in the wilderness; but do not go very far. Plead, then, for me.” ²⁵And Moses said, “When I leave your presence, I will plead with the Eternal that the swarms of insects depart tomorrow from Pharaoh and his courtiers and his people; but let not Pharaoh again act deceitfully, not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Eternal.”

²⁶So Moses left Pharaoh’s presence and pleaded with the Eternal. ²⁷And the Eternal did as Moses asked: ~~He~~ **removing** ~~removed~~ the swarms of insects from Pharaoh, from his courtiers, and from his people; not one remained. ²⁸But Pharaoh became stubborn this time also, and would not let the people go.

9The Eternal One said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the Eternal, the God of the Hebrews: Let My people go to worship Me. ²For if you refuse to let them go, and continue to hold them, ³then the hand of the Eternal will

strike your livestock in the fields—the horses, the asses, the camels, the cattle, and the sheep—with a very severe pestilence. ⁴But the Eternal will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of the Egyptians, so that nothing shall die of all that belongs to the Israelites. ⁵The Eternal has fixed the time: tomorrow the Eternal will do this thing in the land.” ⁶And the Eternal did so the next day: all the livestock of the Egyptians died, but of the livestock of the Israelites not a beast died. ⁷When Pharaoh inquired, he found that not a head of the livestock of Israel had died; yet Pharaoh remained stubborn, and he would not let the people go.

⁸Then the Eternal One said to Moses and Aaron, “Each of you take handfuls of soot from the kiln, and let Moses throw it toward the sky in the sight of Pharaoh. ⁹It shall become a fine dust all over the land of Egypt, and cause an inflammation breaking out in boils on human and beast throughout the land of Egypt.” ¹⁰So they took soot of the kiln and appeared before Pharaoh; Moses threw it toward the sky, and it caused an inflammation breaking out in boils on human and beast. ¹¹The magician-priests were unable to confront Moses because of the inflammation, for the inflammation afflicted the magician-priests as well as all the other Egyptians. ¹²But the Eternal stiffened the heart of Pharaoh, and he would not heed them, just as the Eternal had told Moses.

¹³The Eternal One said to Moses, “Early in the morning present yourself to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the Eternal, the God of the Hebrews: Let My people go to worship Me. ¹⁴For this time I will send all My plagues upon your person, and your courtiers, and your people, in order that you may know that there is none like Me in all the world. ¹⁵I could have stretched forth My hand and stricken you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been effaced from the earth. ¹⁶Nevertheless I have spared you for this purpose: in order to show you My power, and in order that My fame may resound throughout the world. ¹⁷Yet you continue to thwart My people, and do not let them go! ¹⁸This time tomorrow I will rain down a very heavy hail, such as has not been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. ¹⁹Therefore, order your livestock and everything you have in the open brought under shelter; every human and beast that is found outside, not having been brought indoors, shall perish when the hail comes down upon them!’” ²⁰Those among Pharaoh’s courtiers who feared the Eternal’s word brought their slaves and livestock indoors to safety; ²¹but those who paid no regard to the word of the Eternal left their slaves and livestock in the open.

²²The Eternal One said to Moses, “Hold out your arm toward the sky that hail may fall on all the land of Egypt, upon human and beast and all the grasses of the field in the land of Egypt.” ²³So Moses held out his rod toward the sky, and the Eternal sent thunder and hail, and fire streamed down to the ground, as the Eternal rained down hail upon the land of Egypt. ²⁴The hail was very heavy—fire flashing in the midst of the hail—such as had not fallen on the land of Egypt

since it had become a nation. ²⁵Throughout the land of Egypt the hail struck down all that were in the open, both human and beast; the hail also struck down all the grasses of the field and shattered all the trees of the field. ²⁶Only in the region of Goshen, where the Israelites were, there was no hail.

²⁷Thereupon Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and said to them, “I stand guilty this time. The Eternal is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. ²⁸Plead with the Eternal that there may be an end of God’s thunder and of hail. I will let you go; you need stay no longer.” ²⁹Moses said to him, “As I go out of the city, I shall spread out my hands to the Eternal; the thunder will cease and the hail will fall no more, so that you may know that the earth is the Eternal’s. ³⁰But I know that you and your courtiers do not yet fear the Eternal God.”—³¹Now the flax and barley were ruined, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud; ³²but the wheat and the emmer were not hurt, for they ripen late.—³³Leaving Pharaoh, Moses went outside the city and spread out his hands to the Eternal: the thunder and the hail ceased, and no rain came pouring down upon the earth. ³⁴But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he became stubborn and reverted to his guilty ways, as did his courtiers. ³⁵So Pharaoh’s heart stiffened and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the Eternal had foretold through Moses.

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¹⁰Then the Eternal One said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh. For I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his courtiers, in order that I may display these My signs among them, ²and that you may recount in the hearing of your childrensons and of your children’s childrensons’ sons DS52 how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I displayed My signs among them—in order that you may know that I am the Eternal.” ³So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, “Thus says the Eternal, the God of the Hebrews, ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go that they may worship Me. ⁴For if you refuse to let My people go, tomorrow I will bring locusts on your territory. ⁵They shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one will be able to see the land. They shall devour the surviving remnant that was left to you after the hail; and they shall eat away all your trees that grow in the field. ⁶Moreover, they shall fill your palaces and the houses of all your courtiers and of all the Egyptians—something that neither your fathers nor fathers’ fathers DS53 have seen from the day they appeared on earth to this day.’” With that he turned and left Pharaoh’s presence.

⁷Pharaoh’s courtiers said to him, “How long shall this one be a snare to us? Let the mena delegation DS54 go to worship the Eternal their God! Are you not yet aware that Egypt is lost?” ⁸So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh and he said to them, “Go, worship the Eternal your

God! Who are the ones to go?”⁹ Moses replied, “We will all go, **young and old regardless of social station**; [DS55] we will go with our sons and daughters, our flocks and herds; **for** we must observe the Eternal’s festival.”¹⁰ But he said to them, “The Eternal be with you **the same as I mean to let your children dependents** [DS56] go with you! Clearly, you are bent on mischief.”¹¹ No! You **menfolk gentlemen** [DS57] go and worship the Eternal, since that is what you want.” And they were expelled from Pharaoh’s presence.

¹² Then the Eternal One said to Moses, “Hold out your arm over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt and eat up all the grasses in the land, whatever the hail has left.”¹³ So Moses held out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Eternal drove an east wind over the land all that day and all night; and when morning came, the east wind had brought the locusts.¹⁴ Locusts invaded all the land of Egypt and settled within all the territory of Egypt in a thick mass; never before had there been so many, nor will there ever be so many again.¹⁵ They hid all the land from view, and the land was darkened; and they ate up all the grasses of the field and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left, so that nothing green was left, of tree or grass of the field, in all the land of Egypt.

¹⁶ Pharaoh hurriedly summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “I stand guilty before the Eternal your God and before you.¹⁷ Forgive my offense just this once, and plead with the Eternal your God that **this death** He but **be removed this death** from me.”¹⁸ So he left Pharaoh’s presence and pleaded with the Eternal.¹⁹ The Eternal caused a shift to a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and hurled them into the Sea of Reeds; not a single locust remained in all the territory of Egypt.²⁰ But the Eternal stiffened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let the Israelites go.

²¹ Then the Eternal One said to Moses, “Hold out your arm toward the sky that there may be darkness upon the land of Egypt, a darkness that can be touched.”²² Moses held out his arm toward the sky and thick darkness descended upon all the land of Egypt for three days.²³ People could not see one another, and for three days no one could **move about get up from where he was** [DS58]; but all the Israelites enjoyed light in their dwellings.

²⁴ Pharaoh then summoned Moses and said, “Go, worship the Eternal! Only your flocks and your herds shall be left behind; even your **children dependents** [DS59] may go with you.”²⁵ But Moses said, “You yourself must provide us with sacrifices and burnt offerings to offer up to the Eternal our God; ²⁶ our own livestock, too, shall go along with us—not a hoof shall remain behind: for we must select from it for the worship of the Eternal our God; and we shall not know with what we are to worship the Eternal until we arrive there.”²⁷ But the Eternal stiffened Pharaoh’s heart and he would not agree to let them go.²⁸ Pharaoh said to him, “Be gone from me! Take care not to see me again, for the moment you look

upon my face you shall die.”²⁹ And Moses replied, “You have spoken rightly. I shall not see your face again!”

11 And the Eternal One said to Moses, “I will bring but one more plague upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt; after that he shall let you go from here; indeed, when he lets you go, he will drive you out of here one and all.² Tell the people to borrow, each man from his neighbor and each woman from hers, objects of silver and gold.”³ The Eternal disposed the Egyptians favorably toward the people. Moreover, **[God’s] envoy** Moses **himself** [DS60] was much esteemed in the land of Egypt, among Pharaoh’s courtiers and among the people.

⁴ Moses said, “Thus says the Eternal: Toward midnight I will go forth among the Egyptians,⁵ and every **[male] first-born** [DS61] in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the first-born of the slave girl who is behind the millstones; and all the first-born of the cattle.⁶ And there shall be a loud cry in all the land of Egypt, such as has never been or will ever be again;⁷ but not a dog shall snarl at any of the Israelites, at **human or beast**—in order that you may know that the Eternal makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.

⁸ Then all these courtiers of yours shall come down to me and bow low to me, saying, ‘Depart, you and all the people who follow you!’ After that I will depart.” And he left Pharaoh’s presence in hot anger.

⁹ Now the Eternal had said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not heed you, in order that My marvels may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.”¹⁰ Moses and Aaron had performed all these marvels before Pharaoh, but the Eternal had stiffened the heart of Pharaoh so that he would not let the Israelites go from his land.

12 The Eternal One said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: ² This month shall mark for you the beginning of the months; it shall be the first of the months of the year for you.³ Speak to the **whole community leadership** of Israel [DS62] and say that on the tenth of this month each of them shall take a lamb to a family, a lamb to a household.⁴ But if the household is too small for a lamb, let **it him** share one with a neighbor who dwells nearby, in proportion to the number of persons: you shall contribute for the lamb according to what each household will eat.⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a yearling male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.⁶ You shall keep watch over it until the **fourteenth day** of this month; and all the assembled congregation [DS63] of the Israelites shall slaughter it at twilight.⁷ They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they are to eat it.⁸ They shall eat the flesh that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs.⁹ Do not eat any of it raw, or cooked in any way with water, but roasted—head, legs, and entrails—over the fire.¹⁰ You shall

not leave any of it over until morning; if any of it is left until morning, you shall burn it.

¹¹This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly: it is a passover offering to the Eternal. ¹²For that night I will go through the land of Egypt and strike down every [male] first-born [DS64] in the land of Egypt, both human and beast; and I will mete out punishments to all the gods of Egypt, I the Eternal. ¹³And the blood on the houses where you are staying shall be a sign for you: when I see the blood I will pass over you, so that no plague will destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴This day shall be to you one of remembrance: you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Eternal throughout the ages; you shall celebrate it as an institution for all time. ¹⁵Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the very first day you shall remove leaven from your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day to the seventh day, that person [DS65] shall be cut off from Israel.

¹⁶You shall celebrate a sacred occasion on the first day, and a sacred occasion on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them; only what every person is to eat, that alone may be prepared for you. ¹⁷You shall observe the [Feast of] Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your ranks out of the land of Egypt; you shall observe this day throughout the ages as an institution for all time. ¹⁸In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. ¹⁹No leaven shall be found in your houses for seven days. For whoever eats what is leavened, that person—whether a stranger or a citizen of the country—shall be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a citizen of the country [DS66]. ²⁰You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your settlements you shall eat unleavened bread.

²¹Moses then summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go, pick out lambs for your families, and slaughter the passover offering. ²²Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and to the two doorposts. None of you shall go outside the door of hisyour house until morning. ²³For when—the Eternal, when goes going—through to smite the Egyptians, He—will see the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, and the Eternal will pass over the door and not let the Destroyer enter and smite your home.

²⁴“You shall observe this as an institution for all time, for you and for your descendants. ²⁵And when you enter the land that the Eternal will give you, as He has—promised [DS67], you shall observe this rite. ²⁶And when your children ask you, ‘What do you mean by this rite?’ ²⁷you shall say, ‘It is the passover sacrifice to the Eternal, who—because He—passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when smiting—He smote the Egyptians, but saved our houses.’”

The people—Those assembled [DS68]—then bowed low in homage. ²⁸And the Israelites went and did so; just as the Eternal had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

²⁹In the middle of the night the Eternal struck down all the [male] first-born [DS69] in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on the throne to the first-born of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of the cattle. ³⁰And Pharaoh arose in the night, with all his courtiers and all the Egyptians—because there was a loud cry in Egypt; for there was no house where there was not someone dead. ³¹He summoned Moses and Aaron in the night and said, “Up, depart from among my people, you and the Israelites with you! Go, worship the Eternal as you said! ³²Take also your flocks and your herds, as you said, and begone! And may you bring a blessing upon me also!”

³³The Egyptians urged the people on, impatient to have them leave the country, for they said, “We shall all be dead.” ³⁴So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls wrapped in their cloaks upon their shoulders. ³⁵The Israelites had done Moses’ bidding and borrowed from the Egyptians objects of silver and gold, and clothing. ³⁶And the Eternal had disposed the Egyptians favorably toward the people, and they let them have their request; thus they stripped the Egyptians.

³⁷The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand fighting men on foot [DS70], aside from children—noncombatants [DS71]. ³⁸Moreover, a mixed multitude went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds. ³⁹And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had taken out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, since they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay; nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

⁴⁰The length of time that the Israelites lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years; ⁴¹at the end of the four hundred and thirtieth year, to the very day, all the ranks of the Eternal departed from the land of Egypt. ⁴²That was for the Eternal a night of vigil to bring them out of the land of Egypt; that same night is the Eternal’s, one of vigil for all the children of Israel throughout the ages.

⁴³The Eternal One said to Moses and Aaron: This is the law of the passover offering: No foreigner shall eat of it. ⁴⁴But any slave—a man has bought—householder’s purchased—male slave [DS72] may eat of it once he has been circumcised. ⁴⁵No bound or hired laborer shall eat of it. ⁴⁶It shall be eaten in one house: you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house; nor shall you break a bone of it. ⁴⁷The whole community of Israel shall offer it. ⁴⁸If a male stranger [DS73] who dwells with you would offer the passover to the Eternal, all his males must be circumcised; then he shall be admitted to offer it; he shall then be as a citizen of the country. But no uncircumcised person—man [DS74]—may eat of it. ⁴⁹There shall

be one law for the citizen and for the stranger who dwells among you.

⁵⁰And all the Israelites did so; as the Eternal had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

⁵¹That very day the Eternal freed the Israelites from the land of Egypt, troop by troop.

13The Eternal One spoke further to Moses, saying, ²“Consecrate to Me every male first-born^[DS75]; human and beast^[DS76], the first [male] issue of every womb among the Israelites is Mine.”

³And Moses said to the people,

“Remember this day, on which you went free from Egypt, the house of bondage, how the Eternal freed you from it with a mighty hand: no leavened bread shall be eaten. ⁴You go free on this day, in the month of Abib. ⁵So, when the Eternal has brought you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which was sworn^[He swore] to your fathers^[DS77] to be given you^[DS78], a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall observe in this month the following practice:

⁶“Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a festival of the Eternal. ⁷Throughout the seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten; no leavened bread shall be found with you, and no leaven shall be found in all your territory. ⁸And you shall explain to your son/child^[DS79] on that day, ‘It is because of what the Eternal did for me when I went free from Egypt.’

⁹“And this shall serve you as a sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead—in order that the Teaching of the Eternal may be in your mouth—that with a mighty hand the Eternal freed you from Egypt. ¹⁰You shall keep this institution at its set time from year to year.

¹¹“And when the Eternal has brought you into the land of the Canaanites, as [God]^[He] swore to you and to your fathers^[DS80], and has given it to you, ¹²you shall set apart for the Eternal every first issue of the womb: every male firstling that your cattle drop shall be the Eternal’s. ¹³But every firstling ass you shall redeem with a sheep; if you do not redeem it, you must break its neck. And you must redeem every male first-born male^[DS81] among your children. ¹⁴And when, in time to come, your son a child of yours^[DS82] asks you, saying, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him^[reply]. ‘It was with a mighty hand that the Eternal brought us out from Egypt, the house of bondage. ¹⁵When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Eternal slew every [male] first-born^[DS83] in the land of Egypt, the first-born of both human and beast^[DS84]. Therefore I sacrifice to the Eternal every first male issue of the womb, but redeem every male first-born among my sons/children^[DS85].’

¹⁶“And so it shall be as a sign upon your hand and as a symbol on your forehead that with a mighty hand the Eternal freed us from Egypt.”

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¹⁷Now when Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although it was nearer; for God said, “The people may have a change of heart when they see war, and return to Egypt.” ¹⁸So God led the people round about, by way of the wilderness at the Sea of Reeds.

Now the Israelites went up armed out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁹And Moses took with him the bones of Joseph, who had exacted an oath from the children of Israel, saying, “God will be sure to take notice of you: then you shall carry up my bones from here with you.”

²⁰They set out from Succoth, and encamped at Etham, at the edge of the wilderness. ²¹The Eternal went before them in a pillar of cloud by day, to guide them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, that they might travel day and night. ²²The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

14The Eternal One said to Moses: ²Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. ³Pharaoh will say of the Israelites, “They are astray in the land; the wilderness has closed in on them.” ⁴Then I will stiffen Pharaoh’s heart and he will pursue them, that I may gain glory through Pharaoh and all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Eternal.

And they did so.

⁵When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his courtiers had a change of heart about the people and said, “What is this we have done, releasing Israel from our service?” ⁶He ordered his chariot and took his men-force^[DS86] with him; ⁷he took six hundred of his picked chariots, and the rest of the chariots of Egypt, with officers in all of them. ⁸The Eternal stiffened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he gave chase to the Israelites. As the Israelites were departing defiantly, ⁹the Egyptians gave chase to them, and all the chariot horses of Pharaoh, his horsemen/riders^[DS87] and his warriors overtook them encamped by the sea, near Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon.

¹⁰As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites caught sight of the Egyptians advancing upon them. Greatly frightened, the Israelites cried out to the Eternal. ¹¹And they said to Moses, “Was it for want of graves in Egypt that you brought us to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, taking us out of Egypt? ¹²Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us be, and we will serve the Egyptians, for it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness?’” ¹³But Moses said to the people, “Have no fear! Stand by, and witness the deliverance which the Eternal will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you will never

see again. ¹⁴The Eternal will battle for you; you hold your peace!”

¹⁵Then the Eternal One said to Moses, “Why do you cry out to Me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. ¹⁶And you lift up your rod and hold out your arm over the sea and split it, so that the Israelites may march into the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷And I will stiffen the hearts of the Egyptians so that they go in after them; and I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his warriors, his chariots and his **horsemenriders**. ¹⁸Let the Egyptians know that I am the Eternal, when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots, and his **horsemenriders**.”

¹⁹The angel of God, who had been going ahead of the Israelite army, now moved and followed behind them; and the pillar of cloud shifted from in front of them and took up a place behind them, ²⁰and it came between the army of the Egyptians and the army of Israel. Thus there was the cloud with the darkness, and it cast a spell upon the night, so that the one could not come near the other all through the night.

²¹Then Moses held out his arm over the sea and the Eternal drove back the sea with a strong east wind all that night, and turned the sea into dry ground. The waters were split, ²²and the Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. ²³The Egyptians came in pursuit after them into the sea, all of Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and **horsemenriders**. ²⁴At the morning watch, the Eternal looked down upon the Egyptian army from a pillar of fire and cloud, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. ²⁵**He[God]** locked the wheels of their chariots so that they moved forward with difficulty. And the Egyptians said, “Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Eternal is fighting for them against Egypt.”

²⁶Then the Eternal One said to Moses, “Hold out your arm over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians and upon their chariots and upon their **horsemenriders**.” ²⁷Moses held out his arm over the sea, and at day-break the sea returned to its normal state, and the Egyptians fled at its approach. But the Eternal hurled the Egyptians into the sea. ²⁸The waters turned back and covered the chariots and the **horsemenriders**—Pharaoh’s entire army that followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. ²⁹But the Israelites had marched through the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

³⁰Thus the Eternal delivered Israel that day from the Egyptians. Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the shore of the sea. ³¹And when Israel saw the wondrous power which the Eternal had wielded against the Egyptians, the people feared the Eternal; they had faith in the Eternal and **Hisin God’s** servant Moses.

15Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Eternal. They said:

I will sing to the Eternal, for He has triumphed gloriously;

Horse and driver He has hurled into the sea **DS88**.

²The Eternal is my strength and might;

He is become my deliverance.

This is my God and I will enshrine Him;

The God of my **fatherancestors** **DS89**, and I will exalt Him.

³The Eternal, the Warrior—

Eternal One is His name!

⁴Pharaoh’s chariots and his army

He has cast into the sea;

And the pick of his officers

Are drowned in the Sea of Reeds.

⁵The deeps covered them;

They went down into the depths like a stone.

⁶Your right hand, Eternal One, glorious in power,

Your right hand, Eternal One, shatters the foe!

⁷In Your great triumph You break Your opponents;

You send forth Your fury, it consumes them like straw.

⁸At the blast of Your nostrils the waters piled up,

The floods stood straight like a wall;

The deeps froze in the heart of the sea.

⁹The foe said,

“I will pursue, I will overtake,

I will divide the spoil;

My desire shall have its fill of them.

I will bare my sword—

My hand shall subdue them.”

¹⁰You made Your wind blow, the sea covered them;

They sank like lead in the majestic waters.

¹¹Who is like You, Eternal One, among the celestials;

Who is like You, majestic in holiness,

Awesome in splendor, working wonders!

¹²You put out Your right hand,

The earth swallowed them.

¹³In Your love You lead the people You redeemed;

In Your strength You guide them to Your holy abode.

¹⁴The peoples hear, they tremble;

Agony grips the dwellers in Philistia.

¹⁵Now are the clans of Edom dismayed;

The tribes of Moab—trembling grips them;

All the dwellers in Canaan are aghast.

¹⁶Terror and dread descend upon them;

Through the might of Your arm they are still as stone—

Till Your people cross over, Eternal One,

Till Your people cross whom You have ransomed.

17You will bring them and plant them in Your own mountain,

The place You made to dwell in, Eternal One,
The sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands
established.

18The Eternal will reign for ever and ever!

19For the horses of Pharaoh, with his chariots and **horsemen-riders**, went into the sea; and the Eternal turned back on them the waters of the sea; but the Israelites marched on dry ground in the midst of the sea.

20Then Miriam the prophetess^[DS90], Aaron's sister, **picked up a hand-drum**~~took a timbrel in her hand~~, and all the women went out after her in dance with **hand-drums**~~timbrels~~^[DS91]. 21And Miriam chanted for them:

Sing to the Eternal, for He has triumphed
gloriously;
Horse and driver He has hurled into the sea.

22Then Moses caused Israel to set out from the Sea of Reeds. They went on into the wilderness of Shur; they traveled three days in the wilderness and found no water. 23They came to Marah, but they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; that is why it was named Marah. 24And the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" 25So he cried out to the Eternal, and the Eternal showed him a piece of wood; he threw it into the water and the water became sweet.

There **[God]He** made for them a fixed rule;~~and there He they were put them~~ to the test. 26**[God]He** said, "If you will heed the Eternal your God diligently, doing what is upright in **HisGod's** sight, giving ear to **God'sHis** commandments and keeping all **God'sHis** laws, then I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians, for I the Eternal am your healer."

27And they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; and they encamped there beside the water.

16Setting out from Elim, the whole Israelite community^[DS92] came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt. 2In the wilderness, the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. 3The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the Eternal in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, when we ate our fill of bread! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to starve this whole congregation to death."

4And the Eternal One said to Moses, "I will rain down bread for you from the sky, and the people shall go out and

gather each day that day's portion—that I may thus test them, to see whether they will follow My instructions or not. 5But on the sixth day, when they apportion what they have brought in, it shall prove to be double the amount they gather each day." 6So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "By evening you shall know it was the Eternal who brought you out from the land of Egypt; 7and in the morning you shall behold the Presence of the Eternal, because **[God]He** has heard your grumblings against the Eternal. For who are we that you should grumble against us? 8Since it is the Eternal," Moses continued, "who will give you flesh to eat in the evening and bread in the morning to the full—~~because the Eternal has heard the grumblings you utter against Him,~~—what is our part? Your grumbling is **against the Eternal**, not against us, **but against the Eternal!**"

9Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole Israelite community: Advance toward the Eternal, **for Hewho** has heard your grumbling." 10And as Aaron spoke to the whole Israelite community, they turned toward the wilderness, and there, in a cloud, appeared the Presence of the Eternal.

11The Eternal One spoke to Moses: 12"I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Speak to them and say: By evening you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; and you shall know that I the Eternal am your God."

13In the evening quail appeared and covered the camp; in the morning there was a fall of dew about the camp. 14When the fall of dew lifted, there, over the surface of the wilderness, lay a fine and flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. 15When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?"—for they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "That is the bread which the Eternal has given you to eat. 16This is what the Eternal has commanded: **Gather as much of it as each of you**~~Each household shall gather as much as it~~ requires to eat,—~~an omer~~ to a person for as many of you as there are; **each of you shall fetch for those in his**~~each household shall fetch according to those in its tent~~^[DS93]."

17The Israelites did so, some gathering much, some little. 18But when they measured it by the *omer*, **heanyone** who had gathered much had no excess, and **heanyone** who had gathered little had no deficiency: **theyeach household** had gathered as much as **theyit** needed to eat. 19And Moses said to them, "Let no one leave any of it over until morning." 20But they paid no attention to Moses; some of them left of it^[DS94] until morning, and it became infested with maggots and stank. And Moses was angry with them.

21So they gathered it every morning, ~~each~~ as much as **heeach one** needed to eat; for when the sun grew hot, it would melt. 22On the sixth day they gathered double the amount of food, two *omers* for each; and when all the chieftains of the community came and told Moses, 23he said to them, "This is what the Eternal meant: Tomorrow is a day of rest, a holy sabbath of the Eternal. Bake what you would bake and boil

what you would boil; and all that is left put aside to be kept until morning.”²⁴ So they put it aside until morning, as Moses had ordered; and it did not turn foul, and there were no maggots in it.²⁵ Then Moses said, “Eat it today, for today is a sabbath of the Eternal; you will not find it today on the plain.²⁶ Six days you shall gather it; on the seventh day, the sabbath, there will be none.”

²⁷ Yet some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found nothing.²⁸ And the Eternal One said to Moses, “How long will you ~~men~~^{all} refuse to obey My commandments and My teachings?²⁹ Mark that ~~it is~~ the Eternal ~~who, having~~ given you the sabbath; therefore ~~gives you~~ ~~He gives you~~ two days’ food on the sixth day. Let everyone remain ~~where he is~~ ~~in place~~; let no one leave ~~the vicinity-~~ ~~his place~~ on the seventh day.”³⁰ So the people remained inactive on the seventh day.

³¹ The house of Israel named it manna; it was like coriander seed, white, and it tasted like wafers in honey.³² Moses said, “This is what the Eternal has commanded: Let one *omer* of it be kept throughout the ages, in order that they may see the bread that I fed you in the wilderness when I brought you out from the land of Egypt.”³³ And Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar, put one *omer* of manna in it, and place it before the Eternal, to be kept throughout the ages.”³⁴ As the Eternal had commanded Moses, Aaron placed it before the Pact, to be kept.³⁵ And the Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a settled land; they ate the manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.³⁶ The *omer* is a tenth of an *eifah*.

17 From the wilderness of Sin the whole Israelite community continued by stages as the Eternal would command. They encamped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink.² The people quarreled with Moses. “Give us water to drink,” they said; and Moses replied to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you try the Eternal?”³ But the people thirsted there for water; and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?”⁴ Moses cried out to the Eternal, saying, “What shall I do with this people? Before long they will be stoning me!”⁵ Then the Eternal One said to Moses, “Pass before the people; take with you some of the elders of Israel, and take along the rod with which you struck the Nile, and set out.⁶ I will be standing there before you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock and water will issue from it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.⁷ The place was named Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and because they tried the Eternal, saying, “Is the Eternal present among us or not?”

⁸ Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim.⁹ Moses said to Joshua, “Pick some ~~men~~^{troops} for us^{DS97},

and go out and do battle with Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in my hand.”¹⁰ Joshua did as Moses told him and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.¹¹ Then, whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; but whenever he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.¹² But Moses’ hands grew heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur, one on each side, supported his hands; thus his hands remained steady until the sun set.¹³ And Joshua overwhelmed the people of Amalek with the sword.

¹⁴ Then the Eternal One said to Moses, “Inscribe this in a document as a reminder, and read it aloud to Joshua: I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven!”¹⁵ And Moses built an altar and named it Adonai-nissi.¹⁶ He said, “It means, ‘Hand upon the throne of the Eternal!’ The Eternal will be at war with Amalek throughout the ages.”

YITRO

18 Jethro priest of Midian, Moses’ father-in-law, heard all that God had done for Moses and for Israel, ~~His God’s~~ people, ~~—~~ how the Eternal had brought Israel out from Egypt.² So Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses’ wife, after she had been sent home,³ and her two sons—of whom one was named Gershom, that is to say, “I have been a stranger in a foreign land”;⁴ and the other was named Eliezer, meaning, “~~The God of my father’s~~ ~~[house]~~^{DS98} was my help, ~~and He delivered-~~ ~~delivering~~ me from the sword of Pharaoh.”⁵ Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, brought Moses’ sons and wife to him in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of God.⁶ He sent word to Moses, “I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you, with your wife and her two sons.”⁷ Moses went out to meet his father-in-law; he bowed low and kissed him; each asked after the other’s welfare, and they went into the tent.

⁸ Moses then recounted to his father-in-law everything that the Eternal had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel’s sake, all the hardships that had befallen them on the way, and how the Eternal had delivered them.⁹ And Jethro rejoiced over all the kindness that the Eternal had shown Israel when ~~He-~~ ~~delivered~~ ~~ing~~ them from the Egyptians.¹⁰ “Blessed be the Eternal,” Jethro said, “who delivered you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh, and who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.¹¹ Now I know that the Eternal is greater than all gods, yes, by the result of their very schemes against [the people].”¹² And Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices for God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to partake of the meal before God with Moses’ father-in-law.

¹³ Next day, Moses sat as magistrate among the people, while the people stood about Moses from morning until eve-

ning. ¹⁴But when Moses' father-in-law saw how much he had to do for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing to the people? Why do you act alone, while all the people stand about you from morning until evening?" ¹⁵Moses replied to his father-in-law, "It is because the people come to me to inquire of God. ¹⁶When they have a dispute, it comes before me, and I decide between one **person**~~party~~^[DS99] and another, and I make known the laws and teachings of God."

¹⁷But Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing you are doing is not right; ¹⁸you will surely wear yourself out, and these people as well. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. ¹⁹Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You represent the people before God: you bring the disputes before God, ²⁰and enjoin upon them the laws and the teachings, and make known to them the way they are to go and the practices they are to follow. ²¹You shall also seek out from among all the people capable **men**~~deputies~~ who fear God, ~~—~~trustworthy **men**~~deputies~~ who spurn ill-gotten gain^[DS100]. Set these over them as chiefs of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, and ²²let them judge the people at all times. Have them bring every major dispute to you, but let them decide every minor dispute themselves. Make it easier for yourself by letting them share the burden with you. ²³If you do this—and God so commands you—you will be able to bear up; and all these people too will go home unwearied."

²⁴Moses heeded his father-in-law and did just as he had said. ²⁵Moses chose capable **men**~~deputies~~ out of all Israel, and appointed them heads over the people—chiefs of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens; ²⁶and they judged the people at all times: the difficult matters they would bring to Moses, and all the minor matters they would decide themselves. ²⁷Then Moses bade his father-in-law farewell, and he went his way to his own land.

19On the third new moon after the Israelites had gone forth from the land of Egypt, on that very day, they entered the wilderness of Sinai. ²Having journeyed from Rephidim, they entered the wilderness of Sinai and encamped in the wilderness. Israel encamped there in front of the mountain, ³and Moses went up to God. The Eternal One called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob and declare to the children of Israel: ⁴'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Me. ⁵Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, ⁶but you shall be to Me a kingdom of ^[DS101] priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel."

⁷Moses came and summoned the elders of the people ^[DS102] and put before them all that the Eternal had commanded him. ⁸All **the people**~~those assembled~~^[DS103] an-

swered as one, saying, "All that the Eternal has spoken we will do!" And Moses brought back the people's words to the Eternal. ⁹And the Eternal One said to Moses, "I will come to you in a thick cloud, in order that the people may hear when I speak with you and so trust you ever after." Then Moses reported the people's words to the Eternal, ¹⁰and the Eternal said to Moses, "Go to the people and warn them to stay pure today and tomorrow. Let them wash their clothes. ¹¹Let them be ready for the third day; for on the third day the Eternal will come down, in the sight of all the people, on Mount Sinai. ¹²You shall set bounds for the people round about, saying, 'Beware of going up the mountain or touching the border of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death: ¹³~~without being touched—by being either stoned or shot; no hand shall touch him, but he shall be either stoned or shot;~~ beast or **person**~~man~~^[DS104], **he**~~a trespasser~~^[DS105] shall not live.' When the ram's horn sounds a long blast, they may go up on the mountain."

¹⁴Moses came down from the mountain to the people and warned the people to stay pure, and they washed their clothes. ¹⁵And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day: **do**~~[the men among] you should~~ not go near a woman."^[DS106]

¹⁶On the third day, as morning dawned, there was thunder, and lightning, and a dense cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud blast of the horn; and all the people who were in the camp trembled. ¹⁷Moses led the people out of the camp toward God, and they took their places at the foot of the mountain.

¹⁸Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke, for the Eternal had come down upon it in fire; the smoke rose like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled violently. ¹⁹The blare of the horn grew louder and louder. As Moses spoke, God answered him in thunder. ²⁰The Eternal came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain, and the Eternal One called Moses to the top of the mountain and Moses went up. ²¹The Eternal One said to Moses, "Go down, warn the people not to break through to the Eternal to gaze, lest many of them perish. ²²The priests also, who come near the Eternal, must stay pure, lest the Eternal break out against them." ²³But Moses said to the Eternal, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for You warned us saying, 'Set bounds about the mountain and sanctify it.'" ²⁴So the Eternal said to him, "Go down, and come back together with Aaron; but let not the priests or the people break through to come up to the Eternal, lest **He** ~~[God]~~ break out against them." ²⁵And Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.

20God spoke all these words, saying:

²I the Eternal am your God^[DS107] who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage: ³You shall have no other gods besides Me.

⁴You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I the Eternal your God am an impassioned God, visiting the guilt of the parents upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me, ⁶but showing kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

⁷You shall not swear falsely by the name of the Eternal your God; for the Eternal will not clear one who swears falsely by God'sHis name.

⁸Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Eternal your God: you shall not do any work—you DS108, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. ¹¹For in six days the Eternal made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and then He rested on the seventh day; therefore the Eternal blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

¹²Honor your father and your mother, that you may long endure on the land that the Eternal your God is assigning to you.

¹³You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁴You shall not covet your neighbor's house: you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his—male nor female slave, nor his—ox nor his—ass, nor anything that is your neighbor's DS109.

¹⁵All the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the blare of the horn and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they fell back and stood at a distance. ¹⁶“You speak to us,” they said to Moses, “and we will obey; but let not God speak to us, lest we die.” ¹⁷Moses answered the people, “Be not afraid; for God has come only in order to test you, and in order that the fear of GodHim may be ever with you, so that you do not go astray.” ¹⁸So the people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick cloud where God was.

¹⁹The Eternal One said to Moses:

Thus shall you say to the Israelites: You yourselves saw that I spoke to you from the very heavens: ²⁰With Me, therefore, you shall not make any gods of silver, nor shall you make for yourselves any gods of gold. ²¹Make for Me an altar of earth and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your sacrifices of well-being, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be mentioned I will come to you and bless you. ²²And if you make for Me an altar of stones, do not build it of hewn stones; for by wielding your

tool upon them you have profaned them. ²³Do not ascend My altar by steps, that your nakedness may not be exposed upon it.

MISHPATIM

21 These are the rules that you shall set before them:

²When you DS110 acquire a Hebrew slave, he that per- son DS111 shall serve six years; and shall go free in the seventh year he shall go free, without payment. ³If he a male slave DS112 came single, he shall leave single; if he had a wife, his wife shall leave with him. ⁴If his master gave him a wife, and she has borne him children, the wife and her children shall belong to the master, and he shall leave alone. ⁵But if the slave declares, “I love my master, and my wife and children: I do not wish to go free,” ⁶his master shall take him before God. He shall be brought to the door or the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall then remain his master's slave for life.

⁷When a manparent sells h-i-s-a daughter as a slave DS113, she shall not be go freed DS114 as maleother slaves are do DS115. ⁸If she proves to be displeasing to her (male) master, who designated her for himself, he must let her be redeemed; he shall not have the right to sell her to outsiders, since he broke faith with her. ⁹And if he the master designated her for his-a son DS116, he shall deal with her as is the practice with free maidens. ¹⁰If he marries another, he must not withhold from this one her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights. ¹¹If he fails her in these three ways, she shall go free, without payment.

¹²HeOne who fatally strikes a—mananother per- son DS117 shall be put to death. ¹³If he a male killer did not do it by design, but it came about by an act of God, I will assign you a place to which he can flee DS118.

¹⁴When a person a man schemes against another and kills through treachery him treacherously, DS119 you shall take him that person DS120 from My very altar to be put to death.

¹⁵HeOne who strikes his one's father or his—mother shall be put to death DS121.

¹⁶HeOne who kidnaps a manperson DS122—whether he has having sold him—or is—still holding him the victim—shall be put to death.

¹⁷HeOne who insults his one's father or his—mother shall be put to death. DS123

¹⁸When men [two] parties quarrel DS124 and one strikes the other with stone or fist, and he the victim does not die but has to take to his—bed—: ¹⁹if he that victim then gets up and walks outdoors upon his-a staff, the assailant shall go unpunished, except that he must for paying for the his idleness and the his cure.

²⁰When a manperson [who is a slave owner] strikes a his slave, male or female, with a rod, and he who dies there and then, he it must be avenged. ²¹But if he the victim survives a

day or two, he it is not to be avenged, since he the one is the other's property [DS125].

²²When men [two or more] parties fight [DS126], and one of them pushes a pregnant woman and a miscarriage results, but no other damage ensues, the one responsible shall be fined according as the woman's husband may exact from him, the payment to be based on reckoning. ²³But if other damage ensues, the penalty shall be life for life, ²⁴eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

²⁶When a person man [who is a slave owner] strikes the eye of a his slave, male or female, and destroys it, that person he shall let him the slave go free on account of his the eye.

²⁷If the owner he knocks out the tooth of a his slave, male or female, that person he shall let him the slave go free on account of his the tooth.

²⁸When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be stoned and its flesh shall not be eaten, but the owner of the ox is not to be punished. ²⁹If, however, that ox has been in the habit of goring, and its owner, though warned, has failed to guard it, and it kills a man or a woman—the ox shall be stoned and its owner, too, shall be put to death. ³⁰If ransom is imposed laid upon him, the owner he must pay whatever is imposed laid upon him to redeem the owner's own his life. ³¹So, too, if it gores a minor, male or female, [the its owner] shall be dealt with according to the same rule. ³²But if the ox gores a slave, male or female, [its owner] he shall pay thirty shekels of silver to the master, and the ox shall be stoned.

³³When a person man opens a pit, or digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or an ass falls into it, ³⁴the one responsible for the pit must make restitution; he shall —paying the price to the owner, but shall keeping the dead animal.

³⁵When a person man's ox injures a his neighbor's ox and it dies, they shall sell the live ox and divide its price; they shall also divide the dead animal. ³⁶If, however, it is known that the ox was in the habit of goring, and its owner has failed to guard it, that person he must restore ox for ox, but shall keep the dead animal.

³⁷When a person man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, that person he shall pay five oxen for the ox, and four sheep for the sheep.—²²If the thief is seized while tunneling, and he is —beaten to death, there is no bloodguilt in that his [DS127] case. ²If the sun has d already risen on him, there is bloodguilt in that case.—[The thief] He must make restitution; and if he lacking the means, he shall be sold for his the theft. ³But if what was stolen he stole—whether ox or ass or sheep—is found alive and in hand his possession, he that person shall pay double.

⁴When a person man lets his who owns livestock lets it loose to graze in another's land, and so allows a field or a vineyard to be grazed bare, he must make restitution must be made [DS128] for the impairment of that field or vineyard. [DS129]

⁵When a fire is started and spreads to thorns, so that stacked, standing, or growing grain is consumed, he the one who started the fire must make restitution.

⁶When a person man gives money or goods to another for safekeeping, and they are stolen from the man's that other person's house;—if the thief is caught, the thief he shall pay double; ⁷if the thief is not caught, the owner of the house shall depose before God that he has not laid and deny laying hands on the other's property. (⁸In all charges of misappropriation—pertaining to an ox, an ass, a sheep, a garment, or any other loss, whereof one party alleges, “This is it”—the case of both parties shall come before God: he the one whom God declares guilty shall pay double to the other.) [DS130]

⁹When a person man gives to another an ass, an ox, a sheep or any other animal to guard, and it dies or is injured or is carried off, with no witness about, ¹⁰an oath before the Eternal shall decide between the two of them that the one has not laid hands on the property of the other; the owner must acquiesce, and no restitution shall be made. ¹¹But if [the animal] was stolen from the guardian him, he shall make restitution shall be made to its owner [DS131]. ¹²If it was torn by beasts, the guardian he shall bring it as evidence;—he need not needing to replace what has been torn by beasts.

¹³When a person man borrows [an animal] from another and it dies or is injured, its owner not being with it, that person he must make restitution. ¹⁴If its owner was with it, no restitution need be made; but if it was hired, he is entitled to the hire that payment is due [DS132].

¹⁵If a man [DS133] seduces a virgin for whom the bride-price has not been paid, and lies with her, he must make her his wife by payment of a bride-price. ¹⁶If her father refuses to give her to him, he must still weigh out silver in accordance with the bride-price for virgins.

¹⁷You shall not tolerate a sorceress.

¹⁸Whoever lies with a beast [DS134] shall be put to death.

¹⁹Whoever sacrifices to a god other than the Eternal alone shall be proscribed.

²⁰You shall not wrong a stranger nor oppress him a stranger [DS135], for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

²¹You [communal leaders] shall not ill-treat any widow or orphan [DS136]. ²²If you do mistreat them, I will heed their outcry as soon as they cry out to Me, ²³and My anger shall blaze forth and I will put you to the sword, and your own wives shall become widows and your children orphans.

