

Philo

On the Life of Moses

introduction
and purpose
(1.1-4)

BOOK 1

I. I purpose to write the life of Moses, whom some 1 describe as the legislator of the Jews, others as the interpreter of the Holy Laws. I hope to bring the story of this greatest and most perfect of men to the knowledge of such as deserve not to remain in ignorance of it ; for, while the fame of the laws 2 which he left behind him has travelled throughout the civilized world and reached the ends of the earth, the man himself as he really was is known to few. Greek men of letters have refused to treat him as worthy of memory, possibly through envy, and also because in many cases the ordinances of the legislators of the different states are opposed to his. Most 3 of these authors have abused the powers which education gave them, by composing in verse or prose comedies and pieces of voluptuous licence, to their widespread disgrace, when they should have used their natural gifts to the full on the lessons taught by good men and their lives. In this way they might have ensured that nothing of excellence, old or new, should be consigned to oblivion and to the extinction of the light which it could give, and also save themselves from seeming to neglect the better themes and prefer others unworthy of attention, in which all their efforts to express bad matter in good language served to confer distinction on shameful

277

MOSES I. 4-8

subjects. But I will disregard their malice, and tell 4
the story of Moses as I have learned it, both from
the sacred books, the wonderful monuments of his
wisdom which he has left behind him, and from some
of the elders of the nation ; for I always interwove
what I was told with what I read, and thus believed
myself to have a closer knowledge than others of
his life's history.

Moses'
Birth,
Childhood,
Adolescence
(1.5-33)

II. ^a I will begin with what is necessarily the right 5
place to begin. Moses was by race a Chaldean,
but was born and reared in Egypt, as his ancestors
had migrated thither to seek food with their whole
households, in consequence of the long famine under
which Babylon and the neighbouring populations
were suffering. Egypt is a land rich in plains, with
deep soil, and very productive of all that human
nature needs, and particularly of corn. For the river 6
of this country, in the height of summer, when other
streams, whether winter torrents or spring-fed, are
said to dwindle, rises and overflows, and its flood
makes a lake of the fields which need no rain but
every year bear a plentiful crop of good produce
of every kind, if not prevented by some visitation
of the wrath of God to punish the prevailing im-
piety of the inhabitants. He had for his father and 7
mother the best of their contemporaries, members
of the same tribe, though with them mutual affec-
tion was a stronger tie than family connexions. He
was seventh in descent from the first settler, who
became the founder of the whole Jewish nation.^b
III. He was brought up as a prince, a promotion 8
due to the following cause. As the nation of the

^b See Ex. vi. 16 ff., where Moses is given as fifth from Jacob
and therefore seventh from Abraham.

MOSES I. 8-11

newcomers was constantly growing more numerous, the king of the country, fearing that the settlers, thus increasing, might shew their superiority by contesting the chief power with the original inhabitants, contrived a most iniquitous scheme to deprive them of their strength. He gave orders to rear the female infants, since her natural weakness makes a woman inactive in war, but to put the males to death, to prevent their number increasing throughout the cities; for a flourishing male population is a coign of vantage to an aggressor which cannot easily be taken or destroyed. Now, the child from 9 his birth had an appearance of more than ordinary goodness,^a so that his parents as long as they could actually set at nought the proclamations of the despot. In fact we are told that, unknown to all but few, he was kept at home and fed from his mother's breast for three successive months. But, since, as is 10 often the case under a monarch, there were persons prying into holes and corners, ever eager to carry some new report to the king, his parents in their fear that their efforts to save one would but cause a larger number, namely themselves, to perish with him, exposed him with tears on the banks of the river, and departed groaning. They pitied themselves being forced, as they said in their self-reproach, to be the murderers of their own child, and they pitied him too, left to perish in this unnatural way. Then, as was natural in so strangely cruel a 11 situation, they began to accuse themselves of having made bad worse. "Why did we not cast him away," they said, "directly he was born? The child who has not survived to enjoy a kind nurture is not usually reckoned as a human being. But we meddlers

MOSES I. 11-15

actually nurtured him for three whole months, thus procuring more abundant affliction for ourselves and torture for him, only that when he was fully capable of feeling pleasure and pain he should perish conscious of the increased misery of his sufferings.”^a

IV. While they departed ignorant of the future, 12 overcome by grief and sorrow, the sister of the infant castaway, a girl still unmarried, moved by family affection, remained at a little distance, waiting to see what would happen, all this being brought about, in my opinion, by the providence of God watching over the child. The king of the country had but 13 one cherished daughter, who, we are told, had been married for a considerable time but had never conceived a child, though she naturally desired one, particularly of the male sex, to succeed to the magnificent inheritance of her father's kingdom, which threatened to go to strangers if his daughter gave him no grandson.^b Depressed and loud in lamenta- 14 tion she always was, but on this particular day she broke down under the weight of cares ; and, though her custom was to remain at home and never even cross the threshold, she set off with her maids to the river, where the child was exposed. Then, as she was preparing to make her ablutions in the purifying water, she saw him lying where the marshland growth was thickest, and bade him be brought to her. There- 15 upon, surveying him from head to foot, she approved of his beauty and fine condition, and seeing him weeping took pity on him, for her heart was now moved to feel for him as a mother for her own child.

that Moses was heir presumptive to the throne, are additions to Exodus also either given or implied by Josephus, who adds much other legendary matter, *Ant.* ii. 232 ff.

MOSES I. 15-20

And, recognizing that he belonged to the Hebrews, who were intimidated by the king's orders, she considered how to have him nursed, for at present it was not safe to take him to the palace. While 16 she was still thus debating, the child's sister, who guessed her difficulty, ran up from where she stood like a scout, and asked whether she would like to take for his foster-mother a Hebrew woman who had lately been with child. When the princess agreed, 17 she brought her own and the babe's mother in the guise of a stranger, who readily and gladly promised to nurse him, ostensibly for wages. Thus, by God's disposing, it was provided that the child's first nursing should come from the natural source. Since he had been taken up from the water, the princess gave him a name derived from this,^a and called him Moses, for *Möu* is the Egyptian word for water.

V. As he grew and thrived without a break, and 18 was weaned at an earlier date than they had reckoned, his mother and nurse in one brought him to her from whom she had received him, since he had ceased to need an infant's milk. He was noble and goodly to look upon ; and the princess, seeing him so advanced 19 beyond his age, conceived for him an even greater fondness than before, and took him for her son, having at an earlier time artificially enlarged the figure of her womb to make him pass as her real and not a supposititious child. God makes all that He wills easy, however difficult be the accomplishment. So now he received as his right the nurture and 20 service due to a prince. Yet he did not bear himself

^a *ἐτύμως* as regularly in Philo used with reference to the "etymology" of the word, see note on *De Conf.* 137. So again § 130 below.

MOSES I. 20-23

like the mere infant that he was, nor delight in fun and laughter and sport, though those who had the charge of him did not grudge him relaxation or shew him any strictness ;^a but with a modest and serious bearing he applied himself to hearing and seeing what was sure to profit the soul. Teachers at once 21 arrived from different parts, some unbidden from the neighbouring countries and the provinces of Egypt, others summoned from Greece under promise of high reward. But in a short time he advanced beyond their capacities ; his gifted nature forestalled their instruction, so that his seemed a case rather of recollection than of learning, and indeed he himself devised and propounded problems which they could not easily solve. For great natures carve 22 out much that is new in the way of knowledge ; and, just as bodies, robust and agile in every part, free their trainers from care, and receive little or none of their usual attention, and in the same way well-grown and naturally healthy trees, which improve of themselves, give the husbandmen no trouble, so the gifted soul takes the lead in meeting the lessons given by itself rather than the teacher and is profited thereby, and as soon as it has a grasp of some of the first principles of knowledge presses forward like the horse to the meadow,^b as the proverb goes. Arith- 23 metic, geometry, the lore of metre, rhythm and harmony, and the whole subject of music as shown by the use of instruments or in textbooks and treatises of a more special character, were imparted to him by learned Egyptians.^c These further in-mathematics, music, and dancing are said to be the subjects most stressed by Egyptians. *Cf.*, as a summary of all that is said here, Acts vii. 22 " he was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians."

MOSES I. 23-26

structed him in the philosophy conveyed in symbols, as displayed in the so-called holy inscriptions and in the regard paid to animals, to which they even pay divine honours. He had Greeks to teach him the rest of the regular school course,^a and the inhabitants of the neighbouring countries for Assyrian letters^b and the Chaldean science of the heavenly bodies. This he also acquired from Egyptians,^c who 24 give special attention to astrology. And, when he had mastered the lore of both nations, both where they agree and where they differ, he eschewed all strife and contention and sought only for truth. His mind was incapable of accepting any falsehood, as is the way with the sectarians, who defend the doctrines they have propounded, whatever they may be, without examining whether they can stand scrutiny, and thus put themselves on a par with hired advocates who have no thought nor care for justice.

