

PEOPLE OF THE ***BIBLE***
- *ADAM TO MOSES* -

-In Verse-

For Younger Readers

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PREFACE

The stories in this volume are taken from the first five books of the Old Testament of the Holy Bible. Although text from the Bible is included, most of the language used is contemporary English, presented in simple rhyming poetic form that is easy to read.

The story lines in the Bible have been followed closely; however, some portions have been omitted or condensed where it was thought that the material was not appropriate for some readers.

It is hoped that this book will be fun to read, in addition to being informative .

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PROLOGUE

Moses prayed¹:

“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst joined the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”

Before the beginning there was God !

God is the Creator from whom all springs,
all that exists, all life, all things.
Infinite, divine, benevolent Source,
invisible Energy, all-powerful Force,
omniscient Lord, Prime Mover and Cause
unknowable Spirit that always was,
and that will be,
eternally.

¹ Psalms 90 – A prayer of Moses, the man of God: v1,2

CHAPTER ONE

*Creation*¹

In six celestial days
God did all create.

He gave birth to Heaven and earth;
from His great might came “Let there be light”;
by His command came seas and land;
the sun, the moon, the stars in the sky,
all these did Holy God supply;
all grasses, herbs and all the trees,
all creatures of the lands and seas
came to exist by His decrees;

On the seventh day He rested.

A blueprint of what was to be,
was in His plan of destiny.
And, as part of that great plan,
God created man.

In God's own image was he made,
and his spiritual aspect laid.

God made a male, gave him a mate
and ordered that they procreate.
He gave to man a living soul,
bequeathed to him a special role.

Man was free to choose how his mind to use;
and free to use his will to reject or to fulfill God's will.

And he controlled what God had placed
upon this planet's face.

¹ Genesis 1,2

*The First Test*¹

In the Garden of Eden, lush, green and serene,
bright green herbs and grasses grew;
a winding sparkling stream ran thru;
there were exquisite flowers pure and new,
of many a delicate lovely hue,
their petals sweet with morning dew.
The great *Tree of Life* and other fruit trees,
swayed in the gentle fragrant breeze.
'Twas a garden of pleasure, of great delight,
cloaked in a sphere of shimmering light,²
and in its midst, radiant, aglow,
that all who view its power know,
a special large tree, of Divine Decree,
with sweetest fruit of crimson red
hung from branches broadly spread –
The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

From dust in the Garden, God made a man,
gave him life, as part of His plan.
He named him Adam, made him just and fair,
and put the Garden in his care.

Adam was radiant, strong and young²
when full grown into life he'd sprung;
soft curls fell over his broad forehead
as he lay newborn, an arm outspread.

¹ Genesis: 2,3

² Author's images

Then God made creatures - all various kinds -
all created by the Mastermind:
black-striped zebras, tawny lions,¹
huge brown elephants, graceful felines,
stately giraffes and handsome canines,
the deers and the monkeys, and porcupines,
horses and insects and coiled serpentines,
turtles and birds and stolid bovine –
and so many more
of that interesting corps.
They came to Adam, that he give each a name
and so forever their species proclaim.
Adam had a responsible role –
over all that lived he was given control.

This was a birth
of a Paradise on earth.
There'd be peace and harmony
for all eternity.

Then God spoke to Adam:
You may eat of all fruit that you see
except for the fruit of that one *special* tree,
The Knowledge of Good and Evil is its name,
to eat of its fruit you must refrain.
If you do, then you will die.
Do not this command defy.

That Adam was not to live all alone,
God made someone to be his own.
He put him to sleep, a sleep very deep,
and from a rib made him a mate.
Thus did God a female create.

¹Author's image

She was slender and young with long thick hair,¹
of beauty rare.

They breathed the fragrant Garden air ¹
as breezes wafted through their hair.
They ran and played as children do
and petals round the Garden threw.
Playfully did he pursue,
with happy smiles, his mate withdrew.
Naked in their innocence,
joyful in their residence
they lived in peace, the Lord to please.
Though both were child-like and naive
and played their games of make-believe
they knew they must the Lord obey,
and from his dictum did not stray –
until temptation came their way!

The sly subtle serpent, aware, set his snare
for the woman, the newer of the pair.
He asked: May you eat of all the fruit that you see?

Said she ,Yes, except for one big tree;
The Knowledge of Good and Evil is its name
from eating its fruit I must refrain,
for the Lord has said, eat that fruit and you will die.
I will not the Lord defy.

Tempted the serpent: Its a lie that you would die.
The Lord God knows but didn't disclose
that the fruit will make you very wise;
that's a fact I emphasize.
She listened to him and she gave in,

¹ Author's image

and so committed her first sin,
and then tempted Adam and he also ate,
by doing which he sealed his fate.

Suddenly they became aware,
that disobedient sinful pair,
of their naked state,
and fearing what might them await –
covered their privates with large fig leaves
to comfort achieve –
and hid from God..

