

# "AL HAPEREK"

## A Renewed Meeting with Tanach

### Yehoshua Perakim 15-16

These chapters describe the inheritance of the tribes of Yehuda and the children of Yosef (Menashe and Ephraim), as well as the story of Achsah, daughter of Calev. The length and style of the description teaches us about the relationship between the respective tribes and the progressing stages of the Land's division.

### General Overview < "וַיִּקְרְאוּ בְּסֵפֶר בְּתוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים"

#### Perek 15

- ❶ This perek consists of two lists (15:1-12 and 15:20-63), with the story of Achsah placed between them (15:13-19). What characterizes each list? Why do you think the details about the inheritance of Yehuda appear twice?
- ❷ The borders of the inheritance are described in terms of directions (as on a compass)--east (Kedem), south (Negev), west (Sea), and north (Tzafon)--as well as with words like "went down", "encircled", "turned from", and "rose". Using these words as a guide, try to sketch out the details of Yehudah's inheritance on the attached map. (We are interpreting the word "encircled"--תאר--according to Rashi on pasuk 9.)
- ❸ See Yaakov's blessing to Yehuda in Bereshit 49:8-12 and Moshe's blessing to the tribe of Yehuda in Devarim 33:7. How do various aspect of these blessings manifest in our perek and perek 14? Skim perekim 18 and 19 to for further comparison.



מכון תורני לנשים ע"ש שרה בת יצחק יעקב רענגערט  
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## Perek 16

- 4 Study pasuk 9, paying close attention to the location of the cities in Ephraim and Menashe. How did this situation occur and what does it teach us about the settlement process?

### In-depth Study < "מִפְּרֹשׁ וְשׁוֹם שְׂכָל" >

- 5 "And Caleb said: 'He that smites Kiriath-sepher, and takes it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife'" (Yehoshua 15:16). Look at Bereshit Rabbah 60:3 (quoted below) and consider why Calev took such measures to accomplish this act, what the conditions were for its success, and what Hazal thought of his measures.

Bereshit Rabbah 60:3:

*"There were four who made inappropriate declarations; three were answered favorably and one was not. They were Eliezer, Calev, Shaul, and Yiftach.*

*Eliezer: "So let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say: 'Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink;' and she shall say: 'Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also;' let the same be she that Thou hast appointed for Thy servant, even for Isaac" (Bereshit 24:14). Even for one maid, I would wonder? God summoned Rivka for him and decreed that it was appropriate. Calev: "He that smites Kiriath-sepher, and takes it," etc. (Yehoshua 15:16). Even for a servant? God summoned Othniel for him. Saul: "And it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter" etc. (1 Shmuel 17:25). Even for a servant? God summoned David for him. Yiftach asked inappropriately and God decreed that it was inappropriate, as is written: "Whatsoever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, it shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering" (Shoftim 11:31). God said to him: "Even if one camel, one donkey, or one dog had come out of the house, would you have offered it up to me?" What did God do to him? God responded that it was not appropriate and summoned his daughter.*

מִתַּן מַתָּן

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## Appendix < "וַיְבִינּוּ בְּמִקְרָא"

### "Because the land of the south (Negev) you have given me"

(Yehoshua 15:19)

We do not understand this as saying that her father gave her the land of the south (Negev). It seems, rather, that its interpretation is that she spoke in the language of wisdom and hinted that he gave **her** ("you have given me"). In other words, Achsah claimed that her father attached gifts to her, to be given to Otniel when he married her, and promised that he (Calev) would not send her away empty-handed. Achsah's claim is similar to that of Rachel and Leah: "Are we not considered by him as strangers? for he has sold us" (Bereshit 31:15). Their bitterness was that their father did not give them gifts that would benefit them as women in their husband's house. This reflected a lack of concern and care for them; Lavan was only interested in exploiting them.

Unlike Lavan, Calev is not suspected of merely wanting to exploit his daughter, nor does he relate to her solely as a means to further the conquest of Dvir. Indeed, he certainly believed he was serving her best interests, because he would give her in marriage to a great hero, which would undoubtedly please her. Nonetheless, Achsah is indignant. Victory and the conquering hero are not enough for her; she also wants "a land of brooks of water, with springs from the valleys and mountains." Achsah's "womanly wisdom" searched the Land in her best interest. Calev, who gives his daughter to be the victor's prize, ignored life's needs and comforts, because he was wholly occupied with the success of Israel's conquest. But Achsah comes and rectifies this harsh approach. As far as she was concerned, a proper victory is intimately connected with gaining the good of the Land. (From "Divrei haRav Yisrael Ariel" in his book Pnei Levana, pp.146-147).