²⁴If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, do not act toward them as a creditor; exact no interest from them [DS137]. ²⁵If you take your neighbor's garment in pledge, you must return it to him before the sun sets; ²⁶it is his the only available clothing;—the sole covering for his it is what covers the skin. In what else shall he [your neighbor] sleep? Therefore, if he that person cries out to Me, I will pay heed, for I am compassionate.

²⁷You shall not revile God, nor put a curse upon a chieftain among your people.

²⁸You shall not put off the skimming of the first yield of your vats. You shall give Me the male first-born among your sons~~children~~^[DS138]. ²⁹You shall do the same with your cattle and your flocks: seven days it shall remain with its mother; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me.

³⁰You shall be holy people^[DS139] to Me: you must not eat flesh torn by beasts in the field; you shall cast it to the dogs.

23You must not carry false rumors; you shall not join hands with the guilty to act as a malicious witness: ²You shall neither side with the mighty to do wrong—you shall not give perverse testimony in a dispute so as to pervert it in favor of the mighty—³nor shall you show deference to a poor person-man^[DS140] in his dispute.

⁴When you encounter your enemy's ox or ass wandering, you must take it back to him^[DS141].

⁵When you see the ass of your enemy lying under its burden and would refrain from raising it, you must nevertheless help raise it with him.

⁶You shall not subvert the rights of your needy in their disputes. ⁷Keep far from a false charge; do not bring death on those who are innocent and in the right, for I will not acquit the wrongdoer. ⁸Do not take bribes, for bribes blind the clear-sighted and upset the pleas of those who are in the right.

⁹You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt^[DS142].

¹⁰Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; ¹¹but in the seventh you shall let it rest and lie fallow. Let the needy among your people eat of it, and what they leave let the wild beasts eat. You shall do the same with your vineyards and your olive groves.

¹²Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall cease from labor, in order that your ox and your ass may rest, and that your home-born slave~~your bondman~~ and the stranger may be refreshed^[DS143].

¹³Be on guard concerning all that I have told you. Make no mention of the names of other gods; they shall not be heard on your lips.

¹⁴Three times a year you shall hold a festival for Me: ¹⁵You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread—eating unleavened bread for seven days as I have commanded you—at the set time in the month of Abib, for in it you went forth from Egypt; and none shall appear before Me empty-handed; ¹⁶and the Feast of the Harvest, of the first fruits of your work, of what you sow in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in the results of your work from the field. ¹⁷Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Sovereign, the Eternal.

¹⁸You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with anything leavened; and the fat of My festal offering shall not be left lying until morning.

¹⁹The choice first fruits of your soil you shall bring to the house of the Eternal your God.

You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk.

²⁰I am sending an angel^[DS144] before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have made ready. ²¹Pay heed to him and obey him. Do not defy him, for he will not pardon your offenses, since My Name is in him; ²²but if you obey him and do all that I say, I will be an enemy to your enemies and a foe to your foes.

²³When My angel goes before you and brings you to the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and I annihilate them, ²⁴you shall not bow down to their gods in worship or follow their practices, but shall tear them down and smash their pillars to bits. ²⁵You shall serve the Eternal your God, and He who will bless your bread and your water. And I will remove sickness from your midst. ²⁶No woman in your land shall miscarry or be barren. I will let you enjoy the full count of your days.

²⁷I will send forth My terror before you, and I will throw into panic all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn tail before you. ²⁸I will send a plague ahead of you, and it shall drive out before you the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites. ²⁹I will not drive them out before you in a single year, lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply to your hurt. ³⁰I will drive them out before you little by little, until you have increased and possess the land. ³¹I will set your borders from the Sea of Reeds to the Sea of Philistia, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hands, and you will drive them out before you. ³²You shall make no covenant with them and their gods. ³³They shall not remain in your land, lest they cause you to sin against Me; for you will serve their gods—and it will prove a snare to you.

24Then [God]He said to Moses, “Come up to the Eternal, with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel, and bow low from afar. ²Moses alone shall come near the Eternal; but the others shall not come near, nor shall the people come up with him.”

³Moses went and repeated to the people all the commands of the Eternal and all the rules; and all the people answered with one voice, saying, “All the things that the Eternal has commanded we will do!” ⁴Moses then wrote down all the commands of the Eternal.

Early in the morning, he set up an altar at the foot of the mountain, with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵He designated some young men~~assistants~~ among the Israelites^[DS145], and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed bulls as offerings of well-being to the Eternal. ⁶Moses took one part of the blood and put it in basins, and the other part of the blood he dashed against the altar. ⁷Then he took the record of the covenant and read it aloud to the people. And they

said, “All that the Eternal has spoken we will faithfully do!”
⁸Moses took the blood and dashed it on the people and said, “This is the blood of the covenant that the Eternal now makes with you concerning all these commands.”

⁹Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel ascended; ¹⁰and they saw the God of Israel: ~~under His whose~~ feet ~~there~~ was the likeness of a pavement of sapphire, like the very sky for purity. ¹¹Yet [God]He did not raise His ~~a~~ hand against the leaders of the Israelites; they beheld God, and they ate and drank.

¹²The Eternal One said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and wait there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the teachings and commandments which I have inscribed to instruct them.” ¹³So Moses and his attendant Joshua arose, and Moses ascended the mountain of God. ¹⁴To the elders he had said, “Wait here for us until we return to you. You have Aaron and Hur with you; let anyone who has a legal matter approach them.”

¹⁵When Moses had ascended the mountain, the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶The Presence of the Eternal abode on Mount Sinai, and the cloud hid it for six days. On the seventh day [God]He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. ¹⁷Now the Presence of the Eternal appeared in the sight of the Israelites as a consuming fire on the top of the mountain. ¹⁸Moses went inside the cloud and ascended the mountain; and Moses remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

T'RUMAH

²⁵The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ²Tell the Israelite people to bring Me gifts; you shall accept gifts for Me from every person whose heart ~~so moves him~~ ~~is so moved~~ [DS146]. ³And these are the gifts that you shall accept from them: gold, silver, and copper; ⁴blue, purple, and crimson yarns, fine linen, goats' hair; ⁵tanned ram skins, dolphin skins, and acacia wood; ⁶oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense; ⁷lapis lazuli and other stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. ⁸And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them. ⁹Exactly as I show you—the pattern of the Tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings—so shall you make it.

¹⁰They shall make an ark of acacia wood, two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. ¹¹Overlay it with pure gold—overlay it inside and out—and make upon it a gold molding round about. ¹²Cast four gold rings for it, to be attached to its four feet, two rings on one of its side walls and two on the other. ¹³Make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold; ¹⁴then insert the poles into the rings on the side walls of the ark, for carrying the ark. ¹⁵The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark: they shall not be removed from it. ¹⁶And deposit in the Ark [the tablets of] the Pact which I will give you.

¹⁷You shall make a cover of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. ¹⁸Make two cherubim of gold—make them of hammered work—at the two ends of the cover. ¹⁹Make one cherub at one end and the other cherub at the other end; of one piece with the cover shall you make the cherubim at its two ends. ²⁰The cherubim shall have their wings spread out above, shielding the cover with their wings. They shall confront each other, the faces of the cherubim being turned toward the cover. ²¹Place the cover on top of the Ark, after depositing inside the Ark the Pact that I will give you. ²²There I will meet with you, and I will impart to you—from above the cover, from between the two cherubim that are on top of the Ark of the Pact—all that I will command you concerning the Israelite people.

²³You shall make a table of acacia wood, two cubits long, one cubit wide, and a cubit and a half high. ²⁴Overlay it with pure gold, and make a gold molding around it. ²⁵Make a rim of a hand's breadth around it, and make a gold molding for its rim round about. ²⁶Make four gold rings for it, and attach the rings to the four corners at its four legs. ²⁷The rings shall be next to the rim, as holders for poles to carry the table. ²⁸Make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold; by these the table shall be carried. ²⁹Make its bowls, ladles, jars and jugs with which to offer libations; make them of pure gold. ³⁰And on the table you shall set the bread of display, to be before Me always.

³¹You shall make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be made of hammered work; its base and its shaft, its cups, calyxes, and petals shall be of one piece. ³²Six branches shall issue from its sides; three branches from one side of the lampstand and three branches from the other side of the lampstand. ³³On one branch there shall be three cups shaped like almond-blossoms, each with calyx and petals, and on the next branch there shall be three cups shaped like almond-blossoms, each with calyx and petals; so for all six branches issuing from the lampstand. ³⁴And on the lampstand itself there shall be four cups shaped like almond-blossoms, each with calyx and petals: ³⁵a calyx, of one piece with it, under a pair of branches; and a calyx, of one piece with it, under the second pair of branches, and a calyx, of one piece with it, under the last pair of branches; so for all six branches issuing from the lampstand. ³⁶Their calyxes and their stems shall be of one piece with it, the whole of it a single hammered piece of pure gold. ³⁷Make its seven lamps—the lamps shall be so mounted as to give the light on its front side—³⁸and its tongs and fire pans of pure gold. ³⁹It shall be made, with all these furnishings, out of a talent of pure gold. ⁴⁰Note well, and follow the patterns for them that are being shown you on the mountain.

²⁶As for the tabernacle, make it of ten strips of cloth; make these of fine twisted linen, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, with a design of cherubim worked into them. ²The length of

each cloth shall be twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each cloth shall be four cubits, all the cloths to have the same measurements. ³Five of the cloths shall be joined to one another, and the other five cloths shall be joined to one another. ⁴Make loops of blue wool on the edge of the outermost cloth of the one set; and do likewise on the edge of the outermost cloth of the other set: ⁵make fifty loops on the one cloth, and fifty loops on the edge of the end cloth of the other set, the loops to be opposite one another. ⁶And make fifty gold clasps, and couple the cloths to one another with the clasps, so that the tabernacle becomes one whole.

⁷You shall then make cloths of goats' hair for a tent over the tabernacle; make the cloths eleven in number. ⁸The length of each cloth shall be thirty cubits, and the width of each cloth shall be four cubits, the eleven cloths to have the same measurements. ⁹Join five of the cloths by themselves, and the other six cloths by themselves; and fold over the sixth cloth at the front of the tent. ¹⁰Make fifty loops on the edge of the outermost cloth of the one set, and fifty loops on the edge of the cloth of the other set. ¹¹Make fifty copper clasps, and fit the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together so that it becomes one whole. ¹²As for the overlapping excess of the cloths of the tent, the extra half-cloth shall overlap the back of the tabernacle, ¹³while the extra cubit at either end of each length of tent cloth shall hang down to the bottom of the two sides of the tabernacle and cover it. ¹⁴And make for the tent a covering of tanned ram skins, and a covering of dolphin skins above.

¹⁵You shall make the planks for the Tabernacle of acacia wood, upright. ¹⁶The length of each plank shall be ten cubits and the width of each plank a cubit and a half. ¹⁷Each plank shall have two tenons, parallel to each other; do the same with all the planks of the Tabernacle. ¹⁸Of the planks of the Tabernacle, make twenty planks on the south side: ¹⁹making forty silver sockets under the twenty planks, two sockets under the one plank for its two tenons and two sockets under each following plank for its two tenons; ²⁰and for the other side wall of the Tabernacle, on the north side, twenty planks, ²¹with their forty silver sockets, two sockets under the one plank and two sockets under each following plank. ²²And for the rear of the Tabernacle, to the west, make six planks; ²³and make two planks for the corners of the Tabernacle at the rear. ²⁴They shall match at the bottom, and terminate alike at the top inside one ring; thus shall it be with both of them: they shall form the two corners. ²⁵Thus there shall be eight planks with their sockets of silver: sixteen sockets, two sockets under the first plank, and two sockets under each of the other planks.

²⁶You shall make bars of acacia wood: five for the planks of the one side wall of the Tabernacle, ²⁷five bars for the planks of the other side wall of the Tabernacle, and five bars for the planks of the wall of the Tabernacle at the rear to the west. ²⁸The center bar halfway up the planks shall run from end to end. ²⁹Overlay the planks with gold, and make their rings of gold, as holders for the bars; and overlay the

bars with gold. ³⁰Then set up the Tabernacle according to the manner of it that you were shown on the mountain.

³¹You shall make a curtain of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen; it shall have a design of cherubim worked into it. ³²Hang it upon four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold and having hooks of gold, [set] in four sockets of silver. ³³Hang the curtain under the clasps, and carry the Ark of the Pact there, behind the curtain, so that the curtain shall serve you as a partition between the Holy and the Holy of Holies. ³⁴Place the cover upon the Ark of the Pact in the Holy of Holies. ³⁵Place the table outside the curtain, and the lampstand by the south wall of the Tabernacle opposite the table, which is to be placed by the north wall.

³⁶You shall make a screen for the entrance of the Tent, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen, done in embroidery. ³⁷Make five posts of acacia wood for the screen and overlay them with gold—their hooks being of gold—and cast for them five sockets of copper.

27 You shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide—the altar is to be square—and three cubits high. ²Make its horns on the four corners, the horns to be of one piece with it; and overlay it with copper. ³Make the pails for removing its ashes, as well as its scrapers, basins, flesh hooks, and fire pans—make all its utensils of copper. ⁴Make for it a grating of meshwork in copper; and on the mesh make four copper rings at its four corners. ⁵Set the mesh below, under the ledge of the altar, so that it extends to the middle of the altar. ⁶And make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with copper. ⁷The poles shall be inserted into the rings, so that the poles remain on the two sides of the altar when it is carried. ⁸Make it hollow, of boards. As you were shown on the mountain, so shall they be made.

⁹You shall make the enclosure of the Tabernacle:

On the south side, a hundred cubits of hangings of fine twisted linen for the length of the enclosure on that side—¹⁰with its twenty posts and their twenty sockets of copper, the hooks and bands of the posts to be of silver.

¹¹Again a hundred cubits of hangings for its length along the north side—with its twenty posts and their twenty sockets of copper, the hooks and bands of the posts to be of silver.

¹²For the width of the enclosure, on the west side, fifty cubits of hangings, with their ten posts and their ten sockets.

¹³For the width of the enclosure on the front, or east side, fifty cubits: ¹⁴fifteen cubits of hangings on the one flank, with their three posts and their three sockets; ¹⁵fifteen cubits of hangings on the other flank, with their three posts and their three sockets; ¹⁶and for the gate of the enclosure, a screen of twenty cubits, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns,

and fine twisted linen, done in embroidery, with their four posts and their four sockets.

¹⁷All the posts round the enclosure shall be banded with silver and their hooks shall be of silver; their sockets shall be of copper.

¹⁸The length of the enclosure shall be a hundred cubits, and the width fifty throughout; and the height five cubits—[with hangings] of fine twisted linen. The sockets shall be of copper: ¹⁹all the utensils of the Tabernacle, for all its service, as well as all its pegs and all the pegs of the court, shall be of copper.

T'TZAVEH

²⁰You shall further instruct the Israelites to bring you clear oil of beaten olives for lighting, for kindling lamps regularly. ²¹Aaron and his sons shall set them up in the Tent of Meeting, outside the curtain which is over [the Ark of] the Pact, [to burn] from evening to morning before the Eternal. It shall be a due from the Israelites for all time, throughout the ages.

28You shall bring forward your brother Aaron, with his sons, from among the Israelites, to serve Me as priests: Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron. **DS147** ²Make sacral vestments for your brother Aaron, for dignity and adornment. ³Next you shall instruct all who are skillful, whom I have endowed with the gift of skill, to make Aaron's vestments, for consecrating him to serve Me as priest. ⁴These are the vestments they are to make: a breast-piece, an ephod, a robe, a fringed tunic, a headdress, and a sash. They shall make those sacral vestments for your brother Aaron and his sons, for priestly service to Me; ⁵they, therefore, shall receive the gold, the blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and the fine linen.

⁶They shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen, worked into designs. ⁷It shall have two shoulder-pieces attached; they shall be attached at its two ends. ⁸And the decorated band that is upon it shall be made like it, of one piece with it: of gold, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen. ⁹Then take two lazuli stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: ¹⁰six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, in the order of their birth. ¹¹On the two stones you shall make seal engravings—the work of a lapidary—of the names of the sons of Israel. Having bordered them with frames of gold, ¹²attach the two stones to the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, as stones for remembrance of the Israelite people, whose names Aaron shall carry upon his two shoulder-pieces for remembrance before the Eternal.

¹³Then make frames of gold ¹⁴and two chains of pure gold; braid these like corded work, and fasten the corded chains to the frames.

¹⁵You shall make a breast-piece of decision, worked into a design; make it in the style of the ephod: make it of gold, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen. ¹⁶It shall be square and doubled, a span in length and a span in width. ¹⁷Set in it mounted stones, in four rows of stones. The first row shall be a row of carnelian, chrysolite, and emerald; ¹⁸the second row: a turquoise, a sapphire, and an amethyst; ¹⁹the third row: a jacinth, an agate, and a crystal; ²⁰and the fourth row: a beryl, a lapis lazuli, and a jasper. They shall be framed with gold in their mountings. ²¹The stones shall correspond [in number] to the names of the sons of Israel: twelve, corresponding to their names. They shall be engraved like seals, each with its name, for the twelve tribes.

²²On the breast-piece make braided chains of corded work in pure gold. ²³Make two rings of gold on the breast-piece, and fasten the two rings at the two ends of the breast-piece, ²⁴attaching the two golden cords to the two rings at the ends of the breast-piece. ²⁵Then fasten the two ends of the cords to the two frames, which you shall attach to the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, at the front. ²⁶Make two rings of gold and attach them to the two ends of the breast-piece, at its inner edge, which faces the ephod. ²⁷And make two other rings of gold and fasten them on the front of the ephod, low on the two shoulder-pieces, close to its seam above the decorated band. ²⁸The breast-piece shall be held in place by a cord of blue from its rings to the rings of the ephod, so that the breast-piece rests on the decorated band and does not come loose from the ephod. ²⁹Aaron shall carry the names of the sons of Israel on the breast-piece of decision over his heart, when he enters the sanctuary, for remembrance before the Eternal at all times. ³⁰Inside the breast-piece of decision you shall place the Urim and Thummim, so that they are over Aaron's heart when he comes before the Eternal. Thus Aaron shall carry the instrument of decision for the Israelites over his heart before the Eternal at all times.

³¹You shall make the robe of the ephod of pure blue. ³²The opening for the head shall be in the middle of it; the opening shall have a binding of woven work round about—it shall be like the opening of a coat of mail—so that it does not tear. ³³On its hem make pomegranates of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, all around the hem, with bells of gold between them all around: ³⁴a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe. ³⁵Aaron shall wear it while officiating, so that the sound of it is heard when he comes into the sanctuary before the Eternal and when he goes out—that he may not die.

³⁶You shall make a frontlet of pure gold and engrave on it the seal inscription: "Holy to the Eternal." ³⁷Suspend it on a cord of blue, so that it may remain on the headdress; it shall remain on the front of the headdress. ³⁸It shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may take away any sin arising from the

holy things that the Israelites consecrate, from any of their sacred donations; it shall be on his forehead at all times, to win acceptance for them before the Eternal.

³⁹You shall make the fringed tunic of fine linen.

You shall make the headdress of fine linen.

You shall make the sash of embroidered work.

⁴⁰And for Aaron's sons also you shall make tunics, and make sashes for them, and make turbans for them, for dignity and adornment. ⁴¹Put these on your brother Aaron and on his sons as well; anoint them, and ordain them and consecrate them to serve Me as priests.

⁴²You shall also make for them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; they shall extend from the hips to the thighs. ⁴³They shall be worn by Aaron and his sons when they enter the Tent of Meeting or when they approach the altar to officiate in the sanctuary, so that they do not incur punishment and die. It shall be a law for all time for him and for his offspring [DS148] to come.

29This is what you shall do to them in consecrating them to serve Me as priests: Take a young bull of the herd and two rams without blemish; ²also unleavened bread, unleavened cakes with oil mixed in, and unleavened wafers spread with oil—make these of choice wheat flour. ³Place these in one basket and present them in the basket, along with the bull and the two rams. ⁴Lead Aaron and his sons up to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and wash them with water. ⁵Then take the vestments, and clothe Aaron with the tunic, the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastpiece, and gird him with the decorated band of the ephod. ⁶Put the headdress on his head, and place the holy diadem upon the headdress. ⁷Take the anointing oil and pour it on his head and anoint him. ⁸Then bring his sons forward; clothe them with tunics ⁹and wind turbans upon them. And gird both Aaron and his sons with sashes. And so they shall have priesthood as their right for all time.

You shall then ordain Aaron and his sons. ¹⁰Lead the bull up to the front of the Tent of Meeting, and let Aaron and his sons lay their hands upon the head of the bull. ¹¹Slaughter the bull before the Eternal, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, ¹²and take some of the bull's blood and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger; then pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. ¹³Take all the fat that covers the entrails, the protuberance on the liver, and the two kidneys with the fat on them, and turn them into smoke upon the altar. ¹⁴The rest of the flesh of the bull, its hide, and its dung shall be put to the fire outside the camp; it is a purgation offering.

¹⁵Next take the one ram, and let Aaron and his sons lay their hands upon the ram's head. ¹⁶Slaughter the ram, and take its blood and dash it against all sides of the altar. ¹⁷Cut up the ram into sections, wash its entrails and legs, and put them with its quarters and its head. ¹⁸Turn all of the ram into

smoke upon the altar. It is a burnt offering to the Eternal, a pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the Eternal.

¹⁹Then take the other ram, and let Aaron and his sons lay their hands upon the ram's head. ²⁰Slaughter the ram, and take some of its blood and put it on the ridge of Aaron's right ear and on the ridges of his sons' right ears, and on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet; and dash the rest of the blood against every side of the altar round about. ²¹Take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil and sprinkle upon Aaron and his vestments, and also upon his sons and his sons' vestments. Thus shall he and his vestments be holy, as well as his sons and his sons' vestments.

²²You shall take from the ram the fat parts—the broad tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the protuberance on the liver, the two kidneys with the fat on them—and the right thigh; for this is a ram of ordination. ²³Add one flat loaf of bread, one cake of oil bread, and one wafer, from the basket of unleavened bread that is before the Eternal. ²⁴Place all these on the palms of Aaron and his sons, and offer them as an elevation offering before the Eternal. ²⁵Take them from their hands and turn them into smoke upon the altar with the burnt offering, as a pleasing odor before the Eternal; it is an offering by fire to the Eternal.

²⁶Then take the breast of Aaron's ram of ordination and offer it as an elevation offering before the Eternal; it shall be your portion. ²⁷You shall consecrate the breast that was offered as an elevation offering and the thigh that was offered as a gift offering from the ram of ordination—from that which was Aaron's and from that which was his sons' [DS149]—²⁸and those parts shall be a due for all time from the Israelites to Aaron and his descendants [DS150]. For they are a gift; and so shall they be a gift from the Israelites, their gift to the Eternal out of their sacrifices of well-being.

²⁹The sacral vestments of Aaron shall pass on to his sons after him, for them to be anointed and ordained in. ³⁰He among his sons who becomes priest in his stead, who enters the Tent of Meeting to officiate within the sanctuary, shall wear them seven days.

³¹You shall take the ram of ordination and boil its flesh in the sacred precinct; ³²and Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. ³³These things shall be eaten only by those for whom expiation was made with them when they were ordained and consecrated; they may not be eaten by a lay person [DS151], for they are holy. ³⁴And if any of the flesh of ordination, or any of the bread, is left until morning, you shall put what is left to the fire; it shall not be eaten, for it is holy.

³⁵Thus you shall do to Aaron and his sons, just as I have commanded you. You shall ordain them through seven days, ³⁶and each day you shall prepare a bull as a purgation offering for expiation; you shall purge the altar by performing purification upon it, and you shall anoint it to consecrate it.

³⁷Seven days you shall perform purification for the altar to consecrate it, and the altar shall become most holy; whatever touches the altar shall become consecrated.

³⁸Now this is what you shall offer upon the altar: two yearling lambs each day, regularly. ³⁹You shall offer the one lamb in the morning, and you shall offer the other lamb at twilight. ⁴⁰There shall be a tenth of a measure of choice flour with a quarter of a *hin* of beaten oil mixed in, and a libation of a quarter *hin* of wine for one lamb; ⁴¹and you shall offer the other lamb at twilight, repeating with it the meal offering of the morning with its libation—an offering by fire for a pleasing odor to the Eternal, ^{42a}a regular burnt offering throughout the generations, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting before the Eternal.

For there I will meet with you, and there I will speak with you, ⁴³and there I will meet with the Israelites, and it shall be sanctified by My Presence. ⁴⁴I will sanctify the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and I will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve Me as priests. ⁴⁵I will abide among the Israelites, and I will be their God. ⁴⁶And they shall know that I the Eternal am their God, who brought them out from the land of Egypt that I might abide among them, I the Eternal their God.

30You shall make an altar for burning incense; make it of acacia wood. ²It shall be a cubit long and a cubit wide—it shall be square—and two cubits high, its horns of one piece with it. ³Overlay it with pure gold: its top, its sides round about, and its horns; and make a gold molding for it round about. ⁴And make two gold rings for it under its molding; make them on its two side walls, on opposite sides. They shall serve as holders for poles with which to carry it. ⁵Make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold.

⁶Place it in front of the curtain that is over the Ark of the Pact—in front of the cover that is over the Pact—where I will meet with you. ⁷On it Aaron shall burn aromatic incense: he shall burn it every morning when he tends the lamps, ⁸and Aaron shall burn it at twilight when he lights the lamps—a regular incense offering before the Eternal throughout the ages. ⁹You shall not offer alien incense on it, or a burnt offering or a meal offering; neither shall you pour a libation on it. ¹⁰Once a year Aaron shall perform purification upon its horns with blood of the purgation offering of purification; purification shall be performed upon it once a year throughout the ages. It is most holy to the Eternal.

KI TISA

¹¹The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ¹²When you take a census of the Israelite peoplemen according to their army enrollment^[DS152], each shall pay the Eternal a ransom for himself^[DS153] on being enrolled, that no plague may come upon them through their being enrolled. ¹³This is what everyone who is entered in the records shall pay: a half-shekel

by the sanctuary weight—twenty *gerahs* to the shekel—a half-shekel as an offering to the Eternal. ¹⁴Everyone who is entered in the records, from the age of twenty years up, shall give the Eternal's offering: ¹⁵the rich shall not pay more and the poor shall not pay less than half a shekel when giving the Eternal's offering as expiation for your persons. ¹⁶You shall take the expiation money from the Israelites and assign it to the service of the Tent of Meeting; it shall serve the Israelites as a reminder before the Eternal, as expiation for your persons.

¹⁷The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ¹⁸Make a laver of copper and a stand of copper for it, for washing; and place it between the Tent of Meeting and the altar. Put water in it, ¹⁹and let Aaron and his sons wash their hands and feet [in water drawn] from it. ²⁰When they enter the Tent of Meeting they shall wash with water, that they may not die; or when they approach the altar to serve, to turn into smoke an offering by fire to the Eternal, ²¹they shall wash their hands and feet, that they may not die. It shall be a law for all time for them—for him and his offspring^[DS154]—throughout the ages.

²²The Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying: ²³Next take choice spices: five hundred weight of solidified myrrh, half as much—two hundred and fifty—of fragrant cinnamon, two hundred and fifty of aromatic cane, ²⁴five hundred—by the sanctuary weight—of cassia, and a *hin* of olive oil. ²⁵Make of this a sacred anointing oil, a compound of ingredients expertly blended, to serve as sacred anointing oil. ²⁶With it anoint the Tent of Meeting, the Ark of the Pact, ²⁷the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and all its fittings, the altar of incense, ²⁸the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the laver and its stand. ²⁹Thus you shall consecrate them so that they may be most holy; whatever touches them shall be consecrated. ³⁰You shall also anoint Aaron and his sons, consecrating them to serve Me as priests.

³¹And speak to the Israelite people, as follows: This shall be an anointing oil sacred to Me throughout the ages. ³²It must not be rubbed on any person's body, and you must not make anything like it in the same proportions; it is sacred, to be held sacred by you. ³³Whoever compounds its like, or puts any of it on a lay person^[DS155], shall be cut off from his-kin^[DS156].

³⁴And the Eternal One said to Moses: Take the herbs stacte, onycha, and galbanum—these herbs together with pure frankincense; let there be an equal part of each. ³⁵Make them into incense, a compound expertly blended, refined, pure, sacred. ³⁶Beat some of it into powder, and put some before the Pact in the Tent of Meeting, where I will meet with you; it shall be most holy to you. ³⁷But when you make this incense, you must not make any in the same proportions for yourselves; it shall be held by you sacred to the Eternal.

³⁸Whoever makes any like it, to smell of it, shall be cut off from his-kin.

31The Eternal One spoke to Moses: ²See, I have singled out by name Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. ³I have endowed him with a divine spirit of skill, ability, and knowledge in every kind of craft; ⁴to make designs for work in gold, silver, and copper, ⁵to cut stones for setting and to carve wood—to work in every kind of craft. ⁶Moreover, I have assigned to him Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have also granted skill to all who are skillful, that they may make everything that I have commanded you: ⁷the Tent of Meeting, the Ark for the Pact and the cover upon it, and all the furnishings of the Tent; ⁸the table and its utensils, the pure lampstand and all its fittings, and the altar of incense; ⁹the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the laver and its stand; ¹⁰the service vestments, the sacral vestments of Aaron the priest and the vestments of his sons, for their service as priests; ¹¹as well as the anointing oil and the aromatic incense for the sanctuary. Just as I have commanded you, they shall do.

¹²And the Eternal One said to Moses: ¹³Speak to the Israelite people and say: Nevertheless, you must keep My sabbaths, for this is a sign between Me and you throughout the ages, that you may know that I the Eternal have consecrated you. ¹⁴You shall keep the sabbath, for it is holy for you. OneHe who profanes it shall be put to death: whoever does work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his-kin. ¹⁵Six days may work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the Eternal; whoever does work on the sabbath day shall be put to death. ¹⁶The Israelite people shall keep the sabbath, observing the sabbath throughout the ages as a covenant for all time: ¹⁷it shall be a sign for all time between Me and the people of Israel. For in six days the Eternal made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day [God]He ceased from work and was refreshed.

¹⁸When He finishedUpon finishing speaking with him on Mount Sinai, [God]He gave Moses the two tablets of the Pact, stone tablets inscribed with the finger of God.

32When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, the people^[DS157] gathered against Aaron and said to him, “Come, make us a god who shall go before us, for that manfellow Moses^[DS158], the envoy who brought us from the land of Egypt^[DS159]—we do not know what has happened to him.” ²Aaron said to them, “[You men,] Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives^[DS160], your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” ³And all the people^[DS161] took off the gold rings that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. ⁴This he took from them and cast in a mold, and made it into a molten calf. And they exclaimed, “This is your god, O Israel, who

brought you out of the land of Egypt!” ⁵When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron announced: “Tomorrow shall be a festival of the Eternal!” ⁶Early next day, the people offered up burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; they sat down to eat and drink, and then rose to dance.

⁷The Eternal One spoke to Moses, “Hurry down, for your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, have acted basely. ⁸They have been quick to turn aside from the way that I enjoined upon them. They have made themselves a molten calf and bowed low to it and sacrificed to it, saying: ‘This is your god, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt!’”

⁹The Eternal further said to Moses, “I see that this is a stiffnecked people. ¹⁰Now, let Me be, that My anger may blaze forth against them and that I may destroy them, and make of you a great nation.” ¹¹But Moses implored the Eternal his God, saying, “Let not Your anger, Eternal One, blaze forth against Your people, whom You delivered from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand. ¹²Let not the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that Hehe delivered them^[DS162], only to kill them off in the mountains and annihilate them from the face of the earth.’ Turn from Your blazing anger, and renounce the plan to punish Your people. ¹³Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, how You swore to them by Your Self and said to them: I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and I will give to your offspring this whole land of which I spoke, to possess forever.” ¹⁴And the Eternal renounced the punishment He had planned to bring upon for His God’s people.

¹⁵Thereupon Moses turned and went down from the mountain bearing the two tablets of the Pact, tablets inscribed on both their surfaces: they were inscribed on the one side and on the other. ¹⁶The tablets were God’s work, and the writing was God’s writing, incised upon the tablets. ¹⁷When Joshua heard the sound of the people in its boisterousness, he said to Moses, “There is a cry of war in the camp.” ¹⁸But he answered,

“It is not the sound of the tune of triumph,
Or the sound of the tune of defeat;
It is the sound of song that I hear!”

¹⁹As soon as Moses came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, he became enraged; and he hurled the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain. ²⁰He took the calf that they had made and burned it; he ground it to powder and strewed it upon the water and so made the Israelites drink it.

²¹Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you that you have brought such great sin upon them?” ²²Aaron said, “Let not my lord be enraged. You know that this people is bent on evil. ²³They said to me, ‘Make us a god to lead us; for that manfellow Moses, the envoy who^[DS163] brought us from the land of Egypt—we do not know what has happened to him.’ ²⁴So I said to them, ‘Whoever has gold, take it off!’

They gave it to me and I hurled it into the fire and out came this calf!”

²⁵Moses saw that the people were out of control—since Aaron had let them get out of control—so that they were a menace to any who might oppose them. ²⁶Moses stood up in the gate of the camp and said, “Whoever is for the Eternal, come here!” And all the Levites^[DS164] rallied to him. ²⁷He said to them, “Thus says the Eternal, the God of Israel: Each of you put sword on thigh, go back and forth from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay sib-ling^[DS165] brother, neighbor, and kin.” ²⁸The men of Levites did as Moses had bidden; and some three thousand of the people fell that day. ²⁹And Moses said, “Dedicate yourselves to the Eternal this day—for each of you has been against son-and-brother^[DS165] blood relations—that [God]He may bestow a blessing upon you today.”

³⁰The next day Moses said to the people, “You have been guilty of a great sin. Yet I will now go up to the Eternal; perhaps I may win forgiveness for your sin.” ³¹Moses went back to the Eternal and said, “Alas, this people is guilty of a great sin in making for themselves a god of gold. ³²Now, if You will forgive their sin [well and good]; but if not, erase me from the record which You have written!” ³³But the Eternal said to Moses, “Only one^[DS165] He who has sinned against Me, him only will I erase from My record. ³⁴Go now, lead the people where I told you. See, My angel shall go before you. But when I make an accounting, I will bring them to account for their sins.”

³⁵Then the Eternal sent a plague upon the people, for what they did with the calf that Aaron made.

33 Then the Eternal One said to Moses, “Set out from here, you and the people that you have brought up from the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your offspring will I give it’—²I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites—³a land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go in your midst, since you are a stiffnecked people, lest I destroy you on the way.”

⁴When the people heard this harsh word, they went into mourning, and none put on his finery.

⁵The Eternal said to Moses, “Say to the Israelite people, ‘You are a stiffnecked people. If I were to go in your midst for one moment, I would destroy you. Now, then, leave off your finery, and I will consider what to do to you.’” ⁶So the Israelites remained stripped of their finery from Mount Horeb on.

⁷Now Moses would take the Tent and pitch it outside the camp, at some distance from the camp. It was called the Tent of Meeting, and whoever sought the Eternal would go out to the Tent of Meeting that was outside the camp. ⁸Whenever

Moses went out to the Tent, all the people would rise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent^[DS166] at the entrance of each tent^[DS166], and gaze after Moses until he had entered the Tent. ⁹And when Moses entered the Tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the Tent, while [God]He spoke with Moses. ¹⁰When all the people saw the pillar of cloud poised at the entrance of the Tent, all the people would rise and bow low, each at the entrance of his each tent^[DS167]. ¹¹The Eternal would speak to Moses face to face, as one person^[DS168] man speaks to another^[DS168]. And he would then return to the camp; but his attendant, Joshua son of Nun, a youth^[DS169] [serving as] deputy^[DS169] would not stir out of the Tent.

¹²Moses said to the Eternal, “See, You say to me, ‘Lead this people forward,’ but You have not made known to me whom You will send with me. Further, You have said, ‘I have singled you out by name, and you have, indeed, gained My favor.’ ¹³Now, if I have truly gained Your favor, pray let me know Your ways, that I may know You and continue in Your favor. Consider, too, that this nation is Your people.” ¹⁴And [God]He said, “I will go in the lead and will lighten your burden.” ¹⁵And he said to Him^[DS169] replied, “Unless You go in the lead, do not make us leave this place. ¹⁶For how shall it be known that Your people have gained Your favor unless You go with us, so that we may be distinguished, Your people and I, from every people on the face of the earth?”

¹⁷And the Eternal One said to Moses, “I will also do this thing that you have asked; for you have truly gained My favor and I have singled you out by name.” ¹⁸He said, “Oh, let me behold Your Presence!” ¹⁹And [God]He answered, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim before you the name Eternal, and the grace that I grant and the compassion that I show.” ²⁰continuing, “But,” He said, “you cannot see My face, for mana human being may not see Me and live^[DS170].” ²¹And the Eternal said, “See, there is a place near Me. Station yourself on the rock ²²and, as My Presence passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock and shield you with My hand until I have passed by. ²³Then I will take My hand away and you will see My back; but My face must not be seen.”

34 The Eternal One said to Moses: “Carve two tablets of stone like the first, and I will inscribe upon the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you shattered. ²Be ready by morning, and in the morning come up to Mount Sinai and present yourself there to Me, on the top of the mountain. ³No one else shall come up with you, and no one else shall be seen anywhere on the mountain; neither shall the flocks and the herds graze at the foot of this mountain.”

⁴So Moses carved two tablets of stone, like the first, and early in the morning he went up on Mount Sinai, as the Eternal had commanded him, taking the two stone tablets with

him. ⁵The Eternal came down in a cloud; ~~and~~He stood with him there, ~~and~~proclaiming the name Eternal. ⁶The Eternal **One** passed before him and proclaimed: “The Eternal! the Eternal! a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and faithfulness, ⁷extending kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; ~~yet~~ He ~~does~~ not remitting all punishment, but visitings the iniquity of parents upon children and children’s children, upon the third and fourth generations.”

⁸Moses hastened to bow low to the ground in homage, ⁹and said, “If I have gained Your favor, O ~~my~~ Lord [DS171], pray, let ~~the~~my Lord go in our midst, even though this is a stiffnecked people. Pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Your own!”

¹⁰He[God] said: I hereby make a covenant. Before all your people I will work such wonders as have not been wrought on all the earth or in any nation; and all the people who are with you shall see how awesome are the Eternal’s deeds which I will perform for you. ¹¹Mark well what I command you this day. I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ¹²Beware of making a covenant with the inhabitants of the land against which you are advancing, lest they be a snare in your midst. ¹³No, you must tear down their altars, smash their pillars, and cut down their sacred posts; ¹⁴for you must not worship any other god, because the Eternal, whose name is Impassioned, is an impassioned God. ¹⁵You must not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, for they will lust after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and invite you, and you will eat of their sacrifices. ¹⁶And when you take wives from among their daughters for your sons, their daughters will lust after their gods and will cause your sons to lust after their gods.

¹⁷You shall not make molten gods for yourselves.

¹⁸You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread—eating unleavened bread for seven days, as I have commanded you—at the set time of the month of Abib, for in the month of Abib you went forth from Egypt.

¹⁹Every first issue of the womb is Mine, from all your livestock that drop a male as firstling, whether cattle or sheep. ²⁰But the firstling of an ass you shall redeem with a sheep; if you do not redeem it, you must break its neck. And you must redeem every male first-born among your ~~sons~~children [DS172].

None shall appear before Me empty-handed.

²¹Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall cease from labor; you shall cease from labor even at plowing time and harvest time.

²²You shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the first fruits of the wheat harvest; and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year. ²³Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Sovereign Eternal, the God of Israel. ²⁴I will drive out nations from your path and enlarge your terri-

tory; no one will covet your land when you go up to appear before the Eternal your God three times a year.

²⁵You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with anything leavened; and the sacrifice of the Feast of Passover shall not be left lying until morning.

²⁶The choice first fruits of your soil you shall bring to the house of the Eternal your God.

You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk.

²⁷And the Eternal One said to Moses: Write down these commandments, for in accordance with these commandments I make a covenant with you and with Israel.

²⁸And he was there with the Eternal forty days and forty nights; he ate no bread and drank no water; and he wrote down on the tablets the terms of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

²⁹So Moses came down from Mount Sinai. And as Moses came down from the mountain bearing the two tablets of the Pact, Moses was not aware that the skin of his face was radiant, since he had spoken with GodHim. ³⁰Aaron and all the Israelites saw that the skin of Moses’ face was radiant; and they shrank from coming near him. ³¹But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the chieftains in the assembly returned to him, and Moses spoke to them. ³²Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he instructed them concerning all that the Eternal had imparted to him on Mount Sinai. ³³And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.

³⁴Whenever Moses went in before the Eternal to ~~speaking with Him~~converse, he would leave the veil off until he came out; and when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, ³⁵the Israelites would see how radiant the skin of Moses’ face was. Moses would then put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with GodHim.

VAYAK’HEIL

35Moses then convoked the whole Israelite community and said to them:

These are the things that the Eternal has commanded you to do: ²On six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the Eternal; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. ³You shall kindle no fire throughout your settlements on the sabbath day.

⁴Moses said further to the whole community of Israelites:

This is what the Eternal has commanded: ⁵Take from among you gifts to the Eternal; everyone whose heart isso moved~~s~~him [DS173] shall bring them—gifts for the Eternal: gold, silver, and copper; ⁶blue, purple, and crimson yarns, fine linen, and goats’ hair; ⁷tanned ram skins, dolphin skins, and acacia wood; ⁸oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil

and for the aromatic incense; ⁹lapis lazuli and other stones for setting, for the ephod and the breastpiece.

¹⁰And let all among you who are skilled come and make all that the Eternal has commanded: ¹¹the Tabernacle, its tent and its covering, its clasps and its planks, its bars, its posts, and its sockets; ¹²the ark and its poles, the cover, and the curtain for the screen; ¹³the table, and its poles and all its utensils; and the bread of display; ¹⁴the lampstand for lighting, its furnishings and its lamps, and the oil for lighting; ¹⁵the altar of incense and its poles; the anointing oil and the aromatic incense; and the entrance screen for the entrance of the Tabernacle; ¹⁶the altar of burnt offering, its copper grating, its poles, and all its furnishings; the laver and its stand; ¹⁷the hangings of the enclosure, its posts and its sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court; ¹⁸the pegs for the Tabernacle, the pegs for the enclosure, and their cords; ¹⁹the service vestments for officiating in the sanctuary, the sacral vestments of Aaron the priest and the vestments of his sons for priestly service.