VI. When he was now passing beyond the term of 25 boyhood, his good sense became more active. He did not, as some, allow the lusts of adolescence to go unbridled, though the abundant resources which palaces provide supply numberless incentives to foster their flame. But he kept a tight hold on them with the reins, as it were, of temperance and self-control, and forcibly pulled them back from their forward course. And each of the other passions, 26 which rage so furiously if left to themselves, he tamed and assuaged and reduced to mildness; and if they did but gently stir or flutter he provided for them heavier chastisement than any rebuke of words

^b See App. p. 603.

^c This seems to suggest that in Philo's time astrology, as taught on Chaldaean (*i.e.* the generally accepted) principles, differed somewhat from the form current in Egypt.

MOSES I. 26-30

could give ; and in general he watched the first directions and impulses of the soul as one would a restive horse, in fear lest they should run away with the reason which ought to rein them in, and thus cause universal chaos. For it is these impulses which cause both good and bad—good when they obey the guidance of reason, bad when they turn from their regular course into anarchy. Naturally, there- 27 fore, his associates and everyone else, struck with amazement at what they felt was a novel spectacle, considered earnestly what the mind which dwelt in his body like an image in its shrine could be, whether it was human or divine or a mixture of both, so utterly unlike was it to the majority, soaring above them and exalted to a grander height. For on his 28 belly he bestowed no more than the necessary tributes which nature has appointed, and as for the pleasures that have their seat below, save for the lawful begetting of children, they passed altogether even out of his memory. And, in his desire to live 29 to the soul alone and not to the body, he made a special practice of frugal contentment, and had an unparalleled scorn for a life of luxury. He exemplified his philosophical creed by his daily actions. His words expressed his feelings, and his actions accorded with his words, so that speech and life were in harmony, and thus through their mutual agreement were found to make melody together as on a musical instrument.

Now, most men, 30 if they feel a breath of prosperity ever so small upon them, make much ado of puffing and blowing, and boast themselves as bigger than meaner men, and miscall them offscourings and nuisances and cumberers of the earth and other suchlike names, as if

MOSES I. 30-33

they themselves had the permanence of their prosperity securely sealed in their possession, though even the morrow may find them no longer where they are. For nothing is more unstable than Fortune, 31 who moves human affairs up and down on the draughtboard of life, and in a single day pulls down the lofty and exalts the lowly on high;^a and though they see and know full well that this is always happening, they nevertheless look down on their relations and friends and set at naught the laws under which they were born and bred, and subvert the ancestral customs to which no blame can justly attach, by adopting different modes of life, and, in their contentment with the present, lose all memory of the past.

VII. But Moses, having 32 reached the very pinnacle of human prosperity, regarded as the son of the king's daughter, and in general expectation almost the successor to his grandfather's sovereignty, and indeed regularly called the young king, was zealous for the discipline and culture of his kinsmen and ancestors. The good fortune of his adopters, he held, was a spurious one, even though the circumstances gave it greater lustre; that of his natural parents, though less distinguished for the nonce, was at any rate his own and genuine; and so, 33 estimating the claims of his real and his adopted parents like an impartial judge, he requited the former with good feeling and profound affection, the latter with gratitude for their kind treatment of him. And he would have continued to do so throughout had he not found the king adopting in the country a new and highly impious course of action.

MOSES I.

Moses as
King
(1.148-162)

The appointed leader of all these was Moses, invested 148 with this office and kingship, not like some of those who thrust themselves into positions of power by means of arms and engines of war and strength of infantry, cavalry and navy, but on account of his goodness and his nobility of conduct and the universal benevolence which he never failed to shew. Further, his office was bestowed upon him by God, the lover of virtue and nobility, as the reward due to him. For, when he gave up the lordship of Egypt, which 149 he held as son to the daughter of the then reigning king, because the sight of the iniquities committed in the land and his own nobility of soul and magnanimity of spirit and inborn hatred of evil led him to renounce completely his expected inheritance from the kinsfolk of his adoption, He Who presides

MOSES I. 149-153

over and takes charge of all things thought good to requite him with the kingship of a nation more populous and mightier, a nation destined to be consecrated above all others to offer prayers for ever on behalf of the human race that it may be delivered from evil and participate in what is good. Having received 150 this office, he did not, like some, take pains to exalt his own house, and promote his sons, of whom he had two, to great power and make them his consorts for the present and his successors for the hereafter. For in all things great and small he followed a pure and guileless policy, and, like a good judge, allowed the incorruptibility of reason to subdue his natural affection for his children. For he had set before him one 151 essential aim, to benefit his subjects ; and, in all that he said or did, to further their interests and neglect no opportunity which would forward the common well-being. In solitary contrast to those who had 152 hitherto held the same authority, he did not treasure up gold and silver, did not levy tributes, did not possess houses or chattels or livestock or a staff of slaves or revenues or any other accompaniment of costly and opulent living, though he might have had all in abundance. He held that to prize material 153 wealth shews poverty of soul, and despised such wealth as blind ; but the wealth of nature which has eyes to see he highly honoured and zealously pursued, more perhaps than any other man. In dress and food and the other sides of life, he made no arrogant parade to increase his pomp and grandeur. But, while in these he practised the economy and unassuming ways of a private citizen, he was liberal in the truly royal expenditure of those treasures which the ruler may well desire to have in abundance.

MOSES I. 154-158

These treasures were the repeated exhibition of self- 154
restraint, continence, temperance, shrewdness, good
sense, knowledge, endurance of toil and hardships,
contempt of pleasures, justice, advocacy of excellence,
censure and chastisement according to law for wrong-
doers, praise and honour for well-doers, again as the
law directs. XXVIII. And so, as he abjured the 155
accumulation of lucre, and the wealth whose in-
fluence is mighty among men, God rewarded him
by giving him instead the greatest and most
perfect wealth. That is the wealth of the whole
earth and sea and rivers, and of all the other
elements and the combinations which they form.
For, since God judged him worthy to appear as a
partner of His own possessions, He gave into his
hands the whole world as a portion well fitted for His
heir. Therefore, each element obeyed him as its 156
master, changed its natural properties and submitted
to his command, and this perhaps is no wonder. For
if, as the proverb says, what belongs to friends is
common,^a and the prophet is called the friend of God,^b
it would follow that he shares also God's possessions,
so far as it is serviceable. For God possesses all 157
things, but needs nothing; while the good man,
though he possesses nothing in the proper sense, not
even himself, partakes of the precious things of God
so far as he is capable. And that is but natural, for
he is a world citizen, and therefore not on the roll of
any city of men's habitation, rightly so because he has
received no mere piece of land but the whole world
as his portion. Again, was not the joy of his partner- 158
ship with the Father and Maker of all magnified
also by the honour of being deemed worthy to
bear the same title? For he was named god and

MOSES I. 158-162

king of the whole nation, and entered, we are told, into the darkness where God was,^a that is into the unseen, invisible, incorporeal and archetypal essence of existing things. Thus he beheld what is hidden from the sight of mortal nature, and, in himself and his life displayed for all to see, he has set before us, like some well-wrought picture, a piece of work beautiful and godlike, a model for those who are willing to copy it. Happy are they who imprint, or 159 strive to imprint, that image in their souls. For it were best that the mind should carry the form of virtue in perfection, but, failing this, let it at least have the unflinching desire to possess that form.

And, indeed, we all know this, that 160 meaner men emulate men of distinction, and set their inclinations in the direction of what *they* seem to desire. Thus, when a ruler begins to shew profligacy and turn to a life of luxury, the whole body almost of his subjects gives full vent to the appetites of belly and sex beyond their actual needs, save in the case of some who, blessed by the gifts of nature, possess a soul kindly and propitious and free from viciousness; whereas, if that ruler adopt a more severe 161 and more serious rule of life, even the very licentious are converted to continence and are eager, either through fear or shame, to create the impression that, after all, their aims are like to his. In fact the worse, even in madness, will never be found to condemn the ways of the better. Perhaps, too, since he was 162 destined to be a legislator, the providence of God which afterwards appointed him without his knowledge to that work, caused him long before that day to be the reasonable and living impersonation of law.

^a Ex. xx. 21, cf. *De Mut.* 7.

