

# "AL HAPEREK"

## A Renewed Meeting with Tanach

### Yehoshua Perakim 3-4

These perakim describe two formative events in the history of the Jewish People: the crossing of the Jordan and the entrance into the Land of Israel. In various ways, the language of the text and the events themselves echo the splitting of the Red Sea, the Exodus from Egypt, and the Revelation at Sinai. We will explore the broader context of the crossing of the Jordan, and its meaning for both the generation currently entering the Land and for future generations as well.

### "וַיִּקְרְאוּ בְּסֵפֶר בְּתוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים" < בקיאות

Use the following questions to guide your study:

#### Perek 3

- ❶ "By this you will know that the living G-d is among you"(3:10). The Ark of Hashem is mentioned in the perek ten times. Check the different terms used to refer to the Ark. What characteristics does each term express?
- ❷ The perek's description of the crossing of the Jordan emphasizes the physical distance between the Ark and the camp. Why on this occasion is it particularly necessary to be vigilant regarding one's proximity to the Ark? Clarify the issue of maintaining a distance from holiness by reviewing the following: Vayikra 9:1 + 10:1-7; 2 Shmuel 6:1-14.
- ❸ What can we learn from pasuk 16 about the faith of Israel in Hashem? Compare to Shmot 14:8-13.

## Perek 4

- 1 Check the number of times that the collection of twelve stones is mentioned in the perek. Where are they placed each time?
- 2 The number twelve recurs throughout this perek. To understand its symbolism, examine other contexts in which it appears: Bereshit 49:28; Yechezkel 47:13; Ezra 6:17.

### "מִפְּנֵי שְׁלוֹשׁ וְשָׁלֹשׁ" < עיון

- 1 Three pivotal events that the people of Israel experienced earlier are repeated in a different form in Perek 4: the crossing of the Red Sea, the Exodus from Egypt, and the Revelation at Mount Sinai.
  - > For the crossing of the Red Sea, see Yehoshua 4:18 and 4:23.
  - > For the Exodus from Egypt, see Shmot 12:26-27 and 13:14 together with Yehoshua 4:6 and 4:21.
  - > For the Revelation at Mount Sinai, see Shmot 24:4 together with Yehoshua 4:9.In light of these parallels and pesukim 3:7 and 4:14, try to determine the structure of the perekim. What is the significance of this structure?
- 2 "And these stones shall be for a remembrance unto the children of Israel for ever" (4:7). What is the meaning and importance of memorials in Jewish national and private life?

### "וַיְבִינּוּ בַּמִּקְרָא" < הרחבה

**"For with my staff I crossed this Jordan"** (Breshit 32:11).

Rabbi Yehuda bar Simon said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: In Torah, in Nevi'im (Prophets), and in Ketuvim (Writings), we find that Israel crossed the Jordan only through the merit of Yaakov. In the Torah, "For with my staff I crossed this Jordan" (Breshit 32). In Nevi'im, "Then you shall let your children know, saying: on dry land, Israel crossed this Jordan" (Yehoshua 4:22). In Ketuvim, "What ails you, O sea, that you flee? you Jordan, that you turn backward . . . from before the God of Jacob" (Tehillim 114). And the strength of Yaakov also feeds the future generations until the coming of the moshiach. "The rod of your strength the L-rd will send out of Zion" (Tehillim 110). This is the staff that was in the hand of Yaakov, in the hand of Aharon and in the hand of David, and it was in the hand of every king until the destruction of the Temple, and in the future, the same staff will be given to the king-moshiach" (Yalkut Shimoni 8:1).