The Lord God discovered that they were covered.

He questioned them:
What was the causation
of their fig-leaf decoration?
In their consternation
they gave their explanation
of the serpent's sly temptation
and of their violation
of Lord God's strong command
which they did understand.

Then came God's angry condemnation:

God cursed the serpent:
You are cursed above all beasts,
you'll be the worst and be the least.
You'll crawl on your belly and eat the dust,
man will always you distrust;
you'll live with him in enmity;
this is your miserable destiny.

God said to the woman:
I ordain –

that you shall bear your children in pain;
and your husband over you will reign.

God said to Adam:
You will feel sorrows,
today and all your tomorrows;
You'll work and sweat to earn your bread
until you're dead.
Of dust you were made; to dust you'll degrade.

The woman 'till then had not been named,
so Adam proclaimed
her name would be Eve,
for she would conceive,
and be mother of all who came after the fall.
Then the Lord God clothed them with cloaks of skins
for a new life for them was now to begin.

God mused:
because Adam knew of evil and good
there was an excellent likelihood
that he might of the *Tree of Life* eat,
a fruit forbidden, and very sweet,
and so might Adam live on forever.
Said God : No! Never!

So out from Eden the couple were sent
to a permanent banishment.
Like sad children – they crept away ¹
no longer happily to play.
Life would now be difficult,
and there'd be no one to consult.
They would feel fatigue and pain,

¹ Author's image.

they would feel harsh winds and rain,
they'd feel anger, they'd feel fear
they'd shout and cry and weep a tear,
they'd work hard for their daily bread
and someday – they'd both be dead.

Paradise lost! Oh, what a cost!

At Eden's east gate,
a barrier to create,
God placed Seraphim at the rim,
and a mighty moving sword aflame –
that the Tree of Life might in safety remain,
by God's decree
through eternity.

The First Murder

*This is a story of injured pride,
of jealous rage and fratricide !*

Adam and Eve lived in a new domain,
and produced a son whom they named Cain;
a second boy came, they called him Abel—
that was his label.

Cain was tall and muscled and strong,²
with arms powerful and long;
his hair was matted right down from the crown;
his face often scowled with a threatening frown.
He walked along with a clumsy gait
and his eyes sometimes glinted with furious hate.
His mood was often belligerent
and never was he subservient.
Cain worked the soil, with heavy toil,
his body wet with dripping sweat.

Abel was tall and lithe and thin,²
with waving hair as long as his chin;
his eyes were warm and a little bit shy,
his steps were graceful, long and spry.
A caring man, thoughtful and kind,
sharing whatever he could find;
his mother's gentle favourite son
whose smile shone on her like the sun.

¹ Genesis: 4

² Author's images

Abel had sheep in his loving care,
'twas work for which he had a flair.

Cain was aware
that his work was the harder of the pair
a fact that he found hard to bear,
for he thought 'twas most unfair.

One day each brought a gift, an offering,
to give to the Lord, their spiritual King.
The best fruit he could obtain
was the gift that came from Cain.
The finest lamb that he could bring
was Abel's loving offering.
The offering that Abel selected
the Lord respected,¹
which made Cain feel dejected
and rejected.

The Lord saw Cain's reaction –
his dissatisfaction,
which he thought unwise and criticized.

Then jealous Cain, with feelings unstable
sought out Abel –
and murdered
the young shepherd!

Said the Lord to Cain:
Where is your brother? Explain!
I don't know, said Cain,
am I my brother's keeper?

¹ Admired

Said the Lord:
What have you done? Your brother's blood
cries out to me from the ground,
from that bloody mound.
You have him slain!
There lies the stain where he died in pain.

You are now cursed! This is my decree:
depart from the fields, begone from me!
You may no longer farm the land,
you are forbidden by my command.
You shall live as a fugitive
a vagabond, in places beyond.

Cain said to the Lord, from his despair:
my punishment is more than I can bear!
gone from the land and hid from Thee,
people out there will try to slay me.

Then said the Lord:
None may kill Cain,
from that must all the others refrain.
I'll set on his forehead a mark,
clear and stark and dark,
so they will not slay;
if they disobey I will repay –
by sevenfold I'll vengeance take
for that mistake,
so Cain may live –
although he is a fugitive.

So Cain went away from the presence of God
to east of Eden, to the Land of Nod.
There he married and had Enoch, a son –
thus was his long line begun;

and descendants in Enoch's line
lived on and on for a very long time.¹

Cain had prospered materially,
for he had the means to build *Enoch*, the city,
but he must always have been downcast,
for he remained a banished outcast
from God,
in the Land of Nod.

¹Genesis 6:27. e.g. Methuselah lived 969 years

CHAPTER FOUR

*The Flood*¹

*This tale is of a great event, when by God a flood was sent,
to destroy a corrupted earth and to establish an earthly rebirth.*

God looked at mankind He'd created
and saw that evil permeated –
immoral creeds and wicked deeds:
violence, murder, theft and greed.
For every vice there were some willing
from cheating and raping to merciless killing.