²⁰So the whole community of the Israelites left Moses' presence. ²¹And everyone who excelled in ability and everyone whose spirit was moved ~~him~~^{DS174} came, bringing to the Eternal anhis offering for the work of the Tent of Meeting and for all its service and for the sacral vestments. ²²Men and women, all whose hearts moved them, all who would make an elevation offering of gold to the Eternal, came bringing brooches, earrings, rings, and pendants—gold objects of all kinds. ²³And everyone who had in his possession blue, purple, and crimson yarns, fine linen, goats' hair, tanned ram skins, and dolphin skins, brought them; ²⁴everyone who would make gifts of silver or copper brought them as gifts for the Eternal; and everyone who had in his possession acacia wood for any work of the service brought that. ²⁵And all the skilled women spun with their own hands, and brought what they had spun, in blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and in fine linen. ²⁶And all the women who excelled in that skill spun the goats' hair. ²⁷And the chieftains brought lapis lazuli and other stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece; ²⁸and spices and oil for lighting, for the anointing oil, and for the aromatic incense. ²⁹Thus the Israelites, all the men and women whose hearts moved them to bring anything for the work that the Eternal, through Moses, had commanded to be done, brought it as a freewill offering to the Eternal.

³⁰And Moses said to the Israelites: See, the Eternal has singled out by name Bezalel, son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. ³¹He has endowed him with a divine spirit of skill, ability, and knowledge in every kind of craft. ³²and has inspired him to make designs for work in gold, silver, and copper, ³³to cut stones for setting and to carve wood—to work in every kind of designer's craft—³⁴and to give directions. He and Oholiab son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan ³⁵have been endowed with the skill to do any work—of the carver, the designer, the embroiderer in blue, purple, crimson yarns, and in fine linen, and of the weaver—as workers in all

crafts and as makers of designs. ³⁶Let, then, Bezalel and Oholiab and all the skilled persons whom the Eternal has endowed with skill and ability to perform expertly all the tasks connected with the service of the sanctuary carry out all that the Eternal has commanded.

²Moses then called Bezalel and Oholiab, and every skilled person whom the Eternal had endowed with skill, everyone who excelled in ability, to undertake the task and carry it out. ³They took over from Moses all the gifts that the Israelites had brought, to carry out the tasks connected with the service of the sanctuary. But when these continued to bring freewill offerings to him morning after morning, ⁴all the artisans who were engaged in the tasks of the sanctuary came, ~~each~~ from the task upon which he~~each~~ one was engaged^{DS175}, ⁵and said to Moses, “The people are bringing more than is needed for the tasks entailed in the work that the Eternal has commanded to be done.” ⁶Moses thereupon had this proclamation made throughout the camp: “Let no man or woman make further effort toward gifts for the sanctuary!” So the people stopped bringing: ⁷their efforts had been more than enough for all the tasks to be done.

⁸Then all the skilled among those engaged in the work made^{DS176} the tabernacle of ten strips of cloth, which they made of fine twisted linen, blue, purple, and crimson yarns; into these they worked a design of cherubim. ⁹The length of each cloth was twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each cloth was four cubits, all cloths having the same measurements. ¹⁰They joined five of the cloths to one another, and they joined the other five cloths to one another. ¹¹They made loops of blue wool on the edge of the outermost cloth of the one set, and did the same on the edge of the outermost cloth of the other set: ¹²they made fifty loops on the one cloth, and they made fifty loops on the edge of the end cloth of the other set, the loops being opposite one another. ¹³And they made fifty gold clasps and coupled the units to one another with the clasps, so that the tabernacle became one whole.

¹⁴They made cloths of goats' hair for a tent over the tabernacle; they made the cloths eleven in number. ¹⁵The length of each cloth was thirty cubits, and the width of each cloth was four cubits, the eleven cloths having the same measurements. ¹⁶They joined five of the cloths by themselves, and the other six cloths by themselves. ¹⁷They made fifty loops on the edge of the outermost cloth of the one set, and they made fifty loops on the edge of the end cloth of the other set. ¹⁸They made fifty copper clasps to couple the tent together so that it might become one whole. ¹⁹And they made a covering of tanned ram skins for the tent, and a covering of dolphin skins above.

²⁰They made the planks for the Tabernacle of acacia wood, upright. ²¹The length of each plank was ten cubits, the width of each plank a cubit and a half. ²²Each plank had two tenons, parallel to each other; they did the same with all the planks of the Tabernacle. ²³Of the planks of the Tabernacle,

they made twenty planks for the south side, ²⁴making forty silver sockets under the twenty planks, two sockets under one plank for its two tenons and two sockets under each following plank for its two tenons; ²⁵and for the other side wall of the Tabernacle, the north side, twenty planks, ²⁶with their forty silver sockets, two sockets under one plank and two sockets under each following plank. ²⁷And for the rear of the Tabernacle, to the west, they made six planks; ²⁸and they made two planks for the corners of the Tabernacle at the rear. ²⁹They matched at the bottom, but terminated as one at the top into one ring; they did so with both of them at the two corners. ³⁰Thus there were eight planks with their sockets of silver: sixteen sockets, two under each plank.

³¹They made bars of acacia wood, five for the planks of the one side wall of the Tabernacle, ³²five bars for the planks of the other side wall of the Tabernacle, and five bars for the planks of the wall of the Tabernacle at the rear, to the west; ³³they made the center bar to run, halfway up the planks, from end to end. ³⁴They overlaid the planks with gold, and made their rings of gold, as holders for the bars; and they overlaid the bars with gold.

³⁵They made the curtain of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen, working into it a design of cherubim. ³⁶They made for it four posts of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold, with their hooks of gold; and they cast for them four silver sockets.

³⁷They made the screen for the entrance of the Tent, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen, done in embroidery; ³⁸and five posts for it with their hooks. They overlaid their tops and their bands with gold; but the five sockets were of copper.

37Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood, two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. ²He overlaid it with pure gold, inside and out; and he made a gold molding for it round about. ³He cast four gold rings for it, for its four feet: two rings on one of its side walls and two rings on the other. ⁴He made poles of acacia wood, overlaid them with gold, ⁵and inserted the poles into the rings on the side walls of the ark for carrying the ark.

⁶He made a cover of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. ⁷He made two cherubim of gold; he made them of hammered work, at the two ends of the cover: ⁸one cherub at one end and the other cherub at the other end; he made the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at its two ends. ⁹The cherubim had their wings spread out above, shielding the cover with their wings. They faced each other; the faces of the cherubim were turned toward the cover.

¹⁰He made the table of acacia wood, two cubits long, one cubit wide, and a cubit and a half high; ¹¹he overlaid it with pure gold and made a gold molding around it. ¹²He made a rim of a hand's breadth around it and made a gold molding for its rim round about. ¹³He cast four gold rings for

it and attached the rings to the four corners at its four legs. ¹⁴The rings were next to the rim, as holders for the poles to carry the table. ¹⁵He made the poles of acacia wood for carrying the table, and overlaid them with gold. ¹⁶The utensils that were to be upon the table—its bowls, ladles, jugs, and jars with which to offer libations—he made of pure gold.

¹⁷He made the lampstand of pure gold. He made the lampstand—its base and its shaft—of hammered work; its cups, calyxes, and petals were of one piece with it. ¹⁸Six branches issued from its sides: three branches from one side of the lampstand, and three branches from the other side of the lampstand. ¹⁹There were three cups shaped like almond-blossoms, each with calyx and petals, on one branch; and there were three cups shaped like almond-blossoms, each with calyx and petals, on the next branch; so for all six branches issuing from the lampstand. ²⁰On the lampstand itself there were four cups shaped like almond-blossoms, each with calyx and petals: ²¹a calyx, of one piece with it, under a pair of branches; and a calyx, of one piece with it, under the second pair of branches; and a calyx, of one piece with it, under the last pair of branches; so for all six branches issuing from it. ²²Their calyxes and their stems were of one piece with it, the whole of it a single hammered piece of pure gold. ²³He made its seven lamps, its tongs, and its fire pans of pure gold. ²⁴He made it and all its furnishings out of a talent of pure gold.

²⁵He made the incense altar of acacia wood, a cubit long and a cubit wide—square—and two cubits high; its horns were of one piece with it. ²⁶He overlaid it with pure gold: its top, its sides round about, and its horns; and he made a gold molding for it round about. ²⁷He made two gold rings for it under its molding, on its two walls—on opposite sides—as holders for the poles with which to carry it. ²⁸He made the poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold. ²⁹He prepared the sacred anointing oil and the pure aromatic incense, expertly blended.

38He made the altar for burnt offering of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide—square—and three cubits high. ²He made horns for it on its four corners, the horns being of one piece with it; and he overlaid it with copper. ³He made all the utensils of the altar—the pails, the scrapers, the basins, the flesh hooks, and the fire pans; he made all these utensils of copper. ⁴He made for the altar a grating of mesh-work in copper, extending below, under its ledge, to its middle. ⁵He cast four rings, at the four corners of the copper grating, as holders for the poles. ⁶He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with copper; ⁷and he inserted the poles into the rings on the side walls of the altar, to carry it by them. He made it hollow, of boards.

⁸He made the laver of copper and its stand of copper, from the mirrors of the women **DS177** who performed tasks at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.

⁹He made the enclosure:

On the south side, a hundred cubits of hangings of fine twisted linen for the enclosure—¹⁰with their twenty posts and their twenty sockets of copper, the hooks and bands of the posts being silver.

¹¹On the north side, a hundred cubits—with their twenty posts and their twenty sockets of copper, the hooks and bands of the posts being silver.

¹²On the west side, fifty cubits of hangings—with their ten posts and their ten sockets, the hooks and bands of the posts being silver.

¹³And on the front side, to the east, fifty cubits: ¹⁴fifteen cubits of hangings on the one flank, with their three posts and their three sockets, ¹⁵and fifteen cubits of hangings on the other flank—on each side of the gate of the enclosure—with their three posts and their three sockets.

¹⁶All the hangings around the enclosure were of fine twisted linen. ¹⁷The sockets for the posts were of copper, the hooks and bands of the posts were of silver, the overlay of their tops was of silver; all the posts of the enclosure were banded with silver.—¹⁸The screen of the gate of the enclosure, done in embroidery, was of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen. It was twenty cubits long. Its height—or width—was five cubits, like that of the hangings of the enclosure. ¹⁹The posts were four; their four sockets were of copper, their hooks of silver; and the overlay of their tops was of silver, as were also their bands.—²⁰All the pegs of the Tabernacle and of the enclosure round about were of copper.

P'KUDEI

²¹These are the records of the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle of the Pact, which were drawn up at Moses' bidding—the work of the Levites under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest. ²²Now Bezalel, son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, had made all that the Eternal had commanded Moses; ²³at his side was Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, carver and designer, and embroiderer in blue, purple, and crimson yarns and in fine linen.

²⁴All the gold that was used for the work, in all the work of the sanctuary—the elevation offering of gold—came to 29 talents and 730 shekels by the sanctuary weight. ²⁵The silver of those of the community who were recorded came to 100 talents and 1,775 shekels by the sanctuary weight: ²⁶a half-shekel a head, half a shekel by the sanctuary weight, for each one who was entered in the records, from the age of twenty years up, 603,550 men [DS178]. ²⁷The 100 talents of silver were for casting the sockets of the sanctuary and the sockets for the curtain, 100 sockets to the 100 talents, a talent a socket. ²⁸And of the 1,775 shekels he made hooks for the posts, overlay for their tops, and bands around them.

²⁹The copper from the elevation offering came to 70 talents and 2,400 shekels. ³⁰Of it he made the sockets for the

entrance of the Tent of Meeting; the copper altar and its copper grating and all the utensils of the altar; ³¹the sockets of the enclosure round about and the sockets of the gate of the enclosure; and all the pegs of the Tabernacle and all the pegs of the enclosure round about.

39Of the blue, purple, and crimson yarns they also made the service vestments for officiating in the sanctuary; they made Aaron's sacral vestments—as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

²The ephod was made of gold, blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen. ³They hammered out sheets of gold and cut threads to be worked into designs among the blue, the purple, and the crimson yarns, and the fine linen. ⁴They made for it attaching shoulder-pieces; they were attached at its two ends. ⁵The decorated band that was upon it was made like it, of one piece with it; of gold, blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen—as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

⁶They bordered the lazuli stones with frames of gold, engraved with seal engravings of the names of the sons of Israel. ⁷They were set on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, as stones of remembrance for the Israelites—as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

⁸The breastpiece was made in the style of the ephod: of gold, blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen. ⁹It was square; they made the breastpiece doubled—a span in length and a span in width, doubled. ¹⁰They set in it four rows of stones. The first row was a row of carnelian, chrysolite, and emerald; ¹¹the second row: a turquoise, a sapphire, and an amethyst; ¹²the third row: a jacinth, an agate, and a crystal; ¹³and the fourth row: a beryl, a lapis lazuli, and a jasper. They were encircled in their mountings with frames of gold. ¹⁴The stones corresponded [in number] to the names of the sons of Israel: twelve, corresponding to their names; engraved like seals, each with its name, for the twelve tribes.

¹⁵On the breastpiece they made braided chains of corded work in pure gold. ¹⁶They made two frames of gold and two rings of gold, and fastened the two rings at the two ends of the breastpiece, ¹⁷attaching the two golden cords to the two rings at the ends of the breastpiece. ¹⁸They then fastened the two ends of the cords to the two frames, attaching them to the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, at the front. ¹⁹They made two rings of gold and attached them to the two ends of the breastpiece, at its inner edge, which faced the ephod. ²⁰They made two other rings of gold and fastened them on the front of the ephod, low on the two shoulder-pieces, close to its seam above the decorated band. ²¹The breastpiece was held in place by a cord of blue from its rings to the rings of the ephod, so that the breastpiece rested on the decorated band and did not come loose from the ephod—as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

²²The robe for the ephod was made of woven work, of pure blue. ²³The opening of the robe, in the middle of it, was like the opening of a coat of mail, with a binding around the opening, so that it would not tear. ²⁴On the hem of the robe they made pomegranates of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, twisted. ²⁵They also made bells of pure gold, and attached the bells between the pomegranates, all around the hem of the robe, between the pomegranates: ²⁶a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe for officiating in—as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

²⁷They made the tunics of fine linen, of woven work, for Aaron and his sons; ²⁸and the headdress of fine linen, and the decorated turbans of fine linen, and the linen breeches of fine twisted linen; ²⁹and sashes of fine twisted linen, blue, purple, and crimson yarns, done in embroidery—as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

³⁰They made the frontlet for the holy diadem of pure gold, and incised upon it the seal inscription: “Holy to the Eternal.” ³¹They attached to it a cord of blue to fix it upon the headdress above—as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

³²Thus was completed all the work of the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting. The Israelites did so; just as the Eternal had commanded Moses, so they did.

³³Then they brought the Tabernacle to Moses, with the Tent and all its furnishings: its clasps, its planks, its bars, its posts, and its sockets; ³⁴the covering of tanned ram skins, the covering of dolphin skins, and the curtain for the screen; ³⁵the Ark of the Pact and its poles, and the cover; ³⁶the table and all its utensils, and the bread of display; ³⁷the pure lampstand, its lamps—lamps in due order—and all its fittings, and the oil for lighting; ³⁸the altar of gold, the oil for anointing, the aromatic incense, and the screen for the entrance of the Tent; ³⁹the copper altar with its copper grating, its poles and all its utensils, and the laver and its stand; ⁴⁰the hangings of the enclosure, its posts and its sockets, the screen for the gate of the enclosure, its cords and its pegs—all the furnishings for the service of the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting; ⁴¹the service vestments for officiating in the sanctuary, the sacral vestments of Aaron the priest, and the vestments of his sons for priestly service. ⁴²Just as the Eternal had commanded Moses, so the Israelites had done all the work. ⁴³And when Moses saw that they had performed all the tasks—as the Eternal had commanded, so they had done—Moses blessed them.

40And the Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying:

²On the first day of the first month you shall set up the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting. ³Place there the Ark of the Pact, and screen off the ark with the curtain. ⁴Bring in the table and lay out its due setting; bring in the lampstand and light its lamps; ⁵and place the gold altar of incense before the Ark of the Pact. Then put up the screen for the entrance of the Tabernacle.

⁶You shall place the altar of burnt offering before the entrance of the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting. ⁷Place the laver between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and put water in it. ⁸Set up the enclosure round about, and put in place the screen for the gate of the enclosure.

⁹You shall take the anointing oil and anoint the Tabernacle and all that is in it to consecrate it and all its furnishings, so that it shall be holy. ¹⁰Then anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils to consecrate the altar, so that the altar shall be most holy. ¹¹And anoint the laver and its stand to consecrate it.

¹²You shall bring Aaron and his sons forward to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and wash them with the water. ¹³Put the sacral vestments on Aaron, and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may serve Me as priest. ¹⁴Then bring his sons forward, put tunics on them, ¹⁵and anoint them as you have anointed their father, that they may serve Me as priests. This their anointing shall serve them for everlasting priesthood throughout the ages.

¹⁶This Moses did; just as the Eternal had commanded him, so he did.

¹⁷In the first month of the second year, on the first of the month, the Tabernacle was set up. ¹⁸Moses set up the Tabernacle, placing its sockets, setting up its planks, inserting its bars, and erecting its posts. ¹⁹He spread the tent over the Tabernacle, placing the covering of the tent on top of it—just as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

²⁰He took the Pact and placed it in the ark; he fixed the poles to the ark, placed the cover on top of the ark, ²¹and brought the ark inside the Tabernacle. Then he put up the curtain for screening, and screened off the Ark of the Pact—just as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

²²He placed the table in the Tent of Meeting, outside the curtain, on the north side of the Tabernacle. ²³Upon it he laid out the setting of bread before the Eternal—as the Eternal had commanded Moses. ²⁴He placed the lampstand in the Tent of Meeting opposite the table, on the south side of the Tabernacle. ²⁵And he lit the lamps before the Eternal—as the Eternal had commanded Moses. ²⁶He placed the altar of gold in the Tent of Meeting, before the curtain. ²⁷On it he burned aromatic incense—as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

²⁸Then he put up the screen for the entrance of the Tabernacle. ²⁹At the entrance of the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting he placed the altar of burnt offering. On it he offered up the burnt offering and the meal offering—as the Eternal had commanded Moses. ³⁰He placed the laver between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing. ³¹From it Moses and Aaron and his sons would wash their hands and feet; ³²they washed when they entered the Tent of Meeting and when they approached the altar—as the Eternal had commanded Moses. ³³And he set up the enclosure around the Tabernacle and the altar, and put up the screen for the gate of the enclosure.

When Moses had finished the work,³⁴the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the Presence of the Eternal filled the Tabernacle. ³⁵Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting, because the cloud had settled upon it and the Presence of the Eternal filled the Tabernacle. ³⁶When the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle, the Israelites would set out, on their various

journeys;³⁷but if the cloud did not lift, they would not set out until such time as it did lift. ³⁸For over the Tabernacle a cloud of the Eternal rested by day, and fire would appear in [the cloud] by night, in the view of all the house of Israel throughout their journeys.

DS1 1:1. *sh'mot b'nei yisrael* (NJPS: “the names of the sons of Israel”). The term *b'nei* is a construct form of the grammatically masculine plural noun *banim* (literally, “sons, members”), whose singular form is *ben*. The plural form means that both men and women are potentially in view. For whenever a term refers to a *category* of persons (as here), their gender is thus not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that any corresponding verbal inflections and pronouns are masculine. (See my 2008 article “The Grammar of Social Gender in Biblical Hebrew.”)

Denotation of *ben* and Its Relationship to Gender. The word *ben* primarily indicates consequential relationship. It does not mean “son” (which in ancient Israel was apparently the prototypical consequential relationship) except in certain grammatical constructions. And it does not have an inherently male referent. This fact accounts for why an additional term is needed to specify a male child (*ben zakhar*) in Jer. 20:15. Passages in which even the singular form of *ben* appears to function gender-inclusively include Exod. 10:2, 32:27–29; Deut. 1:31; 25:5 (according to the plain sense as well as the halakhic midrash); and Ezek. 18:4. That the plural does not necessarily have a male referent can be seen from Lev. 6:11 (“only the males among Aaron’s *banim* may eat of it”). (Poythress & Grudem, who decry gender-sensitive translations, nonetheless concur that the reference of *banim* and of its construct form, *b'nei*, is not necessarily gender specific; p. 98. Even the classic translations such as KJV [1611] and OJPS [1917] render *banim* in Exod. 12:26 as “children,” and most occurrences of the construct phrase *b'nei yisrael* as “children of Israel.”)

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. The mention that each of these *banim* heads a “household” (see next note) suggests a typically male group. Apparently a generic term is being used to refer to a specific subset—a linguistic usage that occurs frequently in biblical Hebrew. The list of names in vv. 2–4 quickly confirms this inference. The referents are unique: Jacob’s biological sons. This warrants a gender-restricted rendering.

NJPS appropriately conveys the gender-restricted sense. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the sons of Israel.”)

DS2 1:1. *ish u-veito ba'u* (NJPS: “each coming with his household”). Whenever a grammatically masculine noun points to a *category* of persons (as here), their gender is thus not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the

corresponding verbal inflection and pronoun are masculine.)

Denotation of *ish* and *ishah*. This noun is a term of affiliation. That is, it always has not only a *direct referent* (the person or other entity that it's pointing to) but also an *indirect referent* (the other party to which that direct referent has some relationship). The latter must be supplied by the reader based on the context. The primary (most frequent) meaning seems to be “participant” (in a situation or a group). Some situations evoke a representative or agency sense.

In this verse, the indirect referent of *ish* was stated already in this verse: “*b’nei yisrael* (who came to Egypt with Jacob).” The resumptive plural verb that follows (*ba’u*) gives a distributive sense to *ish*, which is therefore its foreground sense: the direct referent is *each (interchangeable) member* of the aforementioned group. Each such *ish* heads a household (making the group presumptively male). Yet in this construction, “householder” is only a connotation. The denotation remains as “participant member.”

The NJPS rendering appropriately conveys the distributive sense without overtranslating the noun’s (suppressed) male semantic component. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “each with his household.”)

DS3 1:7. *u-vnei yisrael paru* (NJPS: “the Israelites were fertile”). On the grammatical form, semantics, and presumptive gender-inclusiveness of the noun *b’nei*, see at 1:1.

Starting here, one of the main terms employed to refer to the descendants of Jacob’s household is the construct chain *b’nei yisrael*. For the sake of translation into English, what needs to be established *in each instance* is whether the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the particular situational context categorically *excludes* women from view.

In this case, for example, the attributed actions are a property of the ethnic group as a whole. So the text’s ancient audience would have no warrant to imagine that women are excluded from view. Thus there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms. (Henceforth I will note instances of *b’nei yisrael* only where I find reason to suspect that the reference is *not* generic.)

NJPS renders inclusively. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “Israelites.”)

DS4 1:9–11. *am b’nei yisrael* (NJPS: “the Israelite people”). This verse contains the first instances in Exodus of the noun *am*, so let’s pause for a **brief word study of *am***. Clearly it sometimes designates only men (see at 14:6). That it sometimes does include women seems almost certain from Exod. 36:6, Num. 21:29, Deut. 31:12, and an account in Judges 16 of the death of Samson: first we are told that a temple was filled with *ha-anashim v’hanashim* (participants, both male and female; v. 27), and then that Samson

caused the building to collapse upon *kol ha-am asher bo* (the entire *am* who was inside it; v. 30).

As a collective term that is not intrinsically male, our noun's gender reference can change between one verse and another in the same passage, as its referent changes (e.g., Exod. 14:5–6).

Gender aside, the referent of *am* ranges widely and is a function of the situation. As Robert McClive Good noted in his monograph on our word: “the meaning of *am* and the evaluation of the scope of individuals to whom it refers must be determined exegetically on a passage-by-passage basis” (p. 47). Similarly, he concluded that rendering it as “people” is “often contextually inappropriate, obscuring the subtlety of a text or imposing on it a false understanding” (p. 52). His conclusion, with which the NJPS translators obviously agreed, is of interest here because in contemporary English the term “the people” is taken as gender inclusive.

The Hebrew noun's reference is not restricted to human beings. It can designate a colony of ants (Prov. 30:25), a family of hyraxes (NJPS: badger) (Prov. 30:25), or a flock of sheep (Psalm 95:7; Zech 9:16; cf. Mic. 7:14; Isa. 65:10; Nah. 3:18).

Our noun can designate human groups of varying size and composition: the bands traveling with Esau (Gen. 33:15) and with Jacob (35:6); a gathering of elders (1 Kgs. 8:66, in light of 8:1, 3), a local assembly (Gen. 23:11; 1 Kgs. 21:9, 12, 13), a collectivity to be formed by marriage and proximity (Gen. 34:16), a tribe (Jud. 5:18), inhabitants of a town (Judg. 18:7; Amos 3:6; 2 Kgs. 4:13; Ruth 3:11, 4:4), inhabitants of a clan or district (Jer. 37:12), those assembled in a given setting (Ruth 4:9, 11), a military body of wide-ranging size (Josh 8:14; Jud. 9:34–35), or a populace that includes several nationalities (Num. 13:28).

Taking these instances together, I speculate that *am* denotes “**the collectivity in question.**” (At the same time, it must be noted that in a few cases, *am* appears to designate an *individual* member of one's collective; Gen. 19:38; Exod. 22:24; Lev. 19:16.) This conclusion is supported by comparison with related languages: both singular and collective referents of the cognate noun are attested in Ancient West Semitic, Phoenician, Aramaic, Epigraphic South Arabian, and North Arabic, and singular reference is attested in Ugaritic (Good, chap. 2). Given the group (versus individual) conceptual orientation in the ancient Near East, perhaps the singular usage is to be understood as an elliptical reference to group identity.

To return to the story of the Exodus, when the noun *am* appears, its referents' gender varies, depending upon whether it refers to the Israelites or some (male) portion thereof. When Moses later says to Pharaoh, “Let my *am* go!”

he is clearly talking about the people as a whole, for he insists on everyone's being allowed to worship God in the wilderness. At the same time, the text describes the *am* in military terms in 6:26, 7:4, 13:18, and elsewhere, which—in a world in which only men were warriors—implies an all-male sense. The present translation, however, takes that military language as metaphoric: the people as a whole were *like* God's conquering army. Indeed, the “stripping of the enemy”—normally a [male] warrior's function—was to be accomplished by Israelite women (3:22); and in 12:34, 39 it was the women—the typical food preparers—who presumably baked the matzah (despite the grammatically masculine verbal inflection; cf. Judg. 21:21). See further my printed comment at 12:37.

In this particular verse, Pharaoh is concerned that the *am* in question might “join our enemies in fighting against us” (v. 10), so perhaps only prospective Israelite combatants are on his mind. However, the context does not require this conclusion. He may have in view the whole people—who might then marshal troops from among their number. And his other express concern, the obscure phrase rendered as “and rise from the ground” (continuation of v. 10; the same expression appears in Hos. 2:2) does not appear necessarily restricted in its gender scope. In short, the situational context does not require the text's audience to construe Pharaoh's reference as being limited to men. (Henceforth I will note instances of *am* only where I find reason to suspect that the reference is *not* generic.)

In the absence of clear evidence of gender-constrained scope, we have no warrant to render into English via a term that suggests a restriction in gender. NJPS appropriately conveys a non-restrictive meaning. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the Israelite people.”)

DSS 1:11. *l'maan annotq b'sivlotam* (NJPS: “to oppress them with forced labor”). Who was forced to do corvée labor, the adults or only the men? Grammatically speaking, the two pronominal suffixes rendered as “them” are not specifically restricted to men.

The contextual evidence is similarly ambiguous. Pharaoh's later direct orders focus only on male infants (1:16, 1:22). Apparently it was based on those textual clues that Ibn Ezra concluded that “the purpose of the oppression was to dry up the men's semen (*liyvesh zera ha-z'charim*)” (“long” commentary, at 1:11). That is, Pharaoh sought to achieve population control via malnutrition among the menfolk. Such a gender-restricted reading is possible but not required. Mistreating women can also potentially reduce a population's fertility.

The labor imposed on the Israelites (1:11, 14) itself is not clearly gendered: an ancient audience would have understood “field labor” as work that

both women and men engaged in. (So too with gathering stubble for straw, 5:12; see my note at 5:9). In ancient Israel, both genders regularly engaged in farm labor (see Ruth 2:8–9).

What does Egyptology tell us about the historical milieu? Nahum Sarna viewed the text's description of bondage in terms of the realia of ancient Egypt, based on archeological and historical sources such as a 1952 monograph (by Bakir) titled *Slavery in Pharaonic Egypt*. He concluded that "What we are dealing with is state slavery, the organized imposition of forced labor upon the male population. . . . The nefarious scheme of the pharaoh [was] to reduce the male Israelite population through state-imposed enslavement. . . . There is no evidence that the Israelite women were enslaved" (*Understanding Exodus* [1986], pp. 21, 23, 21). His assessment, however, is contradicted by evidence that Carol Meyers cites (pers. comm., 11/12/04): "The servitude of foreigners in Egypt was not exclusive to men, of that I am certain. Amarna letters and other texts refer to females as well as males being sent to Egypt as booty; and female workers were deployed in many sectors. . . . Egyptian texts mention women as well as men allotted to do agricultural work in state fields."

A more pointed question is: How might the composer(s) of the text have relied upon its ancient Israelite audience to construe the key terms in this passage? At first glance, the answer depends upon the audience's own experience with *corvée* labor—and whether it ever involved women as well as men. In that sense, the experience of the long Egyptian domination of Canaan (as reflected in the Amarna letters cited by Meyers, above) may be relevant. Furthermore, the Bible tells us of the "perpetual slavery" of Gibeonites as wood choppers and water drawers (Josh. 9:23), and the latter task in the ancient Near East was quintessentially female. (The genders involved in the *corvée* that King Solomon imposed is less clear; I Kings 5:27–30; 12:18; II Chron 2:17; cf. 8:7–9.)

The Bible depicts key Jewish leaders during the early exilic period as promulgating a view of their people's status within the Babylonian and Persian empires as being "bondage" (Ezra 9:9; Jer. 25:11; Isa. 14:2–4). Although that condition for a time involved forced labor for at least the "young men" (Lam. 5:13), it appears intended as a state of the nation as a whole.

This outlook suggests that a certain Israelite mindset probably applied at every historical stage: Even when only our men are singled out for certain tasks, it's not that our women remain free and unaffected; rather, we construe *our whole people* as being subjugated—it's a matter of national honor and solidarity. In short, I do not have sufficient reason to conclude that the text's ancient audience related to "Egyptian bondage" as involving only men.

The NJPS rendering appropriately conveys the Hebrew's lack of gender specificity. No change to NJPS.

DS6 (Recasting sentence structure for more felicitous English is a stratagem employed by NJPS elsewhere, and adopted here.)

DS7 2:1. *va-yeilech ish mi-beit levi* (NJPS: “a certain man of the house of Levi went”). Rendering revised in 2006. Given the preceding singular verb, the noun *ish* points directly to an indefinite yet specific person—who is thus presented as not female (and presumptively male).

On the meaning of *ish* and its relationship to gender, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. (This noun occurs 10 times in Exodus 2, if we count the phrase “two *anashim*” in v. 13 as 2 instances.) Here its indirect referent is stated afterward: *beit levi* (“house of Levi”). The syntax is a basic “member of a group” construction. In the background is the representational sense of *ish* as “householder,” for it is he himself who apparently goes and negotiates for his wife. However, the foreground sense is of simple participation or membership.

The NJPS rendering appropriately conveys specificity (“certain”), yet rendering as “man” translates the noun’s *male* meaning-component at the expense of its *affiliative* meaning-component. English idiom normally favors the converse emphasis. The preposition “of” does convey affiliation but more weakly than the Hebrew noun-plus-preposition. The English noun “member” is a closer equivalent, given that the notice immediately thereafter of his marrying a woman meanwhile implies his maleness. Hence, “a certain member of the house of Levi went.” (NRSV: “. . . man . . .”)

DS8 2:1. *bat levi* (NJPS: “a Levite woman”). Generally in NJPS, the noun or adjective “Levite” refers to an inherited profession and official class. Occasionally, however, NJPS employs the term “Levite” to mean “a member of the tribe of Levi,” following the same pattern used for the brother tribes of Judah (“Judites”), Reuben, (“Reubenites”), and so on. This overlapping terminology creates gender ambiguity: in NJPS it’s sometimes not clear whether “Levite” includes the females associated with the tribe of Levi. For clarity, the present translation uses the term “Levite” only in the former, “professional” sense. “Levite” is thus analogous to “priest” in that both are gendered—in ancient Israel, both roles were limited to males only—a specification that is understood and therefore will not be explicit in translation.

Given the present definition of “Levite,” the NJPS expression “a Levite woman” is an oxymoron. In context, the plain sense of *levi* must be rendered here in a more familial way. To reiterate, in this verse I am adapting NJPS so

as to protect the male-only understanding of the term “Levite” elsewhere in the Torah. Hence, “a woman of Levi.” (NRSV: “a Levite woman.”)

DS92:7. *v’karati lach ishah meinekēt min ha-ivriyot* (NJPS: “Shall I . . . get you a Hebrew nurse”). The noun *ishah* here refers to an indefinite and non-specific person. Yet the use of *ishah* (the feminine counterpart of *ish*) indicates that the speaker has only females in mind—as it appropriate given the task at hand.

On the meaning of this noun, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here, the word *lach* specifies our noun’s indirect referent: pharaoh’s daughter. The verb *kara* (“call, summon, designate”) defines the nature of the affiliation: an agency arrangement. (This explains why the term *ishah meinekēt* is used rather than simply *meinekēt*.) Those terms, together with the offer to be selective (*min ha-ivriyot*, “from among the [pool of] Hebrew women”), evokes the occasional sense of *ishah* as participant *on behalf of another party*—a representative. (Compare the usage of the same verb with *ish* in Isa. 46:11.)

The NJPS rendering of *ishah meinekēt* as “nurse” downplays the relational nuance somewhat, but that seems to be in accord with English idiom. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “a nurse from the Hebrew women.”)

DS102:9. *va-tikkach ha-ishah ha-yeled* (NJPS: “So the woman took the child”). Here the noun *ishah* makes a definite and particular reference to a female, so Hebrew grammar requires the feminine term (rather than *ish*).

Verse 7 already employed *ishah* in an agency sense (see there). When this verse designates her conspicuously as “the *ishah*,” it refers to her in terms of her role as Pharaoh’s daughter’s DESIGNATED AGENT. (Compare *ha-ish*, “[God’s] envoy,” in 11:3.)

English idiom prefers to subsume agency under the context-specific role (cf. “the surrogate” with regard to pregnancy; cf. Gen. 43:19, *ha-ish asher al ha-beit yosef*, NJPS “Joseph’s house steward”). The role term “wet nurse” does imply agency; so in terms of semantic accuracy, that term is arguably superior to the present rendering. However, our rendering needs to be tempered in light of the rendering of *ishah meinekēt* (“nurse”), which appeared in verse 7; further, it would be poor English style to say, “the nurse took the child and nursed it.” For the time being, no change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the woman.”)

DS112:11. *ish mitzri makkeh ish ivri me-echav* (NJPS: “an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his kinsmen”). Here the noun *ish* points to indefinite yet specific individuals; thus in each case it specifies a male.

On the meaning of this noun, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. In this case, the verb defines our noun’s indirect referent, namely, the altercation that Moses

witnesses. In that sense, *ish* denotes a party to the situation.

English idiom does not specify that individuals are parties to an altercation; the fact of their participation is conveyed implicitly by the syntax. So in this type of rendition it would be overtranslating to say: “an Egyptian party beating a Hebrew party.” English idiom does identify people by their ethnic affiliation—without a gender marker. (Specification of gender is left to the co-text “kinsmen”; and the victim’s being male implies that the perpetrator is also male.) No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his kinsfolk.”)

[DS12] 2:11. *echav . . . echav* (NJPS: “his kinsfolk . . . his kinsmen”). The noun *ach* is often glossed as “brother,” yet in fact it specifies maleness only in certain grammatical constructions. Here *ach* is plural and refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (Its main semantic function is to point to the latent relationship between Moses and “the Hebrews.”)

NJPS is right to specify gender in the second instance, as this is the most natural way in English idiom to convey that the person in question is male, as previously disclosed by the Hebrew. (Compare previous note. The reader cannot otherwise discern gender from his identification as “a Hebrew.”) No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “his people . . . his kinsfolk.”)

[DS13] 2:12. *ki ein ish* (NJPS: “no one about”). Here the noun *ish* makes indefinite and nonspecific reference. So it points to a *category* of persons, whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

On the meaning of this noun, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. The foreground sense here appears to be “anyone,” “another party.” (In the background, the clause *ki ein ish* can also be construed as “there was no one (else) to intervene.” This reading would draw upon the occasional sense of *ish* as “one who acts on behalf of another.” That sense would resonate well with this passage’s overall theme, namely, Moses’ gradual development into God’s envoy, who is sent to intervene on behalf of his people.)

Because any adult witness presumably would have prompted Moses to be more circumspect, the situational context would not have prompted the ancient audience to exclude women from view. And in the absence of conclusive evidence that only males are in view, English idiom provides no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

NJPS appropriately renders inclusively. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “no one.”)

[DS14] 2:13. *sh'nei anashim ivrim nitzim* (NJPS: “two Hebrews fighting”). The word *anashim* is the functional plural of the noun *ish*. The mention of a number shows that *anashim* points to specific albeit indefinite individuals, so it specifies that at least one of them is male—while the other party’s gender is grammatically unspecified. Their gender is less important to the narration than that they are *parties* to a conflict—and in biblical Hebrew, *ish* is the normal term to denote that role.

On the meaning of this noun, see the 2nd entry at 1:1.

On the rendering, see the first note at 2:11. No change to NJPS.

(NRSV: “two Hebrews fighting.”)

[DS15] 2:14. *mi sam'cha l'ish sar v'shofet aleinu* (NJPS: “Who made you chief and ruler over us?”). Here the noun *ish* is the indirect object of a verb-with-preposition, and as such it points to an ascribed office. (For *sim le-* in the sense of appointing a figure to a post of importance, see Gen. 45:8 [“father” to pharaoh]; Jud. 8:33 [chief deity].) With regard to human beings, by convention the morphological and syntactic gender of an office matches that of its specified occupant. The noun *ish* is meanwhile in apposition with the offices of *sar* (“chief”) and *shofet* (“ruler”).

On the meaning of this noun, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here, its usage is conspicuous, for if it were omitted the sentence would still make grammatical sense. The conspicuous presence alerts us to some likely special meaning. Our noun’s indirect referent is not the situation itself, for a party to a conflict is hardly an office. Rather, the indirect referent is the subject pronoun *mi* (“who”), as determined by the verb of agency. (For *sim* with *ish* as its object, in the sense of “assign as one’s agent,” see Gen. 47:6; Deut. 1:13; Josh. 8:12; and II Kgs. 10:24.) In other words, here *ish* relates the supposed agent to his hypothetical principal. It denotes an authorized agent. And indeed, my ongoing research suggests *ish* is the Bible’s normal term for referring to someone who has been designated to act on behalf of another.

Because gender is not at issue and is known to the contemporary audience, there is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms.

NJPS appropriately renders without a gender marker. Its lack of a direct rendering for *ish* leaves the issue of agency clear from the context. However, the Hebrew wording’s syntactic and semantic *emphasis* on agency is not so well conveyed. In terms of English idiom, the agency sense of *ish* might best be represented by an adjective (“authorized” or “designated”). Hence a more faithful rendering might be: “Who made you a designated chief and ruler over us?” Perhaps this should be considered in a future printing. For the time being, no change to NJPS. (NRSV: “Who made you a ruler and judge over us?”)

DS16 2:19. *ish mitzri hitzilanu mi-yad ha-ro'im* (NJPS: “an Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds”). Rendering revised in 2010. Here *ish* points to an indefinite yet specific individual; as such, its masculine form conveys that the referent is not believed to be female (and thus presumably is male).

The word order is marked, in that the subject phrase *ish mitzri* is fronted (that is, placed before the verb). That first phrase becomes the focus of this sentence. It contains the most salient information being conveyed (*BHRG* §47). The fronting provides the essential answer to Reuel’s question by introducing a new character who has interrupted the family’s routine. Note that in the speaker’s mind the answer isn’t the fact of their *having been rescued* so much as the sudden presence of a *rescuer*. Her focus is on the figure who was their champion.

On the meaning of this noun, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here, *ish* has several possible nuances. To make indefinite reference to the category “an Egyptian,” it would be sufficient to say *mitzri* (Deut. 23:8), but to refer to a specific member of the Egyptian people, Hebrew employs *ish*. (By providing such specificity, *ish* can even have demonstrative force: “this Egyptian.”) In that sense, the speaker would be identifying her rescuer as an Egyptian as opposed to some other ethnic group. However, that is not the most salient fact about him. His ethnicity is not at issue. (Reuel’s question was not “Were you rescued by an Egyptian—or by an Ishmaelite?”)

A second possibility is “party (to the situation).” Because *ish* is the normal term to denote any party to a conflict, it would be a natural term for Reuel’s daughters to employ—were Midianites to speak Hebrew!—in conveying that another party appeared on the scene. But his simple participation is not the most salient fact, either. It is secondary to his having acted on the girls’ behalf. (Reuel’s question was not “Did someone intervene and rescue you?”)

A third possibility is what I surmised in an endnote in *The Contemporary Torah* [2006], namely, that *ish* here might mean “notable.” But again, the focus of the daughter’s answer is not his princely bearing or outfit or social status, but rather his startling role as benefactor. (Reuel’s question was not “What kind of Egyptian rescued you?”)

Given the particular question that she is responding to, by her leading with this term (fronting) and then tying it to an act of intervention, Reuel’s daughter is using *ish* to mean something else: one who is **ACTING ON BEHALF OF** another party. (This is very close to the widely attested sense of *ish* as a designated agent or representative. The only difference is that in this case the benefaction was not prearranged.) While the direct referent is Moses, the indirect referent is the daughters whom he rescues and then as-

sists. In other words, the affiliation being conveyed is to the daughters themselves—and not to the nobility, nor to the situation, nor to the Egyptian people. This conclusion is confirmed by the next verse, which echoes this usage.