Philo
On the Life of Moses

BOOK 2

I. The former treatise dealt with the birth and 1
nurture of Moses ; also with his education and career
as a ruler, in which capacity his conduct was not
merely blameless but highly praiseworthy ; also
with the works which he performed in Egypt and
during the journeys both at the Red Sea and in the
wilderness—works which no words can adequately
describe ; further, with the troubles which he suc-
cessfully surmounted, and with his partial distribu-
tion of territories to the combatants. The present
treatise is concerned with matters allied and conse-
quent to these. For it has been said, not without 2
good reason, that states can only make progress in
well-being if either kings are philosophers or philo-
sophers are kings.^a But Moses will be found to
have displayed, and more than displayed, com-
bined in his single person, not only these two faculties
—the kingly and the philosophical—but also three
others, one of which is concerned with law-giving,
the second with the high priest's office, and the last
with prophecy. On these three I have now elected 3
to write, being forced to the conviction that it is
fitting that they should be combined in the same
person. For Moses, through God's providence,
became king and lawgiver and high priest and
prophet ; and in each function he won the highest

MOSES II. 3-7

place. But why it is fitting that they should all be combined in the same person needs explanation. It is a king's duty to command what is right 4 and forbid what is wrong. But to command what should be done and to forbid what should not be done is the peculiar function of law; so that it follows at once that the king is a living law, and the law a just king.^a But a king and lawgiver ought to 5 have under his purview not only human but divine things; for, without God's directing care, the affairs of kings and subjects cannot go aright. And therefore such as he needs the chief priest-hood, so that, fortified with perfect rites and the perfect knowledge of the service of God, he may ask that he and those whom he rules may receive prevention of evil and participation in good from the gracious Being Who assents to prayers. For surely that Being will grant fulfilment to prayers, seeing that He is kindly by nature and deems worthy of His special favour those who give Him genuine service. But, since 6 to this king, lawgiver and high priest who, though possessed of so generous a heritage of fortune's gifts, is after all but a mortal creature, countless things both human and divine are wrapped in obscurity, Moses necessarily obtained prophecy also, in order that through the providence of God he might discover what by reasoning he could not grasp. For prophecy finds its way to what the mind fails to reach. Beauti- 7 ful and all-harmonious is the union of these four faculties; for, intertwined and clinging to each other, they move in rhythmic concord, mutually receiving and repaying benefits, and thus imitate the virgin Graces whom an immutable law of nature forbids to be separated. And of them it may be justly

MOSES II. 7-11

Moses as
Legislator
(8-65)

said, what is often said of the virtues, that to have one is to have all.^a

II. First, we must speak of the legislative condition of mind. I know, indeed, that he who is to obtain excellence as a legislator should possess all the virtues fully and completely. But, since also in households there are some very nearly and others only distantly connected with the family, though all are akin to each other, so too we must suppose that some virtues are more closely associated with some situations, while others have less affinity. The legislative faculty has for its brothers and close kinsfolk these four in particular : love of humanity, of justice, of goodness, and hatred of evil. Each of these has its message of encouragement for everyone who is inspired with a zeal for law-making. By love of humanity he is bidden to produce for public use his thoughts for the common weal ; by justice to honour equality and to render to every man his due ; by love of goodness to approve of things naturally excellent, and to supply them without reserve to all who are worthy of them for their unstinted use ; by hatred of evil to spurn the dishonourers of virtue, and frown upon them as the common enemies of the human race. It is no small thing if it is given to any one to acquire even one of these—a marvel surely that he should be able to grasp them all together. And to this Moses alone appears to have attained, who shews distinctly these aforesaid virtues in his ordinances. They know this well who read the sacred books, which, unless he was such as we have said, he would never have composed under God's guidance and handed on for the use of those who are worthy to use them, to be their fairest pos-

MOSES II. 11-16

session, likenesses and copies of the patterns enshrined in the soul, as also are the laws set before us in these books, which shew so clearly the said virtues.

III. That Moses himself was the best of all law-givers in all countries, better in fact than any that have ever arisen among either the Greeks or the barbarians, and that his laws are most excellent and truly come from God, since they omit nothing that is needful, is shewn most clearly by the following proof. Anyone who takes a considered view of the institutions of other peoples will find that they have been unsettled by numberless causes—wars, tyrannies or other mishaps—which the revolutions of fortune have launched upon them. Often, too, luxury, growing to excess by lavish supplies of superfluities, has upset the laws; because the mass of people, being unable to bear “good things in excess,”^a becomes surfeited and consequently violent: and violence is the enemy of law. But Moses is alone in this, that his laws, firm, unshaken, immovable, stamped, as it were, with the seals of nature herself, remain secure from the day when they were first enacted to now, and we may hope that they will remain for all future ages as though immortal, so long as the sun and moon and the whole heaven and universe exist. Thus, though the nation has undergone so many changes, both to increased prosperity and the reverse, nothing—not even the smallest part of the ordinances—has been disturbed; because all have clearly paid high honour to their venerable and godlike character. But that which no famine nor pestilence nor war nor king nor tyrant, no rebel assault of soul or body or passion or vice, nor any other evil whether of God’s sending or man’s making, could undo, must surely be precious

MOSES II. 17-21

beyond what words can describe. IV.
Yet, though it may be rightly thought a great 17
matter in itself that the laws should have been
guarded securely through all time, we have not
reached the true marvel. There is something surely
still more wonderful—even this : not only Jews but
almost every other people, particularly those which
take more account of virtue, have so far grown in
holiness as to value and honour our laws. In this
they have received a special distinction which belongs
to no other code. Here is the proof. Throughout 18
the world of Greeks and barbarians, there is practi-
cally no state which honours the institutions of any
other. Indeed, they can scarcely be said to retain
their own perpetually, as they adapt them to meet
the vicissitudes of times and circumstances. The 19
Athenians reject the customs and institutions of the
Lacedaemonians, and the Lacedaemonians those of
the Athenians ; nor, in the world of the barbarians,
do the Egyptians maintain the laws of the Scythians
nor the Scythians those of the Egyptians—nor, to put
it generally, Europeans those of Asiatics nor Asiatics
those of Europeans. We may fairly say that man-
kind from east to west, every country and nation and
state, shew aversion to foreign institutions, and think
that they will enhance the respect for their own by
shewing disrespect for those of other countries. It 20
is not so with ours. They attract and win the atten-
tion of all, of barbarians, of Greeks, of dwellers on the
mainland and islands, of nations of the east and the
west, of Europe and Asia, of the whole inhabited
world from end to end. For, who has not 21
shewn his high respect for that sacred seventh day,
by giving rest and relaxation from labour to himself

MOSES II. 21-26

and his neighbours, freemen and slaves alike, and beyond these to his beasts? For the holiday extends also to every herd, and to all creatures made to minister to man, who serve like slaves their natural master. It extends also to every kind of trees and plants; for it is not permitted to cut any shoot or branch, or even a leaf, or to pluck any fruit whatsoever. All such are set at liberty on that day, and live as it were in freedom, under the general edict that proclaims that none should touch them.

Again, who does not every year shew awe and reverence for the fast, as it is called,^a which is kept more strictly and solemnly than the "holy month"^b of the Greeks? For in this last the untempered wine flows freely, and the board is spread sumptuously, and all manner of food and drink are lavishly provided, whereby the insatiable pleasures of the belly are enhanced, and further cause the outburst of the lusts that lie below it. But in our fast men may not put food and drink to their lips, in order that with pure hearts, untroubled and untrammelled by any bodily passion, such as is the common outcome of repletion, they may keep the holy-day, propitiating the Father of All with fitting prayers, in which they are wont to ask that their old sins may be forgiven and new blessings gained and enjoyed.

(Omitted 2.25-44 on the translation of the bible into Greek and 2.45-65 on more details regarding the legislation Moses wrote)

MOSES II. 63-66

Moses as
High Priest
(66-186)

XIII. We have now fully treated of two sides of 66 the life of Moses, the royal and the legislative. We must proceed to give account of the third, which concerns his priesthood. The chief and most essential quality required by a priest is piety, and

MOSES II. 66-70

this he practised in a very high degree, and at the same time made use of his great natural gifts. In these, philosophy found a good soil, which she improved still further by the admirable truths which she brought before his eyes, nor did she cease until the fruits of virtue shewn in word and deed were brought to perfection. Thus he came to love God 67 and be loved by Him as have been few others. A heaven-sent rapture inspired him, so markedly did he honour the Ruler of the All and was honoured in return by Him. An honour well-becoming the wise is to serve the Being Who truly is, and the service of God is ever the business of the priesthood. This privilege, a blessing which nothing in the world can surpass, was given to him as his due, and oracles instructed him in all that pertains to rites of worship and the sacred tasks of his ministry. XIV. But first 68 he had to be clean, as in soul so also in body, to have no dealings with any passion, purifying himself from all the calls of mortal nature, food and drink and intercourse with women. This last he had disdained 69 for many a day, almost from the time when, possessed by the spirit, he entered on his work as prophet, since he held it fitting to hold himself always in readiness to receive the oracular messages. As for eating and drinking, he had no thought of them for forty successive days, doubtless because he had the better food of contemplation, through whose inspiration, sent from heaven above, he grew in grace, first of mind, then of body also through the soul, and in both so advanced in strength and well-being that those who saw him afterwards could not believe their eyes. For we read that by God's command 70 he ascended an inaccessible and pathless mountain,