God was very grieved and sad
that man was sinful, man was bad.
He regretted that He made them
and decided to condemn them.
The world that was, He would destroy
and to that end a flood employ.
When evil was eradicated,
a new world would be created..

When God changed His Sacred Mind
about the future of mankind –
He excluded Noah and his family
and gave them an excellent destiny,
for they were people who were good
and righteousness they understood.

God said to Noah:
I ordain –

¹ Genesis: 6-9

that there will come torrential rain.

For forty days and forty nights
there will be despair and fright.

By my command –
water will cover all the land;
all that lives will drown and die
in order earth to purify.
Only you and your family
are spared that fate and that agony.

Build an ark where you shall dwell
until the waters I dispel;
build it well, as I instruct
with careful detail, it construct.

Bring in the creatures, two by two,
from all that walked and crept and flew ,
so all species may stay alive
and the catastrophe survive.
Give them protection and their feed
until the waters shall recede.

Noah did as God instructed
until the ark was well constructed.

Then all came under Noah's care,
his family and creatures paired.
His three sons and all their wives,
would in Noah's ark survive.

Then three times a bird was sent –
to test the waters that was meant –
the last time it did not return
showing no need for more concern.
All was now safe and secure,

the land and water fresh and pure.

Then all emerged into the light
joyfully, with deep delight.
With Noah's brood and two by two,
life on earth began anew,
for the Lord declared to them:
This is the time for a rebirth,
be fruitful and multiply – replenish the earth.

CHAPTER FIVE

*The Patriarch*¹

*Chosen by God, honoured by man, was the patriarch Abraham.
Father to Arab and Hebrew nations, which endure for generations,*

Abram was his given name
before God raised him up to fame.
A soul whose love of God was rare,
he spoke to Him in fervent prayer.
Abram was an impressive sight,²
broad-shouldered, tall, with hair of white;
a lean strong face, full of God's Grace,
large brown eyes, gentle and wise.
He walked with firm and manly stride –
a man in whom one could confide.
God chose him to be his instrument,
His plans for man to implement.

His loving wife was called Sarai –
his faithful friend and wise ally.
Sarai was beyond compare²
with dusky beauty very rare.
She walked proudly like a queen;
her dark-fringed eyes were lustrous green –
serious, steady, and serene;
her high cheek bones and clefted chin
were exquisite, as was her skin.
A righteous soul with clever mind,
a precious jewel of womankind.

¹ Genesis:12 - 17

² Author's images

Although they had of riches plenty,
they lacked because her womb was empty.
No children had to them been born,
a circumstance that both did mourn.

God ordered them to leave their home,
and so abroad they went to roam,
until with nephew, name of Lot,
they were brought
to a destined land, by God's command.

Abram and Lot, owned cattle and land
but crowded herds could not expand.
Because lack of growth did them restrict
their need for pasture did conflict.
So– they went their separate ways
to pastures where their herds could graze.

Lot went east to Jordan's plains,
to where there were two cities of shame;
Sodom and Gomorrah were their names –
those places of such wicked fame.

Abram went into Canaan
as instructed in God's plan,
where he and righteous wife Sarai
would with God's commands comply.
God showed Abram a wonderland; –
all this is for you, God to him said,
and when you and your dear wife are dead
your heirs whom you will have bred
will inherit that huge spread;
from river Euphrates to Egypt land
will be your people's Holy Land.

Abram said to God:
My servant is my only heir
since children Sarai cannot bear.
Later, as Sarai and Abram walked and talked,¹
Sarai said: Because you have no child, you grieve,
so take my maid, make her conceive;
when Hagar's child you will receive
I believe you'll be relieved.

So it came to pass:
Hagar, the maid, conceived Ishmael,
which made her proud, made her head swell.
She no more Sarai respected
which made Sarai feel dejected.

Sarai caused Hagar to leave;
but God spoke out to intercede:
then Hagar returned abased,
and stayed in her maid-servant place.

Ishmael God would embrace
for he would father a new race –
from him would come the Arab clans
according to God's master plans.

Abram was five score years of age
when God appeared before that sage:
I'm the Almighty God, He spake –
A covenant with you I make:
Be perfect for me

¹ Author's image

and I'll guarantee your destiny.
Abraham is your new name,
God exclaimed.
You shall father many nations,
they'll live for countless generations.
There'll be kings – a great family,
That's your glorious destiny.
Circumcise all who are male, without fail;
family and servants too
shall be circumcised like you.
As *Sarah* shall your wife be known –
that name will ever her enthrone,
for a blessing I on her confer –
a son will come to you and her,
and she shall mother many nations
who'll live for countless generations.

Abraham laughed inside and thought
one hundred am I, and ninety is she
how can I a child foresee?
When God again spoke of that birth ¹–
it led to Sarah's inward mirth;
she thought: I'm too old a child to bear–
to give to Abraham an heir.
Her silent inward laugh God heard,
and to her He said these words:
Is anything too hard for the Lord ?