NJPS (which we followed in 2005) apparently treats *'ish* as a general noun of class. Its (non)rendering of *ish* leaves the word's affiliational sense only implicit. Of the English words for one who acts on behalf of someone else (advocate, ally, altruist, benefactor, champion, intervenor, partisan, patron, supporter), only “champion” seems to have both a reasonably close nuance (“one that fights . . . for another's rights, honor, or fame”; *Merriam-Webster's* unabridged dictionary) and a register that might fit an excited girl's speaking to her father. Now, to convey the relationship between champion and championed, English idiom needs either a possessive verb (e.g., “they had a champion”) or a pronoun (“their champion”). I have chosen one such formulation that seems clear and reproduces the presumed breathlessness of the girls is: “An Egyptian was our champion! He rescued us . . .” (Given the plural verb for their speaking and their implied excitement, the daughters' statement should arguably be punctuated to show *multiple voices*: “An Egyptian was our champion! He rescued us from the shepherds!” “He even drew water for us! “And watered the flock!” But that is beyond the purview of this adaptation.) (NRSV, like NJPS, does not render *ish* directly.)

[DS17] 2:20. *lamah zeh azavten et-ha-ish* (NJPS: “Why did you leave the man?”). Rendering revised in 2006 and again in 2010. Here the noun *ish* points to a particular person who is definite in the speaker's mind; as such, its masculine form conveys that the referent is not believed to be female (and thus presumably is a male).

The syntactic focus is on the daughters' act of having left their benefactor standing at the well. Especially in that light, the usage of *ha-ish* is highly conspicuous, in that Reuel could more easily have referred to Moses via a simple pronoun—as he does in both the preceding and following phrases. Apparently the presence of this term is significant.

On the meaning of our noun, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. By 2006, I had realized that *ish* is a term of affiliation, and I had thought that the salient sense of *ish* here was “member” (of the Egyptian people). Hence the 2006 rendering: “Why did you leave the [Egyptian]?” However, by the 2010 printing, I had learned more about the agency sense of *ish*, which caused me to rethink the indirect referent in verse 19. This would explain the significance of Reuel's pointed use of *ha-ish* here: he must be echoing his daughter's agency sense in the previous verse. (By the way, his speech mimetically features the terse and choppy syntax that is presumably typical of intrafamily dialogue, and which reflects his daughters' excitement: “What! This champion—you

left him there?”)

The NJPS rendering as “the man” conveys no affiliation; and when combined with placement at the end of the sentence, it unduly emphasizes maleness. Regarding “champion,” see the previous note. Meanwhile, the article *ha-* has a weakly demonstrative sense that NJPS has often represented in English by the word “this” (e.g., Gen. 4:14, *ha-yom* = “this day”). That adjective would convey here that the speaker is referring back to the aforementioned term.

Hence, “Why did you leave this champion?” (NRSV: Same as NJPS.)

DS18 2:21. *lashevet et ha-ish* (NJPS: “to stay with the man”). Rendering revised in 2006. The noun *ish* points with definiteness to a particular person; thus its form accords with that referent’s not being female.

The particle *et* conveys subordination, as with troops under the command of an officer. By implication, *ha-ish* refers to a social superior. Compare especially the context of the same formula *lashevet et ha-ish* as it appears in Judg. 17:11.

Here the usage of *ha-ish* is conspicuous, in that the narrator could easily have referred to Reuel instead via a pronoun, or via another noun (such as *ha-kohen*, v. 16; or *’avihen*, v. 18).

On the meaning of our noun, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here, the co-text and the situation together evoke the basic sense of *ish* as a representative who acts on behalf of a group—in this case, his household. (Similarly in Gen. 19:9; 20:7; 26:11, 13; 30:43; 42:13; 46:32; Exod. 12:44; Num. 9:6, 7, 13; 27:8; 30:3; Deut. 1:31; 8:5; 12:8; 21:15, 18; 22:13; 23:1; 24:11; 25:5; 28:54; Judg. 1:25, 26; 13:2; 17:1, 5, 11; 18:19; 19:1, 16; 1 Sam. 1:1, 3, 21; 9:1; 17:12; 25:2, 3; 27:3; 2 Sam. 2:3; 17:25; 19:33; Jer. 23:34; Mic. 2:2; 7:6; Ps. 112:5; Prov. 7:19; Job 1:1, 3; Ruth 1:1, 2; Eccles. 6:2, 3; 9:14, 15.) The plain meaning of the phrase is “to stay under the charge of that householder.” In social status terms, Moses became a client and Reuel his patron.

Reuel’s gender is not at issue, and it is known to the contemporary reader. Therefore, in terms of English idiom, we have no warrant for translating in gendered terms. Our rendering should convey affiliation to the household.

Ellen Frankel (consulting editor for this translation project, in her capacity as JPS editor-in-chief) quite properly frowns on renderings that “over-emphasize ‘social anthropology’ at the expense of narrative.” Here it would not be idiomatic English to use the term “householder.” Hence, “to stay in that household.” (NRSV: “to stay with the man.”)

DS19 2:24. *b’ritō* (NJPS: “His covenant”). This is the first of many cases where the context already makes clear which (or whose) covenant is meant; there-

fore in translation I dispense with the masculine inflection because it risks misleading readers with regard to God's gender. Hence, "the covenant."

[DS20] 3:6. *va-yomer* (NJPS: "He said"). NJPS renders this same verb in v. 7 as "[He] continued." Such a rendering here would better reflect the Hebrew word order while avoiding the need for a (gendered) pronoun for the Deity. Hence, "and continued."

[DS21] 3:6. *elohei avicha* (NJPS: "the God of your father"). Rendering revised in 2006. In this context, *avicha* ("your av") is multivocal. The first question is if we can determine whether its plain sense refers to Moses' literal father (namely, Amram; so Midrash Exod. R. § 3.1) or rather Moses' biological and spiritual progenitors, expressed as a singular collective. The latter view is that of Ibn Ezra and of Ramban, presumably influenced by the fact that what comes next is a list of (multiple) forebears. Gunther Plaut likewise makes a similar comment, ad loc. So too Nahum Sarna in the *JPS Torah Commentary*: "In the present instance, the epithet ['the God of your father'] identifies the God who is addressing Moses with the One who made promises of peoplehood and national territory to each of the patriarchs." The present translation takes *avicha* as a collective.

If so, then which forebears are part of that collective? Both patriarchs and matriarchs? Two considerations argue for an inclusive sense. First, while ancient Israelite families were typically reckoned in terms of patrilineage, in this case, as Genesis underscored, even the matriarchs are lineal descendants of Terah. Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah are a crucial part of the biological patrilineage (Naomi Steinberg, *Kinship and Marriage in Genesis*).

Second, what is foremost in God's opening words in this verse is the relationship cultivated with a particular family of human beings *as their God*, thus setting this deity apart from all of the gods worshipped in Egypt and even in Midian. In that respect, *av* here refers most plainly to the spiritual ancestry of the nascent people. And in that too the matriarchs share, for Genesis makes clear that each matriarch worshipped this same God. In sum, the plain sense of *avicha* here includes both patriarchs and matriarchs.

What about the fact that what follows the word *avicha* is a list that names three *men*? According to Genesis, the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were indeed the ones to whom the relevant promises were made. And God addressed them in their capacity as (male) head of their corporate household. A corporate household was the basic economic and social unit of ancient Near Eastern society (Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol*, 2001). That is, an ancient Israelite audience would not have viewed the aforementioned patriarchs apart from the body that they headed: a promise made to the patriarch was a promise to the entire household, of which its

women were a vital part. And in the ancient Near East generally, the patron deity of the householder was the patron deity of his entire household (van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 1996).

In short, the text's ancient audience surely construed this passage in terms of corporate households, expecting the (male) householders to be named while keeping women in view. When the audience heard the word *av* ("father") in such contexts, they understood it to represent *beit av* ("father's house"). And then what follows is construed as an amplification that points to an ongoing relationship that extended over several generations—and, according to Genesis, lasted more than three hundred years.

Why did the NJPS translators render *av* as "father" (in the singular)? Apparently they thought the collective worked in English idiom too, while it served to distinguish the Hebrew singular formulation from its plural variant, *elohei avotecha*, in 3:13 ff. (This explanation accounts for why NJPS rendered "*elohei av . . .*" as "God of . . . father" in Exod. 15:2 and II Kings 20:5, where the plain sense of "father" cannot be the actual male progenitor. It also accounts for the NJPS rendering in Gen. 31:42 of Jacob's phrase *elohei avi* as "the God of my father," even though the following phrase refers to both Abraham and Isaac.)

Unlike the ancient reader, the contemporary audience does not automatically view social reality in terms of corporate households. Such a discrepancy between ancient and contemporary assumptions warrants a clarifying insertion in the translation. Hence, "God of your father's [house]." (NRSV: "the God of your father.")

[DS22] 3:13, 15, 16. *elohei avoteichem* (NJPS: "the God of your fathers"). The noun *av* is a syntactically masculine noun that indicates a non-female whenever it refers to a specific individual. Here, however, it is plural. In other words, it refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

As mentioned in the previous note and discussed in Methodology, Genesis makes clear that each matriarch worshipped this same God. To the text's ancient audience, this would not have been surprising: in the ancient Near East generally, the patron deity of the householder was the patron deity of his entire household (van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 1996). Further, a head of the household often stands for the entire household, as shown by elliptical expressions such as *rashei avot* (Num 31:26, 32:28, 36:1; Josh. 21:1; NJPS "family heads," "the heads of the ancestral houses").

The NJPS rendering as "fathers" does not adequately convey the religious devotion of the women of the patriarchs' households. In 2005, we ad-

dressed that problem of gender accuracy by rendering as “the God of your ancestors.” However, that approach does not quite reflect the way that the text’s wording was probably viewed through the ancient audience’s eyes. Hence it might be best to extend the practice of the previous note by rendering with a *plural* possessive: “the God of your fathers’ [house].” Perhaps this should be considered in a future printing. (NRSV: “the God of your ancestors.”)

[DS23] 3:13. *mah-sh'mo* (NJPS: “What is His name?”). Rendering revised in 2013. Ramban remarked, “This verse cries out for explanation!” That is, unless we read with the same assumptions as the ancient audience, it’s not immediately clear what Moses imagines that his interlocutors would mean by this simple question.

Furthermore, this is one of the few places in the Torah where a character speaks about God and uses a masculine pronominal suffix whose intended gender reference requires some thought by English translators. Moses’ use of a masculine verbal inflection and pronoun indicates only that this deity is seen as *not female*—not necessarily that it is seen as *male*. (Possibly it could be perceived as androgynous, of indeterminate sex, or as beyond sexual categorization.) The Hebrew language does not force the speaker to be more specific. In translation, English idiom does not call for specifying gender, unless we can be sure that Moses imagines that the Israelites think of the deity that he refers to as being *male*.

The answer turns partly on whether the reference (which is grammatically definite) is pointing to a particular deity that is already known, or one that is definite only in the imagination—as unknown but logically required to exist. In 2005 our translation took the second path, as if Moses assumes that the Israelites won’t know which deity he means when he refers to “your ancestors’ God”—and that from his grammatically masculine wording they assume that he’s referring to a male deity. That is, Moses’ believed that his compatriots’ sense of the ancestral deity was sketchy, and that they viewed this deity as one among many. Carol Meyers remarked that “they are using ‘god’ in a generic sense. . . . That’s why they need to know their god’s name!” (pers. comm., 9/19/03). This line of reasoning led me (following a suggestion by Susan Niditch) to change to lower case: “What is his name?”

Upon reflection, that was an unlikely (and midrashic) reading. After all, the Torah always presumes that Israel’s patriarchs and matriarchs had only one patron deity. Reading in line with that presumption, Moses’ reference must be construed as unique. For the Torah it must be a given that the ancestors’ God was a known entity. Furthermore, it was not uncommon to use a generic term like *elohim* to refer to a particular deity. Nor does the ques-

tioner’s masculine language equate to a presumed male deity.

So what then does the question *mah sh’mo* mean? Rashbam opines that the issue is that Moses doesn’t happen to know God’s “personal” name. Naturally his interlocutors will want to verify his claim to represent their deity, much like a contemporary bank’s ATM asks for a PIN number: “What is [God’s] name?”

Another, more nuanced, possibility is found in Ramban’s gloss: *k’lomar, b’eizo middah hu sholei-ach [et Moshe] eleihem*—“in other words, out of which divine quality is God sending [Moses] to [the Israelites]?” For in the ancient Near East, each deity had various names, and each name reflected a particular attribute or manifestation. That basic fact would have resonated here for the text’s ancient audience, in a way that contemporary readers would miss. As John Walton persuasively writes: “Moses’ question concerns which identity of the deity is pertinent to the mission on which he is being sent” (*Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 2006; p. 92). Thus Moses’ question means: “Which aspect of this ancestral deity of ours are you representing?” I would render it in translation as “By which name?”

NJPS appears to have followed Rashbam’s interpretation, while using “His” in its generic sense. Although I now find Ramban’s view to be more persuasive, we are letting the NJPS view stand (now couched in more clearly generic language), while presenting the alternative view in the comment. Hence: “What is [God’s] name?” (NRSV: “What is his name?”)

DS24 3:16. *leikh v’asafta et ziknei yisrael* (NJPS: “go and assemble the elders of Israel”). The term *ziknei* is a construct form of the plural noun *z’kenim* (“elders”). The text’s ancient audience would have understood *z’kenim* to refer to a typically male body—but not to an exclusively male one. For the Bible depicts women as functioning occasionally in the same role that “elders” functioned; this is circumstantial evidence that in the social world of the Bible, a given body of elders may well have included a woman or two. Women are shown doing what elders presumably did: run a wealthy corporate household (II Kings 8:3–6, in light of the notice of wealth in 4:8); found a new clan lineage (see *Women as Clan Leaders and in Genealogies* at 6:14); and serve as town representative in military negotiations (II Sam. 20:15–22). Add to this evidence the depiction of Miriam and of Deborah as lauded prophets with leadership status. While a female “elder” was presumably rare, the text’s ancient audience could not rule out women as being among Moses’ future addressees. No change to NJPS.

DS25 3:18. *nikrah aleinu* (NJPS: “manifested Himself to us”). NJPS supplied the word “Himself,” presumably because in English the verb “manifest” is generally transitive. According to the OED, that verb is also used intransi-

tively in reference to spirits and ghosts. Arguably that rarer, intransitive usage most closely matches the equally rare Hebrew *niph'al* form of the verbal root *k-r-h* here—the unusual setting in which Israelite religion is being described to an outsider. (See Gunther Plaut’s comment on the word *ha-ivri-im*, “the Hebrews,” in this verse; and compare Num. 23:4.) However, we judged that intransitive usage (“manifested to us”) to be too strange, opting instead for an adjectival formulation: “became manifest to us.” (NRSV: “has met with us”; Robert Alter: “happened upon us.”)

[DS26] 4:5. *elohei avotam* (NJPS: “the God of their fathers”). Compare my note at 3:13, 15, 16. According to Genesis, this was the patron deity of the entire household headed by the patriarchs. Here the plural (as opposed to the singular in 3:6) does not focus so clearly on the householder himself. In cases of doubt, we default to an inclusive rendering, which corresponds to ancient reading conventions. Hence, “the God of their ancestors.” (NRSV: “the God of their ancestors.”)

[DS27] 4:10. *adonai* (NJPS: “O Lord”). See below at 5:22. Hence, “O my lord.”

[DS28] 4:10. *lo ish d'varim anochi* (NJPS: “I have never been a man of words”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here the subject noun phrase, *ish d'varim*, is a construct chain that refers to a category—a type of person—as in the similar formulations *ish t'mei s'fatayim anochi* (Isa. 6:5); *ish oved adamah anochi* (Zech. 13:5); and *ishah k'shat ruach anochi* (I Sam. 1:15). Further, the clause places *ish d'varim* in apposition with the pronoun *anochi*, meaning that both substantives have the same referent, namely, the speaker—a specific individual. Therefore the leadword of *ish d'varim* must agree in its morphological gender with the referent’s gender. That choice of *ish* (rather than *ishah*) is a grammatical matter rather than a semantic one.

In other words, Moses’ gender is not at issue. The syntactic emphasis is on his (the speaker’s) self-definition.

On the meaning of *ish*, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here, the semantic emphasis is on the relationship that the noun *ish* is pointing to. None of the other three instances of this formula is found in an agency context, which suggests that the use of *ish* here is independent of this verse’s agency context.

Rather, the indirect referent of *ish* is the genitive term that follows it in the construct chain. That is, *ish* relates the direct referent (Moses) to *d'varim*. Such a construction evokes the denotation of *ish* as “representative”: standing for, or acting on behalf of, a client—which in this case is *d'varim* (“words”). Presumably one “represents” words by being articulate. Thus, what *ish* connotes here is *expertise* (similarly Ibn Ezra and Sforno, ad loc.). Compare Ibn Ezra at Gen. 15:10. Compare also Ibn Janah and Radak in their

lexicons, which gloss the similar expression *ish s'fatayim* (lit. “an *ish* of lips”) in Job 11:2 as “an articulate person, who has mastered language. . . .”

In describing a relationship wherein gender is not germane, English idiom generally uses no gender marker (e.g., “friend” rather than “boyfriend”). Given that the prevailing sense of the polysemous noun “man” is male, a reader of NJPS is likely to imagine that the Bible portrays Moses as placing more emphasis on his gender than the Hebrew text itself actually states. A more unambiguous English equivalent would be a gender-neutral expression. However, English lacks a gender-neutral word-for-word equivalent—or even a corresponding genitive such as “words’ representative” or “an expert of words.” We make recourse to an equivalent idiom that sounds natural in speech. Hence, “I have never been good with words.” (NRSV: “. . . never been eloquent.”)

DS29 4:11. *adam* (NJPS: “man . . . him”). The reference is nonspecific. Here, as in most instances in the Bible, the noun *adam* points to a *category* of persons rather than to a particular individual; the referent’s gender is thus not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

What is the nature of that category in context? This verse’s rhetorical questions emphasize and magnify God’s power; an ancient Israelite audience would have had no reason to take this verse’s references to the faculties of speech, hearing, and sight in anything other than their widest sense—as referring to humankind, not only to men. (Similarly, Poythress & Grudem, p. 140.)

Judging from the absence of an article, NJPS meant “man” in its original, gender-neutral sense. For clarity, I am substituting a more clearly neutral rendering. Like the other grammatically singular words in this sentence, *adam* is meant as a collective noun and thus can be rendered as a plural (cf. NJPS at 1:10, 3:8, 10:2, 23:6–7, etc.). Hence, “humans.” (NRSV: “mortals.”)

DS30 4:11. *yasum* (NJPS: “makes him”). An object pronoun is not in the Hebrew text; it was supplied by the translators (per English idiom). As the previous note explains with regard to the noun, this pronoun was meant in its neutral sense. Rendering the collective noun in the plural (see previous note) also enables this pronoun to be a plural, which is more clearly gender neutral. Hence, “makes them.” (NRSV: “. . . them.”)

DS31 4:14. *ha-levi* (NJPS: “the Levite”). At 2:1, I ruled that this translation will use “Levite” in its “professional” sense only. But here the Torah throws a curve ball by anachronistically referring to Aaron as *ha-Levi*; cf. Gunther Plaut and also Nahum Sarna, ad loc. The Torah is addressing the origin of the

Levites—apparently establishing their credentials, as it were—taking for granted that the audience knows well the eventual development of *levi* into its professional sense. (So too at 6:19 [*ha-levi*] and 6:25 [*ha-lviim*].) In recognition of the foreshadowing, no change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the Levite.”)

DS32 4:18. *achai* (literally: “my brothers”; NJPS: “kinsmen”). Moses has only one actual brother. This plural term must therefore have a broader sense, as NJPS recognizes. (The Hebrew plural does function to reinforce the verse’s allusion to the Joseph story—e.g., Gen. 43:27—but this is not its plain sense.) There is no reason for a reader to restrict this instance to a male-only sense: why would Moses care about only his male relatives, or wish to state that he did? Given that Moses’ female relatives have already played a vital role in the story, an ancient audience would not assume that Moses was speaking only about his male brethren. We can look to the example of 2:11, where NJPS renders a third-person inflection of the same word, *echav*: “when Moses had grown up, he went out to his kinsfolk.” Such a gender-neutral rendering seems preferable here. Hence, “my kinsfolk.” (NRSV: “my kindred.”)

DS33 4:19. *kol ha-anashim ha-m’vakshim* (NJPS: “all the men who sought”). The word *anashim* is the functional plural of the noun *ish*. In addition to being a plural, its reference is definite but nonspecific; that is, it refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflections are masculine.)

Further, our noun is conspicuously present in the text, for God could more easily have said *kol ha-m’vakshim*, “all [those] who have been seeking,” rather than *kol ha-anashim ha-m’vakshim*, “all the *anashim* who have been seeking.” The word *ha-anashim* thus appears to bear some specific meaning here.

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here, the context arguably evokes the standard nuance of *anashim* as “members of the group in question,” the group being defined by what follows: *ha-m’vakshim et nafshekha*, lit. “the seekers of your life.” Thus the meaning would be “every single one of those who were seeking your life.”

Yet another nuance actually seems more salient here, because the group in question is not acting on its own behalf (or trying to kill Moses for no reason) but rather acting on behalf of others (either the victim’s clan, or Pharaoh’s government—because the murder would have been seen as political insurrection). Thus the context evokes another standard nuance of *anashim* as “representatives; those who act on behalf of others.” In context, *anashim* refers to those who *had the authority* to punish Moses. (Similarly Ibn Ezra,

who glosses *ha-anashim* here as “the king and the courtiers who knew Moses.”)

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context positively *excludes* women from view. The answer seems to be yes. Probably the ancient audience would have taken as a given that in Egypt, it was men who were in positions of punitive authority.

Gender is not germane in the text itself. Meanwhile, like the ancient audience, contemporary readers probably assume that “the authorities” are typically male. Thus we have no warrant to translate in gendered terms.

NJPS may have meant “men” in its occasional sense of “people in power,” but it actually overtranslates the Hebrew gender marker. (When gender is not germane, English idiom generally omits a gender marker.) A clearly gender-neutral rendering would be more accurate. Hence, “all the authorities who sought.” NRSV: “all those who were seeking.”)

DS34 4:22–23. *b’ni b’chori yisrael . . . b’ni . . . et bincha b’chorcha* (NJPS: “Israel is My first-born son . . . My son . . . your first-born son”). The pairing *ben b’chor* is practically a title of office (Gen. 27:32; Deut. 21:15; 1 Sam. 8:2; 2 Kings 3:27). Here, as the definite predicate of a nominal (verbless) clause, it functions to identify the definite subject—namely, Israel (*IBHS* § 8.4a). Thus its reference is the same as that of the name “Israel,” and so its grammatical gender must match.

On the semantics of the noun *ben*, see at 1:1. As for the noun *b’chor*, it is occasionally qualified by an explicitly male marker (as in *kol b’chor zachar*, Num. 3:40, 43; *b’chor . . . ha-zachar*, Deut. 15:19)—suggesting that *b’chor* alone is insufficient to specify maleness..

With regard to the imagery, this is one of three Torah passages that pair God together with the people Israel, likening them to the duo of a father-householder and his firstborn son. (See Deut. 1:31 and 8:5. The role of father-householder is also ascribed to God in Num. 12:7; Deut. 28:10; 30:3. On household-kinship imagery as the root metaphor for ancient Near Eastern society at all levels of organization, see Schloen 2001.)

Recognizing that the divine demand here is that Pharaoh let the Israelites “serve” God (NJPS “worship”; v. 23), Ibn Ezra writes (ad loc.) that the meaning of the present image is: “This nation’s ancestors were the first to serve me. Therefore I am partial to this nation, *as a father is partial to a son who serves him*.” But daughters, too, serve their fathers! How do we know that specifically a son is meant here?

The reason is that the imagery would have evoked a situation that was

natural and familiar to the Israelite audience, whose members lived and worked in patrimonially organized corporate households. The father-householder determined heirship and invested effort as needed to raise and protect a worthy heir. Normally a father bestowed extra care and an extra share of the patrimony on the first-born son, accompanied by the expectation that this son render extra service to the family. (As I discuss in my notes at Num. 5:8, 27:11, and Deut. 25:5, a daughter could apparently both inherit the patrimony and carry on the family line, but only under special circumstances including the absence of sons.) In other words, what's at stake is God's legacy or "patrimony" on earth; and Israel is the (male) *ben b'chor* who is to inherit it. (Similarly Susan Niditch, pers. comm.)

Thus we have multiple reasons to render in gendered terms. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: "firstborn son.")

DS35 4:30. *va-yaas ha-otot l'einei ha-am* (NJPS: "he performed the signs in the sight of the people"). Rendering revised in 2010. As discussed at 1:9–11, the basic sense of *am* is "the collectivity in question." In this case, the syntax of vv. 29–30 implicitly identifies "all the elders of the Israelites" (v. 29) with those who witnessed Moses' deeds (*ha-am*). Thus this is one of several passages in which *ha-am* refers to a typically male leadership body.

With regard to the similar group term *edah*, whenever one can distinguish the contours of a gendered social institution—such as a typically male leadership council—it has been the URJ translation's policy to convey that foreground sense. In effect, this approach makes explicit to contemporary readers the gender implications that would have been self-evident to the ancient audience.

The NJPS rendering as "the people" is likely to mislead readers, who are accustomed to construing "the people" as implying "everyone, regardless of gender." In this passage, the denotation of *ha-am* is more precisely rendered in terms of those who have assembled. Such a rendering will prompt the reader to look back and take note of the earlier designation as "elders." Hence, "he performed the signs in the sight of those assembled."

DS36 4:31. *va-yaamein ha-am* (NJPS: "and the people were convinced"). Rendering revised in 2010. See the previous note. Here the rendering should differ slightly, because literary English idiom avoids repetition. Hence, "and the assembly was convinced."

DS37 5:2. *asher eshma b'kolo* (NJPS: "that I should heed Him"). In his opening statement, Moses has used grammatically masculine gender for God. Thus it is reasonable that a polytheistic Pharaoh (and his translator) would respond with a sense that this deity is male (rather than female). Yet as a

polytheist he would not ascribe the kind of absolute loyalty that is implied by the upper case letter in the NJPS rendering “Him”; however, a lower-case “him” would be natural. Hence, “that I should heed him.”

DS38 5:3. See at 3:18.

DS39 5:6. *shot’rav* (NJPS: “and foremen” [of the people]). Rendering revised in 2006. The plural term *shot’rim* (with various inflections or suffixes) appears five times in this chapter (also vv. 10, 14, 15, 19). It is a grammatically masculine noun that indicates a non-female whenever it refers to a specific individual. Here, however, it is used in definite but nonparticular reference. In other words, it refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflections are masculine.)

Arguably the context restricts the referents’ gender somewhat, presuming that Egyptian roles of public authority were filled typically by men. But their gender is not at issue.

An accurate rendering should not make an issue of gender, either, because English idiom specifies gender only where germane. Although NJPS may not have meant “foremen” as a gendered term, in contemporary English it conveys a male-only sense. Thus “foremen” calls undue attention to gender in this context. Hence, “overseers.” (NRSV: “supervisors.”)

DS40 5:9. *tikhbad ha-avodah al ha-anashim* (NJPS: “let heavier work be laid upon the men”). Rendering revised in 2006. The word *anashim* is the functional plural of the noun *ish*. The noun’s direct reference is to a category, so that with the plural form, its social-gender implication is: “at least one of the participants is not specifically female.” (To make a point of gender, Pharaoh would have had to say *ha-g’varim* or *ha-z’charim* or *kol zachar*.)

The use of *ha-anashim* here is conspicuous; why does Pharaoh not simply refer to them via a possessive direct-object suffix? And the passage otherwise calls the oppressed workers *am* (vv. 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12); why not here as well? Apparently it is significant that they are not merely an *am*—they are *anashim*.

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here, the simplest sense of *anashim* fits this context, namely, the “participant-member” sense: they are participants in the labor. That is, the plural noun’s indirect referent is not *ha-am* (5:7) but rather is implied: the enterprise in which they are participating.

Yet in the context of agency (wherein persons have been designated to perform a task), the pointed use of the term *ha-anashim* more likely evokes its agency sense. Therefore the indirect reference is to those on whose behalf

the labor is being performed, namely, either the Israelite people as a whole, or Pharaoh himself, or both. For the present purposes, we don't need to be more specific—if that is indeed possible. Rather, it is sufficient to note that the denotation is “subordinates.”

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text's composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. The newly added task is the gathering of stubble for straw, which is the kind of “field labor” that both women and men engaged in. (Cf. my note at 1:9–11.) That is, it could be that the *am* (“people”) as a whole would be held responsible as “participants” in the labor of producing straw-laced bricks.

One could argue that Pharaoh must be singling out the men for harsh treatment, given that it is men (Moses and Aaron, and presumably the elders for whom they are speaking) who are posing a direct challenge to his authority. (Women have been resorting instead to subterfuge.) Such an interpretation goes beyond the simple meaning of the text, however. Again, Pharaoh does not make an issue of gender here.

In short, neither text nor context give a clear reason for the audience to restrict the referents of *anashim* to only men. And so we have no warrant render in gendered terms.

It is possible that the NJPS rendering “the men” was intended in its gender-inclusive sense as “the subordinates.” However, it is likely to be misconstrued as referring to males, as if that were the point that Pharaoh is making. So I choose a gender-neutral English equivalent that is appropriate to spoken discourse. Hence, “the laborers.” (NRSV: “them.”)

DS41 5:22. *adonai* (NJPS: “O Lord”). (See my printed comment.) As a form of address in the Bible, *adon* is not infrequent, yet it is never applied to women. More tellingly, in five passages (Gen. 16:4, 8, 9; Isa. 24:2; Ps. 123:2; Prov. 30:23; and esp. II Kings 5:3), a female slave's mistress is called *g'virah*, whereas in the latter four passages a male slavemaster is called *adon* (cf. Gen. 18:12, 45:8; Is. 24:2; Mal. 1:6). Likewise, a queen or queen mother is termed *g'virah* (I Kings 11:9, 15:13 [= II Chron. 15:16]; II Kings 10:13; Jer. 13:18, 29:2), while the king is sometimes called *adon* (e.g., I Sam. 16:16; I Kings 1:47; II Kings 5:1).

Therefore, when Moses calls God *adon*, we might infer that he believes that God is male. More precisely, however, he is addressing God as a being who is *not female*. If Moses conceived of God as a being beyond animate gender categories, he would be using this same language.

At a minimum, the term *adon* conveys that Moses is being deferential. (It is the language of courtesy.) More to the point, Moses is addressing God

about the mission on which he's been sent. He is reporting in his role as the agent of a social superior. Similarly, Moses is depicted elsewhere as slave (*eved*) to God-as-householder (*adon*; see Baruch Levine [AB] at Num. 12:7); or as royal minister (*eved*) to God-as-ruler (*adon*; see Jeffrey Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, at Deut. 34:5). In short, gender is not at issue here so much as hierarchy.

So in translation, the term *adon* would not necessarily need to be expressed in gendered terms. However, in English idiom, we have only gendered terms for addressing a social superior (“sir, madam”; “my lord, my lady”; “master, mistress”). Meanwhile, the downstyle employed by Stern at Gen. 18:27 ff. is preferable because it makes more apparent the metaphor's human vehicle. Hence, “O my lord.”

[DS42] 6:12. *va-anochi aral s'fatayim* (NJPS: “a man of impeded speech”). Rendering revised in 2006. Literally, “I—blocked of lips.” The construction is emphatic: “me (of all people)!”

The substantive *arel* is the leadword of a construct chain, *aral s'fatayim*. That chain is in apposition with the pronoun *anochi*, by which Moses refers specifically to himself. Because both appositives must have the same referent, the leadword of *aral s'fatayim* must agree in grammatical gender with the social gender of *anochi*, namely, Moses.

Moses' gender is not at issue in his self-assessment. The semantic emphasis is on another aspect of *arel* besides its gender meaning-component. The specification of gender is a grammatical feature rather than a semantic one. (See also my note at 4:10 regarding the somewhat similar construction *lo ish d'varim anochi*.)

Lexicographers posit that *arel* derives from *orlah* (foreskin) and thus literally means “uncircumcised.” A female counterpart, *arelah*, is attested (Jer. 6:10). Yet precisely because it is grammatically masculine, it does not intrinsically refer to males. Indeed, in order to specify a male category, *arel* needs the additional qualifier *zachar* (“male”) in Gen. 17:14.

In a construct chain such as “*aral* + noun,” the second noun modifies the first. Here it places *arel* in a context in which it connotes blockage. (Contrast the context of the similar expressions *arlei lev* in Ezek. 44:7, *erel lev* in Ezek. 44:9, and *arlei lev* in Jer. 9:25. In those instances, the terms are pointedly counterposed with the absence of ritual circumcision, as referred to by the parallel terms *arlei basar*, *erel basar*, and *arelim*, respectively.)

There is no warrant for rendering in gendered terms, because Moses' gender is both already understood and not germane. NJPS rendered *aral* by “impeded.” For the sake of English idiom, it also supplied the expression “man of,” which means “a male human being belonging to a particular and

usually specified category (as by birth, residence, or membership)” (*Webster’s*). That usage overtranslates the male meaning-component of the Hebrew expression. (Contrast the same expression in 6:30, where NJPS avoids this problem: “am of impeded speech.”) The proper rendering ought to be like the Hebrew: an expression composed of concrete, non-gendered terms; a curt and even blunt utterance. Hence, “—me, who gets tongue-tied.” (NRSV: “poor speaker that I am”; TNIV: “I speak with faltering lips.”)

DS43 6:14. *eileh rashei beit avotam* (NJPS: “the following are the heads of their respective clans”). The plural demonstrative *eileh* points to a specific group that in this case happens to consist only of men, but the word itself is not gender specific. Nor is the wording in the compound construct chain, in which the plural of the noun *av* (literally, “father”; with a pronominal suffix) modifies *bayit*, while in turn *beit avot* (“clans”) modifies the plural of the noun *rosh* (“head”). The plurals specify their referents’ gender only to the extent of excluding an all-female group.

The expression gains no further gender specificity from the fact that it introduces a genealogy (vv. 14–25). True, the entries in that genre typically refer to males. However, this list mentions two women by name (vv. 20, 23); perhaps they were considered to be part of the group of *rashim* listed in the genealogy, although we have no other evidence of Jochebed and Elisheba’s having been considered leaders of eponymous clans—if that is indeed what *rashim* means.

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. The answer is no, as the following discussion indicates.

Women as Clan Leaders and in Genealogies. Meanwhile, though, the Bible indicates in at least seven other ways that the Israelites understood themselves to have had at least a few female clan founders in their past—some of whom are indeed mentioned in genealogies or extended names. In evaluating the following evidence, one must bear in mind that genealogical names typically overlapped with clan names and place names, both as depicted in the Bible and as attested in ancient Israelite epigraphic evidence. Thus one type of name implies the existence of the other types as well. See Bendor 1996, pp. 98–99, 219.

(1) **Ephrath(ah)** is depicted as a woman who married one of Judah’s grandsons—and also a clan within the tribe of Judah and a locale in Judahite territory (I Chron. 2:19, 50–51; 4:4; I Sam. 17:12; Ruth 1:2, 4:11). See “Ephrathah (Person)” and “Ephrathah (Place),” *ABD*, II:557–58.

(2) The five **daughters of Zelophehad** of the tribe of Manasseh were said to

have received particular land-holdings (Josh. 17:3–6), while some of their names were associated with particular locales (see at Num. 27:1, 5–11 in TAWC). They thus appear to have been considered clan founders.

(3) In light of Ruth 4:11–12, the laconic notice about *batim* (“households”) in Exod. 1:21 seems to hint at **Shiphrah and Puah** as well-known lineage names in Israelite circles (see printed comment on that verse).

(4) The genealogical identification in I Chron. 7:15–16 of **Maacah** as both Manasseh’s daughter and daughter-in-law seems to accord with the mention elsewhere of “Maacathites” alongside Manassite territory (Deut. 3:14; Josh. 12:5), as if they eventually became part of the people of Israel. This speculation is strengthened by noting that Machir, who is named in I Chronicles 7 as her brother or husband, is elsewhere said to have been a clan leader and associated with a particular locale (Num. 26:29; 32:39–40).

(5) **Serah** daughter of Asher is conspicuously named in genealogies alongside brothers who are clearly eponyms for clans (Gen. 46:17; Num. 26:46; I Chron. 7:30).

(6) In a genealogy, **Sheerah** granddaughter of Ephraim is said to have founded three settlements (I Chron. 7:22–24; see also Josh. 18:13).

(7) Another woman, **Achsah**, is associated with a particular piece of land (Josh. 15:16–19; Judg. 1:12–15), as if she were considered the ancestor of its later inhabitants.

Taken together, these allusions provide sufficient evidence to conclude that in the present case, the text’s composer(s) would not have assumed that its original audience would understand the plural terms *avot* and *rashim* to refer only to males. Absent a definitely gender-restricted context, such wording retains its gender-inclusive character.

NJPS appropriately renders this expression in gender-neutral terms. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “. . . their ancestral houses.”)

DS44 6:25. *rashai avot ha-lviyim* (NJPS: “heads of the fathers’ houses of the Levites”). This verse’s notice is worded like that in 6:14; see my note there. (The similarity links them together as they frame the genealogy in between.) Here, the plural noun *avot* (literally, “fathers”) modifies the plural noun *ra’shim* (“heads”). As explained in my note at 6:14, the text’s composer(s) would not have assumed that its original audience would understand the plural terms *avot* and *rashim* to refer only to males.

Meanwhile, however, this statement is anachronistic and anticipates the later institution of Levites, rhetorical features that pose a challenge when rendering its plain sense in context. On the rendering of *l’viyim* as “Levites,” see above at 2:1.

NJPS takes *avot* as elliptical for *beit avot*, supplying the word “houses,”

which seems reasonable given the corresponding notice in v. 14. (For other instances of words that NJPS supplies for clarity, see 16:28, 38:8.) Yet this is the only genealogical setting in the Torah (and one of the few in the Bible) where NJPS renders (*beit*) *avot* as “fathers’ houses.” Everywhere else—even with regard to Levites—it is “clans” (above, v. 14; and repeatedly in Chronicles), “family” (12:3), or “ancestral houses” (throughout Numbers, e.g., Num. 1:47, 3:15, 3:20; Josh. 22:14). Thus *rashei avot* appears in Num 31:26, 32:28, 36:1 as “family heads.” And the exact same expression, *rashei avot ha-lviyim*, is rendered in Josh. 21:1 as “the heads of the ancestral houses of the Levites.” I cannot account for why NJPS employs “fathers’ houses” here.

At any rate, the NJPS rendering as “fathers’ houses” is problematic for gender reasons. Being a plural, “fathers” can be construed (in theory) as gender-inclusive. Yet many readers would be likely to misconstrue it as a male-only term, in light of the common supposition that in biblical genealogies, the only personages who counted were male. For clarity, I substitute a more gender-neutral term from elsewhere in NJPS. Hence, “. . . ancestral houses . . .” (NRSV: “. . . ancestral houses . . .”)

[DS45] 6:30. *ani aral s’fatayim* (NJPS: “I am of impeded speech”). Rendering revised in 2006. This is a resumptive repetition of the statement in 6:12. See my note there. Hence, “I get tongue-tied.” (NRSV: “I am a poor speaker.”)

[DS46] 7:11. *la-chachamim* (NJPS: “the wise men”). Rendering revised in 2006. Grammatically, this plural noun refers to a group whose gender is not solely female. Gender is not at issue in the context.

Carol Meyers defensibly holds that the text’s ancient audience would not have excluded women from among those whom Pharaoh summoned: “Israelites presumably were comfortable with the tradition of ‘wise women’ [for the Bible recognized women for their wisdom in II Sam. 14:2, 20:16; Prov. 31:26]” (pers. comm., 10/16/03). Further, “wise woman” was a historically well-known category in Egypt, giving the ancient audience no apparent reason to imagine that the noun connoted a male-only group.

I see a more clearly gender-inclusive rendering than “the wise men.” Hence, “the sages.” (NRSV: “the wise men.”)

[DS47] 7:11. *v’la-m’chash’fim* (NJPS: “and the sorcerers”). Grammatically, this plural noun refers to a group that is not specifically female. As Carol Meyers notes, “‘sorcerers’ almost certainly included women; see Exod. 22:17” (pers. comm., 10/14/03). In short, the ancient audience had no known reason to imagine that the nouns in question connoted a male-only group. No change to NJPS.

[DS48] 7:11–12. *va-yaasu gam hem chartumei mitzrayim . . . ken* (NJPS: “and the Egyptian magicians, in turn did the same”). Rendering revised in 2006. Grammatically, this plural noun refers to a group that is not specifically female.

Although women were also among Egypt’s magicians since pre-dynastic times, the particular term that describes the active participants, *chartumim* (NJPS: “magicians”) comes directly from an Egyptian word that applies only to men; it is usually translated by Egyptologists as “lector priests.” That the text pointedly makes recourse to a specialized Egyptian term suggests that the composer[s] would have been familiar enough with the institution of lector priests to have known that it referred a male-only group. Furthermore, in juxtaposing the term *chartumim* with the previously mentioned *chachamim* and *m’chash’fim*, the text itself does not give the audience sufficient evidence to know that the *chartumim* are significantly different in their being a male-only group (and thus a subset of the larger body whom Pharaoh summoned). That such a distinction went without saying implies that the audience, too, was already aware of it. In short, I conclude that *chartumim* was construed as a male term.

The contemporary reader is not familiar with the gender contours of ancient Egyptian professions, and for that reason a translation should indicate the male-only connotation of terms where the ancient audience would have implicitly recognized it. This consideration calls for rendering this term in a recognizably male manner. This rendition presumes throughout that readers will take “priest” as a male-only term within a Torah translation, and that convention can be employed here. Rendering *chartumim* as “magician-priests” will explain to the reader why I render with a male possessive pronoun. Hence, “and the Egyptian magician-priests.” (NRSV understands the syntax differently, equating the “wise men and the sorcerers” with the “magicians.”)

[DS49] 7:12. *va-yashlichu ish matteihu* (NJPS: “each cast down his rod”). The relational noun *ish* refers indirectly back to the verb’s subject: the body of male “magician-priests” mentioned at the end of the previous verse. The plural verb apparently indicates that the function of the noun *ish* is *distributive*—referring singly to all members of the group in question. This view accords well with the primary sense of *ish* as “a participant or member.” An alternative explanation for this grammatical construction, proffered by Harry Orlinsky, is that the plural verb “points to *ish* as a singular collective” (“Male Oriented Language” [1991], p. 269, n. 6). That view seems less likely, because it would also require that the word for “rod” be a collective (as if the acts of casting were carried out in unison); and in similar constructions, such

as *l'chu ish l'iro* (“Go back [plural] to your hometown [singular]”; I Sam. 8:22), a collective understanding of those disparate entities would make little sense. Either way we understand the grammar, however, the outcome is the same with regard to gender: the wording does not limit the referent of *ish* only to males—even if all of the group are men, as here—because the referent is indefinite and non-specific. No change to NJPS.