MOSES II. 70-74

the highest and most sacred in the region, and remained for the period named, taking nothing that is needed to satisfy the requirements of bare sustenance. Then, after the said forty days had passed, he descended with a countenance far more beautiful than when he ascended, so that those who saw him were filled with awe and amazement; nor even could their eyes continue to stand the dazzling brightness that flashed from him like the rays of the sun.^a

XV. While he was still staying on the mount, he was 71
 being instructed in all the mysteries of his priestly
 duties: and first in those which stood first in order,
 namely the building and furnishing of the sanctuary.
 Now, if they had already occupied the land into which 72
 they were removing, they would necessarily have had
 to erect a magnificent temple on the most open and
 conspicuous site,^b with costly stones for its material,
 and build great walls around it, with plenty of houses
 for the attendants, and call the place the holy city.
 But, as they were still wandering in the desert and 73
 had as yet no settled habitation, it suited them to have
 a portable sanctuary, so that during their journeys and
 encampment they might bring their sacrifices to it
 and perform all their other religious duties, not lack-
 ing anything which dwellers in cities should have.
 It was determined, therefore, to fashion a tabernacle, 74
 a work of the highest sanctity, the construction of
 which was set forth to Moses on the mount by divine
 pronouncements. He saw with the soul's eye the
 immaterial forms of the material objects about to be

^b Mangey "augustissima sede," the German translation "geweihter Stätte," but the sense given above seems more probable. Cf. §§ 34 and 214, also *In Flaccum* 122 ἐπὶ τοὺς πλησίον αἰγιαλοὺς ἀφικνοῦνται κὰν τῷ καθαρωτάτῳ σπάντες ἀνεβήσαν.

MOSES II. 74-79

made, and these forms had to be reproduced in copies perceived by the senses, taken from the original draught, so to speak, and from patterns conceived in the mind. For it was fitting that the construction 75 of the sanctuary should be committed to him who was truly high priest, in order that his performance of the rites belonging to his sacred office might be in more than full accordance and harmony with the fabric. XVI. So the shape of the model was stamped 76 upon the mind of the prophet, a secretly painted or moulded prototype, produced by immaterial and invisible forms ; and then the resulting work was built in accordance with that shape by the artist impressing the stampings upon the material substances required in each case. ^aThe actual construction was as follows. 77 Forty-eight pillars ^b of the most durable cedar wood, hewn out of the finest trunks, were encased in a deep layer of gold, and each of these had two silver bases ^c set to support it and a golden capital fixed on the top. For the length of the building, the craftsman put 78 forty pillars, half of them—that is a row of twenty—on each side, with no interval left between them, but each joined and fitted on to the next, so as to present the appearance of a single wall. For the breadth he set right inside the remaining eight, six in the central space and two in the corners on either side of the centre, one on the right and one on the left ; also four others at the entrance, like the rest in everything else, except that they had one base instead of the two of the pillars opposite, and after these, at the very outside, five, differing only in their bases, which were of brass. Thus the whole number of pillars visible in 79 the tabernacle, leaving out the two in the corners,

^c Or "sockets."

MOSES II. 79-83

hidden from view, amounted to fifty-five, that is to the sum of successive numbers from one to the supremely perfect ten.^a But if you choose to exclude 80 the five in the propylaeum adjoining the open-air space which he has called the court, there will be left the most sacred number, fifty, the square of the sides of the right-angled triangle, the original source from which the universe springs.^b This fifty is obtained by adding together the inside pillars, namely the forty made up by the twenties on each side, then the six in the middle, leaving out the two hidden away in the corners, and then the four opposite which support the veil. I will now give my reason for first 81 counting the five with the fifty and then separately. Five is the number of the senses, and sense in mankind inclines on one side to things external, while on the other its trend is towards mind, whose handmaiden it is by the laws of nature. And therefore he assigned the position on the border to the five pillars, for what lies inside them verges on the inmost sanctuary of the tabernacle, which symbolically represents the realm of mind, while what lies outside them verges on the open-air space and court which represent the realm of sense. And therefore the five differ from the rest 82 also in their bases which are of brass. Since the mind is head and ruler of the sense-faculty in us, and the world which sense apprehends is the extremity and, as it were, the base of mind, he symbolized the mind by the gold and the sense-objects by the brass. The 83 dimensions of the pillars were as follows : the height,

is said to be the *σχημάτων καὶ ποιότητων ἀρχή*. The virtues of fifty are described more fully in *De Spec. Leg.* ii. 176, when it is said to be *στοιχειωδέστατον καὶ πρεσβύτατον τῶν ἐν οὐσίαις περιλαμβανομένων*.

MOSES II. 83-87

ten cubits, the breadth, one-and-a-half, so that the tabernacle might appear equal in all its parts.

XVII. ^a He also surrounded it with the most beautiful pieces of woven work of various colours, using without stint materials of dark red and purple and scarlet and bright white, for the weaving. For he made ten curtains, as he calls them in the sacred writings, of the four kinds of material just mentioned, twenty-eight cubits in length and extended to four cubits in breadth. Thus we find in them ten, the supremely perfect number, four which contains the essence of ten, twenty-eight, a perfect number, equal to the sum of its factors,^b and forty, the most prolific of life, which gives the time in which, as we are told, the man is fully formed in the laboratory of nature.^c The twenty-eight cubits of the curtains were distributed as follows: ten along the roof, that being the breadth of the tabernacle, the rest extended along the sides, nine on each to cover the pillars, but leaving one cubit free from the floor, that this work so magnificent and worthily held sacred should not trail in the dust. Of the forty cubits which sum up the breadth of the ten curtains, thirty are taken up by the length of the tabernacle itself, that being its extent, nine by the backyard, and the remaining one by the space at the propylaeum, thus forming a bond to make the enclosing complete.^d On the propylaeum was set the veil. But in a sense the curtains also are veils, not only because they cover the roof and the walls, but also because they are woven with the same kinds of

^a For §§ 84-88 see Ex. xxvi. 1-14.

^b *i.e.* $1+2+4+7+14=28$. See note on *De Op.* 101.

^c *i.e.* forty weeks, or about ten months is supposed to be the period of gestation. *Cf. e.g. Virg. Ecl.* 4. 61.

^d Lit. "to be a bond of all that was put round."

MOSES II. 87-90

material, dark red and purple and scarlet and bright white. And what he calls the "covering"^a was also made with the same materials as the veil, that being placed inside along the four pillars to hide the inmost sanctuary, the "covering" outside along the five pillars, so that no unconsecrated person should get even a distant view of the holy precincts. XVIII. But, in choosing the materials for the woven work, 88 he selected as the best out of a vast number possible four, as equal in number to the elements—earth, water, air, fire—out of which the world was made, and with a definite relation to those elements; the byssus, or bright white, coming from the earth, purple from the water, while dark red is like the air, which is naturally black, and scarlet like fire, since both are bright red. For it was necessary that in framing a temple of man's making, dedicated to the Father and Ruler of All, he should take substances like those with which that Ruler made the All.

^b The tabernacle, then, was constructed to resemble 89 a sacred temple in the way described. Its precincts contained an area of a hundred cubits long by fifty broad, with pillars at equal intervals of five cubits from each other, so that the total number was sixty, with forty arranged on the long sides and twenty on the broad sides, in both cases half to each side. The 90 material of the columns was of cedar wood overlaid by silver. The bases in all cases were of brass, and the height was five cubits. For the master craftsman thought it proper to cut down the height of what he calls the court by a complete half, in order that the

screen at the gate of the court represented in Philo by the *ὕψωμα* of § 93.

^b For §§ 89-93 see Ex. xxvii. 9-18.

MOSES II. 90-94

tabernacle should be conspicuous by rising up to double the height. Five linen sheets like sails were attached to the pillars, both on the length and the breadth, so that no impure person could enter the place. XIX. The plan was as follows. The tab- 91
ernacle itself was set in the midst, thirty cubits long and ten broad, including the thickness of the pillars. From three aspects, namely the two long sides and the space at the back, it was the same distance from the boundary of the court, reckoned at twenty cubits. But at the propylaeum there was naturally a greater interval of fifty cubits, on account of the number of people entering. This increase was required to make up the hundred cubits of the court ; the twenty of the back-space and the thirty taken up by the tab- 92
ernacle being added to the fifty at the entrances. For the propylaeum^a of the tabernacle was set as the border-line between the two fifties, namely the fifty on the eastern half, where the entrance is, and the fifty on the western half, consisting of the tabernacle and the area behind it. At the beginning of the 93
entrance to the court was built another very fine and large propylaeum with four pillars, on which was stretched a piece of woven work of various colours, made in the same way as those within the tabernacle and of like materials.