Now Hagar had borne a son,
so far Abraham's only one;

¹Genesis: 18

Abraham prayed to God , to persuade,
that Ishmael not aside be laid
that recognition him be paid. ¹

God declared:

Sarah will bear a son, Isaac,
for naught of goodness will he lack;
A covenant with him I'll make
which I will never, ever break;
and pay heed – I've decreed,
it will hold also with his seed.

As for Ishmael, I did not him dispossess,
I've made him fruitful, did him bless.

I prophecy he'll multiply –
he'll father be to a great nation
with princes and large population.

Then God withdrew,
ending that fateful interview.

¹Genesis: 17

CHAPTER SIX¹

*Lot ,
And the Cities of Shame*

*Sodom and Gomorrah, two cities of shame on Jordan's plain
were destroyed by God with fiery rain.*

In the dusty heat of day
'neath the golden blazing rays
sat Abraham before his tent –
Abraham the excellent,
Abraham the reverent.

In the plains of Mamre, as he sat beneath a tree,
three men appeared – a Holy Three.
It was clear he should revere
for he knew,
'twas the Lord and angels two.

He ran to greet and to entreat
the Lord, that they should rest
and be his guest.
He brought water for their feet
and bread and meat for them to eat.

The angels left for Jordan's plain
and God said to Abraham:

¹ Genesis ;18,19

I'll share with you what I shall do,
for you're devout and blessed too.
You'll be father to great nations –
in perpetuation.

I hear cries, souls agonize
in Sodom and Gomorrah on Jordan's plain.
Because their evil is vile and great,
I shall soon decide their fate.
Abraham, in dread,
with the Lord God pled;
he pled again and again and again,
that God would from His plan abstain.
Please don't be angry with me, said he,
that I offer you my plea:
If some souls there be innocent,
would fifty, forty, thirty, twenty,
or even ten prevent
the coming torment and lament
Please consent, if such are there,
in answer to my fervent prayer
to forbear
and to spare.

God replied:
If ten such righteous souls be found,
of goodness most profound,
for their sakes, I will spare,
and abandon the nightmare.
I will refrain from the fiery rain
which would have slain.

The two wise angels in disguise
arrived at Sodom to apprise
the truth of that bad situation –
Was it deserving of damnation?

Lot – attractive and masculine
had a very engaging grin.
He was an honourable man of Abraham's clan,
by others much respected and by God protected.
He was sitting outdoors at Sodom's gate.
When he saw the angels he fell prostrate.
He offered them bread and with them pled
that they stay inside overnight,
and not depart until daylight.
After a feast, before bedtime,
there arrived some incredible slime –
old and young, small and tall, evil all –
men arrived from everywhere
to use and abuse the heavenly pair.
They crowded all around
Lot's home and large compound.

Lot pleaded with the evil ones –
Let not the wicked deeds be done;
I beg of you, to them he said,
take my daughters two instead,
they are virginal and gently bred.

But they threatened Lot he'd be molested
if his two guests he protected.

The angels then drew Lot inside

to hide from the menacing evil tide.
Those men then tried to break the door
but found that they could see no more,
for the angels had made them blind,
so that Lot's door they could not find.

Then the angels said to Lot:
At God's behest –
we will destroy this wicked place,
where people are a vile disgrace;
it and they shall be erased
so no more people be debased.

All that lives will soon be gone, into oblivion.

We say to you and your family –
flee! There will be agony
and death.
Leave with us, don't change your mind,
and- we will you remind, don't look behind!
With our words you must comply
or you will die!

The sons-in-law did not believe
and would not leave.
But Lot, his daughters and his wife
all fled, that they might save their life.

The angels repeated : we remind, don't look behind!

What a plight to make that flight!
To leave their home—and where to roam?

Lot in front, his wife at rear,
while feeling sad and feeling fears,
with the women flooding tears,
all in confusion and disillusion,
yet as they walked away
they were careful to obey.

Until, Lot's wife could not resist
her foolish head around to twist.
She took one last look –
and saw the city all aflame
with sulphur and brimstone's fiery rain,
where people choked on thick black smoke,
and tried in vain to flee
from their fatal destiny.
Because she committed so grievous a fault,
God turned her into a pillar of salt.
Lot and daughters did obey
but with dismay went on their way.

So ended the cities of evil and shame,
Sodom and Gomorrah on Jordan's plain,
destroyed by God with cleansing flame.

Abraham's Choice

*One day, God made a request
that put Abraham to a painful test.*

God said to Abraham: Behold, here I am!
Take Isaac, your precious son
to where sacrifice shall be done.
To a mountain you'll him bring
for a sacrificial offering.

Oh! what a blow that he was dealt,²
he felt as if his heart would melt.
Oh! his soul felt that it was cleft
for of his son he'd be bereft.