DS50 8:8. *al d'var ha-tz'fard'im asher sam l'far-o* (NJPS: “in the matter of the frogs which He had inflicted upon Pharaoh”). In order to avoid the appearance of ascribing gender to God, I occasionally resort to a passive rendering, especially (as here) when a 3rd-person masculine perfect verb has no immediately stated subject; the Hebrew verb is arguably meant in an impersonal sense, as NJPS understood in other contexts (e.g., Gen. 11:9; Exod. 39:2, 8, 22; Lev. 27:11). A passive construction is acceptable because the context makes clear that God is the ultimate agent. Hence, “in the matter of the frogs which had been inflicted upon Pharaoh.”

DS51 8:13. *ba-adam u-va-b'heimah* (NJPS: “upon man and beast”). The reference is nonspecific. Probably the Hebrew phrase is a merism, expressing a totality via contrasting parts: all civilized creatures. The noun *adam* points (here and almost everywhere in the Bible) to a *category* of human beings—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. That hardly seems likely; it would seem to require the far-fetched assumption that the infesting vermin discriminated by gender.

On how NJPS handled merism, see the *JPS Notes*, p. 37. At first I thought that when counterposed to “beast,” “man” is unlikely to be misconstrued as referring only to males, for without an article this noun technically retains its original, longstanding gender-inclusive sense. Yet I have found that “man” still makes many contemporary readers hesitate needlessly, and therefore it is best avoided. The obvious alternative is “human.” Admittedly “man and beast” has a concise and familiar ring to it in English. (Concerned about readers’ attachment to the familiar phrasing, I considered also changing “beast” to a synonym. But I could find no good synonym in English, given that NJPS has already reserved “livestock” to render *mikneh*, and “cattle” to render *bakar*.) Arguably, however, “human and beast” better echoes the Hebrew phrase’s rhythmic and pausal quality. One can only hope that readers eventually get used to the sound of it. Hence, “upon human and

beast.” (NRSV: “on humans and animals,” which seems to dilute the merism.)

DSS2 10:2. *bincha u-ven-bincha* (literally, “your son and your son’s son; NJPS: “your sons and . . . your sons’ sons”). The singular personal noun *ben* here points to a *category* of descendants—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

The alliteration and the mention of two generations suggests a proliferation of offspring, to whom the story is broadcast. The question is whether the text’s composer(s) had any reason to think that an ancient audience would interpret the recounting of the Egyptian experience mentioned here as intended for the ears of males only (rather than all of one’s descendants). My answer is no, for not only is the Exodus story the central Israelite narrative, but also the Passover festival requires the full cooperation of women (who in ancient Israel were typically the ones in charge of food preservation, processing, and preparation) in order to be observed properly. It is inconceivable that men hid from women why everyone was expected to observe the festival.

On the gender meaning of *ben*, see at 1:1. The NJPS reading here properly conveys the collective sense of singular *ben* in this context. In terms of gender, however, the rendering as “sons” is surprising. As Prof. Carol Meyers remarks, “this seems to be part of the didactic language of the Torah that the NJPS has elsewhere rendered inclusively” (e.g., Deut. 6:2, 20–21; cf. Exod. 12:26 in the plural). Why did NJPS did not do so here? To put the issue in context, it should be noted that standard translations such as KJV (1611), ASV (1901), OJPS (1917), and RSV (1954) rendered the singular *ben* as “son” here (and in the similar passages Exod. 13:8, 14; Deut. 6:2, 20–21), while rendering the plural in Exod. 12:26 as “children.” More importantly, in the first two editions of *The Torah* (1962, 1967), the NJPS translators actually rendered the singular *ben* as “son” in these same passages, including Deut. 6:2, 20–21. After all, that was the era in which every Passover Haggadah used to refer to the famous midrash on most of these verses as the “Four Sons.” The two passages in Deuteronomy were changed to read “children” only in 1985—a change almost certainly undertaken in recognition of the biblical text’s gender inclusiveness. (Prof. Harry Orlinsky, editor-in-chief of the *The Torah*, has pointed to a similar change in NJPS from “son” [1978] to “child” [1985] in Ezek. 18:20, as having been made for the sake of a philologically accurate—and thus inclusive—rendering. He also wrote that it was not until 1973 that he became aware of “unjustified masculinization of the text of the Bible in translation.” See Orlinsky, “Male Oriented Language,” 1991, pp. 267–268; 273, n. 13.) Presumably the remaining

passages in question were overlooked because the 1985 corrections were made by happenstance; they were not the result of a sustained, systemic review of gender ascriptions.

These remaining passages—namely, here and Exod. 13:8, 14—are therefore cases of the “male oriented language originated by Bible translators” that Orlinsky later decried while remarking, “it is not easy to catch such errors” (ibid.; p. 269, n. 7). Nowadays, however, they are more noticeable; in contemporary Haggadahs, the Four Sons have largely been replaced by the Four Children (so also Jeffrey Tigay in his 2004 commentary at Exod. 12:26 alludes to the “midrashic elaboration of these passages about children”). Both Nahum Sarna in his 1991 commentary here, Jeffrey Tigay in his 1996 commentary at Deut. 6:2 speak in terms of the education of “children” rather than “sons.” Against such a backdrop, the NJPS renderings in terms of “son” suggest to readers that the biblical text is more male-oriented than its original audience would have perceived it to be.

For the sake of greater accuracy, such renderings deserve to be modified. The NJPS reading here already conveys the collective sense of singular *ben* in such passages. The 1985 NJPS changes in Deuteronomy and thus provide a good model. Hence, “your children and . . . your children’s children.” (NRSV: “your children and grandchildren.”)

[DSS3] 10:6. *asher lo ra-u avotecha v’avot avotecha* (NJPS: “something that neither your fathers nor fathers’ fathers have seen”). The noun *av* is a syntactically masculine noun that indicates a non-female whenever it refers to a specific individual. Here, however, it is plural. In other words, it refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection is masculine.)

The question is then whether the text’s composer(s) expected that its ancient audience would have interpreted this particular mention of Pharaoh’s ancestors as restricted by connotation to males only. I think they would, on the grounds that male pride is in view here. Part of the ancient definition of masculinity was the ability to protect one’s people and land. (See the scholarly quotations adduced in Methodology.) The narrative here depicts Moses as engaging in a power showdown. In the context of that confrontation, the audience would understand him to be alluding to both the authority of Pharaoh’s (male) lineage—given that dynastic succession in ancient Egypt tended to be patrilineal—and to each (male) pharaoh’s responsibility to protect his dominion from harm. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “your parents nor your grandparents.”)

[DSS4] 10:7. *shalach et ha-anashim* (NJPS: “let the men go”). Rendering revised in 2010. The word *anashim* is the functional plural of the noun *ish*. The plural form of the personal noun does not exclude women from view.

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here, in the context of negotiations, the courtiers would predictably suggest that Pharaoh offer his despised Israelite slaves as little as possible; thus an ancient audience would be inclined to take *ha-anashim* in its most restrictive sense. Meanwhile, the prospect of a mission into the wilderness (emphasized by the verb *shalach*, to send off) would reliably evoke the simple sense of our relational noun as “representatives [of a group or party].” (See also Lev. 16:21; Num. 13:1–3; Deut. 1:22.) That is, the word *anashim* often points to “representatives” while relating that delegation to the entity that dispatched it.

In other words, the audience would conclude that Pharaoh’s courtiers are making a presumption that in the ancient world was fairly standard: for purposes of a deity’s communal worship, a duly authorized delegation ought to suffice. Such a reading is quickly confirmed when Pharaoh asks Moses: *mi va-mi*, “Who in particular [are the ones to go]?” (v. 8). His desire to specify who would go implies that most of the people would be staying home.

(Even though a delegation has not previously been mentioned, the article *ha-* is needed because the delegation is “definite in the imagination”: its definiteness is what some call “situationally pertinent.” See *IBHS* § 13.5.1e–f.)

Now, in the ancient world it was taken for granted that a representative delegation would consist of leading citizens. (Compare, for example, the various delegations employed later in the Torah, such as: for ratification of the covenant with God in Exod. 24:1–2; for taking a census of fighters in Num. 1:4–17; and for the scouting mission in Num. 13:1–3.) As Ramban comments *ad loc.*, citing an adjectival phrase applied elsewhere to (*ha-*)*anashim* where that noun clearly refers to designated agents (Num. 1:17; II Chron. 28:15; 31:19): “Pharaoh initially wanted [only] leaders and elders to go—*anashim* who would be ‘designated by name.’” The connotation, then, would be “notables, leaders, elders.”

Such representatives would typically be men rather than women, given the social structure of patrimonial households. (On women as occasional clan leaders, see at 6:14.) However, gender is beside the point. It is not actually at issue (contrast v. 11); rather, the semantic focus is on the referents’ representative function.

The next question is *whose* representatives would they be: the Israelites’, or Pharaoh’s? Apparently both—given that they would need to be authorized and agreed upon by both parties. Although the verb *shalach* normally refers

to the dispatching of one’s agent, and in this verse that verb refers to Pharaoh, the fact is that he alone cannot select a delegation that would satisfy the Israelites. They must agree to the participants as well. (The only other passage in the Bible where the construction “*shalach + et + ha-anashim*” appears is II Kings 5:22–24. It describes a similar case, in that two parties—namely, Naaman and Gehazi—agree that a deed will be performed by a third party, namely, two of Naaman’s *naarim* [servants]. As that deed is completed and Gehazi dispatches those two servants to return to their master, they are called *ha-anashim*. Why? Because they are the “representatives” of both parties: they are “sent off” by Gehazi yet have been acting on behalf of Naaman.)

Regarding translation, many interpreters seemed to have missed the representative aspect of the noun in question. Some versions (e.g., NRSV, NIV, CEV, and TNIV) construe *ha-anashim* broadly as “the people.” Others (e.g., KJV, ASV, RSV, NASB, HCSB, ESV; and David Sperling, pers. comm.), including NJPS, read the negotiations in this passage (vv. 7–11) as being in terms of “the men” versus “the whole people” (= men, women, and children). Either reading is plausible—yet both are unlikely. The context of agency evokes the sense of *’anashim* first of all as “representatives,” and the reader need look no farther.

When I first adapted NJPS in 2005, I was influenced by Ibn Ezra’s remark (along with other medieval and modern annotations that recognized a nuance of *anashim* as “persons of consequence; persons of distinction”; see at Num. 13:2–3; see also Joüon, 1925), and so I rendered according to that connotation as “their notables.” (As an equivalent to the Hebrew article, English idiom would prefer a possessive pronoun; see *IBHS* § 13.5.1e.) That rendering also implied the typically male character of such a delegation.

In 2010, I sought a rendering that expresses denotation rather than connotation, and that allows for the *anashim* to represent both the Israelites and Pharaoh. Rendering as “representatives” does not fit, for that term implies formally elected officials. As occasionally recognized in NJPS (as in Gen. 17:23; II Sam. 4:2), the closest equivalent in English is actually a singular collective term. In this case: “a delegation.” That wording conveys well that the party would be representing those who remain at home. This is one of many instances where the proper English rendering of the Hebrew article *ha-* is indefinite. (Compare Gen. 18:7, *va-yitten el ha-naar*, “[Abraham] gave [the calf] to a servant”; see also *IBHS* § 13.5.1e). Hence, “let a delegation go.” (NRSV: “let the people go.”)

[DS55] 10:9. *bi-nareinu u-vi-zkeneinu* (NJPS: “all . . . young and old”; OJPS: “with our young and with our old”). Rendering revised in 2006. The personal

noun *naar* discloses not only gender but also social status (Carolyn Leeb, *Away from the Father's House*, 2000). Leeb finds that *naar* generally denotes not an age grade but rather a social status of being outside the normal protection offered by one's *beit av*. She refines the conclusions reached both by Hans-Peter Stähli's 1978 dissertation—reflected in *HALOT*—that the two semantic domains for *naar* are legal or social states [unmarried dependent male; servant], and by Lawrence Stager's 1985 article, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," which held that the *naar* was a firstborn male who had not yet inherited his family's estate, or a younger son who was unlikely to become the head of an autonomous household. Meanwhile, *zaken* is already well known as a status term ("elder"). See further at 33:11.

Once the two nouns are construed here as social status terms rather than as age terms, it becomes apparent that their juxtaposition is not a merism (as construed by NJPS). Its context is Pharaoh's offer for "a delegation" to go, who would presumably consist of distinguished leaders and elders (see my previous note). In reply, then, Moses is placing emphasis on the first term of his expression: "our underlings *as well as* our elders"—the latter group being already a given. Such a formulation, however, is not spoken English idiom. Better, "(we will) all (go), low status as well as high." Even more idiomatically: ". . . regardless of social station." (NRSV: "with our young and our old.")

DS56 10:10. *tapchem* (NJPS: "your children"). The personal noun is *taf*, a singular collective. The reference is definite but not particular. Both because of the term's collective nature and its pointing to a *category* of persons, their gender is thus not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

Denotation of *taf* and Its Relationship to Gender. Carol Meyers points out that *taf* is a technical term meaning "dependent": "Women are usually part of that collective term . . . and thus are often invisible in translations that render the term . . . 'children'" (*WIS*, p. 223, citing the entry in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*). So too already *BDB* (addenda, p. 1124); *HALOT*, p. 378. The precise nature of the dependency is situational. The technical sense fits this context: Moses has not otherwise mentioned adult women—yet he has implicitly included them, given that their social role included tending both of the elements that he does mention: the "sons and daughters" and the "flocks and herds." The text's composer(s) could reliably assume that its audience would understand *tapchem* in terms of a basic social dichotomy in the ancient Near East: the responsible parties versus their dependents (roughly equivalent to today's dichotomy of entrepreneurs versus employees). This reading is confirmed in the next verse, where the category

whom Pharaoh nixes is “everyone but the *g’varim* (active and responsible men).” Hence, “your dependents.” (NRSV: “your little ones.”)

DSS7 10:11. *l’chu-na ha-g’varim* (NJPS: “you menfolk go”). Rendering revised in 2010. The noun *g’varim* is the plural form of *gever*. This is the first of 66 occurrences of *gever* in the Bible. I have not found a careful comparison of *gever* with other terms in its semantic domain. Ibn Ezra remarks, “The word *gever* refers [only] to males throughout the Bible, unlike the word *adam*, which is a generic term.” That may be an overstatement but it does seem to apply here. Yet there is more than maleness at stake.

Denotation of gever and Its Relationship to Gender. Aggregation of its various contexts suggests that *gever* refers specifically to *a male who acts upon or in the world*: his presence is noticeable already from conception (Job 3:3); he has arms and hands (Jer. 17:5, 30:6); he takes initiative with females in several ways—bedding a maiden (Prov. 30:19), seizing a damsel as spoil from the enemy (Judg. 5:30), and courting a woman (Jer. 31:22); he possesses a household (Mic. 2:2; Jer. 44:20) and jealously defends its integrity (Prov. 6:34); he succeeds in reproducing (Jer. 22:30); he lives vibrantly (Job 14:10); he challenges God (Job 16:21); he is normally in control of his faculties (Jer. 23:9) and is self-reliant (Ps. 88:5); he makes pronouncements (Num. 24:3, 15; II Sam. 23:1; Prov. 30:1); he sustains his dependents (Exod. 12:37; Jer. 41:16, 43:6); he gives to the poor (Prov. 28:3); he moves forward steadily (Joel 2:8), proceeding step by step (Ps. 37:23; Prov. 20:24) along his path (Job 3:23); he is an unusual asset (Job 22:2); he is in charge of a flock (Zech. 13:7); he girds his loins in preparation for action (Job 38:3, 40:7); he bears a yoke (Lam. 3:27); he forms work details (I Chron. 23:3, 24:4, 26:12); he faces the besieging enemy (Ps. 127:5); and he possesses sins, that is, faulty deeds (Lam. 3:39). In short, a *gever* is a male who is neither passive, depressed, ill, disabled, or feeble.

Here, in reply to Moses’ expansive answer, Pharaoh reacts: “You *g’varim* shall go!” That is, Moses and Aaron, plus a restricted group of unspecified others. The fact that *gever* normally carries a nuance of honor suggests that the king is continuing to speak ironically, just as he did earlier in the same utterance (see the previous verse). He means something like: “You hotshots can go!” This restricted understanding of the term fits the following considerations better than does the NJPS rendering as “menfolk”: the courtiers’ proposal to send a delegation (v. 7), Pharaoh’s insistence on particular names (v. 8), and his mention of dependents (v. 10)—which most “menfolk” would not have, being dependents themselves.

A contextual English equivalent—a term of mild honor that suits Phar-

aoḥ’s ironic and dismissive remonstrance—is “gentlemen.” Hence, “you gentlemen go.” (NRSV: “your men may go.”)

[DS58] 10:23. *lo ra’u ish et achiv, v’lo kamu ish mi-tachtav* (NJPS: “people could not see one another, and . . . no one could get up from where he was”). Here the noun *ish* refers to no particular individual but rather to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflections and pronouns are masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here, *ish* refers to any party to the situation described; the parties are interchangeable for purposes of the activity in question.

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. Surely the answer is no. For why would the darkness discriminate by gender? Therefore we have no warrant to render in gendered terms.

Clearly NJPS recognized the construction’s gender-inclusive force (“people . . . no one”). Thus it must have employed the rendering “he” in its classical neutral sense. However, this usage is liable to confuse contemporary readers, who tend to believe that in the Bible, only men count. So I select an equivalent expression in English that is more clearly gender-neutral. Hence, “. . . no one could move about.” (NRSV: “. . . they could not move from where they were.”)

[DS59] 10:24. *gam tapchem* (NJPS: “even your children”). See above, at 10:10. Hence, “even your dependents.” (NRSV: “even your children.”)

[DS60] 11:3. *ha-ish moshe gadol m’od* (NJPS: “Moses himself was much esteemed”; Fox: “the man Moshe was (considered) exceedingly great”; NRSV: “Moses himself was a man of great importance”; Alter: “the man Moses . . . is very great”; Friedman: “the man Moses was very big”; TNIV: “Moses himself was highly regarded”). Rendering revised in 2006 and again in 2010. The construction places the word *ha-ish* in apposition with the name “Moses,” so both must point to the same referent in an equally definite and particular way. In so doing, the word *ha-ish* must match morphologically its referent’s gender (that is, *ish* rather than *ishah*), simply as a matter of syntactic concord.

The word *ha-ish* is conspicuous by its presence, for the sentence would still make grammatical sense if it were omitted. What does it tell us about Moses that we would not know from hearing him referred to only by name? Ramban offers a clue at 33:11 when he remarks in passing, “the esteemed of-

faceholder [*baal ha-s'rarah ha-nichbad*] is called *ha-ish*.” (In their lexicons, Ibn Janah and Radak glossed this sense of *ish* as *rosh/nasi* [“head,” “prince”], citing Judges 7:14; 1 Sam. 26:15.) Construing *ish* here as an office explains both the article (*ha-ish*) and the conspicuous apposition of this term prior to the name. Just as the apposition of *melech* (king) with a name identifies the bearer *by office*, so too here. And in those instances where, as *IBHS* puts it, “the name and the identification are equally distinctive” as determined by the context, the office is often given first: *ha-melech David* means “King David” (II Sam. 3:31 and frequently; *IBHS* § 12.3e). (Compare *ha-naar Sh'muel* in I Sam. 2:21, 23; 3:1.)

What exactly is the office in question? That is, what does *ish* denote here? In its basic function, this noun relates Moses to another party or entity—but in this case the identity of the latter is only implied. (That is presumably why so many interpreters have missed it, and it leaves that indirect referent somewhat open to interpretation.) The context evokes the frequent denotation of *ish* as a “representative” who speaks or acts on behalf of another. It may be understood that Moses speaks on behalf of the people of Israel. More likely, however, the ancient audience—better schooled than we in the practice of agency—would have understood that Moses speaks on behalf of God. It would have gone without saying that at the burning bush, God commissioned Moses as appointed agent (Exod. 3:10; Deut. 33:1)—and he has continued to act explicitly in that capacity. Earlier in this same verse, God is named and mentioned as being engaged in the scene; for the text’s ancient audience, that mention would now call Moses’ agency to mind.

Thus, in this setting, Moses’ distinction is that an increasingly impressive God has designated him as the sole agent with regard to the Israelites’ fate. That context, together with the syntax and the underlying meaning of *ish*, turns our noun into a title. The result is something like “Ambassador Moses” or “Agent Moses” or “Special Envoy Moses.”

Bruce Waltke has kindly posited an alternative explanation, suggesting that this verse is “perhaps contrasting Moses, a man, [who] was held in higher honor than their god—Pharaoh” (pers. comm., 12/19/05). In my view, perceiving any contrast with a deity is a stretch in this context. Nor does it account for the construction “*ha-ish* + personal name” in other passages in which no such contrast is even remotely evident: Num. 12:3 (Moses as God’s head agent); I Kings 11:28 (Jeroboam as designated project manager); and Esther 9:4 (Mordecai as appointed vizier). Even an angel is identified this way (*ha-ish Gavriel*) when he serves as a divine envoy (Dan. 9:21–22). What all of these cases have in common is that these individuals were appointed to represent an authority figure. That is, *ish* refers to the agent’s relationship

with the principal. (Two instances do not fit this schema so clearly. One is *ha-ish Elkanah* in I Sam. 1:21—where Elkanah seems to be characterized as having authority over his household. More difficult to assess is *ha-ish Michah* in Judg. 17:5—is it that he is a householder, as in v. 4? Or his mother’s agent, as in v. 3? The solution may be that a householder is understood to have been designated by that household’s previous head, as attested by the frequent and conspicuous use of *ish* to refer to a king’s successor on the throne.)

When gender is not germane, English idiom generally does not employ a gender marker. Rendering *ish* as “man” overtranslates the gender component of the Hebrew noun in this context. NJPS apparently recognized that something other than maleness is at stake. It, like NRSV and TNIV, rendered *ha-ish* as “himself,” a sense that—so far as I know—is otherwise unattested. Such a rendering therefore seems to have been a last resort.

In 2006, after construing Moses to be representing the people as their head, I rendered our clause as “their leader Moses was much esteemed.” (The weakly demonstrative force of the Hebrew article was conveyed in English idiom via a possessive pronoun.) At the time, however, I had not realized that Moses is representing God. The styling with the title as “Envoy Moses” is not English idiom, which prefers a possessive. Hence, “[God’s] envoy Moses was much esteemed.”

[DS61] 11:5. *u-met kol b’chor* (NJPS: “every first-born . . . shall die”). Here the “male” noun *b’chor* refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection is masculine.)

On the meaning of *b’chor* and its relationship to gender, see my note above at Exod. 4:22–23.

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. Would the ancient Israelite audience understand that the tenth plague, which strikes the *b’chor*, involves only male Egyptians?

The Midrash, in various ways, expanded the number of people included in the definition of *b’chor* and thus killed in the tenth plague (see, e.g., Rashi at 12:30), just as the Midrash amplified the plagues generally, in tribute to God’s power (see famously the traditional Passover Haggadah). In particular, an influential midrash held that also female Egyptian first-born died (Exod. Rabbah § 18.3; this justified the practice in some medieval Jewish communities of firstborn women’s taking part in the annual Fast of the Firstborn—see

Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim § 470.1; Judith Antonelli, pp. 161, 164).

Ramban’s comment (at 12:30) presumes that the plain-sense scope of the tenth plague can be inferred from the subsequent ritual regulations; this is also the view of the *Mishnah B’rurah* at *Orach Chayim* § 470.1. I apply that reasoning to the gender question as follows. The related metaphors and legal sequelae—i.e., that to which the plague narrative functions to give meaning—clearly involve only males. (See my comments in the printed Commentary at 4:22–23 and Num. 3:12.) Given a presumed correspondence between narrative and ritual, I infer that the tenth plague killed only males. That is, the ancient audience would have understood the narrative in terms of the male-only rites with which they were already familiar, and to which the Torah account gives meaning.

In other words, the Torah is using a gender-inclusive term to refer to a male-only group, while the gendered nature of that group is expected to be understood from the broader context. (That is like in English when we are discussing the National Basketball Association: we customarily refer to athletes who members of a team simply as “players.” In context, their gender goes without saying.)

Having established the male-only connotation of *b’chor* here, we still face the challenge of how to render it. In translation, “first-born” alone is misleading because the English term is generic, while the lack of specificity confounds the readers’ understanding as to who will be affected by the plague and by rituals later consequent upon it. When only males are intended, a contextual translation should be more specific.

However, I do perceive a distinction in the Torah’s language: It is more vague as to whom the tenth plague killed than it is as to whom the later lore applies. Therefore I have made a distinction: I have rendered the references to victims of the plague in terms of “[male] first-born” (with brackets that respect the textual ambiguity), whereas the consequent references to Israelite life are to “male first-born” (without brackets). (But cf. Deut. 25:6.) Hence here, “every [male] first-born . . . shall die.” (NRSV: “every firstborn . . .”)

DS62 12:3. *kol adat yisrael* (NJPS: “the whole community of Israel”). Rendering revised in 2010. The operative word here, *edah*, can variously refer to all the Israelites, the adult males, or the chieftains (see Jacob Milgrom on Numbers, Excursus 1 and at 1:2 for citations). I explain in my notes at Lev. 24:14–15 and Num. 1:2 why a concern for gender precision prompted my revisiting the rendering of this term. Generally when the prose text seems to point to a more specific institution that represents the nation as a whole, I have tried to spotlight that smaller body. Doing so makes explicit the information that is only implicit in the Hebrew text, for the sake of more clarity as

to the gender implications.

As is common in the Hebrew Bible (and in English), a broad term is used here to refer to a more specific body. For an Israelite audience that construed this passage in terms of their own hierarchical and patrimonial social structure, the presence in this passage of a representative leadership body would have gone without saying. Indeed, Moses has all along been dealing with a body of “elders” (Exod. 3:16, 18; 4:29). The narrative later confirms that such a leadership body is in view here too, when it refers to the assembly as *kol ziqnei yisra’el* [“all the elders of Israel”] in verse 21. Such a body would have consisted typically of men.

Thus, Moses—perhaps as a matter of both practicality and political savvy—interacts directly with only the leadership and charges them with conveying the instructions to the entire people (Ibn Ezra at v. 21). Hence, “the community leadership of Israel.” (NRSV: “the whole congregation of Israel.”)

DS63 12:6. *kol k’hal adat yisrael* (NJPS: “all the assembled congregation of the Israelites”). This term refers explicitly to those who are to perform the paschal sacrifice and to spread the blood (vv. 6–7), and then to consume the sacrifice (v. 8). The first rite might be reserved for heads of households, but if so the emphasis is on their acting on behalf of all. Consumption is an act in which every Israelite is surely meant to participate, for even an individual *ger* can take part (v. 48). Finally, in verse 28, we are informed that “the Israelites” carried out these instructions. (The broad designation supports the larger, mythic telescoping of past and present in this passage. These instructions are not only for the Israelites who are about to leave Egypt but explicitly also for the audience of the text, who are hearing this story long after it was said to have taken place.) In short, the contours of a restricted group are not apparent (contrast v. 3), and so there is no warrant for replacing broad terms with more restricted ones. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the whole assembled congregation of Israel.”)

DS64 12:12. See above at 11:5 regarding “first-born.”

DS65 12:15. *v’nichratah ha-nefesh ha-hi* (NJPS: “that person shall be cut off”). This is the Bible’s first instance of the expression *ha-nefesh ha-hi* since its initial appearance in Gen. 17:14. The grammatically feminine common noun *nefesh* points here to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection and pronoun are feminine.)

On the meaning of *b’chor* and its relationship to gender, see my note

above at Exod. 4:22–23.

To which group is *nefesh* being applied as a constituent term? (Although it can refer to human beings in general, it can also apply to members of a male-only group, such as the male descendants of Abraham, Gen. 17:14; and the male descendants of Aaron, Lev. 22:3.) Given that the present verse has just stated that leaven must be removed from “your houses,” it can hardly be the case that the ban on eating leavened bread applies only to Israelite men. In this context, therefore, the text’s composer(s) could rely on its original audience to retain the gender-inclusive sense of *nefesh* here.

NJPS properly conveys the Hebrew’s absence of gender specificity. No change to NJPS. (NRSV does not render this expression directly.)

DS66 12:19. *nichratah ha-nefesh ha-hi . . . ba-ger uv-ezrach ha-aretz* (NJPS: “that person shall be cut off . . . whether he is a stranger or a citizen of the country”). On *nefesh*, see my note above at v. 15. The two personal-noun categories of *ger* and *ezrach* possess gender-inclusive here for the same reasons.

Although the Bible never applies the noun *ger* (“stranger”) to a specific female, there is no evidence that it intrinsically refers only to males. As noted in my printed comments at Exod. 12:48 and Num. 9:14, it denotes an outsider who lacks the protection of a home clan, who therefore seeks the sponsorship of a local patron, and who meanwhile remains socially and economically vulnerable. One could become a *ger* as a refugee from war, famine, or oppression. Presumably such victims included both women and men. The term applied also to an Israelite who left the homeland or Israelite jurisdiction. Such people included Moses in Midian (Exod. 2:22; 18:3), as well as the whole Israelite populace in Egypt (Exod. 22:20; 23:9). Women certainly found themselves in the same position as is designated by the term, so there is no reason to think that it did not apply to them. Given that in the Hebrew Bible, grammatically masculine nouns have a gender-inclusive reference by default, we cannot consider that either the term *ger* or *ezrach* itself excludes women from view.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. Our verse has just stated that no leaven shall be found in “your houses.” In Israelite society, the senior wife functioned as chief operating officer of the household and managed its economy. Meanwhile, are the Israelite or resident alien *women* free to eat leaven while their *men* are forbidden? Hardly. Thus the ancient audience had no reason to infer that the text meant to exclude women from view.

NJPS appropriately conveys the nouns' lack of gender specificity. The word "he" (supplied by the translators for good English idiom) was presumably intended in its neutral sense. The male pronoun is, however, liable to be misconstrued by contemporary readers, due to the common impression that for the biblical authors, only men counted. For clarity, I substitute an equivalent but gender-neutral English formulation, by recasting the sentence to avoid a pronoun: "that person—whether a stranger or a citizen of the country—shall be cut off. . . ." (NRSV does not directly render *ha-nefesh ha-hi* and leaves the final phrase dangling: "shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether an alien or a native of the land.")

DS67 12:25. *kaasher dibber* (NJPS: "as He has promised"). This now calls for an equivalent but gender-neutral English idiom. Throughout (but noted only here), I am adopting the expression "as promised" as being the more usual English way to express the thought conveyed by the Hebrew idiom. That God is the source of the promise is obvious from the context. Hence, "as promised."

DS68 12:27. *va-yikkod ha-am va-yishtachavu* (NJPS: "the people bowed low in homage"). Rendering revised in 2010. The situation is similar to 4:30–31 (see notes there). Here, *ha-am* refers to the elders whom Moses has been addressing (cf. Ibn Ezra ad loc.), as stated in verse 21. (Their physical demonstration of deference brings the assembly to a close.) Regardless of whether we understand *am* here as denoting the larger nation that the elders represent (using a broad term to refer to a more restricted one), or whether we construe it as denoting the "collectivity" that is present, the contours of a more restricted body are in view—which warrants a narrower rendering according to our criteria (see Methodology).

The NJPS rendering as "the people" is misleading in that it suggests a gender-inclusive group, rather than a typically male one. Hence, "those assembled bowed low in homage." (NRSV: "And the people bowed down and worshiped.")

DS69 12:29. See above at 11:5 regarding "first-born."

DS70 12:37. *k'shesh me'ot elef ragli ha-g'varim* (NJPS: "about six hundred thousand men on foot"). Rendering revised in 2010. The exact nature of the construction is not clear to me. The personal adjective *ragli*, here used as a substantive (see *IBHS* § 14.3.3c), may stand in apposition with the personal noun *g'varim* (plural of *gever*), which means that the two terms agree in definiteness and have similar or identical reference. The article with *g'varim* makes it definite; that article can be construed as pointing the noun to a referent that is understood to be present and, as such, situationally definite

(*IBHS* § 13.5.1e). Thus, the two terms point to a definite and particular referent that is being numbered: “the *ragli ha-g’varim*, aside from *taf*, being about six hundred thousand.”

Another way to understand this verse’s construction is as a comparison of *ha-g’varim* with *ragli*. The article with *g’varim* can be construed as a generic usage, marking out a unique and determined class of persons, as is common in comparisons (*IBHS* § 13.5.1f; see also § 15.2.6); meanwhile, *ragli* points to a category while gaining definiteness from its stated number. Thus, *g’varim* points to a definite and particular referent that is being compared to *ragli*, whose referent is definite yet nonparticular: “aside from *taf*, the *g’varim* were like six hundred thousand *ragli*.”

Either way, as a collective term, *ragli* does not specify its referents’ gender; and as a plural, *g’varim* is equally nonspecific. Grammatically speaking, we learn only that the referent is not entirely female.

At the same time, these words’ principal meaning-component (i.e., the meaning-component that is independent of the pointing function) is male-only by definition. The substantive *ragli* denotes “infantry,” which is its sense in all of the other ten instances of this term in the Bible (e.g., Judg 20:2; I Sam 4:10; 15:4). The word *ragli* occurs only other time in the Torah (Num. 11:21), where we rendered it as “foot soldiers” (following NJPS at I Sam. 4:10; see my note there). Meanwhile, as suggested by my semantic analysis of the personal noun *g’varim* (see my note above at 10:11), these are males at their most vigorous.

Such male-oriented terms fit the context. As I state in my printed comment, the spotlight is apparently on men in order to underscore the militaristic portrayal of Israelite departure (v. 51) and later conquest of Canaan: this is the Eternal’s army. And in the ancient Near East, military service was quintessentially male activity. Not all men are in view—only those who would potentially qualify as members of a militia.

The larger story line does portray women as part of the metaphorical fighting force: the “stripping of the enemy”—normally a [male] warrior’s function—is accomplished by Israelite women (3:22). However, just because women sometimes behave like *g’varim* does not mean that they are called *g’varim*. The text’s composer(s) had no reason to think that its audience would construe the terms *g’varim* or *ragli* inclusively in the present context. Their male cast goes without saying.

If *ragli ha-g’varim* is an appositive, then the two terms combine in meaning to yield something like “foot soldiers.” But if *g’varim* is being compared to *ragli*, then *g’varim* retains its more general meaning of “active men” or “fighting men.” (Construing *ha-g’varim* as something more specific than

simply “the men” is confirmed later by the close tally between the number of *g’varim* given here and the results of the later wilderness censuses for the army, esp. Num 11:21; regarding one such census, Num. 1:2–3 states that the males counted are *of fighting age and “able to bear arms.”*)

A further semantic datum is that this verse counterposes *gever* with *taf* (dependents—see my next note). In terms of Israelite social structure, most men of fighting age were themselves dependents of a smaller number of (male) householders. This would seem to suggest that *ha-g’varim* refers only to Israelite householders. However, in the Bible the scope of *taf* appears to be contextually determined; that is, the precise nature of the dependency is situational. Here, then, the dependency is most simply that which exists between combatants and noncombatants, namely, the need for protection from enemy attack.

The NJPS rendering of *g’varim* as “men” is accurate in terms of gender yet misses the military nuance. Hence, “fighting men.” (NRSV: “men on foot.”)

DS71 12:37. *l’vad mi-taf* (NJPS: “aside from children”). Rendering revised in 2010. Both because of its collective nature and because its reference is indefinite and nonspecific, the noun *taf* points here to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

On the meaning of *taf* and its relationship to gender—and for a similar counterposition of *gever* with *taf*—see at 10:10.

About this verse, which characterizes the Israelite populace via only two terms, *g’varim* and *taf*, Carol Meyers asks rhetorically, “Where are the women?” In which term are they included? She raises the possibility that a masculine term like *g’varim* may have been “meant to include the female half of a conjugal pair” (pers. comm., 3/4/05)—as is found with *atah* (“you,” 2ms) in Exod. 20:10 and Deut. 12:12; see my notes there. Those instances appear in the context of the functions of a household (homestead), and the text here may likewise mean to suggest that just as the Israelites had gathered by household during the previous night (12:3), so too they now journeyed in household groups (as my alternative reading of Num. 1:52, 2:2, 34 likewise presumes), in which case *gever* and *taf* might be rendered “foot soldiers [and their wives]” and “other noncombatants,” respectively. For this proposal to be convincing, however, the text would need to offer more pointers in this direction (esp. given that the other instances of *ragli* do not have women in view); on balance, it seems more likely (given other instances of how *gever* and *taf* are used) that women would have been construed as part of *taf* rather than *g’varim*.

Professor Meyers and I both believe that an ancient Israelite audience would have understood the apposition of *gever* with *taf* in the same terms that she has described elsewhere, adduced above at 10:10—responsible parties versus their dependents. In this passage the “responsibility” is arguably in terms of readiness to serve effectively on the battlefield, while the dependents are all noncombatants (including some adult males). For *taf* in the sense of “[other] noncombatants,” see Num. 31:9 and possibly Deut. 2:34. Perhaps, then, “fighting men” and “noncombatants” is a more accurate dichotomization of the present verse’s terms. (One might think to object: Can these escaping slaves really be considered fighters? Where did they get weapons to battle with? The text itself seems unconcerned about such considerations. Indeed, soon thereafter, in 17:8–13, it depicts a detachment of Israelite troops as defeating Amalekites “by the sword.”)

The NJPS rendering of *taf* as “children” is inadequate, for it needlessly obscures women from view. In 2005 and 2006, I had imagined that “non-combatants” was too unusual a word to match the biblical register, and so I opted for “dependents.” However, already NJPS itself used “combatant” in Num. 31:27 (to render *tof sei milchamah*), while in post-9/11 parlance, “non-combatant” has come to be part of standard political vocabulary in the U.S.A. Hence, “aside from noncombatants.” (NRSV: “. . . children.”)

[DS72] 12:44. *kol eved ish miknat kasef* (NJPS: “any slave a man has bought”). Rendering revised in 2006. Here the personal nouns *eved* and *ish* form a construct chain, in which the latter term qualifies the former. Here both nouns refer to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection and pronoun are masculine.)

The context quickly discloses that this *eved* requires ritual circumcision, which restricts the term’s connotation to male slaves. (On circumcision as a specifically male rite in the Torah’s view, see Gen. 17:9–14.)

As for *ish*, its presence is conspicuous; if it were omitted the sentence would still make grammatical sense. Conspicuous usage in the context of a subject that is organized by households—as is the rite of the paschal sacrifice (Exod. 12:3–4)—would have evoked for the ancient audience the simple sense of *ish* as “representative” of his household. (For a list of instances with this meaning, see my note above at 2:21.) The direct referent of *ish* is the householder (who presumably has purchased the slave in question, and who is responsible to see to his circumcision), while the indirect referent is the implied household on whose behalf he acts. Because in a patrimonially organized society the typical householder is a man, the syntactic and topical con-

texts together cast *ish* in a specifically male light. That being said, the regulation presumably also covers the few women who might live outside of a male-headed household and who own a male slave. (For women as slave-owners, see Gen. 16:8, 24:59, 24:61, 29:24, 29:29.) In short, the text’s composer(s) could not presume that its audience would understand that women are excluded from view.

The NJPS rendering of *eved* as “slave” undertranslates the male semantic component, which is relevant in this context per English idiom. Conversely, with regard to *ish*, the NJPS rendering as “man” is unduly gendered at the expense of the Hebrew term’s representational sense. English idiom does not employ a gender marker in a situation such as this, where gender is not at issue. For contemporary readers, it goes without saying that an Israelite householder is most likely to be male. Hence, “any householder’s purchased male slave.” (NRSV: “any slave who has been purchased.”)

[DS73] 12:48. *ger . . . v’asah fesach* (NJPS: “a stranger . . . who would offer the passover”). See my printed comment, which explains the change here to “a male stranger. . . .” On the meaning of *ger*, see also at 12:19. (NRSV: “alien.”)

[DS74] 12:48. *v’chol arel lo yochal bo* (NJPS: “but no uncircumcised person may eat of it”). Here the substantive *arel* refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection is masculine.)

On the meaning of *arel* and its relationship to gender, see at 6:12.

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. The answer is yes, given the statement in Genesis 17 that circumcision is incumbent only on males.

Because gender is germane and not otherwise immediately evident, English idiom expects a rendering here in gendered terms. Further, in the presence of negation, an adjective cannot by itself serve as a substantive; therefore “uncircumcised” must modify a noun. The NJPS rendering has supplied such a noun. Yet its choice of noun is unduly gender-neutral, even confusing.

I now substitute a more clearly male term. Hence, “but no uncircumcised man may eat of it.” (NRSV: “. . . uncircumcised person. . . .”)

[DS75] 13:2. *kol b’chor peter kol rechem* (NJPS: “every first-born . . . the first issue of every womb”). Regarding the presumed male meaning of the personal noun *b’chor*, the ambiguity of the rendering “first-born,” and my con-

vention for clarifying the intended gender, see above at 11:5. Hence, for clarity, “every male first-born” and “the first [male] issue of the womb.” (NRSV: “all the firstborn; whatever is the first to open the womb.”)

DS76 13:2. *ba-adam u-va-b'heimah* (NJPS: “man and beast”). On this merism and the role of *adam*, see my note at 8:13. Hence, “human and beast.” (NRSV: “of human beings and animals.”)

DS77 13:5. *el eretz . . . asher nishba la-avotecha* (NJPS: “into the land . . . which he swore to your fathers to give you”). Rendering revised in 2006. The noun *av* is a syntactically masculine noun that indicates a non-female whenever it refers to a specific individual. Here, however, it is plural. As such, it refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context positively *excludes* women from view. As discussed in Methodology, the answer is yes. In the specific context of God’s *promises of land*, an ancient audience would have heard the term *avot* as referring to the patriarchs specifically. That’s because in ancient Israel the ancestral land holding was patrimonial—typically inherited and controlled by males. (Compare my rendering in situations regarding other gendered social institutions; see my notes to Exod. 12:3, Lev. 24:14 and 26:7. See also my note at Num. 20:15. Contrast this with my inclusive rendering elsewhere of expressions like *elohei avotecha*: “God of your ancestors”—see my note at Exod. 3:6.)

The NJPS rendering as “fathers” is appropriately gendered in this context. Early in my adaptation effort, however, I changed “fathers” to “ancestors” throughout the Torah; I later reversed the change in most passages involving a promise of land (see Methodology). This is one such passage that I overlooked until 2006, when I restored the rendering to “to your fathers.” That is, no change to NJPS. (NRSV: “to your ancestors”).