With these were also made the sacred vessels and 94
furniture, the ark, candlestick, table and altars for incense and burnt offerings. The altar for burnt offerings was placed in the open air, opposite the entrance of the tabernacle,^b at a distance sufficient to

applied to what is clearly a single "propylaeum," indicating that the line in which the portico stands is included.

^b See Ex. xl. 6, 29.

MOSES II. 94-99

give the ministrants room for the daily performance
 of the sacrifices. XX. ^a The ark was placed on the 95
 forbidden ground of the inner sanctuary, within the
 veils. It was coated with costly gilding within and
 without, and was covered by a sort of lid, which is
 called in the sacred books the mercy-seat.^b The 96
 length and breadth of this are stated, but no depth,
 and thus it closely resembles the plane surface of
 geometry. It appears to be a symbol in a theo-
 logical sense ^c of the gracious power of God; in the
 human sense, of a mind which is gracious to itself and
 feels the duty of repressing and destroying with the
 aid of knowledge the conceit which in its love of vanity
 uplifts it in unreasoning exaltation and puffs it with
 pride. The ark itself is the coffer of the laws, for in 97
 it are deposited the oracles which have been delivered.
 But the cover, which is called the mercy-seat, serves
 to support the two winged creatures which in the
 Hebrew are called cherubim, but, as we should term
 them, recognition and full knowledge.^d Some hold 98
 that, since they are set facing each other, they are
 symbols of the two hemispheres, one above the earth
 and one under it, for the whole heaven has wings. I 99
 should myself say that they are allegorical representa-
 tions of the two most august and highest potencies of
 Him that is, the creative and the kingly. His creative
 potency is called God, because through it He placed ^e
 Clem. as *ἐπίγνωσις πολλή*, by Jerome as "multitudo scientiae,"
 to which add Augustine's "plenitudo scientiae." All these
 are presumably dependent on Philo and no explanation of
 how he got this belief seems to be forthcoming.

The symbolical interpretations mentioned below have been
 given in *De Cher.* 21 ff, together with a third, that they
 represent the spheres of the planets and fixed stars. See
 notes *ad loc.*

^e *θεός* again associated with *τιθῆμι*, cf. *De Abr.* 122.

MOSES II. 99-104

and made and ordered this universe, and the kingly is called Lord, being that with which He governs what has come into being and rules it steadfastly with justice. For, as He alone really is, He is undoubtedly 100 also the Maker, since He brought into being what was not, and He is in the nature of things King, since none could more justly govern what has been made than the Maker.

XXI. In the space between the four and the five 101 pillars, which may properly be called the vestibule of the temple, and is shut off by two woven screens, the inner and the outer, called respectively the veil and the covering, he set the remaining three of the equipments mentioned above. ^aThe altar of incense he placed in the middle, a symbol of the thankfulness for earth and water which should be rendered for the benefits derived from both these, since the mid-position in the universe has been assigned to them. ^bThe candlestick he placed at the south, figuring 102 thereby the movements of the luminaries above; for the sun and the moon and the others run their courses in the south far away from the north. And therefore six branches, three on each side, issue from the central candlestick, bringing up the number to seven, and on all these are set seven lamps and candle- 103 bearers, symbols of what the men of science call planets. For the sun, like the candlestick, has the fourth place in the middle of the six and gives light to the three above and the three below it, so tuning to harmony an instrument of music truly divine. XXII. ^cThe table is set at the north and has bread 104

^a See Ex. xxx. 1 f.

^b See Ex. xxv. 31 ff. Cf. *Quis Rerum*, 221-225.

^c See Ex. xxv. 23 ff.

MOSES II. 104-108

and salt ^a on it, as the north winds are those which most provide us with food, and food comes from heaven and earth, the one sending rain, the other bringing the seeds to their fullness when watered by the showers.^b In a line with the table are set ¹⁰⁵ the symbols of heaven and earth, as our account has shewn, heaven being signified by the candlestick, earth and its parts, from which rise the vapours, by what is appropriately called the vapour-keeper ^c or altar of incense. The great altar in the open court ¹⁰⁶ he usually calls by a name which means sacrifice-keeper, and when he thus speaks of the altar which destroys sacrifices as their keeper and guardian he alludes not to the parts and limbs of the victims, whose nature is to be consumed by fire, but to the intention of the offerer. For, if the worshipper is ¹⁰⁷ without kindly feeling or justice, the sacrifices are no sacrifices, the consecrated oblation is desecrated, the prayers are words of ill omen with utter destruction waiting upon them. For, when to outward appearance they are offered, it is not a remission but a reminder of past sins which they effect. But, if ¹⁰⁸ he is pure of heart and just, the sacrifice stands firm, though the flesh is consumed, or rather, even if no victim at all is brought to the altar. For the true oblation, what else can it be but the devotion of a soul which is dear to God? The thank-offering of such a soul receives immortality, and is inscribed in the records of God, sharing the eternal life of the sun and moon and the whole universe.

^a Philo does not expressly derive the *-τηριον* of *θυμιατήριον* from *τηρέιν*. But as *ἐτύμως* implies etymological derivation, and in the next words he gives this derivation for *θυσιαστήριον*, it seems probable that he means it to apply to both words.

MOSES II. 109-114

XXIII. ^a Next after these, the master prepared for 109
the future high priest a vesture, the fabric of which
had a texture of great and marvellous beauty. It
consisted of two garments, one of which he calls
the robe and the other the ephod.^b The robe was 110
of a comparatively uniform make, for it was all of
the dark red colour, except at the lowest extremities,
where it was variegated with golden pomegranates
and bells and intertwined flowers. The ephod, a 111
work of special magnificence and artistry, was
wrought with perfect knowledge in the kinds of
materials mentioned above, namely dark red and
purple and bright white and scarlet, with gold thread
intertwined. For gold leaf cut into fine threads was
woven with all the yarn. On the shoulder-tops 112
were fitted two highly precious stones of the costly
emerald kind, and on them were graven the names of
the patriarchs, six for each shoulder, twelve in all.
On the breast were twelve other costly stones of
different colours, like seals, in four rows of three each.
These were fitted into what he calls the "place of
reason."^c This was made four-square and doubled, 113
forming a ground to enshrine the two virtues, clear
showing and truth.^d The whole was attached by
golden chainlets to the ephod, fastened strongly to
it so as not to come loose. A piece of gold plate, 114
too, was wrought into the form of a crown with four

^c Or "oracle" (LXX λογέιον τῶν κρίσεων, Ex. xxviii. 15). But Philo clearly uses the word in the sense given in the translation (see §§ 125 and 128), and the same meaning is given to it *De Spec. Leg.* i. 87. The E.V. has "breastplate of judgement" though the word translated "breastplate" is said to be rather = "pouch."

^d The LXX translation of the mysterious words rendered in E.V. as Urim and Thummim. *Cf. Leg. All.* iii. 142.

MOSES II. 114-118

incisions, showing a name which only those whose ears and tongues are purified may hear or speak in the holy place, and no other person, nor in any other place at all. That name has four letters,^a so says 115 that master learned in divine verities, who, it may be, gives them as symbols of the first numbers, one, two, three and four; since the geometrical categories under which all things fall, point, line, superficies, solid, are all embraced in four. So, too, with the best harmonies in music, the fourth, fifth, octave and double octave intervals, where the ratios are respectively four to three, three to two, two to one and four to one. Four, too, has countless other virtues, most of which I have set forth in detail in my treatise on numbers.^b Under the crown, to prevent 116 the plate touching the head, was a headband. A turban also was provided, for the turban is regularly worn by eastern monarchs instead of a diadem.

XXIV. ^c Such was the vesture of the high priest. 117 But I must not leave untold its meaning and that of its parts. We have in it as a whole and in its parts a typical representation of the world and its particular parts. Let us begin with the full-length robe. This 118 gown is all of violet, and is thus an image of the air; for the air is naturally black, and so to speak a robe reaching to the feet, since it stretches down from the region below the moon to the ends of the earth, and spreads out everywhere. And, therefore, the

The statement given here is also made by Josephus *Bell. Jud.* v. 235 (*cf. Ant.* iii. 178). See too App. pp. 608-609.

^b Presumably the same as the "special treatise" mentioned in *De Op.* 52, after enumerating many of the properties of the number. He has also dealt with them in *De Plant.* 117 ff.

^c For some notes on and illustration of the symbolism of §§ 117-135 see App. p. 609.