His Isaac –
for whom he did so long await
and whose arrival did elate.

His Isaac –
beloved child, gentle and mild,
so caring and so kind,
and with such a clever mind.

To have to sacrifice his seed!
He felt as if his heart would bleed;
but – he did not plead,
for he obeyed what God decreed.
He would proceed
to carry out the painful deed.

¹ Genesis: 22

² Author's image

He knew he must God's will fulfill
so he climbed up that fateful hill ¹
upon which Isaac would be slain,
his own devoutness to maintain.

The altar set and Isaac bound,
Abraham his courage found.
His sharpened sacrificial knife,
ready to take his Isaac's life,
was poised high in the air
to slit that small throat bare,
when an angel came to spare!!!

The angel said:
Abraham, Abraham,
a command has come from God up high.
Stop! Isaac shall not die!
His bindings you must now untie,
God's testing you did satisfy.
Do not harm your precious son,
God's request is now undone.
God was testing your devotion
aware of fatherly emotion.
As the angel spoke,
God's testing to revoke,
God sent Abraham a ram –
its blood to shed,
to be the sacrifice instead.
With utmost speed
Abraham did that sacrificial deed.

¹ Mount Moriah

*He had not to God protested
when he was so sorely tested;
he was the best,
forever blest,
by God embraced,
and in a seat of honour placed!*

Isaac's Twin Sons

*Two stories here about the twins,
where Esau loses, Jacob wins.*

The Birthright

Rebekah, Isaac's beautiful wife
had been barren all her life.
Isaac asked God that she conceive
and pregnancy she did achieve.

Rebekah was grateful that she'd been blessed,
and as her pregnancy progressed
she felt a struggle in her womb
and did not know what to assume.

She asked the Lord to her explain
what meanings did her womb contain.

The Lord replied:

Your womb contains a twain,
two babes of different strain;
and after the separation ²
there will be two different nations.
I predict there'll be conflict;
I foresee –

¹ Genesis : 25

² birth

that one of the two will stronger be;
and in the future you'll observe
the older will the younger serve.

When emerged the newborn pair
the sight of them was very rare,
for Esau, the first was covered with hair
while Jacob's skin was smooth and bare.
Jacob had hold of Esau's heel,
perhaps the future to reveal?
Esau too was born all red
from his toes up to his head.

When they were to adults grown
and functioned well upon their own
Esau, the hairy, tall and gaunt ¹
was very cunning at the hunt.
He loved to be outside
and walked with long and loping stride.
His eyes of blue were keen;
his bearded face content, serene.
He was fleet, as if with wings upon his feet.
His long red hair behind him flew
as the deer he did pursue;
his arrows struck them bold and true,
or sometimes with a spear he slew.
Issac loved that venison –
for him, his Esau was the one.
Yet Esau was naive
and easily deceived.

¹Author's image

Jacob's black hair was groomed and clean,¹
his narrow eyes were small and green.
He was slender and pale and avoided travail.
Mostly he stayed within the tents
and rarely hardships underwent.
He was a man who was quite plain
and did not a lot attain.
Although he had a pleasant mien
there were times when he was mean.
He was the twin who liked to win.
With motives ulterior
he made himself superior.
Rebekah loved her younger son—
for her, her Jacob was the one.

Esau worked hard in Isaac's fields
so there would be a lavish yield
One day, he came in from his labour,
felt very faint, sought a favour.
Jacob had cooked a lentil stew
which was delicious, Esau knew.
He begged :Jacob, spare me a meal,
for that stew sure does appeal.

He said:
I'm very faint, I need some food –
your lentil stew smells oh so good!

I entreat!
give me some stew to eat.

Jacob replied:

You must sell me your birthright,
right now in my presence, in my sight,
you must that swear! or I'll not share.

Esau groaned:
I'm at the point of death-
at my last breath.
What good to me is my birthright
if I die from present plight?
This I swear! For I am in a snare.

Then Jacob Esau fed
with hot stew and with bread
and Esau left,
of his birthright now bereft!

The Deception ¹

When Isaac was old and blind
but still was clear within his mind,
he longed to eat some venison
and called Esau, the hairy one.

Isaac said:
I am old. Before I die
I seek a wish to gratify.
Go with quiver and bow

¹Genesis: 27

and slay for me a tender doe;
then cook for me some savoury meat
of the kind I love to eat;
then, when you've achieved success
I will you bless.

Rebekah heard what Isaac said
and to Jacob quickly sped.
Jacob, my son-
you must receive the blessing instead,
let it rest upon *your* head.
Bring to me
two kids of goats for a savoury.
You will feed it to your father,
he will think you are your brother.
Now go and do as I have bade,
in the future you'll be glad.
Rebekah had a sneaky plan
to show him as the hairy man,
to his true self conceal
when he brought the tasty meal,
and so Esau's blessing steal.