DS78 13:5. *asher nishba . . . latet lach* (NJPS: “which He swore . . . to give you”). With this Hebrew idiom, when an active subject is specified, I have let stand NJPS’s rendering of both verbs as active: “that the Eternal swore . . . to assign.” (The verb *nishba* is active in force, even though for most other verbal roots this same grammatical form conveys a passive sense.) However, when (as here) the subject is only implied, I render both parts of the idiom impersonally (cf. at 8:8). That God is the actor remains clear from the context and from the reference to the well-known promises themselves. Hence, “which was sworn . . . to be given you.”

[DS79] 13:8. *v'higadta l'vincha* (NJPS: “and you shall explain to your son”).

Here the relational noun *ben* points to its referent in a definite yet nonspecific manner. That is, it refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

The immediate context mentions a ban on leavened food, which is gender inclusive (see my note at 12:15). Indeed, given that in ancient Israel, food storage-and-preparation was a female gender role (Carol Meyers, *WIS*, pp. 213–214), this ban would have affected females *more* than males. As explained in my note at 10:2, the text’s composer(s) could reliably presume that its audience would not construe this verse’s language as applying only to sons (and not daughters). Rather, they would have understood this as a charge for one parent or the other to educate all of their children about the basis of their national identity.

See my note at 10:2 also for my conclusion that this is a (relatively rare) case of inadvertent gender bias on the part of the NJPS translators. In contrast to the situation in 10:2, rendering in the singular is preferable here, because in this case a specific parent-child interaction is in view. Hence, “and you shall explain to your child.” (NRSV: “. . . your child.”)

[DS80] 13:11. *nishba l'cha v'la-avotecha* (NJPS: “swore to you and to your fathers”). Rendering revised in 2006. See my note on *av* at v. 5. No change to NJPS.

[DS81] 13:13. *v'chol b'chor adam b'vanecha tifdeh* (NJPS: “and you must redeem every first-born male among your children”). Regarding the presumed male meaning of the personal noun *b'chor*, the ambiguity of the rendering “first-born,” and my convention for clarifying the intended gender, see above at 11:5. (NJPS does not directly render the generic term *adam*; it seems to incorporate that word into its rendering of *banecha* generically as “your children” rather than “your sons.” But *adam* may be seen instead as establishing the transition in subject from one’s beasts to one’s own [i.e., human] progeny. By either reading, the intended gender is the same. See further my second note at v. 15, below.) Hence, “. . . every male first-born among your children.” (NRSV: “every firstborn male among your children.”)

[DS82] 13:14. *ki yishal'cha vincha . . . v'amarta elav* (NJPS: “when . . . your son asks you . . . you shall say to him”). On the singular relational noun *ben* in such a context, see my note at v. 8. Here, the text has just stated that this parent has multiple “children” (NJPS); the same question could be posed by any of them, whether son or daughter. In this case, as distinct from v. 8, not only “son” but also “him” is problematic for contemporary readers. With regard to the latter, I note that an object pronoun is not necessary to convey the idea of

response; indeed, NJPS rendered the verbal expression “*amar el + pronoun*” simply as “replied” in Gen. 19:21; 24:24 (cf. I Sam. 2:16). Hence, “when . . . a child of yours asks you . . . you shall reply.” (NRSV: “when . . . your child asks you . . . you shall answer.”)

DS83 13:15. *va-yaharog kol b'chor* (NJPS: “slew every first-born”). Regarding the presumed male meaning of the personal noun *b'chor*, the ambiguity of the rendering “first-born,” and my convention for clarifying the intended gender, see above at 11:5. Hence, “slew every [male] first-born.” (NRSV: “all the firstborn.”)

DS84 13:15. *mi-b'chor adam v'-ad-b'chor b'heimah* (NJPS: “the first-born of both man and beast”). On this merism and the role of *adam*, see my note at 8:13. Hence, “. . . human and beast.” (NRSV: “. . . from human firstborn to the firstborn of animals.”)

DS85 13:15. *v'chol b'chor banai* (NJPS: “every first-born among my sons”). The construct chain *b'chor banim* appears in the Bible only in the context of ritual redemption. In the singular, in 22:28 and 34:20. In the plural, in Neh. 10:37: *v'et b'chorot baneinu uv-hemteinu ka-katuv ba-torah* (literally, “the first-borns of our *banim* and our beasts, as is written in the *torah*”).

On the meaning of *b'chor* and its male connotation in this context, see my note at 11:5. If, as I suggest, the ancient audience understood *b'chor* in the context of redemption as referring to a son, then the construct form does not require *banim* to be understood restrictively as “sons.” Given the relatively high valuation that ancient Israelite society placed on women (Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve*), and the biblical inclusion of daughters in other ritual contexts (Exod. 20:10; Lev. 12:6; Deut. 12:12, 18, 31; 16:11, 14; Jer. 7:31; 32:25; Ezek. 16:20; Ps. 106:37–38; see also I Sam. 30:6, 19; II Sam. 12:3), I believe that most audience members—especially those who had only daughters, or who had daughters as well as sons, or who had sisters as well as brothers (and so on)—would have heard *banim* here in inclusive terms. (Cf. my note at 10:2 regarding “son.”) Without any basis for believing that the knowledge of ritual lore was kept from females, there is no reason to exclude daughters from view.

On why *b'chor* now needs to be rendered more specifically, see my note at 11:5. Meanwhile, the NJPS rendering as “sons” (while traditional) obscures the gender-inclusive sense of the Hebrew term—and the fact that daughters as well as sons are in view. Hence, “every male first-born among my children.” (NRSV: “but every firstborn of my sons.”)

DS86 14:6. *v'et amo laqach imo* (NJPS: “and took his men with him”). Here, the noun *am* points to a definite yet nonparticular group. In other words, it re-

fers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

For a word study of the noun *am* and its referents' gender, see at 1:9–11.

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text's composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. The answer is yes, for in the ancient Near East, the military context evoked a male-only connotation. This would go without saying.

NJPS renders *am* as “men” also in Esau's informal reference of Gen. 33:15, and in battle at Deut. 2:32–33. Usually, however, in a military setting, NJPS renders *am* as “troops” (I Sam. 11:1), “force” (Judg. 20:16), “forces” (Deut. 20:1), or “army” (Judg. 20:22).

For precision, the present translation reserves the term “men” for instances where gender is at issue (“men” as opposed to “women”). Here, our term, given its emphatic position in the verse, seems to refer to the king's standing troops as a body. In rendering, I seek a collective term to convey that impression (and like the Hebrew, to convey gender by implication). (Probably “army” is not a good choice here, because NJPS employs it to render *machaneh* later in this episode.) Hence, “force.” (NRSV: “army.”)

DS87 14:9. *kol-sus rechev paro u-farashav v'cheilo* (NJPS: “all the chariot horses of Pharaoh, his horsemen, and his warriors”). Rendering revised in 2006. The plural personal noun *parash* (with various inflections or suffixes) appears six times in this chapter (also vv. 17, 18, 23, 26, 28). The noun points to a definite but nonparticular referent. In other words, it refers to a *category* of persons—whose gender is thus not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

The exact denotation is unclear. According to Sarna, horseback riding in warfare was not yet known, so the Hebrew term originally must have referred either to the horses themselves (which to me seems unlikely, given that horses were just mentioned) or to charioteers. (We cannot be certain that the composer[s] of the text meant to be historically accurate in this regard.)

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text's composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. The answer is yes, for the military context restricts the referents' gender to men.

But gender is not a salient issue at this point. And the contemporary reader's assumptions about ancient warriors' gender is likely to be that they were men. Therefore we have no warrant to render in gendered terms.

NJPS presumably meant “horsemen” here as a generic term. Yet con-

temporary readers are likely to misconstrue it as reflecting an emphasis on gender in the original Hebrew (given the common predisposition to believe that in the biblical world, only men counted). I look for a nongendered alternative that is ambiguous enough to also suggest “charioteers.” Hence, “all the chariot horses of Pharaoh, his riders, and his warriors.” (NRSV: “. . . chariot drivers . . .”)

DS88 15:1 ff. This elaborates on my printed comments about the God-language. In terms of surface syntax, the expression *ish milchamah* is a construct chain that stands in apposition to a name, so that the referents of the two must overlap—and match in their gender. The appositive identifies the bearer of the name by role: “YHWH is a . . .!” As for the role itself, *ish* in this construction indicates mastery, yielding: “expert warrior” (Rashi, Ibn Ezra).

In most cases, the employment of *ish* (rather than its female counterpart, *ishah*) in such a construction would indicate that the referent is male. However, technically it means only that the referent is *not female*. The speaker may actually consider that referent’s gender to be indeterminate, unknown, or beyond gender categories—and none of those possibilities can be ruled out here.

Furthermore, the poetic image is not a statement about God’s nature but rather about how God was experienced by the Israelites (according to the text). As Ibn Ezra explains (at this verse), the image is an ascription. As such, it says nothing about the gender of God as an abiding persona in the biblical text. Deliverance is what the image emphasizes, not divine maleness.

Meanwhile, Judah Kraut (a graduate student at the University of Penna.) has argued cogently in an SBL presentation that this verse is an instance of a rare poetic structure known as “staircase parallelism.” If so, then the syntax is equivalent to the prose formulation: *Adonai—ish milchamah sh’mo!* (“YHWH: his manifestation [literally, name] is [as] a top-notch warrior!”). In such a construction, *ish milchamah* functions as a *category*—which means only that its potential referents are *not solely female*.

Tikva Frymer-Kensky sees *ish milchamah* as an explicitly male image (pers. comm., 11/20/03); and Susan Niditch concurs (pers. comm., 5/19/04). Indeed, in the ancient Near East, warriors were male (Asher-Greve, 2002); and conversely, a paradigmatic measure of maleness was war-making (Hoffner, 1966).

With regard to deities, however, one might object to that equation of warrior with maleness on the grounds that Canaanite (pre-Israelite) culture portrayed a goddess (Anat) also as a fierce warrior (in the Baal epic of Ugarit). However, it appears that in the Canaanite pantheon, Anat held an exceptional

“tomboy” status (see Phyllis Day, 1991). Carol Meyers adds: “I don’t think the goddess issue is relevant for the very reason that goddesses can do what humans can’t or don’t. My understanding of warrior imagery for Anat, Ishtar, and other such ancient Near Eastern deities is that battle language and iconography are expressions of power” (pers. comm., 11/17/03). In other words, the language for Anat appropriates, rather than undercuts, the male orientation of war imagery.

Thus even in comparison to other epic poetry, it seems safe to assume that ancient Israelites could have portrayed their one God as warrior only in male terms. (Notice that in v. 21, this male imagery is placed in the mouth of Miriam.)

Out of respect for the biblical author’s poetic license, I have retained NJPS’s masculine English pronouns for God in vv. 1–3. In this passage we retained more masculine pronouns than the Hebrew wording reflects. We did so in order to carry the metaphor. Because this passage is one of only two in the entire Torah for which male pronouns for God appear, readers might think that the male language was a mistake unless it received some emphasis here. More importantly, the heavily male rendering seemed warranted by the situational context in this passage, rather than by the language itself. Emphasis on maleness in translation would convey the extent to which the ancient audience perceived making war as a quintessentially male activity, which might otherwise be lost on contemporary readers.

DS89 15:2. *elohei avi va-arom’menhu* (NJPS: “the God of my father, and I will exalt Him”). As discussed in more detail at 3:6, in the construct chain *elohei av*, the relational noun *av* does not point to a particular person; rather, it has a collective sense. That is, it refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

More precisely, the text’s composer(s) could rely on its audience to construe this expression in terms of corporate households, understanding as elliptical for *elohei beit av* (“God of my father’s house”). In the mind of the audience, women were in view.

On why the NJPS translators rendered *av* as “father” (in the singular), see my note at 3:6. For contemporary readers, such a rendering obscures their view of women. Unlike the ancient reader, the contemporary audience does not automatically view social reality in terms of corporate households. As in other passages in the Torah where *elohei av* appears, such a discrepancy between ancient and contemporary assumptions warrants a clarifying insertion in the translation—as in 3:6 (“God of your father’s [house]”).

In 2005, I rendered as “ancestors” so as to convey that women are not excluded from view, but this was before I realized that “father’s [house]”

more closely reflects the ancient worldview. In a future printing, the rendering here should probably be changed to yield: “the God of my father’s [house], . . .” (NRSV: “my father’s God . . .”)

[DS90] 15:20. *miryam ha-n’viyah* (NJPS: “Miriam the prophetess”). With the noun *n’viyah*, Hebrew employs a feminine gender marker for the sake of syntactic concord only. Miriam’s being female has nothing in particular to do with her being a prophet.

Translations of the Bible into English have customarily rendered the feminine Hebrew marker, but this is an overtranslation: it is contrary to standard English idiom, which avoids a gender marker unless it is germane. The feminine marker “-ess” introduces a diminutive connotation—absent in the Hebrew—which is needlessly confusing to contemporary readers. (Meanwhile, contemporary English style has generally dropped gender-specific terms like “actress,” “Jewess,” etc.—which makes “prophetess” stand out even more due to the rarity of its form.)

I render according to normal English idiom. Hence, “Miriam the prophet.” (NRSV: “Miriam the prophet.”)

[DS91] 15:20. *va-tikach . . . ha-tof b’yadah* (NJPS: “took a timbrel in her hand”). See printed comment. The key difference between the two meanings of the English word “timbrel”—as “tambourine” and as “hand-drum”—is that only the latter is an instrument that controls tempo. Thus the rendering of *tof* is a matter of gender accuracy because, as Carol Meyers writes, “women were probably the percussionists in ancient Israel, which goes against Western conventions that associate men with drums!” (She further notes that “tambourines, it seems, don’t predate the Roman period.”) (pers. comm., 10/16/03, 10/14/03) Hence, “picked up a hand-drum.” (NRSV: “took a tambourine in her hand.”)

[DS92] 16:1, 2. *va-yavo’u kol adat b’nei yisrael . . . va-yilonu kol adat b’nei yisrael* (NJPS: “the whole Israelite community came. . . . the whole Israelite community grumbled”). See the discussion of *edah* (“community”) at the start of Numbers. This translation understands that women were full participants in the activities (traveling, grumbling, gathering, and eating) narrated in the present passage. Thus the context of *edah* here is generic. (According to Carol Meyers, food gathering in ancient Israel was not a gender-restricted activity.) No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the whole congregation of the Israelites.”)

[DS93] 16:16. *ish l’fi ochlo . . . ish l’asher b’oholo tikkachu* (NJPS: “as much of it as each of you requires to eat. . . . each of you shall fetch for those in his tent”). Rendering revised in 2010. On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the

2nd entry at 1:1. Twice in the present verse, and again in vv. 18 and 21, *ish* (literally, “participant”) appears within an idiom in its distributive sense of “each one, anyone.” On that sense, see at 1:7 and especially at 7:12.

Here *ish* refers to the party responsible for the “gathering” and the “fetching.” Some translations read *ish* as designating the individual gatherer, thus rendering the key phrase *ish l’fi ochlo* as “every man according to his eating” (OJPS). Yet this understanding contradicts two conditions laid out in the same verse: (a) If one gathers as much as *he himself* eats (per the first clause), this conflicts with gathering for everybody in *his* household (per the second clause; cf. v. 5, which mentions the daily apportionment of what’s gathered); and (b) If one gathers *whatever* he himself will eat (per the first clause), this conflicts with the fixed quantity “an *omer* to a person” (in the next phrase).

R. Hayyim ben Moses ibn Attar proposed a different reading in his commentary *Or ha-Hayyim* (1742): “the consumption of all the household’s members is considered to be the consumption of the individual gatherer upon whom it depends.” In other words, we should read the phrase idiomatically, in terms of what each gatherer needs to acquire for the household’s consumption. Such an interpretation is logical in context; but it violates the plain-sense grammar.

The solution comes from noticing that where the identical phrase occurs in Exod. 12:4, *ish* clearly refers to households (NJPS: “according to what each *household* will eat”), and that referent also fits the context here best. For the group in question—of which *ish* must be the constituent unit—was identified in the previous verse as *b’nei Yisra-el* (Israelites). And in an ancient group-oriented society, it would have gone without saying that a HOUSEHOLD is the constituent unit of the Israelite polity. (For other instances of a reference to households, see Num. 1:52, 2:2, 2:34. The Bible applies the noun *ish* not only to human beings but also to animals, to inanimate objects, and to abstract entities such as clans, tribes, and nations.)

NJPS had apparently followed Ibn Attar’s interpretation, which I have discredited. Now we must recast the rendering in terms of households. Hence, “Each household . . . as much as it requires to eat . . . each household shall fetch according to those in its tent.” (NRSV: “all providing for those in their tents.”)

[DS94] 16:20. *va-yotiru anashim mi-mennu* (NJPS: “some of them left of it”).

The word *anashim* is the functional plural of the noun *ish*. This verse’s phrasing echoes that of the previous verse, in which Moses enjoined: *ish al yoteir mi-mennu* (“Let none leave of it”). He was applying *ish* nonspecifically. Whenever a grammatically masculine noun like *ish* points to a *cate-*

gory of persons (as there), their genders are not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection is masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. The former editor-in-chief of the NJPS *Torah*, Harry Orlinsky, noted that *anashim* appears here in a generic context and thus must be understood in a gender-neutral sense; he marveled that even “all of the word for word versions” (such as the King James Version) have rendered *anashim* this way here (“Male Oriented Language,” p. 269, n. 6). Indeed, given the verbal echo of v. 19, the primary sense of *ish* is salient here: “participants.” When followed by the partitive preposition *mi-* and a reference to a group, the nonspecific plural means “some participants” or “certain (unspecified) participants” (“The Noun *’ish* in Biblical Hebrew,” p. 12; compare v. 27; Num. 9:6; *IBHS* § 11.2.11e). Based on how v. 18 echoes the language of v. 16, the referent unit here is households rather than individuals.

(On a more midrashic note, *anashim* can be read as “some notables.” See at Num. 13:3. That might better explain Moses’ angry reaction. This may have been Rashi’s point when, based on Midrash Tanchuma, he glossed *anashim* here as “Dathan and Abiram”—referring to the Reubenites who later led a rebellion against Moses; see Num. 16, where they seem to be designated as *anashim* in vv. 2, 30.)

No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “some.”)

DS95 16:28. *ad anah m’antem* (NJPS: “how long will you men refuse”). The address is 2nd-person plural, which in terms of the referents’ gender means merely that the speaker believes that the group being addressed is not *solely* female.

The word “men” is not in the Hebrew. NJPS supplied it because “you” in English is ambiguous in number; the insertion clarifies that the “you” being addressed by God is plural—so that the reader doesn’t mistakenly infer that only Moses himself is being addressed. (For NJPS to represent “you” as referring to men-in-general understands that God is speaking hyperbolically, for the remark was provoked by the actions of only “some of the people” in v. 27. The question “how long” does suggest some exasperation!) NJPS was using “men” in a neutral sense. For clarity, I am substituting a more gender-neutral equivalent. Hence, “how long will you all refuse.” (NRSV: “how long will you refuse.”)

DS96 16:29. *sh’vu ish tachtav, al yeitzei ish mimkom* (NJPS: “Let everyone remain where he is: let no one leave his place”).

Whenever a morphologically and syntactically masculine noun like *ish* points to a *category* of persons, their genders are not *solely* female but are

otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection and pronouns are masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here, the plural form of the verb *sh'vu* points to a distributive usage of the noun *ish*: everyone within the category to which the verb pertains. On that sense, see at 1:7 and especially at 7:12.

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text's composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. Here the answer is no. The Torah's requirement of rest on the Sabbath nowhere discriminates by gender. On the contrary, in the Decalogue, daughter is mentioned together with son, while the wife is implicitly mentioned with her husband as addressee (see 20:9–10). Therefore we have no warrant to render into English in gendered terms.

The NJPS reading in 1962, 1967, and 1985 was “let no man leave his place”; in 1991, Orlinsky decried this as an instance of “male oriented language originated by Bible translators,” remarking in a footnote that “hopefully, ‘no one’ will replace it in the next printing” (*ibid.*). The change was made that same year in the *JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus*. Given such attention to this passage, the NJPS translators clearly employed the masculine pronouns here in a neutral sense. For clarity, I am now substituting a more gender-neutral equivalent. Hence, “Let everyone remain in place: let no one leave the vicinity.” (NRSV: “each of you stay where you are; do not leave your place.”)

DS97 17:9. *b'char lanu anashim v'tzei hilachem* (NJPS: “pick some men for us, and go out and do battle”). The word *anashim* is the functional plural of the noun *ish*. Here it refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here, it is the direct object of a governing verb of selection. That, together with the preposition *le-* and its pronominal suffix (which effectively means “for our sake; on our behalf”) evoke the agency sense of *ish*: our representatives on the battlefield. (This reading is confirmed when in verse 11 the narrator refers to this militia as “Israel”—even though it's actually a tiny fraction of the entire nation.) In a military context, both the biblical author and the ancient audience took male gender as a given. It is not at issue here.

The lexicons and concordances that I checked (e.g., *HALOT*, *BDB*) do not recognize “representatives on the battlefield” as a sense of *anashim* (although *DCH* does recognize “warrior” if the noun is inflected with a posses-

sive), yet in several other instances *anashim* arguably does convey that nuance: Num. 31:3; Josh. 10:18; I Sam. 22:6; Jer. 26:22; II Chron. 24:24; and perhaps others.

Ibn Ezra (in his longer commentary) sees *anashim* here as meaning “experienced, valiant, proven fighters.” He likens the usage to the description of the scouts in Num. 13:3 (*kulam anashim*—“all of them were notables”). In both instances, the term *anashim* appears unadorned and in absolute form (i.e., neither *ha-anashim* nor *anshei*, and without adjectives). Ibn Ezra thus accounts for why Moses said here to “choose” the troops rather than simply take them along: one must have criteria of some kind in order to make a selection. Indeed, the participle form *bachur* is elsewhere a designation for expert fighters—select troops (NJPS: “picked [men]” in Exod. 14:7, Judges 20:16–17, and II Chron. 25:5). Yet in this instance expertise is a connotation rather than a denotation. Moses says simply to choose representatives, whose expertise is left as a matter of implication.

If Moses were speaking English today, then he would *not* say “men” to describe unspecified troops. True, the word “men” has been used in English vernacular in the sense of “troops,” although in today’s U.S. army, the inclusive term “soldiers” is used instead (Chaplain [Captain] Howard M. Fields, pers. comm., 11/30/04). So I look for a one-word designation for a nation’s nonprofessional representatives in a battlefield setting. Hence, “Pick some troops for us. . . .” (NRSV: “choose some men for us.”)

[DS98] 18:4. *elohei avi* (NJPS: “the God of my father”). Rendering revised in 2010. The gist of the argument in my note at 3:6 applies here as well. Hence, “The God of my father’s [house].” (NRSV: “the God of my father.”)

[DS99] 18:16. *v’shafat’ti bein ish l’vein re’eihu* (NJPS: “I decide between one person and another”). Rendering revised in 2010. Here the noun *ish* refers not to a specific individual but to a category of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Our noun’s basic meaning of “PARTICIPANT in a situation or group” suits the setting here.

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. The answer is no. Given women’s normal recourse to the judicial system, the ancient audience would not have presumed that Moses was settling disputes only between men (compare Num. 27:1–4; I Kings 3:16 ff.; II Sam. 14:4; II Kings 6:26; 8:3). Therefore we have no warrant to render into English in gendered terms.

In legal contexts, English idiom prefers the term “party” to the more gen-

eral term “participant.” The latter is less contextually precise. It is meanwhile more semantically accurate than the NJPS rendering, “person” (which does not convey relationship, as a proper English equivalent of *ish* should do). Indeed, “parties” is how NJPS had rendered the plural noun in Deut. 19:17, and “party” or “parties” is how we rendered in 2006 in Exodus 21:18, 22; Num. 5:8, Deut. 17:12; 21:22; 22:18, 26, 29; 24:7, 11, 12; 25:1, 5. It’s time to apply the same treatment more comprehensively in the book of Exodus. Hence, “I decide between one party and another.” (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

DS100 18:21. *techezeh mi-kol ha-am anshei chayil . . . anshei emet* (NJPS: “seek out from among all the people capable men . . . trustworthy men”). Rendering revised in 2010. The word *anshei* is the construct form of the term *anashim*, which is the functional plural of the noun *ish*. Here it refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that its corresponding verbal inflections and pronouns are masculine.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here, Jethro is not making an issue of gender. His point must be both that Moses delegate to others, and that those representative have demonstrated that they have the desired qualities.

Four factors—the story line, the governing verb, the sentence construction, and the stated purpose of the selection—together evoke our noun’s sense as REPRESENTATIVES ON ANOTHER’S BEHALF. In this case, they are to become Moses’ field representatives.

- *Story line*: Moses is serving as God’s envoy to guide the people, but he is overloaded and needs help.
- *Governing verb*: As an imperative, the verb is rare; it apparently means “to look for discerningly.” (See Prov. 22:29; 29:20; see also the synonym *bachar* in the fulfillment clause in v. 25, and the synonyms *yahav* and *lakach* in the parallel account in Deut. 1:13, 15.)
- *Sentence construction*: The phrase *mi-kol am* (“from among all the people”) implies selectivity. The construct chains apparently serve to specify qualifying criteria, as in I Sam. 14:52; II Sam. 14:2. The term *anshei* can mean “exemplars of; individuals who possess the quality of” (as apparently with *anshei ha-shem*, Gen. 6:4; *anshei kodesh*, Exod. 22:30; *anshei middot*, Num. 13:32; *anshei chayil*, Judg. 20:44; *anshei chesed*, Isa. 57:1; etc.), but here such a meaning seems to be secondary to the agency sense. (Outside of this episode, the Bible does not otherwise use a construct plural with regard to selection, for any of the four verbs in question.)
- *Purpose*: to create a cadre of deputies.

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. The answer is no; see “elders” at 3:16. Therefore we have no warrant to render into English in gendered terms.

The NJPS rendering as “men” does not accurately convey the Hebrew word’s relational sense. Further, it risks misleading contemporary readers into imagining that the salient issue is “men” versus “women.” For clarity, I am substituting wording that more precisely reflects how the ancient audience understood the Hebrew. The best contextual rendering for a judicial field representative is probably “deputy.” (In today’s society, a commonly used term for the office in question is “judicial commissioner,” but that seems too formal in this context.) Hence, “capable deputies . . . trustworthy deputies”; and thus too “capable deputies” in v. 25. (NRSV renders as “men” here, and as “individuals” in the parallel text in Deuteronomy. NLT renders as “men” in both passages.)

DS101 19:6. *mamlechet* (NJPS: “kingdom of”). See at Deut. 3:4. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “kingdom.”)

DS102 19:7–8. *va-yavo moshe va-yikra l’ziknei ha-am* (NJPS: “Moses came and summoned the elders of the people”). The Bible nowhere discusses the gender of those whom it designates as “elders.” (On their gender, see at 3:16.) It does not make an issue of whether they are male or female. (In the Hebrew Bible in general, descriptive details about people are scarce!) Whatever their gender, the present verse establishes that they are going to be serving as the entire people’s representatives. (Representation by elders is the normal way that Moses has been communicating with the people: see 4:29–31; 12:3, 27.) That is what’s occupying the conceptual foreground. The narrator’s concern is to show that the nation was properly represented. Then during the rest of this episode, readers should know to construe references to *ha-am* in terms of the people’s representation by the elders. No change to NJPS.

DS103 19:8. *va-yaanu chol ha-am* (NJPS: “All the people answered”). Rendering revised in 2010. The rest of this long account (chapters 19–20) refers to those present at the Revelation repeatedly as *ha-am*. On this noun’s range of meaning, see at 1:9–11.

Julie K. Gordon attempts to resolve the term’s gender ambiguity by asserting that in this passage, the plural form of the verbs and nouns associated with *ha-am* indicates that this term refers to “the entire people” (“We All Stood at Sinai,” p. 145). While this assertion has midrashic standing, it does

not work in terms of the *p'shat* (plain sense). According to normal rules of Hebrew usage, such plurals are simply not a reliable indicator of a mixed-gender referent. Consider that the Bible uses plurals even where *am* arguably has a male-only sense (e.g., Num. 31:3; Judges 8:5, 9:37). In short, in this passage the grammar alone is agnostic with regard to the gender of the collectivity referred to as *ha-am*.

If we follow the text's lead, then women's presence (or absence) in this scene is not the translator's concern—not for the purpose of conveying the text's plain sense. Rather, *ha-am* refers here specifically to the elders (v. 7) in their occasional capacity as representatives of the people (see previous note). Who is it who actually answers Moses at this point? Not “the people” per se but the assembled elders. Unfortunately, the NJPS rendering as “the people” obscures what's going on in this scene.

In order to help readers perceive that “the elders” represent “the people,” we are changing our rendering of this first *ha-am* in the verse to “those assembled.” Hence, “All those assembled answered as one.” (The elders' representative role is then clearly implied when this verse proceeds to say “And Moses brought back *the people's* words to the Eternal.”)

Because I have changed my view on this matter since 2005, let me reiterate: By rendering *ha-am* in this passage (after the first instance in this verse) as “the people,” I do not mean that the Torah depicts the whole populace (including “the women”) as present in the scene. Rather, the non-specific rendering reflects the text's foregrounding of the role of “the elders” as the entire people's representatives.

DS104 19:13. *kol ha-nogei-a ba-har . . . im b'heimah im ish* (NJPS: “whoever touches the mountain . . . beast or man”). Here the noun *ish* refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

On the meaning of *ish* and its relationship to gender, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here the primary sense of *ish* as “participant” is salient: it denotes a member of the human group in question (namely, the *am* in v. 12, which is either the elders or the Israelite people).

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text's composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. But surely that audience did not imagine that women were exempt from the injunction against trespassing on the mountain.

Thus we have no warrant for a gendered rendering.

NJPS employed “man” in its original generic sense—as the lack of an article indicates. For clarity, however, I am substituting a more gender-

neutral equivalent. One could render *ish* as “human,” but that is how NJPS generally renders the term *adam* when the Torah counterposes it with *b’heimah* (“beast”). I might as well reflect in translation a distinction between the two terms. Hence, “beast or person.” (NRSV: “animal or human being.”)

DS105 19:13. *lo yichyeh* (NJPS: “he shall not live”). On the generic sense of “he,” see previous note. For clarity, I am substituting a more gender-neutral equivalent. Wherever a practice is being discouraged, it seems best not to render singular language with a generic plural, for that would suggest an expectation that people will flout the rule in droves. Rather, I emulate the NJPS practice of supplying a term as needed for clarity (see my notes below at 36:8 and 38:26). Hence, “a trespasser shall not live.” (Postscript in 2010: Another possible rendering of this clause, together with the previous one, would be: “such a beast or person shall not live.”) (NRSV: “they shall not live.”)

DS106 19:15. *va-yomer el ha-am . . . al tigshu el ishah* (NJPS: “he said to the people, ‘. . . do not go near a woman’”). In ancient Israelite society, which acknowledged only heterosexual sex as legitimate, only men would have been the subject of an injunction against sex with women. From this fact, Judith Plaskow (*Standing Again at Sinai*, pp. 25–27), Athalya Brenner (“An Afterword,” p. 256), Drorah Setel (“Exodus,” *Women’s Bible Commentary*, p. 37), Marc Brettler (*Women in Scripture*, p. 191), and others infer that the term *ha-am* refers to men—not only in this verse but also throughout the Revelation passage. Richard Elliott Friedman grants this possibility yet also posits that “it may reflect a perception that a command to abstain from sex for three days needs to be particularly directed to men because men are more likely than women to violate the instruction” (ad loc.). The latter speculation strikes me as the best fit with the available evidence, as I shall now explain.

On the agnostic gender reference of the noun *ha-am* (“the people”) in this passage, see my note above at vv. 7–8.

It appears that the ancient Israelites believed that the role of initiating (hetero)sexual relations was properly limited to the male gender. This view is consistent with the extensive sexual regulations of Leviticus 18 and 20, which are addressed only to men (as shown not only by language but also by subject matter), except for the laws about bestiality, where women are mentioned as the active party (18:23b; 20:16): between human beings, as a matter of social norms, only the man initiates sexual activity. Leviticus 20:10 reinforces this view by portraying the man as the more active party in cases of adultery, even while both the law’s penalty and its wording (*no’efet*, “adulteress”) make clear that the woman is not overlooked as a participant (cf. Deut. 22:22). Meanwhile, biblical cases in which women appear to initiate

sexual relations (Gen. 19:32–35; Gen. 30:16; Prov. 7:13–18; Song of Songs) all can be discounted as non-normative situations or surrealistic writing. Tikva Frymer-Kensky’s remark on Torah law serves as an apt summary: “It is only when the text considers sexual lust that it stops being inclusive” (“Deuteronomy,” *Women’s Bible Commentary*, p. 59). If the ancient audience shared this biblical view, they would have understood that Moses would not have addressed women in a public pronouncement on this topic. That Moses couched the present instruction in male terms would have seemed unremarkable; furthermore, it would have implied nothing about women’s inclusion (or lack thereof) within the term *ha-am* in the larger passage.

(A contemporary analogy: This is like an airline flight attendant who announces: “As we prepare for landing, please discontinue the use of all electronic devices.” We cannot infer that everyone on board is operating such devices. Rather, the instruction is addressed only to those present *to whom it applies*. That goes without saying.)

Today’s readers do not share the same assumptions about gender as were apparently held by the ancient audience. Nowadays we tend to be bewildered—if not misled—by Moses’ unstated shift in the present verse from speaking to the people in general to addressing only the men. For clarity, I give readers an indication of what the ancestors took for granted; I signal the shift via a bracketed insertion. Hence, “he said to the people, ‘. . . [the men among] you should not go near a woman.’” (NRSV: Same as NJPS.)

DS107 20:2. *ani . . . elohecha* (NJPS: “I am . . . your God”). The address here, as throughout the Decalogue, uses a grammatically masculine singular form. The address is nonspecific: “to whom it may concern.” Whenever a syntactically masculine noun, verbal inflection, or pronoun points to a *category* of persons (as here), it means that their gender is not solely female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. Let me reiterate: all that we can say for sure is that God is addressing an audience that is not *solely* female.

Ironically, from this grammatical form some feminists (e.g., Judith Plaskow [*Standing Again at Sinai*, pp. 25–26, 82]; Athalya Brenner [“An Afterword,” p. 256]) take the language as excluding women, whereas some complementarians (anti-feminists) take it as inclusive: Poythress & Grudem explain that “in many . . . instances, the masculine singular is used in addressing a whole community. Men and women are included as addressees, by implication from context” (p. 158, regarding v. 14).

In the case of the Decalogue’s legal genre, the text’s ancient Israelite audience would have taken it in the widest sense, in the absence of indications that gender is at stake (see Methodology). The wording of v. 10 (see below) underscores this point. Robert Alter reflects this perspective in his

remark that the Decalogue is “framed as a series of imperatives in the second-person singular and thus addressing every man and woman of the Israelite nation,” the rhetorical nuance being that this expresses “the keenest sense of urgency” (303).

What Grammatically Masculine Forms Mean—and Don’t Mean. Let us also look at the ancient interpretation of second-person address from a broader linguistic perspective. When ancient Hebrew writers or speakers made a non-specific reference (that is, to a *category* of persons) and the topic was not restricted to a particular gender, they expressed themselves via recourse to one of the existing grammatical-gender forms that normally was used for specific reference. Hebrew is one of many languages that does this.

In particular, Hebrew employs the *masculine* gender for this purpose. That it does so, however, doesn’t imply that the speaker is assuming that the referent’s gender is male. Rather, the usage is simply *a matter of convention*. (Meanwhile, a few languages follow a contrasting convention: they employ a different grammatical form from the one used when it is known *for sure* that a male is involved. Note that neither of those two linguistic arrangements is inherently sexist.)

Conceivably, ancient Israelite listeners might have construed grammatically masculine forms as referring only to a male *even in generic usage*, for arguably the odds would favor their doing so: in the Bible, men are referred to much more frequently than women. (In other words, if the referent is most likely a male, then it’s easiest to just imagine that person as male.) Linguists call this consideration “usage frequency.” Yet in my article “The Grammar of Social Gender in Biblical Hebrew” (2008), I cite examples to show that the Bible is *written in a manner* consistent with the presumption that the audience did indeed *construe nonspecific masculine language generically*, when the topic was not restricted to men. My approach to the text is thus empirically based.

Let me account for why the text’s composers used masculine language in effectively generic ways. In ancient Hebrew (unlike, say, in English), the generic usage of masculine forms was the *only* way to communicate gender-neutral reference. As a result, listeners must have naturally made allowance for such generic usage. One could say that “usage frequency” did indeed pertain in ancient Hebrew: the *relative frequency of the use of masculine forms with generic meaning* ensured that listeners would keep the possibility of generic meanings in mind.

No change to NJPS.

DS108 20:10. *atah u-vincha u-vitecha* (NJPS: “you, your son or daughter”).

The address here continues to use a grammatically masculine form, yet the

lack of mention of a wife—conspicuous by its absence among this commandment’s list of household roles—pointedly signals that *atah* is meant in an inclusive sense here. So Tikva Frymer-Kensky writes persuasively: “the omission of a phrase ‘and your wife’ shows that the ‘you’ that the law addresses includes both women and men, each treated as a separate moral agent” (“Deuteronomy,” *Women’s Bible Commentary*, p. 59). See further my note at Deut. 5:14. No change to NJPS.

DS109 20:14. *lo tachmod eishet rei’echa* (NJPS: “you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife”). Some scholars, such as Athalya Brenner (“An Afterword,” p. 257), Drorah Setel (“Exodus,” *Women’s Bible Commentary*, p. 37), and Marc Brettler (*Women in Scripture*, p. 191), believe that this clause not only excludes women from the audience of this commandment but also indicates that the entire Decalogue is addressed to “a male community.” Yet the textual features can be explained in a simpler manner that is more consistent with ancient Israelite understandings of gender.

In this verse, the mention of “wife” but not “husband” is attributable to the society’s gender asymmetry with regard to the structure of marriage, as I explain in my printed comments here and at Deut. 5:18 (which follow Tikva Frymer-Kensky). To the text’s ancient audience, such asymmetry was taken for granted. Regarding the clause in question, the text is indeed momentarily not addressing women. But what does the text’s mention of “wife” logically tell us about who was gathered at Sinai? Merely that *some* of those present must have had wives.

Consider that when anyone is speaking on a particular topic to a varied group and giving examples, some of those examples may well apply only to certain members of that group. (See my note and printed comment at Deut. 1:1.) Conversely, the same hyperliteral reading that justifies concluding that “you” refers solely to men also justifies the absurd conclusion that every Israelite’s neighbor must have been a married adult male who owned both a slave and a donkey—and that all of those elements in his household were clearly superior to the corresponding elements in “your” household!

According to the plain sense, the entries in the list are simply the featured exemplars, being the most valued aspects of a corporate household—the basic unit of society. Furthermore, the fact that the precept’s wording temporarily narrows its focus so as to address only men would have seemed unremarkable to the text’s ancient Israelite audience because of the gender roles that they took for granted. In short, the text’s audience would have understood that *each aspect of this precept is addressed to whoever it applies among the people*.

To a contemporary audience—which holds different assumptions about

sexual roles—the unannounced shift in address admittedly can come across as unsettling. It seems to me that, alas, the potential for misreading cannot be fixed via an alternate rendering or a clarifying insertion; rather, it is a matter better suited for commentary. The clause here is accurately translated as NJPS has it. (But cf. Deut. 5:18.) No change to NJPS. (NRSV: Same as NJPS.)

DS110 21:2–6. *ki tikneh eved . . . adonav . . . adoneha . . . v'avado* (NJPS: “when you acquire a . . . slave . . . his master . . . the master . . . he shall then remain his slave”). On the agnostic gender of those addressed by nonspecific 2nd-person masculine inflections, see at 20:2. Throughout this paragraph, the subject is the same slave owner, albeit under varying conditions. In referring to that owner, the Hebrew wording points to a *category* of persons, whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (The second-person address governs masculine pronouns and inflections solely for the sake of syntactic gender concord.)

The noun *adon* identifies the owner by relationship to a slave; there is no evidence that it is intrinsically male; on its meaning, see at 5:22. Therefore, the use of a masculine-gender term here must be regarded as a grammatical feature rather than a semantic one.

In the biblical world, slave owners included not only men but also women (Gen. 16:8, 24:59, 24:61, 29:24, 29:29; Prov. 30:23; cf. 9:3, 31:15). Historically, women were known as slave owners in the ancient Near East (see Carolyn Pressler, “Wives and Daughters, Bond and Free,” p. 166). Therefore in the slavery laws, the text’s original audience lacked a clear warrant to believe that its composer meant to exclude women from view *as owners*.

Because neither terminology nor context categorically excludes women, a rendering into normal English idiom should *not* be gendered. Using English wording that is likely to be construed as male causes semantic distortion: a greater emphasis on gender in translation than is found in the source text. (The rendering should mention a referent’s gender *only* if it is germane, that is, if either the terminology or context unequivocally requires the exclusion of women—and if the contemporary reader would not recognize those facts. But such is not the case here.)

The NJPS rendering “and he shall then remain his slave” (v. 6) is *non-literal*, presumably because a more literal rendering such as “and he shall serve him” (as in KJV, OJPS) confuses the antecedents of the two pronouns—in violation of English idiom.

Although the NJPS masculine pronoun “his” can be read legitimately as gender-inclusive, contemporary readers are more likely to construe it as

male, for three reasons: (1) In a legal context, generic use of “his” is nowadays rare; readers expect generic intent to be couched in clearly gender-neutral language. (2) Readers tend to believe that in the biblical world, only males were deemed worthy of the text’s attention. (3) Readers are unlikely to imagine that female slave owners existed. (Meanwhile, Miller and Swift’s handbook suggests that the noun “master” has recently become a gender-inclusive term; and if so, then it poses no problem here in vv. 4–6.) Therefore, the NJPS rendering overtranslates gender.

To avoid a misreading of “his” (v. 6) as indicating a male owner only, I render without a masculine pronoun for the master, by shifting the referent of “his” from the owner to the slave, who in this subcase is male. Hence, “he shall then remain his master’s slave.” (In contrast, NRSV renders in masculine terms only.)