MOSES II. 118-122

gown, too, spreads out from the breast to the feet round the whole body. At the ankles there stand 119 out from it pomegranates and flower trimming and bells. The earth is represented by the flowers, for all that flowers and grows comes from the earth; the water by the pomegranates or flowing fruit, so aptly called from their flowing juice; while the bells represent the harmonious alliance of these two, since life cannot be produced by earth without water or by water without the substance of earth, but only by the union and combination of both. Their 120 position testifies most clearly to this explanation. For, just as the pomegranates, the flower trimming and the bells are at the extremities of the long robe, so too what these symbolize, namely earth and water, occupy the lowest place in the universe, and in unison with the harmony of the All display their several powers at fixed revolutions of time and at their proper seasons. This proof that the three 121 elements, earth, water and air, from which come and in which live all mortal and perishable forms of life, are symbolized by the long robe with the appendages at the ankles, is supported^a by observing that as the gown is one, the three said elements are of a single kind, since all below the moon is alike in its liability to change and alteration, and that, as the pomegranates and flower patterns are fastened to the gown, so too in a sense earth and water are suspended on the air, which acts as their support.

As for the ephod, consideration following what 122 probability suggests will represent it as a symbol of heaven. For first the two circular emerald stones

symbolism described above is suitable by the other resemblances pointed out in the last part of the sentence.

on the shoulder-pieces indicate, as some think, those heavenly bodies which rule the day and night, namely the sun and moon, or, as may be said with a nearer approach to truth, the two hemispheres of the sky. For, just as the stones are equal to each other, so is the hemisphere above to that below the earth, and neither is so constituted as to increase and diminish as does the moon. A similar testimony is given by 123 their colour, for the appearance of the whole heaven as presented to our sight is like the emerald. Six names, too, had to be engraved on each of the stones, since each of the hemispheres also divides the zodiac into two, and appropriates six of the signs. Secondly, the stones at the breast, which are dis- 124 similar in colour, and are distributed into four rows of threes, what else should they signify but the zodiac circle? For that circle, when divided into four parts, constitutes by three signs in each case the seasons of the year—spring, summer, autumn, winter—those four, the transition in each of which is determined by three signs and made known to us by the revolutions of the sun, according to a mathematical law, unshaken, immutable and truly divine. Therefore also they were fitted into what is rightly 125 called the place of reason, for a rational principle, ordered and firmly established, creates the transitions and seasons of the year. And the strangest thing is that it is this seasonal change which demonstrates their age-long permanence. It is an excellent 126 and indeed a splendid point that the twelve stones are of different colours and none of them like to any other. For each of the signs of the zodiac also produces its own particular colouring in the air and

MOSES II. 126-129

earth and water and their phases, and also in the different kinds of animals and plants. XXV.

There is a point, too, in the reason-seat being doubled, 127 for the rational principle is twofold as well in the universe as in human nature. In the universe we find it in one form dealing with the incorporeal and archetypal ideas from which the intelligible world was framed, and in another with the visible objects which are the copies and likenesses of those ideas and out of which this sensible world was produced. With man, in one form it resides within, in the other it passes out from him in utterance. The former is like a spring, and is the source from which the latter, the spoken, flows. The inward is located in the dominant mind, the outward in the tongue and mouth and the rest of the vocal organism. The 128 master did well also in assigning a four-square shape to the reason-seat, thereby shewing in a figure that the rational principle, both in nature and in man, must everywhere stand firm and never be shaken in any respect at all; and, therefore, he allotted to it the two above-named virtues, clear shewing and truth. For the rational principle in nature is true, and sets forth all things clearly, and, in the wise man, being a copy of the other, has as its bounden duty to honour truth with absolute freedom from falsehood, and not keep dark through jealousy anything the disclosure of which will benefit those who hear its lesson. At the same time, as in each of us, 129 reason has two forms, the outward of utterance and the inward of thought, he gave them each one of the two virtues as its special property; to utterance clear shewing, to the thinking mind truth. For it is the duty of the thinking faculty to admit no false-

MOSES II. 129-133

hood, and of the language faculty to give free play to all that helps to shew facts clearly with the utmost exactness. Yet reason, as seen in either of these 130 faculties, is of no value, however admirable and excellent are its lofty pronouncements, unless followed by deeds in accordance with it. And, therefore, since in his judgement speech and thought should never be separated from actions, he fastened the reason-seat to the ephod or shoulder-piece so that it should not come loose. For he regards the shoulder as the symbol of deeds and activity.

XXVI. Such are the ideas which he suggests under 131 the figure of the sacred vesture ; but, in setting a turban on the priest's head, instead of a diadem, he expresses his judgement that he who is consecrated to God is superior when he acts as a priest to all others, not only the ordinary laymen, but even kings. Above the turban is the golden plate on which the 132 graven shapes of four letters, indicating, as we are told, the name of the Self-Existent, are impressed, meaning that it is impossible for anything that is to subsist without invocation of Him ; for it is His goodness and gracious power which join and compact all things.

Thus is the high priest 133 arrayed when he sets forth to his holy duties, in order that when he enters to offer the ancestral prayers and sacrifices there may enter with him the whole universe, as signified in the types of it which he brings upon his person, the long robe a copy of the air, the pomegranate of water, the flower trimming of earth, the scarlet of fire, the ephod of heaven, the circular emeralds on the shoulder-tops with the six engravings in each of the two hemispheres which they resemble in form, the twelve stones on the

MOSES II. 133-138

breast in four rows of threes of the zodiac, the reason-
seat of that Reason^a which holds together and ad-
ministers all things. For he who has been con- 134
secrated to the Father of the world must needs have
that Father's Son^b with all His fullness of excellence
to plead his cause, that sins may be remembered no
more and good gifts showered in rich abundance.
Perhaps, too, he is preparing the servant of God to 135
learn the lesson, that, if it be beyond him to be
worthy of the world's Maker, he should try to be
throughout worthy of the world. For, as he wears a
vesture which represents the world, his first duty is
to carry the pattern enshrined in his heart, and so
be in a sense transformed from a man into the nature
of the world; and, if one may dare to say so—and
in speaking of truth one may well dare to state the
truth—be himself a little world, a microcosm.

XXVII. ^c Outside the propylaeum, at the entrance, 136
there was a brazen laver, for the making of which the
master did not take unworked material, as is usually
done, but chattels already elaborately wrought for
another purpose. These the women brought, filled
with fervent zeal, rivalling the men in piety, resolved
to win the prize of high excellence, and eager to use
every power that they had that they might not be
outstripped by them in holiness. For, with spont- 137
aneous ardour at no other bidding than their own,
they gave the mirrors which they used in adorning
their comely persons, a truly fitting firstfruit offering
of their modesty and chastity in marriage, and in fact
of their beauty of soul. These the master thought 138

^b The Son here is of course the World.

^c For §§ 136-140 see Ex. xxxviii. 26, 27 (E.V. 8). The incident has been treated briefly in the same way *De Mig.* 98.

MOSES II. 138-141

good to take, and, after melting them down, construct therewith the laver and nothing else, to serve for lustration to priests who should enter the temple to perform the appointed rites, particularly for washing the hands and feet ; a symbol, this, of a blameless life, of years of cleanliness employed in laudable actions, and in straight travelling, not on the rough road or more properly pathless waste of vice, but on the smooth high road through virtue's land. Let him, 139 he means, who shall be purified with water, bethink him that the mirrors were the material of this vessel, to the end that he himself may behold his own mind as in a mirror ; and, if some ugly spot appear of unreasoning passion, either of pleasure, uplifting and raising him to heights which nature forbids, or of its converse pain, making him shrink and pulling him down, or of fear, diverting and distorting the straight course to which his face was set, or of desire, pulling and dragging him perforce to what he has not got, then he may salve and heal the sore and hope to gain the beauty which is genuine and unalloyed. For beauty of body 140 lies in well-proportioned parts, in a fine complexion and good condition of flesh, and short is the season of its bloom. But beauty of mind lies in harmony of creed, in concert of virtues. The passing of time cannot wither it, and, as its years lengthen, it ever renews its youth, adorned with the lustrous hue of truth and of consistency of deeds with words and words with deeds, and further of thoughts and intentions with both.

(Omitted 2.141-186, providing further details regarding the priesthood as instituted and managed by Moses)

MOSES II. 185-187

Moses as
Prophet
(187-287)

XXXV. We said above that there are four ad-187
juncts to the truly perfect ruler. He must have
kingship, the faculty of legislation, priesthood and
prophecy, so that in his capacity of legislator he may
command what should be done and forbid what
should not be done, as priest dispose not only things
human but things divine, as prophet declare by in-
spiration what cannot be apprehended by reason.
I have discussed the first three, and shewn that
Moses was the best of kings, of lawgivers and of

tribe." Is this to be taken literally, or does it stand for
Israel, the nation of priests or even for the truly priestly
soul? If we could insert *ἡ εὐχὴ ὑπὲρ* after *ὑστέρῃ* the thought
would become clear. Philo often insists (*e.g. De Spec.
Leg. i. 97*), that the prayers of the priests are for the whole
human race.