Jacob replied:
But mother, I am smooth and bare
and Esau my brother is covered with hair;
father might touch and be aware

and that would be a sad affair.
He would know that I deceive
and no blessing I'd receive;
instead I might get a curse
and for me it would be worse.

Rebekah answered:
I guarantee- your father's curse would fall on me;
do as I say, you must obey.
Before your father dies
you must receive the blessing, the prize;
you must yourself disguise.

Now arise –
go fetch the goats, I'll cook the meat,
of the kind he loves to eat;
I'll cover your arms with skin of goat
and then you will don Esau's coat.
And so the willing bough was bent.

Jacob went to Isaac's tent
in Esau's clothes with Esau's scent,
and presented the savoury meat
for Isaac's delicious treat to eat –
his neck and arms clothed in goat hair
nothing visible, nothing bare.

Isaac said:
Who are you, my son?

How come so quick the venison?
And Jacob replied:
The Lord thy God brought it to me
to gratify your fervent plea.

Isaac said:
Come here, that I may feel and know
where my blessings I bestow.
When Jacob came
Isaac exclaimed:
"Tis Jacob's voice I hear, yet feel I Esau's hands—
I don't understand;
I demand to know your name
that I may know which son my blessings claims.
Are you Esau, my son?
Yes, said Jacob, I am that very one.

So on the meat and wine did Isaac dine,
then asked Jacob for a kiss
and thought that there was naught amiss,
for he knew Esau's clothing smell
which did all his doubts dispel.
He declared:
These blessings upon you I give
for as long as you shall live:
You'll have wine and corn from land;
your life will be grand.

You'll have heavenly dew,
nations and brethren will bow to you;
others around will serve you with verve.
Those who curse you will be cursed -with the worst,
those who bless you will be blessed- with the best.

A moment later
Esau came in with his venison meat
and offered to Isaac, that he should eat.
In confusion Isaac said:
Who are you!? Which one of the two?
Replied Esau:
I am Esau, your first-born son,
who has brought to you fresh venison.
Isaac was stunned; what had he done!
Had he given his blessing to his second son?
He began to tremble, and could not dissemble.
He said:
Who then brought me the savoury meat to eat?
And did me falsely greet?
I ate his meat and did him bless
a blessing that you dispossessed;
I am grieved - with slyness he deceived
and did your blessing steal,
from which there's no appeal.

When Esau heard these shattering words,

he gave a great and bitter cry
that Jacob had told such a terrible lie.

He cried:

Twice has he stolen from me
and interfered with my destiny.

The birthright and blessing were for me meant,
and he has from me these treasures rent –
what torment.!

Father, did you not hold back a blessing for me?
he said in a sorrowful plea.
and he wept as if his heart would break
for his lost birthright and blessings sake.

Isaac, with deepest sorrow said:

He will you subdue, for I gave him power over you;
He'll have wine and corn from the land
to nourish him and all his band;

Many relatives will him serve with courtesy and verve.

What's left for you that I can give?

I cannot give to you the same
yet I can bless you with two claims.

You too shall have dew from Heaven and corn from the land;
but listen now and understand –
by your sword shall you live,
and to Jacob service give;
later on you will have power
and there will come an hour
when by yourself alone
his yoke from you will be thrown.

Oh! Esau's searing pain made him exclaim –

I've been treacherously betrayed!
my soul is stabbed with a sharp blade.
It was a monstrous devious deed
that caused my heart to bleed.
What kind of greed can lead to such a deed!

To himself he said,
I hate brother Jacob, and when father's dead,
I will him slay!
For his evil deed he'll pay!

When Rebekah learned of Esau's intent
to beloved Jacob she quickly went;
told him of the potential deed
and with him did plead;
Leave! Flee! for a while, 'till anger is gone,
and Jacob obeyed, like a dutiful son.

*So ends this tale
of brotherly betrayal.
(But read on to discover
that Esau never killed his brother.)*

CHAPTER NINE

*Jacob's Dream*¹

*Jacob has a sacred dream
where God reveals His holy theme.*

“And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

And, behold, the LORD stood over him, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the

¹ Genesis 28: 12-19

LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.

And he was afraid, and said, How awesome is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

And he called the name of that place Beth-el”¹.

¹The house of the Lord

*Jacob's Labour of Love*¹

*Jacob acquires two mates,
the second he loves, the first he hates.*

Isaac told Jacob to leave Canaan
and marry a daughter of uncle Laban,²
and before Jacob his journey began
Isaac gave him the blessings of Abraham.

When he arrived in Laban's compound
he found a girl who did him astound.
Two daughters of Laban were living there,
ready for a husband's care.
Leah, the older, had weak eyes and was no prize;
but Rachel, the younger girl, was a beautiful pearl.

Rachel the shepherdess, warm and sweet,³
moved gracefully on little feet;
a tender mouth, a radiant smile,
her large brown eyes, without guile;

¹ Genesis: 29-33

² His mother's brother.