DS111 21:2. *eved ivri . . . yaavod . . . yeitzei la-chofshi* (NJPS: “a Hebrew slave . . . he shall serve . . . he shall go free”). The term *eved ivri* (“Hebrew slave”) in the base case refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

One of my teachers has argued that because the slave in the verses that follow (vv. 3–6) is clearly male (for he has a wife), the slave in verse 2 must also be male, on the grounds that all of the masculine pronouns must have the same masculine antecedent, which in turn must have a male referent. But such an argument fails on two grammatical grounds:

1. When the referent is a category (rather than an individual), as here, *the pronouns are masculine only for the sake of syntactic gender concord with the object noun*. Because the masculine wording is nonspecific, it does not mean that only men are in view.
2. Continuity of reference cannot be presumed between verses 2 and 3, because the word *im* at the start of verse 3 introduces a new (subsidiary) situation. In other words, the conditions that follow do not necessarily pertain to the conditions that preceded. Thus we find later in this chapter, in vv. 29–30: the ox’s owner in v. 29 is to be executed, whereas in v. 30 (after the word *im*) the ox’s owner is presumed to remain alive; clearly the masculine wording does not refer to the same individual.

All told, the grammatical construction does not force the reader to conclude that only a male slave is in view.

Our noun *eved* identifies its referent in terms of social status. There is no evidence that *eved* is an intrinsically male noun, and some evidence that it is not. (Although *eved* is often counterposed with a female counterpart term—namely, either *amah* or *shifchah*—such usage does not necessarily prove that *eved* is male elsewhere. In II Sam. 6:20, if we presume that in an-

cient Israel, the typical owner of a female slave was herself a woman, as many biblical passages suggest, then both men and women are in view when Michal employs the masculine plural form *avadim* to refer to the king's subjects who own female slaves.)

The Bible refers to female Hebrew slaves in Deut. 15:12 and Jer. 34:8–10. Further, it seems safe to presume that the ancient Israelite audience also knew of a few actual cases of women among them who had sold themselves into slavery. These would have been women not under the authority of a man—that is, widows, abandoned wives, divorcées, prostitutes—who suddenly faced hard times. (Communal efforts to care for the poor and vulnerable were not always successful, particular after a catastrophe of some sort.) Carolyn Pressler has assessed their situation; based partly on the practices of nearby societies, she makes the following observations: “Cuneiform records suggest that they could have given themselves into bondage in order to survive or been forced into slavery because of debt. . . . There are several references to the release of freeborn slaves in cuneiform documents and biblical law. In every [other] case . . . the release includes both males and females.” The Bible meanwhile gives no indication that a woman who sold herself as a general household slave was to be treated differently from a male slave. Therefore, as Pressler asserts, “the burden of proof lies with those who believe that the law of release excludes all women” (“Wives and Daughters, Bond and Free,” pp. 170, 166–167; see discussion through 172). In short, unless a law singles out slaves for special treatment according to their gender, the Torah's original audience lacked a clear warrant to believe that the text's composer meant to exclude women from view *as slaves*.

There is no warrant in this case for translating in gendered terms. The referent's gender is not germane. Therefore, a rendering into normal English idiom should *not* be gendered. (Nor does the situation implicitly convey either sole or typical maleness—which might require further specificity in English, at least implicitly.)

Although the NJPS masculine pronoun in v. 2 (“he shall serve”) can be read legitimately as gender-inclusive, contemporary readers are more likely to construe it as male, for two reasons: (1) In a legal context, the generic use of “he” is nowadays rare; readers expect a generic intent to be couched in clearly gender-neutral language. (2) Readers tend to believe that in the biblical world, only males were deemed worthy of the text's attention.

To avoid a misreading of “he” as indicating a male slave only, I render without a masculine pronoun; I substitute a substantive and recast the second clause. (The new word order seems consistent with the focus of the Hebrew

syntax.) Hence, “a Hebrew slave . . . that person shall serve . . . —and shall go free.” (In contrast, NRSV renders in masculine terms only.)

DS112 21:3. *im b’gapo yavo . . . im baal ishah hu* (NJPS: “If he came single . . . if he had a wife”). On the grammar and the lexical meaning, see my previous note.

Unlike in the previous verse, in vv. 3–6 the slave is clearly male, for he either has a wife or (in grammatical parallel) is capable of having one.

While the wording does not categorically exclude women, the co-text does: the referent’s gender is germane. Because the situation implicitly conveys sole maleness, normal English idiom would initially specify gender, thus accounting for the masculine pronouns to follow. (English idiom calls for explicit specification of the referent’s gender as soon as it becomes germane, though not necessarily thereafter.) Thus we have warrant for translating in gendered terms.

Although the NJPS initial masculine pronoun in v. 3 (“If he came single”) can be read correctly as referring to a male, in English it is too nonchalant a way to signal to the reader that gender has suddenly become germane.

Per normal English idiom, I specify the referent’s maleness at the place where gender first becomes germane. Hence, “If [a male slave] came single . . . if he had a wife.” (NRSV: “If he comes in single . . . if he comes in married.”)

DS113 21:7. *v’chi yimkor ish et bito l’amah* (NJPS: “When a man sells his daughter as a slave”). Regarding the seller, the Hebrew wording refers to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs masculine pronouns and inflections.)

The noun *ish* identifies its referent by affiliation to a group or party; it is not an intrinsically male term. (See the 2nd entry at 1:1.) Here, the legal context evokes its sense as a “party (to the situation or legal proceeding).”

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context positively *excludes* women from view *as the seller*. The answer is no. Let me expand upon my printed comment (as corrected in the 3rd printing): II Kings 4:1, II Sam. 14, and Job 24:9 take as a given that in an Israelite father’s absence, a mother served as head of the household; the first and third of those instances presume that *she had the authority* to sell or surrender her children into slavery, however unwillingly. Carolyn Pressler notes that across the ancient Near East, “a range of cuneiform documents also record the sale of children by mothers” (“Wives and

Daughters, Bond and Free,” pp. 166–167; see further there). Presumably such norms and actual practice were known to the text’s original audience. Given the conventions of the legal genre, they would construe *ish* as “any party who has a daughter,” or as we would say in English, “a parent.”

Thus we have no warrant to translate in gendered terms.

Surely the NJPS translators chose “a man” as a rendering for *ish* here intentionally, for they do so consistently in this Covenant Collection. However, in most instances—here and in 21:12, 14, 20, 33, 35; 22:4, 6, 9, 13—the gender intent is not clear. (The exceptions are the few cases where the referent of “a man” is obviously male because the co-text counterposes that term with “a woman” [21:28] or “a virgin” [22:15].) Contrary to my classification in the URJ revised edition’s preface (Table 2, p. xxx), I now think that NJPS probably meant “a man” throughout these laws as an indefinite pronoun (“anyone”), without regard to gender. In 1962, such usage of “man” was still common parlance in American legal texts, which employed masculine terms generically. Therefore I attribute the NJPS rendering as “man” to English style from that era.

Although the NJPS wording here can be read legitimately as gender-inclusive, contemporary readers are more likely to construe it as male, for three reasons: (1) They are less likely than was the ancient audience to imagine a mother selling her child. (2) They tend to believe that in the biblical world, only males were deemed worthy of the text’s attention. (3) Generic usage of “man” is no longer part of legal parlance in our country, so a reader who expects contemporary idiom will not be thinking in those terms.

To avoid a likely misreading of “a man” as indicating a male only, I render more generically. Hence, “When a parent sells a daughter . . .” (NRSV: “When a man sells his daughter.”)

DS114 21:7. *lo teitzei k’tzeit ha-avadim* (NJPS [1967; 1999]: “she shall not be freed as male slaves are”). JPS *Notes* (1969) stated that this rendering was supposed to be changed to “. . . go free as male slaves do,” so as to match a pending re-rendering in v. 2 from “be freed” to “go free.” According to JPS *Notes* at v. 2, the earlier formulation was liable to be misunderstood as meaning that the owner has a choice in the matter. In 1985, the wording was indeed changed in v. 2; unfortunately, it appears that the parallel change in v. 7 was overlooked. Hence I have now introduced the correction. (Not a matter of gender per se.) See next note.

DS115 21:7. *lo teitzei k’tzeit ha-avadim* (NJPS [per 1969 plan]: “she shall not go free as male slaves do”). Rendering revised in 2008. The plural noun *avadim* (“slaves”) refers here to a category of unspecified persons, at least one of whom is not female; grammatically, the referents’ gender is not oth-

erwise specified. (True, the referential class of *ha-avadim* in Jer. 34:11 and Joel 3:2 is clearly non-female, but that does not preclude its having a generic sense in the present context.) See further in my note at 21:2, above, under *eved ivri*.

The wording is laconic. This case is unusual in that exegesis—and therefore translation—depends upon the perceived intent of the law regarding gender. Many interpreters have believed that this law, by being placed after the previous paragraph (which focuses on a male slave), was intended to counterpose *female* slaves with *male* slaves. (Some also claim that Deut. 15:12, which goes out of its way to mention female Hebrew slaves, must be a later revision of this law so as to include them under the law of release.)

However, the text’s ancient audience was not required to imagine that the situation necessarily excluded women from view in the present (Exodus) formulation. As Carolyn Pressler has cogently argued, that audience was likely familiar with legal distinctions between types of female slaves; if so, it would have construed this law’s exemption from release as pertaining only to the type mentioned (namely, being sold as an *amah* while still a minor). Further, both Deut. 15:12 and the episode in Jer. 34:8–16 apply the law of release to female slaves; so if one imagines that *the complete Torah* was compiled after Jeremiah’s time, then the text’s ancient audience would have naturally construed *ha-avadim* inclusively here, according to a canonical reading. (As for the specification of females in Deut. 15:12, see there.)

In short, this law contrasts an *amah* in this particular situation with everybody else (including other women slaves). According to that interpretation, there is no warrant here for translating in gendered terms. Thus I must reject the NJPS rendering, which supposes that this law contrasts women with men.

To convey the force of the implied contrast, a clarifying adjective is needed. (Arguably, that adjective should be inserted in brackets, so as to indicate the underlying textual ambiguity that has prompted the divergent interpretations discussed above. However, NJPS style tends to avoid brackets.) The word “other” serves well, and it has ample NJPS precedent—Gen. 3:2; 34:27; Exod. 26:9; and Lev. 7:19 are among the many instances where NJPS uses the word “other” to represent the definiteness of a broad Hebrew category in contrast to something else. Hence, “. . . go free as other slaves do.” (NRSV: “. . . go out as the male slaves do.”)

DS116 21:9. *v'im livno yiyadennah* (NJPS: “And if he designated her for his son”). Regarding the slave owner, the masculine Hebrew pronoun and verbal inflection refer to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs mas-

culine pronouns and inflections.)

It would be a grammatical fallacy to argue that because the slave master in the previous verse is clearly male, the master in this verse must also be male; see above at verse 2 under *eved ivri*.

The case described in this verse is logically distinct from that of the (male) master who designates the slave for himself (v. 8). Carolyn Pressler observes that “the master who purchases a slave wife for a son could have been a woman” (op. cit., p. 166; see my note at 21:2–6). Because the ancient Israelite audience was familiar with women as slave owners, the text’s original audience could not presume that the text’s composer meant to exclude women *as owners*.

There is no warrant here for translating in gendered terms. Coming on the heels of verse 8, where the slave owner is clearly male, the NJPS rendering “he” is not suddenly going to be construed as gender-inclusive. NJPS thus overspecifies the referent’s gender.

So as not to mislead the reader, I render the slave’s master in gender-neutral terms. (This distinction probably won’t preclude a misreading by one who fails to imagine that female owners are in view. But there’s only so much we can do. The Hebrew wording in verses 8–9 is simply more fungible with regard to its referential gender than is normal English idiom.) Hence, “the master designated her for a son.” (NRSV: “he designates her for his son.”)

DS117 21:12. *makkeh ish va-met* (NJPS: “he who fatally strikes a man”). Let us consider the gender first of the *victim* (NJPS: “a man”). The noun *ish* refers here to a *category* of persons (“anyone in this situation”) whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs masculine pronouns and inflections.)

Our noun identifies the referent by affiliation to a group or party; it is not an intrinsically male term. (See the 2nd entry at 1:1.) The legal context evokes the basic sense of *ish* as a “party (to the situation or legal proceeding).”

Practically speaking, *ish* applies only to those over whom the court has jurisdiction (namely, Israelites), but the prominence that the Torah gives to the stricture against human bloodshed (Gen. 9:5–6, couched in terms of *adam*; see JPS *Notes* there) would argue for viewing *ish* even more broadly here: any human being. At any rate, the text’s original audience lacked warrant to believe that the text’s composer meant to exclude women as victims.

Jonah ibn Janah’s dictionary of biblical Hebrew (written in Arabic as *Kitab al-Utsul*, ca. 1030; transl. Judah ibn Tibbon as *Sefer ha-Shorashim* in

1171) served as a main source for the plain-sense commentaries of Ibn Ezra and of Radak. It cited this verse as the exemplar of the gender-inclusive sense of *ish*: “in this instance it includes male and female.”

There is no warrant here for translating in gendered terms. Regarding NJPS, see above at verse 7, where I concluded that in the Covenant Collection, the NJPS rendering “a man” was meant as an indefinite pronoun (“anyone”), without regard to gender. Yet contemporary readers are likely to construe the wording here as male, for two reasons: (1) They tend to believe that in the biblical world, only males were deemed worthy of the text’s attention. (2) Generic usage of “man” is no longer part of our country’s legal parlance, so a reader who expects contemporary idiom will not be thinking in those terms.

This setting suits the primary sense of *ish* as “participant.” The specific nuance is not clear. The denotation may be “a party to the situation” or “a party to the legal proceeding (in which this person is being charged with murder).” A background connotation is “a member of the polity over which our courts have jurisdiction.” To convey the gender-inclusive sense for the victim: “another person.” This conveys the relational sense of *ish* while still allowing for the precept to be understood as a principle, not merely as a statement of legal procedure. (For instances where NJPS represents *ish* in English by the term “another . . .,” see Gen. 41:38; Lev. 19:20; Deut. 19:16; for similar constructions with other nouns, see Gen. 36:6; 44:19; Num. 36:3; Deut. 4:34.)

makkeh ish va-met (NJPS: “he who fatally strikes a man”). Now let’s consider the gender of the *perpetrator*. The masculine verbal inflection has an indefinite subject that refers to a *category* of persons (“anyone to whom this applies”) whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. The text is not making an issue of gender here.

It would be a grammatical fallacy to think that because the killer in the next verse is apparently male (see note there), the killer in this verse must also be male; compare above at verse 2 under *eved ivri*.

Given the Torah’s emphasis on the sacredness of human life, the text’s original audience lacked warrant to believe that its composer meant to exclude women from liability for killing a human being. Given the conventions of the legal genre, the audience would have taken the language in its widest sense, in the absence of indications that gender is at stake (see Methodology). (Similarly in vv. 14, 15, 16, and 17.)

There is no warrant here for translating in gendered terms.

Although the NJPS masculine pronoun “he” can be read legitimately as

gender-inclusive, contemporary readers are more likely to construe it as male, for two reasons: (1) They tend to believe that in the biblical world, only males were deemed worthy of the text’s attention. (2) Generic usage of “he” is no longer part of legal parlance in our country, so a reader who expects contemporary idiom will not be thinking in those terms.

To convey the gender-inclusive sense for the perpetrator: “One.” Hence, “One who fatally strikes another person.” (Compare at 33:11.) (NRSV: “Whoever strikes a person mortally.”)

DS118 21:13. *va-asher lo tzadah . . . makom asher yanus shamah* (NJPS: “if he did not do it by design . . . a place to which he can flee”). The first instance of the word *asher*—which is not intrinsically gendered in its reference (Isa. 44:7)—here functions like a pronoun, introducing a clause of condition that becomes the subject of the sentence. The reference is indefinite. The masculine Hebrew verbal inflections refer to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

Regarding the situation in question, the experts whom I consulted (see at Num. 35:6) were unanimous that an ancient Israelite audience—given their view of gender roles—would have understood from the very idea of “a place to which [the killer] can flee” that (in contrast to the previous verse) the subject here is exclusively male. This shift in subject is implicit. For cultural reasons, the text’s original audience had warrant to believe that the text’s composer meant to exclude women from this situation. (I myself do not find this argument entirely convincing.)

If it was true that the context unequivocally required the exclusion of women *and* is true that the contemporary audience does not similarly presume that cities of refuge apply only to men, a rendering into normal English idiom *should* be gendered.

The NJPS rendering “he” can be construed as gendered, yet because it does not clearly convey a shift in gender ascription from the preceding verse, it is liable to be either misunderstood or jarring.

Per normal English idiom, I insert a specification of maleness at the place where gender first becomes germane. I indicate the implicit shift in subject (with its sudden presumption of maleness) via a bracketed insertion. Hence, “if [a male killer] did not do it by design . . .” (NRSV: “if it was not premeditated . . . a place to which the killer may flee.”)

DS119 21:14. *v’chi yazid ish . . . tikkachennu* (NJPS: “when a man schemes . . . you shall take him”). This note treats references to the *killer*. Poythress & Grudem maintain that in employing grammatically masculine language to refer to the killer, the text is using “a specific case in order to state a legal prin-

ciple” (p. 123). That is, the text relates what to do if a *male* kills in treachery, and from that it implies what to do if a *woman* kills in treachery. Such a reading is plausible, and my first draft indeed took that approach. However, it reads the text backwards, when compared to an ancient Israelite perspective.

The noun *ish* refers here to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s potential gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (In this case, our noun’s verbal inflection and possessive pronoun are masculine as a grammatical matter, not a semantic one.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. For our noun’s contextual meaning, see above at v. 7, where I construe *ish* in this passage as “a party.” (Compare 33:11, where a similar expression appears.)

The notion that women could “scheme and kill” is implicit in the Bible; it was presumed both by Pharaoh in his order to the midwives, and by God in rewarding them (Exod. 1:16, 21). For later biblical examples, see the celebrated case of Jael (Judges 4–5), as well as Jezebel (I Kings 21:7–14) and Athaliah (II Kings 11:1). On ancient Israel’s awareness of violent women, see my note below at v. 18. Given this cultural milieu, the text’s original audience lacked warrant to believe that the text’s composer meant to categorically exclude women from view.

Accordingly, there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms.

NJPS surely intended “man . . . him” in a generic sense, but that such usage is now likely to be misconstrued as male (see above at v. 7). For clarity, I am substituting a more gender-neutral equivalent. Regarding the advantage of “person” over “party,” see above at v. 12. Hence, “When a person schemes . . . you shall take that person.” (For the parallel formulation “*bein ish u-vein re-eihu*” in 18:16, NJPS similarly rendered *ish* as “one person.”) (NRSV: “but if someone willfully attacks . . . another.”)

DS120 21:14. *re-eihu l'horgo v'ormah* (NJPS: “another and kills him treacherously”). This note treats references to the *victim*. The grammatically masculine noun *re'a* refers here to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (The noun’s object pronoun is thus masculine as a grammatical matter, not a semantic one.)

The noun *rei-ah* identifies the referent by relationship. There is no evidence that *re-ah* is intrinsically male, and ample evidence that it is not. (Although *rei-ah* has a female counterpart term—*rei-ut*, as in 11:2—such usage does not necessarily prove that *rei-ah* always has a male reference elsewhere. On the contrary, in similar constructions such as Gen. 11:7 and Jer. 34:15–17, women are surely in view, as also in Deut. 23:25–26. And in Song 5:1, the scope of the plural *rei-im* surely includes lovers of both genders.)

As explained above at v. 12 (first note), the text's composer could rely on its ancient audience not to exclude women from view in these references to a victim.

There is no warrant for translating in gendered terms.

NJPS surely intended “man . . . him” in a generic sense, but that such usage is now likely to be misconstrued as male (see above at v. 7). For clarity, I now render in neutral terms. Hence, “another and kills through treachery.” (NRSV: “and kills another by treachery.”)

DS121 21:15, 17. *u-makkeh . . . u-m'kallel* (NJPS: “he who strikes . . . he who insults.”) In these two parallel formulations, the masculine Hebrew verbal inflections refer to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent's gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (In this case, then, the language is masculine as a grammatical matter, not a semantic one.)

Nahum Sarna commented on v. 15 that it applied to “a son or daughter,” although he gave no justification for his claim. Similarly, Rabbinic exegesis interpreted the terms broadly; Rashi—following the Mechilta—stated that both males and females are forbidden to curse parents by Exod. 21:17. But halachah does not necessarily convey the plain sense as understood in an earlier era.

Regarding that earlier era, Carol Meyers makes a case for rendering the masculine language in male terms: “It is my understanding that these laws are dealing with a social problem known to exist in extended or compound families in which the authority of the senior adults [over the allocation and disposition of basic subsistence tasks] is challenged by adult children. However, adult females (except daughters-in-law) would not be present because of the patrilocal nature of Israelite society. I.e., I think these two stipulations are addressed to adult male sons. Note a similar law in Hammurabi's Code has just the son” (pers. comm.).

The Akkadian law that Meyers adduces (§ 195) is couched in terms of a *marum* (“son, child”), which when referring to a *category* of persons is not necessarily restricted to male offspring. As for Israelites, I agree that a son was more likely than a daughter to run afoul of such a law, because as I understand it, the gender conditioning in families was such that males were more likely to rebel openly (Deut. 21:18; I Sam. 20:32), whereas females were more likely to rebel via indirect subversion (Deut. 22:20; I Sam. 19:17). Does this mean, then, that an ancient Israelite audience would have construed this law only in terms of sons? No, because they knew of situations where a grown daughter, too, might be tempted to insult or strike her parents. Thus Micah observed a time of turmoil when “daughter rises up against mother”

(Mic. 7:6). A daughter could reach majority in her parents' household and—for a variety of reasons—still not be married. Meanwhile, the Bible repeatedly indicates that married daughters did not cease being emotionally connected to their parents, and sometimes remained proximate as well:

- An angelic messenger presumes that Lot's *married* daughters, who live in the same place, counted as "his," and that he would be in touch with them (Gen. 19:12).

- Years after their marriage to Jacob, Rachel and Leah presume that if their father had treated them fairly, they would still have some share in their father's house (Gen. 31:14).

- Laban too considered his married daughters to be part of his household (which Jacob does not deny), taking pains to guarantee their welfare after their departure (Gen. 31:26, 43, 50).

- Jacob's sons' reply ("we will become as one kindred") to Shechem and Hamor's proposal presumed that married daughters would normally count as part of one's family (Gen. 34:16).

- Zipporah remained in her father's household even after her marriage to Moses (Exod. 2:21; 3:1; 4:18).

- The presumption that a daughter who is widowed or divorce would naturally return to her "father's house" (Lev. 22:13) suggests that she was not estranged meanwhile.

- The tragedy of Jephthah is premised on the idea that, had events taken their normal course, his daughter would have married and yet remained part of Jephthah's corporate household (Judg. 11; cf. the act of Sheshan in I Chron. 2:34).

- In Bethlehem, a concubine was welcomed back to her "father's house," where she possessed authority over her husband's ability to visit there (Judg. 19:2–3).

- Saul's assignment of his married daughter Michal to another husband suggests that she remained part of her father's house even after her marriage to David (I Sam. 25:44; however, this act may have been the king's prerogative—or even duty).

- Regarding the princess/royal wife Maacah and also one of Saul's daughters, their male offspring were treated as members of their respective father's house (II Sam. 3:3; 13:37–38; 21:1–9).

More generally, Israelite society's preference for patrilocality with endogamy (that is, first-cousin marriage) meant that a daughter tended to live in the same village (if not next door) even after her marriage. All this evidence suggests ample opportunity for a grown daughter to lash out at her parents.

In short, the text's composers could not reliably assume that its ancient

audience would have construed these two laws as if daughters were excluded from view.

Consequently, there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms.

NJPS probably meant the masculine pronouns “he” and “his” in their gender-inclusive sense. Yet contemporary readers are unlikely to read them as such, for two reasons: (1) They tend to believe that in the biblical world, only males were deemed worthy of the text’s attention. (2) Generic usage of “he” or “his” is no longer part of legal parlance in our country, so a reader who expects contemporary idiom will not be thinking in those terms.

I render with neutral language. Hence, “one who strikes one’s father or mother . . . one who insults one’s father or mother.” (NRSV: “whoever strikes father or mother . . . whoever curses father or mother.”)

DS122 21:16. *v’gonev ish u-mcharo* (NJPS: “He who kidnaps a man—whether he has sold him”). The noun *ish* here refers to a victim of kidnapping—that is, to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (In this case, our noun’s verbal inflection and its object pronoun are masculine as a grammatical matter, not a semantic one.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Regarding the contextual meaning here, see above at 21:7, where I construe *ish* in this passage as “a party.”

The Bible does not employ this verb anywhere in explicit reference to kidnapping women. It does describe similar, although not exact, situations as applying to women. It was normal for warriors to capture women in war; and afterward it was not unthinkable to sell them to someone else (a notion that Deut. 21:14 forbids). And Judg. 21:20–23 recounts an incident where 200 Benjaminites stole 200 young women from Shiloh—although that passage uses different verbs to characterize the deed.

I know of no evidence that the text’s composer could have relied on its ancient audience to exclude women from view as potential victims of kidnapping, or to expect that kidnapping should be punished differentially depending upon the victim’s gender. Further, the co-text supports an expectation of gender inclusiveness with regard to the victim, for this law is placed between two other laws in which the specified crime victim is “father *or* mother” (emphasis added).

In the absence of sure evidence that it was supposed to go without saying that this terminology or situation did not apply to female victims, our English rendering should be generic like the original Hebrew wording.

NJPS surely intended “man . . . him” in a generic sense, but that such usage is now likely to be misconstrued as male (see above at v. 7). For clarity, I

render in neutral terms. Regarding the advantage of “person” over “party,” see above at v. 12. Hence, “a person,” while recasting the sentence so as to avoid pronouns. (NRSV: “a person,” with similar rewording.)

DS123 21:17. See above at v. 15.

DS124 21:18. *v'chi y'rivun anashim* (NJPS: “when men quarrel”). Rendering revised in 2006. The word *anashim* is the functional plural of the noun *ish*. Here it refers to a category of unspecified persons, at least one of whom is not female; grammatically, the referents’ gender is not otherwise specified. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs a masculine inflection.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here, its primary lexical sense as “participant” is evoked by the verb. Indeed, our noun is the normal term for parties to a conflict (see, e.g., 2:13, 14).

Are women excluded from view by the situation, namely, fighting? Tikva Frymer-Kensky perceived a “common belief in the ancient Near East . . . that women are not fighters” (“Gender and Law: An Introduction,” p. 19). However, despite such an apparent social norm (the strength of which is not clearly established), the Israelite audience may well have known of women who had struck other women anyway—or threatened to do so. Carol Meyers notes that there was ample opportunity for friction, given that “people were probably more often with people of their own gender during much of the work day” (pers. comm.). The biblical text, too, seems to imply that it was Sarah’s violence that prompted her slave Hagar to flee in Gen. 15:6. As for women’s violent impulses generally, the text elsewhere treats the case of a woman who joins a fight between two men (Deut. 25:11).

Another possible justification for excluding women is suggested by the later Mishnaic law that a woman is not liable for torts so long as she is married. For the Mishnah, a wife’s violent behavior is regulated by a different set of laws. However, even if that exemption were true also in ancient Israel, not all women were married; some were maidens or widows or divorcees, and if two of them got into a fight—what then?

Granted that in ancient Israel, men rather than women were acknowledged to be the typical injurious fighters—whether by dint of nature or nurture. Yet for the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. For that I can find little evidence. (Compare at v. 22, below.) Thus there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms. The rendering should be as generic as the Hebrew wording.

NJPS distorts the primary meaning of *anashim* by shifting its relational

meaning from explicit to implicit status. As for the gender implication, NJPS employs “men” in indefinite usage, which in theory makes it gender inclusive. Such usage is now likely to be misconstrued as male (see above at v. 7), especially in the context of fighting.

To match the semantic emphasis of the Hebrew term, I choose an English relational term for which gender is incidental. Compare NJPS in Deut. 19:17, “the two parties (*anashim*) to the dispute.” In addition, English idiom calls for specification of number up front, although in the Hebrew construction this information is only implicit. Hence, “when [two] parties quarrel.” (NRSV: “when individuals quarrel.”)

DS125 21:21. *kaspo hu* (literally: “he is his silver”; NJPS: “he is the other’s property”). The masculine Hebrew pronoun refers here to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (See Stein, “The Grammar of Social Gender,” 2008.)

This pronoun’s antecedent is the object phrase *eved . . . o . . . amah* (“a slave, male or female”) in the previous verse. The pronoun’s masculine gender must be regarded as a grammatical feature rather than a semantic one. (See at 20:2, *What Grammatically Masculine Forms Mean—and Don’t Mean*.)

Women are in view here, as the antecedent states explicitly (apparently because the ancient audience knew that in certain circumstances a female slave might be handled differently than a male slave).

Thus there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms. Although the NJPS masculine pronoun “he” can be read legitimately as gender-inclusive, contemporary readers are more likely to construe it as male, for two reasons: (1) They tend to believe that in the biblical world, only males were deemed worthy of the text’s attention. (2) Generic usage of “he” is no longer part of legal parlance in our country, so a reader who expects contemporary idiom will not be thinking in those terms.

I opt for a clearer yet neutral English idiom: “the one . . . the other”—as employed by NJPS in Gen. 4:19, 29:28, 32:9; Exod. 14:19, etc. This formulation matches the vagueness of the Hebrew’s pronominal references. Hence, “the one is the other’s property.” (NRSV: “the slave is the owner’s property.”) (Robert Alter employs “they” as a singular pronoun: “they are his money.”)

DS126 21:22. *v’chi yinnatzu anashim* (NJPS: “when men fight”). Rendering revised in 2006. For the grammatical details, contextual meaning of *anashim*, and situational context, see the parallel case at v. 18, above. As Carol Meyers noted, “pregnant women might be injured by such a brawl among women”

(pers. comm.). So the text's original audience lacked a clear warrant to believe that its composer meant to exclude women from view.

Thus there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms. On the remaining translation issues, see at v. 18. Hence, "when [two or more] parties fight." (NRSV: "when people who are fighting.")

DS127 22:1. *ein lo damim* (NJPS: "there is no bloodguilt in his case"). The masculine Hebrew pronoun refers here to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent's gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (See Stein, "The Grammar of Social Gender," 2008.)

Scholars are divided as to whose bloodguilt this text is referring to; JPS *Notes* cites a discussion by S. D. Luzzatto. The pronominal suffix in *lo* can refer either to a person (such as the dead thief) or to the situation. Our outcome is not appreciably altered either way.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text's ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. I find no proof the text's composer could have relied upon the ancient audience to believe as much. That is, I know of no compelling reason to conclude that an ancient Israelite audience would have excluded the possibility of a tunneling female thief (however remote), nor would have believed that she should be treated differentially from a male thief. The legal genre encourages an inclusive reading (see Methodology).

In short, there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms.

Although the NJPS masculine pronoun "his" can be read legitimately as gender-inclusive, contemporary readers are more likely to construe it as male, for two reasons: (1) In a legal context, generic use of "his" is nowadays rare; readers expect generic intent to be couched in clearly gender-neutral language. (2) Readers tend to believe that in the biblical world, only males were deemed worthy of the text's attention.

It seems the least misleading to render *lo* in terms of the situation, and doing so preserves the interpretive ambiguity. Indeed, in the following verse, NJPS rendered the same idiom—framed positively—as "there is bloodguilt in that case." Hence, for the negative statement: "there is no bloodguilt in that case." (NRSV: "no bloodguilt is incurred.")

DS128 22:4. *ish . . . y'shallem* (NJPS: "a man . . . he must make restitution"). The masculine Hebrew noun *ish* refers here to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent's gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs a masculine inflection.)

On the lexical meaning of *ish*, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. On the contextual

sense of *ish* here (“a party”), see at 21:7.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. I find no proof that the text’s composer could have relied upon the ancient audience to believe as much. (In the social world of the Bible, women were known to own livestock [Job 24:3], which satisfies a prerequisite for the application of this law.) Thus there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms.

On the likelihood that NJPS meant “a man” and “he” in their gender-neutral sense, see at 21:7. Contemporary readers are more likely to construe them as male, for two reasons: (1) In a legal context, generic use of male terms is nowadays rare; readers expect generic intent to be couched in clearly gender-neutral language. (2) Readers tend to believe that in the biblical world, only males were deemed worthy of the text’s attention.

For clarity in v. 10, NJPS had rendered this same verb and inflection in the passive voice (see JPS *Notes*, loc. cit.). I will adopt the same stratagem here—where it is equally necessary to clarify that a neutral sense is intended. In both passages, a passive voice is acceptable because the responsible party remains clear from the context. (In contrast, Poythress & Grudem, pp. 123–124, decry NRSV’s similar, passive-voice wording. They claim that it leaves unclear “who is to make restitution to whom.” However, that critique does not withstand scrutiny; it overlooks that the word “restitution” refers to making good for an injury, and the only injury in view is the one caused by the livestock.) Hence, “restitution must be made.” (NRSV: “restitution shall be made.”)

DS129 22:4. *meitav sadeihu u-meitav karmo* (NJPS: “for the impairment of that field or vineyard”). Literally, “the excellence of his field and the excellence of his vineyard.” This is a banner example of how NJPS’s idiomatic approach to translation already rendered grammatically masculine inflections in gender-neutral terms. No change to NJPS. (NRSV understands the antecedents differently: “from the best in the owner’s field or vineyard.”)

DS130 22:8. Parentheses added for clarity, in the recognition that verse 8 addresses a separate case that is only loosely related to what precedes and follows it; see Nahum Sarna’s comment ad loc. (which cited rabbinic authorities). (This is not a matter of gender per se.)

DS131 22:11. *y’shallem* (NJPS: “he must make restitution”). On rendering in the passive voice—“restitution must be made”—see at verse 4. (NRSV: “restitution shall be made.”)

DS132 22:14. *ba bischaro* (literally, “he comes with its payment”; NJPS: “he is entitled to the hire”). The grammatically masculine verbal inflection is governed by the noun *ish* in v. 13, which refers there to a *category* of persons. This means that its referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that *ish* governs a masculine inflection here.

On the lexical meaning of *ish*, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. On the contextual sense of *ish* in this law (“a party”), see at 21:7.

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. The roles in question are the animal’s owner and its borrower. I find no proof to support exclusion. Indeed, Job 24:3 matter-of-factly mentions a “widow’s ox.”

In short, there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms.

NJPS resorted to an English idiom—one in which the pronoun’s antecedent is not the animal’s borrower (as implied by the Hebrew verb) but rather its owner. Although the NJPS masculine pronoun “he” can be read legitimately as gender-inclusive, contemporary readers are more likely to construe it as male, for the reasons stated in earlier notes to this law collection, above.

For clarity, I am substituting a more gender-neutral equivalent, with no antecedent: “that payment is due.” (NRSV: “only the hiring fee is due.”)

DS133 22:15. *v’chi y’fateh ish b’tulah . . . v’shachav imah* (NJPS: “if a man seduces a virgin . . . and lies with her”). The noun *ish* here refers to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs a masculine inflection.)

On the lexical meaning of *ish*, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. On the contextual sense of *ish* here (“a party”), see at 21:7.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. Given the (hetero)sexual situation, the text’s composer could reliably imagine that the ancient audience would indeed construe the “party” in question as male. Thus there is no need to use explicitly male-specific wording, such as *zachar*; the referent’s maleness goes without saying.

The co-text of *ish* makes its referent’s gender germane. Because the situation implicitly conveys maleness, normal English idiom would initially specify gender. Such specificity would account for the masculine pronouns to follow.

The NJPS rendering as “man” is more explicitly male in its force than the Hebrew original. Yet in terms of English idiom, such explicitness is necessary. Although “man” in an indefinite construction could be read legitimately as gender-inclusive (“anyone”), the contemporary audience is very unlikely to construe it as such in a sexual context.

No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “When a man seduces a virgin . . . and lies with her.”).

DS134 22:18. *kol-shochev im b'heimah* (NJPS: “whoever lies with a beast”).

The masculine Hebrew verbal inflection refers here to a *category* of persons (as marked by the quantity term *kol*). This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. I find no proof the text’s composer could have relied upon the ancient audience to believe as much. The Bible uses the idiom *shachav im* for women, as can be seen with Lot’s daughters (Gen. 19:32–35). Further, the ancient world’s gender-asymmetry with regard to sex revolved around two factors (namely, which man has access to the woman’s sexual activity, and which party gets to initiate such activity), neither of which is at issue with regard to a beast. (Compare Lev. 18:23, 20:15–16, which treats men and women separately yet prohibits bestial sex for both.)

In short, there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms. The NJPS wording is appropriately gender-inclusive. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “whoever . . .”.)

DS135 22:20. *v'ger lo toneh v'lo tilchatzennu* (NJPS: “you shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him”). The noun *ger* refers here to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs a masculine pronoun.)

On the denotation of *ger*, see at 12:19. For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. I find no proof the text’s composer could have relied upon the ancient audience to believe as much. Thus there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms.

Although the NJPS masculine pronoun “him” can be read legitimately as gender-inclusive, contemporary readers are more likely to construe it as male, for the reasons stated in earlier notes to this law collection, above.

For clarity, I am substituting a more gender-neutral equivalent, recasting

the sentence to avoid a pronoun. Hence, “you shall not wrong nor oppress a stranger.” (NRSV: “you shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien.”)

DS136 22:21. *kol almanah v’yatom lo t’annun* (NJPS: “you shall not ill-treat any widow or orphan”). The plural second-person verb leaves vague the subject’s presumed gender: who is the “you”? On the referential gender of second-person address, see at 20:2, especially my excursus on *What Grammatically Masculine Forms Mean—and Don’t Mean*.

From v. 23, however, it’s clear that here the addressees are presumed to be (predominantly) husbands and fathers. Indeed, an Israelite audience would have understood the subjects to be (predominantly) male already here in v. 21, because in the ancient Near East the role of assisting and protecting widows and the fatherless was classically the responsibility of the communal leadership—the king, the elders, and the local heads of a *beit av* (“homestead”). (Regarding King David, see II Sam. 14; *sarim*, Isa. 1:23; the king, Jer. 22:3; *n’si’ei yisrael*, Ezek. 22:6–7; *am ha-aretz* and priests, Zech. 7:10; for ancient Near Eastern kings, see *EJ* (1st edn.), “Widows.”)

Here the responsible party is not simply “men” (as opposed to “women”) but rather a smaller group, consisting of those in positions of leadership; they are typically male.

(By their nature, instructions are addressed foremost to those who have the responsibility and power to carry them out; the implicit address is “to whom it may concern.” And a shift in address from one party to another is often unannounced, for it is inferred from the nature of the instructions. In other words, the fact that vv. 21–23 is addressed to certain men says nothing about the gender of the implied recipient for the rest of this law collection.)

English idiom calls for explicit specification of a referent’s gender as soon as it becomes germane. And so the translation here requires a clear signal as to the shift in the implied recipient. The NJPS rendering thus comes across as unduly neutral. A clarifying insertion is warranted to avoid startling the reader of the following verse. Hence, “you [communal leaders] shall not ill-treat . . .” (NRSV: “you shall not abuse.”)

DS137 22:24. *he-ani . . . lo-tihyeh lo k’nosheh . . . lo t’simun alay neshech* (literally: “the poor (person) . . . do not be to him like a creditor . . . do not place upon him interest”; NJPS: “the poor . . . do not act toward them as a creditor . . . exact no interest from them”). The masculine Hebrew noun *ani* (some say it’s an adjective employed as a noun) refers here to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs masculine pronouns.)

Masculine nouns have presumptively generic reference. There is no evi-

dence that our noun is intrinsically male.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. I find no proof the text’s composer could have relied upon the ancient audience to believe as much. On the contrary, an ancient Israelite audience—no doubt well aware of widows, abandoned wives, and other women living in poverty—would have reliably understood this verse as gender-inclusive. The Bible too portrays women as handling money (Judg. 17:2–4; Prov. 31:24), and poor women as debtors and borrowers (II Kings 4:1–3; Job 24:3, 9; cf. Exod. 3:22; 11:2).

In short, there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms. NJPS rendered in the plural, apparently understanding that the context established at the start of the verse (*am*, “people”) casts the singular as a collective. The plural formulation is appropriately gender-inclusive. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the poor . . . you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them.”)

DS138 22:28. *b’chor banecha* (NJPS: “the first-born among your sons”). Regarding this expression, see my note at 13:15 on *b’chor banai*. The same reasoning applies here. Hence, “the male first-born among your children.” (NRSV: “the firstborn of your sons.”)

DS139 22:30. *anshei kodesh* (literally, “men of holiness”; NJPS: “holy people”). The word *anshei* is the construct form of the term *anashim*, which is the functional plural of the noun *ish*. Here it refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (For example, in Gen. 17:23 the referent of *anshei* clearly includes women as well as men.)

On the meaning of *ish* in general, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here, *anshei* appears in its attested (neutral) sense of “those who possess the quality of. . . .”

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. I find no proof the text’s composer could have relied upon the ancient audience to believe as much. Here the second half of the verse places this term into the context of eating (or more precisely, *not* eating). Neither the ancient Israelites nor the Torah’s composers are known to have made food distinctions on the basis of gender.

In short, there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms. The NJPS

rendering is appropriately gender-inclusive. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “people consecrated to me.”)

DS140 23:3. *dal . . . b'rivo* (NJPS: “a poor man . . . in his dispute”). The masculine noun *dal* (some say it’s an adjective employed as a noun) refers here to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs a masculine pronoun.)

Masculine nouns have presumptively generic reference. In Lev. 14:21, our noun’s reference is clearly gender-inclusive. (Thus although in Exod. 30:15 its reference is solely male, that must be an instance of a general term’s being used to designate a more specific case.)

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. I find no proof the text’s composer could have relied upon the ancient audience to believe as much. On the contrary, an ancient Israelite audience—no doubt well aware of widows, abandoned wives, and other women living in poverty—would have reliably understood this verse as gender-inclusive. The Bible too portrays women as handling money (Judg. 17:2–4; Prov. 31:24), and poor women as debtors and borrowers (II Kings 4:1–3; Job 24:3, 9; cf. Exod. 3:22; 11:2). An ancient Israelite audience would have known that many (if not most) of their poor were women. Cuneiform records show that in nearby societies, poor women could and sometimes did turn to the courts for redress of grievances; presumably the same was the case in Israel. Indeed, the Bible matter-of-factly depicts women (not only poor ones) as doing so (Num. 27:1–11; II Sam. 14:4; I Kings 3:16; II Kings 6:26; 8:5).

In short, there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms. Although the NJPS noun “man” and pronoun “his” can be read legitimately as gender-inclusive, contemporary readers are more likely to construe it as male, for the reasons stated in earlier notes to this law collection, above.

For clarity, I am substituting a more gender-neutral equivalent. A plural rendering (taking the Hebrew singular as a collective) would be properly inclusive, yet it would weaken the sense of vulnerability conveyed by the text’s expressing the situation in terms of an individual. Hence, “a poor person . . . in a dispute.” (But better English idiom would be to locate the focus properly at the sentence’s end: “nor in a dispute shall you show deference to a poor person.” Perhaps that should be the reading in a future printing.) (NRSV: “the poor in a lawsuit.”)