MOSES II. 187-191

high priests, and will now go on to shew in conclusion that he was a prophet of the highest quality. Now I am fully aware that all things written in the 188 sacred books are oracles delivered through Moses ; but I will confine myself to those which are more especially his, with the following preliminary remarks. Of the divine utterances, some are spoken by God in His own Person with His prophet for interpreter, in some the revelation comes through question and answer, and others are spoken by Moses in his own person, when possessed by God and carried away out of himself. The first kind are 189 absolutely and entirely signs of the divine excellences, graciousness and beneficence, by which He incites all men to noble conduct, and particularly the nation of His worshippers, for whom He opens up the road which leads to happiness. In the second 190 kind we find combination and partnership : the prophet asks questions of God about matters on which he has been seeking knowledge, and God replies and instructs him. The third kind are assigned to the lawgiver himself : God has given to him of His own power of foreknowledge and by this he will reveal future events. Now, the first kind must be 191 left out of the discussion. They are too great to be lauded by human lips ; scarcely indeed could heaven and the world and the whole existing universe worthily sing their praises. Besides, they are delivered through an interpreter, and interpretation and prophecy are not the same thing. The second kind I will at once proceed to describe, interweaving with it the third kind, in which the speaker appears under that divine possession in virtue of which he is chiefly and in the strict sense considered a prophet.

(Omitted 2.192-245 on the first type of prophecy – Question and answer)

XLV. Having completed this necessary account 246 of the oracles of mixed character, I will proceed next to describe those delivered by the prophet himself under divine inspiration, for this was included in my promise. The examples of his possession by God's spirit begin with one which was also the beginning of the prosperity of the nation, when its many myriads set out as colonists from Egypt to the cities of Syria. ^a Men and women alike, they had traversed 247 a long and pathless wilderness, and arrived at the Red Sea, as it is called. They were then naturally in great difficulties, as they could not cross the sea for want of boats, and did not think it safe to retrace their steps. When they were in this state of mind, 248 a greater misfortune burst upon them. The king of Egypt, accompanied by a very formidable body of infantry and cavalry, came in hot pursuit, eager to overtake them and so chastise them for leaving the country. He had, indeed, permitted them to do so, induced by unmistakable warnings from God. But the disposition of the wicked is, as may be well seen, unstable, suspended as it were on a balance and swayed up and down by the slightest cause in opposite directions. Thus, caught between the enemy and 249 the sea, they despaired each of his own safety. Some thought that the most miserable death would be a welcome blessing, while others, believing it to be better to perish by the elements of nature than to become a laughing-stock to their enemies, purposed

• For §§ 247-257 see Ex. xiv.

MOSES II. 249-253

to throw themselves into the sea, and, loaded with some heavy substances, sat waiting by the shore, so that when they saw the foe near at hand they might leap down and easily sink into the depths. But, 250 while in these helpless straits, they were at death's door with consternation (XLVI.) the prophet, seeing the whole nation entangled in the meshes of panic, like a draught of fishes, was taken out of himself by divine possession and uttered these inspired words : "Alarm you needs must feel. Terror is near at 251 hand : the danger is great. In front is a vast expanse of sea ; no haven for a refuge, no boats at hand : behind, the menace of the enemy's troops, which march along in unresting pursuit. Whither can one turn or swim for safety ? Everything has attacked us suddenly from every side—earth, sea, man, the elements of nature. Yet be of good 252 courage, faint not. Stand with unshaken minds, look for the invincible help which God will send. Self-sent it will be with you anon, invisible it will fight before you. Ere now you have often experienced its unseen defence. I see it preparing for the contest and casting a noose round the necks of the enemy. It drags them down through the sea. They sink like lead into the depths.^a You see them still alive : I have a vision of them dead, and to-day you too shall see their corpses."

So he spake with words of promise exceeding any- 253 thing they could hope for. But they began to find by the experience of facts the truth of the heavenly message. For what he prophesied came to pass

^a Taken from the song, Ex. xv. 10 "they sank like lead in the mighty water" and 5, "they sank in the depth like a stone.

MOSES II. 253-256

through the might of God, though harder to credit than any fable. Let us picture the scene. The sea breaks in two, and each section retires. The parts around the break, through the whole depth of their waters, congeal to serve as walls of vast strength: a path is drawn straight, a road of miracle between the frozen walls on either side : the nation makes 254 its passage, marching safely through the sea, as on a dry path or a stone-paved causeway ; for the sand is crisped, and its scattered particles grow together into a unity : the enemy advance in unresting pursuit, hastening to their own destruction : the cloud goes behind the travellers' rear to guide them on their way, and within is the vision of the Godhead, flashing rays of fire. Then the waters which had been stayed from their course and parted for a while return to their place : the dried-up cleft between the walls suddenly becomes a sea again : the enemy 255 meet their doom, sent to their last sleep by the fall of the frozen walls, and overwhelmed by the tides, as they rush down upon their path as into a ravine ! that doom is evidenced by the corpses which are floated to the top and strew the surface of the sea : last comes a mighty rushing wave, which flings the corpses in heaps upon the opposite shore, a sight inevitably to be seen by the saved, thus permitted not only to escape their dangers, but also to behold their enemies fallen under a chastisement which no words can express, through the power of God and not of man. After this, what should Moses do but 256 honour the Benefactor with hymns of thanksgiving ? He divides the nation into two choirs, one of men, the other of women, and himself leads the men while

MOSES II. 256-259

he appoints his sister to lead the women, that the two in concert might sing hymns to the Father and Creator in tuneful response, with a blending both of temperaments ^a and melody—temperaments eager to render to each other like for like; melody produced by the concord of treble and bass; for the voices of men are bass and the women's treble, and when they are blended in due proportion the resulting melody is of the fullest and sweetest harmony. All these myriads were persuaded by Moses to sing ²⁵⁷ with hearts in accord the same song, telling of those mighty and marvellous works which I have recorded just above. And the prophet, rejoicing at this, seeing the people also overjoyed, and himself no longer able to contain his delight, led off the song, and his hearers massed in two choirs sang with him the story of these same deeds.^b

XLVII. ^c It was thus that Moses began and opened ²⁵⁸ his work as a prophet possessed by God's spirit. His next utterance of this sort was concerned with that primary and most necessary matter, food; and this food was not produced by the earth, which was barren and unfruitful, but heaven rained down before day-break, not once only but every day for forty years, a celestial fruit in the form of dew, like millet grain. When Moses saw it, he bade them gather it, and ²⁵⁹ said under inspiration: "We must trust God as we have experienced His kindnesses in deeds greater than we could have hoped for. Do not treasure up or store the food He sends. Let none leave any moment they are entirely united. The phrase is often used by Philo as a synonym for *ἀμόνοια* and the like.

^b *i.e.* "the above-mentioned." Others take it to mean the words which Moses said to them.

^c For §§ 258-269 see Ex. xvi. 4-30.

MOSES II. 260-263

part of it over till the morrow." On hearing this, 260 some whose piety had little ballast, thinking perhaps that the statement was no divine oracle but just the exhortation of the ruler, left it to the next day ; but it first rotted and filled the whole extent of the camp with its stench, and then turned into worms which are bred from corruption. Moses, seeing this, was 261 naturally and indeed inevitably indignant at their disobedience—to think that after witnessing wonders so many and so great, impossibilities no doubt as judged by what to outward appearance is credible and reasonable but easily accomplished by the dispensations of God's providence, they not only doubted, but in their utter incapacity for learning actually disbelieved. But the Father confirmed the 262 utterance of the prophet with two most convincing proofs. One proof He had given at the time, when what was left over corrupted and stank and then was changed into worms, the vilest of living creatures. The other He gave later, for the unneeded surplus over what was gathered by the multitude was dissolved by the sun's rays, melted away and disappeared.