³ Author's image.

long soft black hair, sun-bronzed skin
glowing from within;
her face lit with spiritual light,
yet passion waiting to ignite.

For Jacob, it was love at first sight!
His heart was filled with great delight;
his eyes shone with a lover's light,
he felt his soul with hers unite;

He offered with cheer to serve for her for seven years;
he would stay in Laban's land
in order to win Rachel's hand..
Her father agreed , so they made the deal,
but a devious lie it did conceal!

When Jacob had served his seven years' time,
to win his Rachel, his beloved sublime,
the wedding took place,
but he saw not her face
until the next morn when he awoke
and with fury spoke –
for it was Leah in his bed
and not his Rachel whom he'd wed!
He protested to Laban:
How could you do this to me!
Could you not see how I would be!

What a cruel trick to play, me to betray.
Why did you my Rachel displace
and put that Leah in her place?

To which Laban replied:
There is a custom in this land
which you must understand;
the younger daughter may not wed
ere the older sees her marriage bed..
You must promise seven years more
'fore you open Rachel's door.

Then with joy they crossed the bridge
into their blissful marriage.
Now Jacob had a second wife –
one who would enhance his life;
and Jacob gladly served another seven
in payment for his destined heaven.

Jacob had a very large family,¹
which played a part in history.
He acquired cattle, goats and sheep
by methods somewhat devious and deep;
wealthy he became
with many servants to his name .

¹ Twelve sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. One daughter: Dinah. The sons were heads of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Then-
God bade Jacob to leave Laban
and to return home to Canaan.
So Jacob packed all that he did own,
all the seeds that he had sown,
and left for home.¹

Now he had been very sad
that he'd left Esau furiously mad.
He would attempt to reconcile
to try to remove that bitter bile.
Jacob had found where Esau lived
and wished very hard he would forgive.
So a message was to Esau sent
along with an offering of a rich present.

When Esau and Jacob each other found,
seven times did Jacob bow to the ground,
but Esau quickly ran to meet and joyfully did greet;
he kissed him and he wept,
and with reluctance did the gift accept..
The brothers had good health and wealth,
and became loving brothers again;
and each of the twain
would govern in his own domain.

¹ On the way, in Bethlehem, Rachel died giving birth to her younger son, whom she named Benjamin; a little later on, Isaac passed on, and was buried at home in Hebron.

And God proclaimed: ¹
There is a change in Jacob's name.
He's to be known as *Israel* – a name of fame.
That name would go down in the history
of the holy company
to whom God did grant
His sacred, permanent covenant

Israel the name, Israel the nation,
Jacob sired an enduring creation.

¹ Genesis 28: 13-15.

Joseph and his Brothers ¹

*Joseph, bright and excellent,
becomes God's chosen instrument.*

Part 1

Joseph was Rachel's older son,
Jacob's most beloved one.
Joseph – a son most dutiful, ²
bright-eyed and beautiful
with jet-black curly hair,
happy and debonair,
with qualities rare.

Jacob on Joseph did lovingly dote,
made for him a many-coloured coat,
in which he was a lordly sight.
Well muscled and six feet in height,
he was aglow with Godly light.

¹ Genesis 37: 39-50

² Author's image

His older brothers did him hate
and wished for him a nasty fate.
With bitter jealousy they burned
because they felt by father spurned.
They knew that he loved Joseph best,
that he was special and by him blest.

Then, when he was seventeen,
Joseph had a vivid dream.
He told his brothers his dream's theme:
We were binding sheaves of wheat
and when we had that work complete,
my sheaf stood itself upright,
rising to its greatest height,
and your sheaves which stood around
my sheaf to surround,
bowed down to it with great respect
in a manner circumspect.
His brothers replied with great disdain:
Above us shall you sit and reign?
and power over us attain?
You're a pain!
And the hate they bore
grew even more.

Then Joseph had a second dream
and told his family of its theme:

The sun, the moon, eleven stars,
heavenly bodies from afar,
all that celestial company bowed down to me.
For that dream father chastised
and envious brothers criticized.
They bitterly resented him,
made a plan brutal and grim:
they'd kill and throw him in a pit
and so a homicide commit.
His coloured coat with blood they'd stain
and father tell a beast had slain.

But Reuben heard and said –
Let no blood be shed!
Throw him in the pit, but no murder let's commit;
for he thought to himself:
I'll rescue him from that abyss
and take him home for father's kiss.

So Joseph was thrown in a waterless pit
to which he did tearfully submit.
Though in anguish he shrieked his fears;
his pleas fell upon deaf ears.
Then Judah declared:
Let's take this chance
our finances to advance.
He tried to justify:

I don't want Joseph to die;
I have a plan.
We'll sell him to that caravan.
Pieces of silver were received,
and Joseph from death was reprieved.
Reuben returned but Joseph was gone
and Reuben's planned rescue was undone.