DS141 23:4–5. *oyivcha . . . hashev t’shivenu lo . . . azov taazov imo* (NJPS: “your enemy . . . you must take it back to him . . . you must nevertheless raise it with him”). The masculine Hebrew noun *oyev* refers here to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs masculine pronouns.)

Masculine nouns have presumptively generic reference. There is no evidence that our noun is intrinsically male.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. I find no proof the text’s composer could have relied upon the ancient audience to believe as much. The Bible depicts women as owning oxen (Job 24:3) and as traveling with laden donkeys (I Sam. 25:18–20).

In short, there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms. Although the NJPS masculine pronoun “him” can be read legitimately as gender-inclusive, contemporary readers are more likely to construe it as male, for the reasons stated in earlier notes to this law collection, above.

For clarity, I am substituting a more gender-neutral equivalent. My recasting of the English phrasing in this verse and the next is modeled after NRSV’s elegant reading. Hence, “you must take it back . . . you must nevertheless help raise it.” (NRSV: “you shall bring it back . . . you must help to set it free.”)

DS142 23:9. *v’ger lo tilchatz* (NJPS: “you shall not oppress a stranger”). The noun *ger* refers here to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs a masculine pronoun.)

On the denotation of *ger*, see at 12:19. For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. I find no proof the text’s composer could have relied upon the ancient audience to believe as much. Thus there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms.

The NJPS rendering is appropriately inclusive. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “you shall not oppress a resident alien.”)

DS143 23:12. *v’yinafesh ben amat’cha v’ha-ger* (NJPS: “that your bondman and the stranger may be refreshed”). [Regarding the noun *ger* (“stranger”), see previous note; no change to NJPS.] The masculine Hebrew noun *ben* refers here to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is

not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs a masculine inflection.)

On the gender meaning of *ben* in general, see at 1:1.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. I find no convincing argument that the text’s composer could have relied upon the ancient audience to believe as much. They would have had no reason to think that the composer expected female slaves (but not male slaves) to work on the Sabbath. Indeed, the Decalogue’s more detailed enumeration of household members (Exod. 20:10) explicitly requires that both male and female slaves rest.

Here, the text specifies a home-born slave (rather than a purchased one); and together with the term *ger*, the term *ben amah* forms a merism: from the “lifelong member from within your household” to the “new arrival from afar”—in other words, the homestead’s entire populace.

Thus there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms.

The NJPS translators understood “the use of *ben* . . . as merely denoting the species or category,” citing Driver, who wrote that the term was “intended, it must be supposed, to represent slaves in general” (*JPS Notes*, at this verse). Although the NJPS “bondman” can be read legitimately as gender-inclusive, contemporary readers are more likely to construe it as male, for the reasons stated in earlier notes to this law collection, above. (This is the only place in the *Tanakh* where NJPS employs the generic term “bondman”; elsewhere, various inflected forms of *ben amah* are rendered as “son of the slave-woman; son of his handmaid; son of your maidservant.”)

For clarity, I substitute a clearly gender-neutral equivalent—a term that includes female slaves/servants. To render the recurring term *y’lid bayit* in Genesis 17, NJPS and Chaim Stern had both employed the term “homeborn slave”; and that seems an acceptable rendering here as well. Hence, “your home-born slave.” (NRSV: “the homeborn slave.”)

DS144 23:20–21. *hinei anochi sholei’ach mal’ach l’fanecha lishmorcha. . . . hishamer mi-panav u-shma b’kolō* (NJPS: “I am sending an angel to guard you. . . . Pay heed to him and obey him”). The noun *mal’ach* (literally, “messenger”) governs grammatically masculine pronouns. The construction indicates action that is about to occur. The *mal’ach* (literally, “messenger”) in question is still indefinite. Whether or not this reference is also *specific* depends upon whether the figure of God (the speaker) already has a *specific angel in mind*. If not, then the noun points to a category of divine being

whose gender is unconstrained; and in that case, the masculinity of the pronouns is a grammatical matter that says nothing about the angel's gender. If God's reference is specific, however, then the pronouns point to a divine being whose gender is *not female*, and thus presumably male. (Angels as imagined in ancient Israel did have gender; see below.)

The Bible never refers to a specific female via the term *mal'ach*. Yet grammatically masculine nouns are gender-inclusive by default. And we have no reason to believe that our noun refers only to males.

Angel's Gender. [Angels appeared already twice in the book of Exodus, at the Burning Bush and at the Sea of Reeds; but this is the first instance where gender considerations might affect the rendering.] In the ancient Near East, both human men and women functioned as messengers. As Meier (1991) wrote regarding Mesopotamia: "The Akkadian *marat shipri* [a female form of the term for messenger] is attested from the Old Babylonian period down to the Persian empire. . . . One [also] finds women sent on missions implying messenger activity, even though the description *marat shipri* does not appear. . . . In Mesopotamia, female . . . messengers were continually confronting men, and it is consequently inappropriate to perceive the female world as an isolated entity. . . . Women [as messengers] were not simply an (admittedly rare) alternative but a preferred choice in certain contexts."

The Bible seems to presume the existence of female messenger activity in ancient Israel. As evidence, Meier cites three passages: 2 Sam. 17:17 (where the agent is designated as a *shifchah*, "slave"); Prov. 9:2–3 (*naarah*, "assistant"); and Isa. 40:9 (*m'vaseret*, "herald"). To that list I would add 2 Kings 22:15 ff., in which Huldah (*n'viah*, "prophet") utters the classic messenger formula; and Zechariah 5:9, a vision of winged *nashim* who perform an errand on God's behalf. There the context evokes the occasional sense of *nashim* as "representative functionaries, agents" (Exod. 2:7; II Sam. 14:2; II Sam. 20:16). (Likewise, the counterpart male noun *ish* ["participant"] is one of the Bible's standard ways to designate a messenger, although few scholars have recognized that fact.)

The case of the female messengers in Zechariah 5:9 also seems to confirm that for the Torah's original audience, *divine beings were possessed of gender* even from within a monotheistic worldview, and further, the biblical God was known to dispatch female angels to perform an errand.

Now, for the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text's ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would *exclude* women from view. The answer appears to be yes, based on an imagined analogy to human beings. For the metaphor to be meaningful, an emissary who happens to be from God was nevertheless

expected to follow the conventions that human emissaries observed. The present verse specifies that this angel's duty will be to serve as a *guard*, which on the human plane was a military role, reserved for men (Carol Meyers, pers. comm., 9/19/03, 10/16/03). On that basis, the text's audience would have reliably taken this heralded angel to be male.

In short, we have warrant for a gendered rendering of the pronouns. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: "an angel . . . be attentive to him and listen to his voice.")

DS145 24:5. *vayishlach et naarei b'nei yisra'el* (NJPS: "he designated some young men among the Israelites"). Rendering revised in 2006. The plural construct form of the masculine noun *naarim* refers here to a *category* of persons: the group is unique and determined by Moses' selection, yet its members are not specified in this utterance. This means that the group's gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs masculine verbal inflections.)

Grammatically masculine nouns are gender-inclusive by default. And we have no reason to believe that our noun always refers only to males, especially in the plural. Indeed, in Ruth 2:15, 21 (in light of 2:8), the term *naarim* refers to both male and female workers.

The term *naar* denotes primarily age or social status (see my note above at 10:9). Here, in the absence of contextual emphasis on age, the salient sense of *naar* is one of dependency and subordination (compare at 33:11). As Leeb notes in her study of this term, other passages mention *naarim* who functioned as assistants. Here, Moses gives these *naarim* direction and they carry out menial tasks on his behalf.

Targum Onkelos, Ibn Ezra, and Ramban see the connotation of *naarim* here as "first-born sons," apparently because the Torah elsewhere depicts them as the Israelites' main cultic actors, prior to the establishment of a formal priesthood. Such a speculation is plausible. More likely, however, the latter's mention here serves as an etiology for the *naarim* who later functioned as servants in Israelite sanctuaries: I Sam. 2:11, 13, 15, 17, 18. At any rate, the wording's emphasis is on function rather than gender.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text's ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. I find no evidence the text's composer could have relied upon the ancient audience to believe as much; nothing implies that the *naarim* must necessarily be males. The activity of slaughtering animals and preparing the body parts for sacrificial offering was apparently not restricted to men in ancient Israel—and it

was definitely a gender-inclusive activity in the ancient Near East generally (see the discussion in my Leviticus comments and notes). And according to v. 6, the “priestly” (i.e., male) task of handling the blood is done not by the *naarim* but Moses.

In short, there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms.

The NJPS rendering overtranslates the gender marker, for “some young men” cannot be read legitimately as gender-inclusive. I render via a gender-neutral term that conveys the word’s primary meaning, which suits the context. Hence, “. . . some assistants . . .” (NRSV: “. . . young men . . .”)

DS146 25:2. *kol-ish asher yid'venu libo* (NJPS: “every person whose heart so moves him”). The noun phrase *kol-ish* always refers to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs a masculine inflection and pronoun.)

On the gender meaning of *ish*, see the 2nd entry at 1:1.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. On the contrary, the list of solicited materials that follows (v. 3) includes a number of items—particularly the yarn, linen, and goat hair—that in ancient Israel were very much associated with women (Prov. 31:13, 19, 24; see TAWC, p. 467). (This inference is later confirmed by the stated purpose of this endeavor in v. 8, for the sanctuary’s sacrificial system will definitely include women. More direct evidence comes from 35:22, 29 and 36:6, where women explicitly respond by bringing gifts: they know that they are included.)

Further, the ancient audience would have assumed that women in the story controlled some resources (and thus could donate them to this new project). That is evident from Prov. 28:24 and Jud. 17:1–4, which presume that an Israelite mother possesses valuables.

In short, there is no warrant for translating in gendered terms. The NJPS rendering as “person” is properly gender-neutral. As for the pronoun “him,” although it was surely meant as gender-inclusive, contemporary readers are more likely to construe it as male, for they tend to believe that in the biblical world, only males were deemed worthy of the text’s attention.

For clarity, I am rewording so as to avoid a pronoun. Hence, “every person whose heart is so moved.” (NRSV preserves the active verb via a plural construction: “all whose hearts prompt them.”)

DS147 28:1. *et-aharon achicha v'et-banav ito* (NJPS: “your brother Aaron, with his sons”). The plural masculine noun *ben* refers here to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is oth-

erwise unconstrained by the grammar.

On the gender meaning of *ben*, see at 1:1.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text's ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. Here at the inception of the priesthood, the mention of "Aaron with his *banim*" is followed by a named list that consists only of his sons. (According to Lev. 10:14, Aaron also has daughters.) A generic term is being used to refer to a specific (male) subset—a linguistic usage that occurs frequently in biblical Hebrew.

(Henceforth, references to Aaron and "his *banim*" in the context of priesthood must be understood as designating his sons. And it is from here and from Lev. 6:11 that we infer that only males can become Israelite priests.)

The referent's gender is germane, yet it will not be known to a contemporary reader at this point. Under such circumstances, English idiom calls for gender to be specified. Thus the NJPS rendering as "sons" is appropriately gender-restrictive. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: "your brother Aaron, and his with him.")

DS148 28:43. *ul-zar'o acharav* (NJPS: "and for his offspring after him"). The masculine Hebrew noun *zera* refers here to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent's gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

Semantics of the common noun ZERA: When applied to persons, the noun *zera* designates lineal descendants; there is no evidence that it is intrinsically male. Indeed, it is generally used in a neutral sense (Gen. 9:9; 15:3, 5; 17:12; Gen. 46:6–7; Lev. 18:20–21; 20:2, 34; 22:13; Deut. 28:46, 59; 30:6, 19; 31:21; I Sam. 2:20).

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text's ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. Here, that is indeed the case (see 28:1 and my note there). Apparently a generic term is being used to refer to a specific subset—the *male* descendants of Aaron—which is a linguistic usage that occurs frequently in biblical Hebrew. (So also with *zera* in two other passages, 30:21 and Num. 25:13.) The text did not need to use a more restrictive term than the generic *zera*, for the reference to priesthood already makes clear that only the males were meant.

The referent's gender is germane, yet it is already known to the reader. (The subject "Aaron and his *sons*" appears earlier in the verse.) Under such circumstances, English idiom does not call for gender to be specified. The

NJPS rendering as “offspring” is appropriately gender-agnostic. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “his descendants.”)

DS149 29:27. *me-asher l’aharon u-me-asher l’yanav*. (NJPS: “from that which was Aaron’s and from that which was his sons’”). On the grammar, see my note at 28:1. On the gender meaning of *ben* and its plural construct form, see at 1:1.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. The answer is yes: the participants are literally Aaron and his own sons.

Thus we have warrant for translating in gendered terms. English idiom calls for specificity with regard to the participants. The NJPS “sons” is appropriately gender-specific. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “and his sons.”)

DS150 29:28. *l’aharon ul-yanav l’chok olam* (NJPS: “for all time . . . to Aaron and his descendants”). On the grammar, see my note at 28:1. On the gender meaning of *ben* and its plural construct form, see at 1:1.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. If we understand that the meat portions under discussion are to be available for consumption by all of the priestly household, then women remain in view. (So Lev. 10:14: “The breast of elevation offering and the thigh of gift offering you, and your sons *and daughters* with you, may eat . . .”; similarly Num. 18:11, 19.) However, this is not the whole story. In the foreground, the text’s focus of concern remains on the *initial* recipients: the male priesthood as an institution, and what is due to them. (As stated in Lev. 7:31–34, these portions of meat primarily will compensate the priests for their ritual role; see further at Lev. 10:14.) The Torah is using a generic term to refer to a specific subset—namely, the *male* descendants of Aaron—which is a linguistic usage that occurs frequently in biblical Hebrew. In short, women are excluded from view.

Thus we have warrant for translating in gendered terms. We must also consider the notice that this instruction applies “for all time.” In that context, the NJPS rendering as “descendants” is arguably superior to “sons.” Yet that rendering is likely to be construed as gender inclusive, and thus it obscures the focus on the priests themselves. (In the nearly identical situation in Lev. 7:31–34, NJPS rendered *banav* as “his sons.” In Lev. 10:14–15, it rendered *banecha* as “your children,” but I have since changed that to “your sons”; see my notes there.)

Perhaps “descendants” should be changed to “sons” in a future printing.

(However, such a substitution would create a significant conflict with the present wording of the comment on this verse in TAWC). (NRSV: “and his sons.”)

DS151 29:33. *v'zar lo yochal* (NJPS: “they may not be eaten by a layman”).

The masculine adjective *zar*, being used as a substantive, refers here to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our substantive governs a masculine inflection.)

The adjective *zar* identifies one who is out of bounds; there is no evidence that it is intrinsically male. The existence of a specifically feminine form (*zarah*, Prov. 2:16; 7:5) proves nothing. Nearly all grammatically masculine Hebrew substantives are gender inclusive by default.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. That is not the case. Here, *zar* is priestly jargon for a non-priest; in this setting it logically refers to either a male or a female, for the latter were not permitted to eat “holy” foods (Lev. 22:12).

Thus there is no warrant here for translating in gendered terms.

NJPS surely intended “layman” in its inclusive sense, but like any so-called false generic, “layman” is confusingly ambiguous. Although it can be read as gender-inclusive, contemporary readers are more likely to construe it as male, for they tend to believe that in the biblical world, only males were deemed worthy of the text’s attention.

For clarity, I am substituting a more gender-neutral term. As it happens, in Lev. 22:10, 13, NJPS renders the equivalent expression *v'chol zar lo yochal* as “no lay person shall (or: may) eat.” Such a two-word rendering of *zar* seems suitable here too—and preferable to the relatively recent coinage “lay-person.” (Alternatively, taking the term *zar* as a singular collective: “the laity.”) Hence, “they may not be eaten by a lay person.” (NRSV: “no one else shall eat of them.”)

DS152 30:12. *b'nei yisrael lifkudeihem* (NJPS: “the Israelite people according to their enrollment”). The term *b'nei* is a construct form of the grammatically masculine plural noun *banim* (literally, “sons, members”), whose singular form is *ben*. The plural form means that both men and women are potentially in view. On the gender meaning of *ben*, see at 1:1.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. As my

printed comment points out, the context is a military one, which in the ancient world was a male domain. From the fact of the census—and especially from the term *p'kudeihem*—an ancient Israelite audience would have grasped that this passage refers only to men.

In other words, the text here uses a generic term to designate a more specific group. Gender would go without saying. The ancient audience would have perceived such a locution as natural, for on a battlefield the (male) soldiers were understood to represent the entire people. (In English it is common make similarly generic statements, such as “Green Bay is playing Pittsburgh tonight,” where it goes without saying that only *male* athletes play in the National Football League.)

Yet the fact that gender is germane is not obvious to contemporary readers, for in our culture a “census . . . of the people” counts the entire population. On that basis readers would incorrectly presume that women are in view in this paragraph. Thus there is warrant for translating in gendered terms. Such a move accounts for the cultural information that is implicit.

The NJPS rendering *b'nei yisrael* as “the Israelite people” is normally fine—but unduly generic here. This is especially so given that in the rest of this passage, NJPS also employs generic language: “everyone” (v. 13) and “the Israelites” (v. 16). Taken together, the translation risks misleading contemporary readers. This explains why NJPS supplied male language when it faced an analogous challenge in a similar context of military muster, in II Chron. 25:5. There it rendered the object of the census, *y'hudah*, not as the literal “Judah” but rather as “men of Judah.”

Such a clarification is needed here too, to signal that this census does *not* apply to women. First I make clear that only a subset of the populace is in view (“the Israelite men”); then I underscore this by highlighting the military nature of the census (“according to their army enrollment”). Hence, “the Israelite men according to their army enrollment.” (NRSV: “the Israelites to register them.”)

DS153 30:12. *v'nat'nu ish kofer nafsho* (NJPS: “each shall pay a ransom for himself”). The plural verb apparently indicates that the function of the subject noun *ish* is *distributive*—referring singly to all members of the group in question. In other words, the noun *ish* refers here to a *category* of persons. This means that the referent’s gender is not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs a masculine inflection and pronoun.)

On the gender meaning of *ish*, see the 2nd entry at 1:1.

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the

situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. Here the answer is yes; see the previous note.

For the noun itself, English idiom would not normally warrant a gendered term. Although the referents' gender is germane, it will already be obvious from the context. Even so, a reflexive singular pronoun would be gendered according to normal English idiom.

The NJPS rendering “each” is appropriately gender neutral. Meanwhile, although the pronoun “himself” can be read legitimately as gender-inclusive, contemporary readers are more likely to construe it correctly as male, given the newly introduced word “men” earlier in the verse. No change to NJPS. (NRSV makes its rendering gender neutral [compared to the earlier RSV]: “all of them shall give a ransom for their lives.”)

DS154 30:21. *lo u-lzar'o l'dorotam* (NJPS: “for him and his offspring—throughout the ages”). See my note above at 28:43, regarding the same situation. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “for him and for his descendants throughout all generations.”)

DS155 30:33. *va-asher yitten mi-mennu al zar* (NJPS: “puts any of it on a layman”). See note at 29:33, above. The same logic applies here: it can hardly be the case that the prohibition applies only to men and not to women. Hence, “lay person.” (NRSV: “unqualified person”—cf. 29:33.)

DS156 30:33. *ish asher yikkach kamohu . . . v'nichrat me-amav* (NJPS: “whoever compounds its like . . . shall be cut off from his kin”). On the noun *ish*, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here it refers to a *category* of persons (“anyone in this situation”) whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that our noun governs masculine verbal inflections and a pronoun.)

For the sake of translation into English, we now need to establish whether, in the minds of the text's ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would nevertheless *exclude* women from view. The answer is no. An ancient Israelite audience would have taken it for granted that women as well as men were quite capable of misusing or replicating the sacred anointing oil detailed in this passage. (The Bible describes women matter-of-factly as perfumers in I Sam. 8:13.)

By rendering the often inclusive term *ish* as “whoever,” NJPS shows its recognition of a generic sense here; thus “his” was also meant in a generic sense. For clarity, I create a more gender-neutral rendering via simplification. (In context, the possessive pronoun is superfluous—for who else's kin could be meant?) Hence, “. . . cut off from kin.” (This formulation will likely strike readers as awkward at first, but that seems to be a function of its unfamiliar-

ity only. So I will implement it where the phrase recurs, 7 more times in the rest of the Torah.) (NRSV: “cut off from the people.”)

DS157 32:1. *va-yar ha-am . . . va-yikkahel ha-am* (NJPS: “the people saw . . . the people gathered”). On the meaning of *am* and its gender implications, see at 1:9–11.

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context would *exclude* women from view. The double mention of *ha-am* in this verse probably refers to the community leadership body—a council of elders or tribal chieftains or the like—acting on behalf of the people. (After all, in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, that is the template for interactions between Moses and “the people.”) The biblical text often uses a generic term (such as *ha-am*) to designate a specific yet representative group, so that would be a natural way to read the text here. As discussed earlier, the text’s ancient audience would have construed this Israelite leadership body as typically (though not exclusively) male.

Even so, the narrative focus is on that leadership council *as the people’s representatives*. Thus there is no warrant to render in gendered terms. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: “the people.”)

DS158 32:1, 23. *zeh moshe* (NJPS: “that . . . Moses”). Rendering revised in 2006. Nahum Sarna cites three passages in I Samuel where a man is referred to (disparagingly) by a speaker solely via the demonstrative *zeh*; in each case, NJPS renders *zeh* as “this fellow” or “that fellow” (1 Sam. 10:27; 21:16; 25:21). It did not do so here, where the text uniquely uses both *zeh* and *ha-ish* (the next word after Moses’s name) in apposition with the person’s name. In response, NJPS conflated its rendering of *zeh* with that of *ha-ish*, to yield “that man Moses.” As I will construe *ha-ish* very differently from NJPS (see next note), I must now separate the terms that were conflated in the translation. To do so, I will borrow from the way that NJPS renders *zeh* elsewhere. Hence, “that fellow Moses.”

DS159 32:1, 23. *ha-ish asher he-elanu me-eretz mitrayim* (NJPS: “man . . . who brought us from the land of Egypt”). Rendering revised in 2006 and again in 2010. This instance is one of those rare cases where how we construe the word *ish* affects our interpretation of the larger passage. A proper understanding of *ish* confirms that the Israelites are not seeking to worship a *different god* but rather they seek a *replacement medium for communicating with their existing God*.

On the noun *ish*, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here in 32:1, *ish* displays all the hallmarks of a title of office: it is definite, follows the person’s name, and

in several respects appears conspicuously. For one thing, Moses has already been tagged by the demonstrative *zeh* (see previous note), which makes more pointed their additional designation of him as *ha-ish*. The emphasis is doubled by the exact repetition of this clause in v. 23.

Robert Alter notices the conspicuous usage of *ish* here and muses about its significance: “It is noteworthy that the most ordinary of terms, ‘man,’ becomes a kind of epithet for Moses, perhaps intimating the distance of puzzlement or wonder with which others regard him.” Alter’s speculation misses the mark because in actual fact *ish* does not denote “man”; rather, it is a relational noun.

Jeffrey Tigay says that *ish* contrasts with the *elohim* that the people have just asked Aaron to make: “In the people’s view, Moses disappeared because he was a mortal; that is why they want a ‘god’ to replace him” (JSB). True, *ish* is counterposed with the divine in a number of biblical passages. But the support for such a reading (as the plain sense) is weak, for in those other instances the wording is different: either *ish* is plural (Gen. 32:29; Num. 22:32–35; Judges 9:9, 13) or *elohim* is singular (in poetry: Num. 23:19; Hos. 11:9; Job 9:2, 32; 32:13), or the usage of *ish* is indefinite and impersonal (Gen. 31:50; Jer. 23:36). Furthermore, Tigay’s speculation fails to account for why the term *ish* is used here rather than other nouns that convey mortality when contrasted with divinity: *adam* (Num. 23:19), *enosh* (Isa. 51:12; Pss. 8:5; 90:3; II Chr. 14:10), *ben-adam* (ibid.; Ps. 146:3), or *basar* (Deut. 5:23).

Already seven hundred years ago, Ramban perceptively paraphrased the people’s request as follows: “Let us make another Moses who can show us the way to proceed according to God as conveyed via his agency (*al pi Adonai b’yado*).” In other words, the people are explicit about their perception of Moses as God’s envoy. The focus of their concern is Moses’ role as God’s agent. Given his absence, they seek to open a new channel of communication with God. (As Ramban later explains, the people wouldn’t need Aaron’s help simply to replace Moses with another *human* leader. They came to Aaron because he was known to be another of God’s agents, and therefore he might know what to do. And surely they were not seeking a new deity, for in their statement of motivation they didn’t mention the most significant things that deities are known to do.)

Ramban then proceeds to account for the conspicuous presence of *ish*: “This is why they mentioned ‘Moses the *ish* who brought us’ and not ‘the deity who brought us’—for they were feeling the need for an *ish ’elohim*.” That is, Ramban explains the usage of *ish* by alluding to Deut. 33:1, where Moses is characterized as God’s agent: *ish ’elohim*. This is not midrashic

word play but rather the text's plain sense. For generally speaking, in a context of agency, the conspicuous presence of *ish* evokes the agency sense of that noun (see at 11:3). This nuance is attested dozens of times in the Bible. Indeed, *ish* appears to be biblical Hebrew's most common word to denote a party who is acting on behalf of another party.

I did not come to that realization right away. In 2006, I had understood that Moses was representing the Israelites (i.e., as leader). Meanwhile, I've found that when *ha-ish* denotes a leader, it almost always designates someone who's been commissioned by a higher authority. Thus, here it actually refers to Moses' representing God (i.e., as envoy).

Rendering *ha-ish* as “the envoy”—here and in the repetition of this statement in verse 23—is consistent with not only our rendering in Exod. 11:3 and Num. 12:3 but also the conclusion reached by Plaut's essay on this episode's theology (page 599). Hence, “Moses—the envoy who brought us . . .” (NRSV: “the man who brought us . . .”)

DS160 32:2. *par'ku nizmei ha-zahav asher b'oznei n'sheichem* (NJPS: “take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives”). The verb is plural and in the second person, with a masculine inflection. Thus its referents' gender is grammatically unspecified, other than that the addressees are not solely female. (See at 20:2.)

Aaron is speaking in terms of the typical addressee—namely, a householder. After all, in that society it was the male head of the typical family group who had the final authority regarding that family's donations to God (see Num. 30:7–16), just as with the disposition of other assets. The wording of this instruction does not mean that everyone present is an adult male, any more than it means that everyone present is a married parent of both sons and daughters.

As discussed in the first note at verse 1, it may well be that Aaron has already been speaking with a representative body comprised of householders. (Compare 12:3.) If so, then the contours of that mostly male body now become briefly visible. At any rate, this situation is like others in Exodus wherein differential gender and status roles—who can initiate sex (19:15; 20:14), who can flee to a place of asylum (21:13), and who is responsible for the welfare of widows and orphans (22:21)—prompt a temporary shift of address toward those whom the immediate topic concerns. Regardless, an ancient Israelite audience would have viewed this shift as unremarkable because of the social roles that they took for granted.

Yet a contemporary audience—which holds different assumptions about gender and household structure—is all too likely to be startled by an otherwise unannounced shift in focus. The situation can be eased by supplying the

implicit cultural information, in accord with English idiom (which does not employ the term “householders” in ordinary speech). This calls for a clarifying insertion in brackets, making clear that Aaron is momentarily addressing a subset of the populace. Hence, “[You men,] take off the gold rings . . .” (NRSV: same as NJPS.)

DS161 32:3. *kol ha-am* (NJPS: “all the people”). On the meaning of *am* and its gender implications, see at 1:9–11. The participants in the Golden Calf episode are repeatedly referred to as *ha-am*. Here and in the remainder of the episode, the referent of *am* is not necessarily the same as in verse 1.

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context *would exclude women from view*. The context is public worship, albeit of an illicit sort. I do not believe that extant evidence allows us to know to what extent—if any—the ancient Israelite audience viewed public worship as a gendered activity. The Bible itself does not portray any instances of public worship from which women were expressly forbidden or explicitly absent. It depicts householders’ wives as presumed to participate in the absence of their husbands (see my note at Deut. 12:12), as well as actively involved in certain ritual activity (Jer. 44:19). It depicts daughters as participants in many ritual contexts (Exod. 20:10; Lev. 12:6; Deut. 12:12, 18, 31; 16:11, 14; Jer. 7:31; 32:25; Ezek. 16:20; Ps. 106:37–38; see also I Sam. 30:6, 19; II Sam. 12:3). In my notes to Leviticus and to Deuteronomy, I argue that the Torah’s overall perspective was that for women to take part in public worship is normal. Thus, whenever the text is unclear about women’s participation, we should simply understand that this issue was not the text’s concern, and that women are not excluded from view.

The present passage supplies some additional clues that *ha-am* is meant to mean “everybody.” As Ibn Ezra noted on this verse, Aaron had mentioned the rings on the ears of wives, sons, and daughters (v. 2)—and now *kol ha-am* take off those rings, which suggests that *kol ha-am* includes women as well as men. Carol Meyers points to circumstantial evidence: When v. 6 mentions that *ha-am* bring offerings, it employs language that elsewhere is usually gender-inclusive. [See Carol Meyers on Lev 2:1 in *WIS*.]; furthermore, the consequent plague that strikes *ha-am* (v. 35) “would hardly have been gender-selective!” (pers. comm., 9/19/03).

Another piece of circumstantial evidence involves the *m’cholot* (v. 19; rendered by various scholars as “dance,” “music,” or “antiphonal singing”): whenever the Bible specifies the performers of this activity, they are always women (Exod. 15:20; Judg. 11:34, 21:21, 23; I Sam 18:6, 21:12; Jer. 31:4, 13). The mention of *m’cholot* thus points to women’s involvement in this

episode (although given how little we know about *m'cholot*, it remains possible that Israelite men might at times have engaged in them apart from women).

In short, the text's original audience lacked warrant to believe that the text's composer(s) meant to exclude women from view. The NJPS rendering does not indicate women's exclusion. No change to NJPS. (NRSV: "the people.")

[DS162] 32:12. *hotzi'am* (NJPS: "He delivered them"). Contrary to NJPS's capitalization, I assert that the plain sense here is that Moses would expect Egyptians to think in polytheistic (lower-case) terms. They would refer not to *the* deity but *a* deity. At the same time, they would presume that Israel's national god is not female—or at least, so Moses portrays it. Hence, "he delivered them."

[DS163] 32:23. See at 32:1.

[DS164] 32:26, 28. *b'nei levi* (literally, "sons of Levi" or "members of [the tribe of] Levi"; NJPS: "the Levites"). See my note at 2:1. The NJPS rendering is confusing, because at this point in the story, the professional class called *halviyim*—which it also renders as "the Levites"—does not yet exist. (Contrast the text's own similar anachronisms in 4:14; 6:19, 25.) The distinction between the tribe of Levi and the professional group "the Levites" matters when we ask whether females are included. Although here the referent excludes women either way, for the sake of consistency with other passages I prefer another rendering than "the Levites." Hence, "the men of Levi." (NRSV: "sons of Levi.")

[DS165] 32:27–29. *v'hirgu ish et achiv v'ish et re'eihu v'ish et k'rovo . . . ish biv'no uv'achiv* (NJPS: "each of you . . . slay brother, neighbor, and kin. . . each of you has been against son and brother"). Substantives like *ach*, *re-a*, *karov*, and *ben* specify their referents' gender only in certain grammatical constructions. Here they refer to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

These nouns' main denotative function is to point to the latent relationship between the men of Levi and their victims. Taken together in context as a reference to the victims, these terms connote the tribe of Levi's characteristically fierce determination.

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether, in the minds of the text's ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context *would exclude women from view*. What justification would the ancient audience have had for imagining that the men of Levi were to differentiate their victims by gender? (Cf. Deut. 17:2–7, which prescribes stoning a

“man or woman” who worships other gods.)

Apparently we are supposed to understand that only the ringleaders are being held accountable. This would explain why “only” 3,000 were slain in this expedition (v. 28). Ibn Ezra remarks that those killed were “those who had recognizably taken part in the apostasy”—i.e., according to the evidence available at that point—which would mean that others involved went unpunished by the sword. Still, warrant is lacking to categorically exclude women from view.

Furthermore, if “all the men of Levi” indeed rallied to Moses’ side (v. 26), then it would be a logical contradiction for them to have killed any actual “son and brother”—for all such folk were “men of Levi” too. This, too, argues against rendering *ach* as “brother” and *ben* as “son.”

In short, there is no warrant to render in gendered terms. (Note that the pathos and power of Moses’ statements lie in the concreteness of the terminology he uses to refer to the slain. Thus the rendering of these terms should be as concrete as possible.) Hence, “each of you . . . slay sibling, neighbor, and kin. . . . each of you has been against blood relations.” (NRSV: “each of you kill your brother, your friend, and your neighbor. . . . each one at the cost of a son or a brother.”)

DS166 33:8. *yakumu kol ha-am v’nitz’vu ish petach oholo* (NJPS: “all the people would rise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent”). On the noun *am*, see at 1:9–11. On the noun *ish*, see the 2nd entry at 1:1; on its distributive usage, see at 7:12. Here each of the two nouns refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflections and pronoun are masculine.)

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context *would exclude women from view*. Surely the audience did not conceive of women as confined inside their dwellings. Rather, Israelite women worked outdoors—carrying water, growing or gathering or processing foodstuffs, tending livestock, etc.—as much as indoors. (The term *petach* elsewhere connotes a work area, or a vicinity where people gather, rather than a literal doorway; see, e.g., 38:8.) Thus we cannot conclude that the ancient audience had warrant to presume that women were excluded from the scene or from the action described (cf. Deut. 29:9–11).

One might posit that the text is using generic terms to refer to a specific group—and that the author has only men (householders?) in mind. Even if that were true, however, it would not change the translation outcome, for in

order to match the Hebrew styling we would be obliged to employ generic English terms (which often refer to a subgroup).

NJPS presumably intended “his” in its generic sense. At any rate, for clarity, I am substituting a more neutral rendering via an idiomatic equivalent. Hence, “. . . at the entrance of each tent.” (NRSV preserves the possessive via a plural: “all the people would rise and stand, each of them, at the entrance of their tents.”)

DS167 33:10. *v'kam kol ha-am v'hishtachavu ish petach oholo* (NJPS: “all the people would rise and bow low, each at the entrance of his tent”). The same reasoning applies here as at v. 8. Hence, “. . . at the entrance of each tent.” (NRSV: “all the people would rise and bow down, all of them, at the entrance of their tent.”)

DS168 33:11. *ka-asher y'dabber ish el-re'eihu* (NJPS: “as one man speaks to another”). On the noun *ish*, see the 2nd entry at 1:1. Here it refers to a category of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflection and pronoun are masculine.)

That the people stand up and also bow down is a reflection of Moses’ authority as God’s envoy; this is the issue at hand. The present clause is probably not focusing attention on either *intimacy* or *loyalty*, for those are not crucial to authority. And to express those ideas I would expect to see other nouns invoked, such as *ach* or *asher k'nafsho* (Deut. 13:7, NJPS: “If your brother . . . or your closest friend, entices you in secret . . .”). Rather, the focus seems to be on the unusual *clarity of communication* between God and this particular agent. (Compare Num. 12.)

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether, in the minds of the text’s ancient audience, the particulars of the situational context *would exclude women from view*. The answer is no. The text’s composer(s) had no known warrant to presume that ancient audience would have imagined that men speak to each other with more clarity than women do. Indeed, it would have worked equally well—perhaps better—to say specifically “as one woman speaks to another.” Gender is not at stake in this analogy.

For parallel “one . . . another” formulations in Exod. 10:23 and 18:16, NJPS rendered *ish* as “person.” Why, then, did the translation committee render *ish* as “man” here? Apparently they considered it to be more idiomatic English in this setting. Arguably, NJPS intended “one man” in its classical generic sense, but that such usage is now likely to be misconstrued as male (see at 21:7). For clarity, I am substituting a more gender-neutral equivalent.

Hence, “as one person speaks to another.” (NRSV: “as one speaks to a friend.”)

DS169 33:11. *u-m’shar’to y’hoshua bin nun naar* (NJPS: “but his attendant, Joshua son of Nun, a youth”). Rendering revised in 2006. This is the only occasion where Joshua is called a *naar*—in the context of being a subordinate and carrying out a delegated task on Moses’ behalf, as is appropriate to the term’s basic sense (see at 10:9; 24:5).

Ibn Ezra cites a talmudic question as to how Joshua could have been called a “youth” when (as established by counting backwards from his age at death) he was 56 years old at the time; Ibn Ezra then explains that it’s an elliptical expression: Joshua was performing the type of service that a youth would typically perform.

Ramban (citing six other examples) offers a more general explanation that seems persuasive: “In my opinion, it is Hebrew’s preferred way to refer to every attendant as *naar*: the esteemed officeholder is [called] *ha-ish*, and the one who attends him is called *naar*.” In other words, Joshua here is an ad hoc functionary like the *naarim* of 24:5. The real question is what does *naar* add to what the term *m’sharet* (“attendant”) has already told us about him? The point seems to be that whereas a *m’sharet* would normally remain physically close to the person being waited on, here Joshua and remains behind whenever Moses leaves. This sense of *naar* is thus “deputy, proxy”; and the terse language warrants some elaboration via an insertion. Hence, “. . . [serving as] deputy.” (NRSV, as an adjective modifying the word “assistant”: “young”)

DS170 33:20. *lo yir’ani ha-adam va’chai* (NJPS: “man may not see Me and live”). Here the noun *adam* makes a definite yet nonspecific reference. As in most instances in the Bible, the noun *adam* points to a *category* of persons rather than to a particular individual; the referent’s gender is thus not *solely* female but is otherwise unconstrained by the grammar.

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. For that I can find no known reason, such as an implied contrast between men’s and women’s ability to see God. Thus we have no warrant to render into English in gendered terms.

Presumably NJPS meant “man” (without an article) in its classical generic sense. To avoid misunderstanding, I am substituting a more gender-neutral equivalent. Hence, “a human being may not see Me and live.” (NRSV: “no one shall see me and live.”)

[DS171] 34:9. *adonai* (NJPS: “O Lord”). See my note at 5:22; see also 4:10, 4:13. Hence, “O my lord.”

[DS172] 34:20. *b’chor banecha* (NJPS: “first-born among your sons”). See my note at 13:15 regarding the pairing of these two terms. Hence, “male first-born among your children.” (NRSV: “the firstborn of your sons.”)

[DS173] 35:5. *kol n’div libo* (NJPS: “everyone whose heart so moves him”). See my note at 25:2; the argument there also implies that NJPS is using “he” in a generic sense here. For clarity, I am substituting a more gender-neutral rendering. Hence, “everyone whose heart is so moved.” (NRSV: “whoever is of a generous heart.”)

[DS174] 35:21. *v’chol asher nad’vah rucho* (NJPS: “and everyone whose spirit moved him”). A grammatically masculine impersonal construction. Always *kol* refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding pronoun is masculine.)

That the setting does not exclude women was discussed at 25:2. This is confirmed in the next verse.

Surely NJPS is using “him” in its classical generic sense. For clarity, I am substituting a more gender-neutral rendering. Hence, “and everyone whose spirit was moved.” (NRSV: “everyone whose spirit was willing.”) (On the same grounds, I have made similar alterations below, vv. 23–24.)

[DS175] 36:4. *va-yavo’u khol ha-chachamim . . . ish-ish mi-m’lacho asher-hemah osim* (NJPS: “all the artisans . . . came, each from the task upon which he was engaged”). Intensified, elevated diction. Here the plural noun *chachamim* refers to a *category* of persons—whose genders are thus not *solely* female but are otherwise unconstrained by the grammar. (It is purely for the sake of syntactic gender concord that the corresponding verbal inflections, nouns, and pronouns are masculine.)

For the sake of translation into English, we need to establish whether the text’s composer(s) could have relied upon the ancient Israelite audience to believe that the situational context categorically *excludes* women from view. Were only men involved in the tasks performed under Bezalel’s direction? No. See at 25:2 and see 35:21–22.

NJPS rendered *kol-ish chacham-lev* in 36:1–2 as “every skilled person” rather than “every skilled man,” showing that it understood the artisans as including women. I must conclude that here in v. 4, NJPS intended “he” in its classical generic sense. For clarity, I am substituting a more gender-neutral rendering. Hence, “from the task upon which each one was engaged.” (NRSV: “each from the task being performed.”)

DS176 36:8. *va-ya'asu kol chacham lev* (NJPS: “all the skilled . . . made”).

While this verb is plural, the third-person verbs in the rest of the passage (through v. 38) are singular and grammatically masculine, either referring back to the noun phrase *kol chacham lev* as a collective, or having impersonal force.

Older translations such as the King James Version, OJPS, and RSV rendered those verbs with the singular “he,” without supplying a clear antecedent.

NJPS continues with the plural throughout. (Elsewhere, too, it occasionally renders collectives in the plural.) Here NJPS did so probably out of a sense of proper English style (which is what prompted Robert Alter to render in the plural as well). The effect is appropriately inclusive, for women were involved in many of these activities. No change to NJPS. (NRSV retains the masculine singular formulation of the RSV.)

DS177 38:8. *ha-tzov'ot asher tzav'u petach ohel mo-ed* (literally: “those arrayed/arranged who did service . . .”; NJPS: “the women who performed tasks at the entrance of the tent of meeting”). The plural noun is grammatically feminine, implying that its referent is solely female. Thus gender is germane.

(The expression rendered “at the entrance” usually refers not to the tent’s doorway but rather to an area *in front of the tent*—a highly visible location, as in Gen. 18:1–2; 43:19; Exod. 33:8–10; 38:8; 40:29; Lev. 3:2; Num. 16:18, 27; 25:6; 27:2; etc.)

A gendered rendering is warranted. Otherwise, readers would not know that only women are in view. Rather than simply saying “those who performed tasks . . .,” NJPS appropriately supplies the phrase “the women” for clarity. No change to NJPS.

DS178 38:26. *shesh mei'ot elef u-sh'loshet alafim v'chamesh mei'ot*

va'chamishim (NJPS: “603,550 men”). Only men were counted, as Exod. 12:37 suggests and as Num. 1:2, taken together with 2:32, reiterates. The ancient audience knew that censuses counted only men, but we moderns—who count also women and children—are liable to be misled by the cultural difference.

For the sake of English idiom, in a similar situation in Numbers 26, NJPS repeatedly supplied the word “persons” after the enumeration. Here, for whatever reason, it supplied “men.” The effect is to specify the gender appropriately. No change to NJPS.