XLVIII. Not long after, Moses delivered a second 263 inspired pronouncement concerning the sacred seventh day. That day has held the place of honour in nature, not merely from the time when the world was framed, but even before the heaven and all that sense perceives came into being. Yet men knew it not, perhaps because by reason of the constant and repeated destructions by water and fire the later generations did not receive from the former the memory of the order and sequence of events in the series of years.^a This hidden truth Moses, under

MOSES II. 263-267

inspiration, revealed in an announcement to which a manifest sign gave testimony. This sign was as follows : the shower of food from the air was less on the first days, but on a later day was doubled ; and on those first days anything left melted and was dissolved till, after turning completely into moisture, it disappeared ; but on that later day it admitted no change and remained just as it had been. Moses, when he heard of this and also actually saw it, was awestruck and, guided by what was not so much surmise as God-sent inspiration, made announcement of the sabbath. I need hardly say that conjectures of this kind are closely akin to prophecies. For the mind could not have made so straight an aim if there was not also the divine spirit guiding it to the truth itself. Now the greatness of the wonder was shown not only by the double supply of food and its remaining sound contrary to the usual happening, but by the combination of both these occurring on the sixth day, counting from the day on which the food began to be supplied from the air ; and that sixth day was to be followed by the dawning of the seventh which is the most sacred of numbers. And therefore consideration will show the inquirer that the food given from heaven followed the analogy of the birth of the world ; for both the creating of the world and also the raining of the said food were begun by God on the first day out of six. The copy reproduces the original very exactly : for, as God called up His most perfect work, the world, out of not being into being, so He called up plenty in the desert, changing round the elements to meet the pressing need of the occasion, so that instead of the earth the air bore food for their nourishment, and

MOSES II. 267-271

that without labour or travail for those who had no chance of resorting to any deliberate process of providing sustenance. After this, he uttered 268 a third prophetic saying of truly marvellous import. He declared that on the sabbath the air would not yield the accustomed food, and that nothing would come down to earth as it had done before, not even the smallest morsel. And this proved true in the 269 result, for it was on the day before the sabbath that he prophesied this, but on the morrow some of the weaker-minded set out to gather the food but were disappointed and returned baffled, reproaching themselves for their disbelief and hailing the prophet as a true seer, an interpreter of God, and alone gifted with foreknowledge of the hidden future.

XLIX. ^a Such was his pronouncement under divine 270 inspiration on the matter of the food which came from heaven, but there are examples to follow which must be noted, though perhaps they may be thought to resemble exhortations rather than oracular sayings. Among these is the command given at their great backsliding from the ways of their fathers, about which I have spoken above. This was when, after fashioning a golden bull in imitation of the vanity of Egypt,^b they set up choirs and built altars and brought victims for sacrifice in forgetfulness of the true God and to the ruin of the high-born qualities inherited from their forefathers and fostered by piety and holiness. At this, Moses was cut to the heart to 271 think that in the first place the whole people had suddenly been blinded who a few hours ago had excelled every nation in clearness of vision, and secondly, that a fable falsely invented could quench the bright radiance of truth—truth on which no

MOSES II. 271-274

eclipse of the sun or of all the starry choir can cast a shadow, since it is illumined by its own light, the intelligible, the incorporeal, compared with which the light of the senses would seem to be as night compared with day. He therefore became another ²⁷² man, changed both in outward appearance and mind ; and, filled with the spirit, he cried : “ Who is there who has no part with this delusion nor has given to no-lords the name of lordship ? Let all such come to me.” One tribe came at the call, bringing with ²⁷³ them their minds no less than their bodies, men who for some time had been breathing slaughter against the godless workers of unholiness, but sought to find a leader and captain who would have the right to tell them when and how to make this attack. When Moses found them hot with rage and brimful of courage and resolution, he was more than ever possessed by the spirit and said : “ Let each of you take his sword and rush through the whole camp, and slay not only those who are strangers to you but also the very nearest of your friends and kinsfolk. Mow them down, holding that to be a truly righteous deed which is done for truth and God’s honour, a cause which to champion and defend is the lightest of labours.” So they slaughtered three thousand of the ²⁷⁴ principal leaders in godlessness, without meeting any resistance, and thereby not only made good their defence against the charge of having been party to the shameless crime, but were accounted as the noblest of heroes and awarded the prize most suitable to their action, that is the priesthood. For it was meet that the duty of ministering to holiness should be given to those who had battled and acquitted themselves bravely in its defence.

MOSES II. 275-279

L. ^a There is another still more remarkable utter- 275
ance of this kind which I may mention. It is one
which I described some way back when I was speak-
ing of the prophet in his capacity of high priest. This
again came from his own mouth when again under
possession, and it was fulfilled not long afterwards
but at the very time when the prediction was given.
The ministers of the temple are of two ranks, the 276
higher consisting of priests, the lower of temple
attendants; and at that time there were three priests^b
but many thousand attendants. These last, puffed 277
with pride at their own numerical superiority over
the priests, despised their fewness, and combined in
the same deed two trespasses, by attempting on the
one hand to bring low the superior, on the other to
exalt the inferior. This is what happens when sub-
jects attack their rulers to confound that most ex-
cellent promoter of the common weal, order. Then, 278
conspiring with each other, and collecting in great
numbers, they raised an outcry against the prophet,
declaring that he had bestowed the priesthood on his
brother and nephews because of their relation to him,
and had given a false account of their election, which
had not really been made under divine direction, as we
stated it above to be. Moses, greatly hurt and grieved 279
at this, though the mildest and meekest of men, was
so spurred to righteous anger by his passionate hatred
of evil that he besought God to turn His face from
their sacrifice; not that the All-righteous Judge
would ever accept the ministries of the impious, but
because the soul of one whom God loves must also do
its part and not keep silence, so eagerly does it desire
that the unholy may not prosper but ever fail to

MOSES II. 280-285

attain their purpose. While his heart was still hot 280
within him, burning with lawful indignation, inspira-
tion came upon him, and, transformed into a prophet,
he pronounced these words : “ Disbelief falls hardly
on the disbelievers only. Such are schooled by facts
alone, and not by words. Experience will show them
what teaching has failed to show that I do not lie.
This matter will be judged by the manner of their 281
latter end. If the death they meet is in the ordinary
course of nature, my oracles are a false invention ;
but, if it be of a new and different kind, my truthful-
ness will be attested. I see the earth opened and
vast chasms yawning wide. I see great bands of
kinsfolk perishing, houses dragged down and swal-
lowed up with their inmates, and living men descend-
ing into Hades.” As he ceased speaking, the earth 282
burst open under the shock of a convulsion, and the
bursting was just in that part where the tents of
the impious stood, so that they were borne below in
a mass and hidden from sight ; for the gaping sides
closed again when the object was accomplished for
which they had been split asunder. And, shortly 283
after, thunderbolts fell suddenly on two hundred and
fifty men who had led the sedition and destroyed
them in a mass, leaving no part of their bodies to
receive the tribute of burial. The quick succession 284
of these punishments and their magnitude in both
cases clearly and widely established the fame of the
prophet’s godliness, to the truth of whose pronounc-
ments God Himself had testified. This too we 285
should not fail to note, that the work of chastising
the impious was shared by earth and heaven, the
fundamental parts of the universe. For they had
set the roots of their wickedness on earth, but let it

MOSES II. 285-290

grow so high that it mounted right up to ether above. Therefore each of the two elements supplied its punishment: earth burst and parted asunder to drag down and swallow up those who had then become a burden to it; heaven poured down the strangest of rainstorms, a great stream of fire to blast them in its flames. Whether they were swallowed up or destroyed by the thunderbolts, the result was the same: neither party was ever seen again, the former hidden in the earth by the closing of the chasm which united to form level ground again, the latter consumed absolutely and entirely by the flame of the thunderbolt.

Death of
Moses
(2.288-292)

LI. ^a Afterwards the time came when he had to make his pilgrimage from earth to heaven, and leave this mortal life for immortality, summoned thither by the Father Who resolved his twofold nature of soul and body into a single unity, transforming his whole being into mind, pure as the sunlight. Then, indeed, we find him possessed by the spirit, no longer uttering general truths to the whole nation but prophesying to each tribe in particular the things which were to be and hereafter must come to pass. Some of these have already taken place, others are still looked for, since confidence in the future is assured by fulfilment in the past. It was very fitting that persons so different in the history of their birth, particularly in their descent on the mother's side and in the manifold varieties of their thoughts and aims and the endless diversities of their practices and habits of life, should receive as a sort of legacy a suitable apportionment of oracles and inspired sayings. This was indeed wonderful: but most wonderful of all is the conclusion of the Holy Scriptures, which stands to the whole law-book as the head to the living

MOSES II. 291-292

creature ; for when he was already being exalted and 291 stood at the very barrier, ready at the signal to direct his upward flight to heaven, the divine spirit fell upon him and he prophesied with discernment while still alive the story of his own death ; told ere the end how the end came ; told how he was buried with none present, surely by no mortal hands but by immortal powers ; how also he was not laid to rest in the tomb of his forefathers but was given a monument of special dignity which no man has ever seen ; how all the nation wept and mourned for him a whole month and made open display, private and public, of their sorrow, in memory of his vast benevolence and watchful care for each one of them and for all.

Such, as recorded in the Holy Scriptures, was the 292 life and such the end of Moses, king, lawgiver, high priest, prophet.