The others did gloat as the beautiful coat,
they stained with the blood of a newly-slain goat.
The coat to Jacob was brought
who immediately became distraught.
Jacob cried out as he wept:
I am bereft!
an evil beast has devoured my son,
Joseph, my precious one.
My heart is torn;
all my life I will him mourn.
You'll never be able to comfort me,
you can't remove my agony;
and his garments he rent in his bitter torment.

Part 2

Joseph was sold to Potiphar, a star
of the Egyptian Pharaoh's court,
a man with whom Joseph had great rapport.

Potiphar saw Joseph living in God's grace
that he was held in God's loving embrace;
he saw Joseph's great success and quick progress,
.and was with him much impressed.

He saw how Joseph was so just
and gave to him his complete trust;
Joseph served him well
and did in all his work excel.

Potiphar's wife was slim and tall,¹
her long black hair hung in a fall,
she walked with sensuous feline grace,
expressive eyes in oval face,
her pouting lips, red and full,
expressed her passions powerful.

One day, to Joseph's dismay
she did him waylay.
As he was tending unto his affairs
he became aware
of her lustful stare,
laying her sexual intentions bare.
She tried to seduce
but it was no use,
for Joseph refused.
He said:

¹ Author's image

I will not sin – no sex with you will I begin;
I will not Potiphar betray
I will not from God's path stray!
She heard with anger and dismay
and thought: I'll make him pay!
She grasped his cloak to make him stay,
but it remained within her grasp
as she panted hard and gasped.

When she could not him detain
she shrieked as if she were insane:

He's an evil man of the Hebrew clan
who tried me to seduce, without an excuse,
but I wouldn't consent to his ravishment;

I am innocent;

Let him deny, let him tell his lie;
see – I hold his cloak in my hand
that him a seducer brands.

So she did him falsify, and to Potiphar vilify.
Then Potiphar sent Joseph to a punishment –
to an unjust imprisonment.

While Joseph was in Pharaoh's jail
the good Lord helped him to prevail;
God cloaked him in His holy light,
protected him and gave him might.
God guided all events

that took place in his imprisonment.

The warden put others in his care
for he found Joseph's talents rare.

One day, Pharaoh had two servants jailed
since he thought they'd in their duties failed.

Two palace chiefs had come to grief;
were in disgrace and lost their place.

They were put in Joseph's care,
and one day fell into despair.

Joseph said :

Why do you look sad? Tell me, he bade.

They replied:

we've each had a dream and know not what they mean;
there's no expert here to understand
and to give a helping hand.

Joseph replied:

Only God can say what dreams portray –
what is meant; what they represent;
but tell them to me, and I'll tell you what portent I see.

The chief butler said:

In my dream were three branches on a vine
with ripened grapes, luscious, divine,
and I made them into wine
for Pharaoh's cup, for him to sup.

Joseph answered him:
In three days more,
Pharaoh will you to your place restore.

The chief baker said:
In my dream there were three baskets on my head,
the topmost one was filled with bread,
which birds did eat;
there – that's my dream complete.

Joseph answered him:
In three days, Pharaoh will cut off your head so you'll be
dead,
and I foresee he'll hang you from a tree,
and your flesh will birds eat as their meat.

Joseph's predictions both came true,
and his reputation grew.
To the departing butler he said:
When with Pharaoh you will be,
remember me;
tell him I'm the Hebrew innocent
and he should remove my punishment.

Part 3

Two years went past

before Joseph's next great forecast.

Pharaoh had a puzzling dream
and didn't understand its theme.

No one in his environment
had any concept of what it meant.

The chief butler said to Pharaoh:

I recall Joseph, a pundit supreme
who understands what all dreams mean.

When the baker and I were in your jail
and our dreams made us so sad and pale

he drew away the veil
and his predictions did not fail.

So Pharaoh put out his command :

Bring me that Joseph, who may understand.

Pharaoh's command was quickly sent
for Joseph to interpret his dream's portent.

So Joseph, newly dressed and clean
hurried to Pharaoh to interpret his dream.

Pharaoh explained his dream:

In a meadow where green grasses grow,
I stood on the bank of a river's flow;
seven healthy fat cows came out of it
and grazed on the grass for their benefit;
then emerged from the river their opposite,
seven cows ugly and lean,

their like in Egypt I'd never seen;
they devoured those who were healthy and fat,
yet – after that,
were as ugly and lean as they were before
since no fat on their bodies could they store.

Then Pharaoh told of a second dream:
On one stalk of corn came up seven ears, without peers,
that were ripe and full, and bountiful;
then, blasted by a wind from the east
and having a feast
were ears that were withered and thin
which ate up their fat and bountiful kin.

Pharaoh was upset, by worries beset;
about what the dreams meant
what was their portent?
He asked that Joseph explain.

Joseph spoke:
It is not I who gives release;
God shall give you an answer of peace.
God has shown the Pharaoh what He will do,
it is He has given to you a clue.

The seven cows and seven ears mean seven years.
First there will be seven years of plentiful food

which will conclude,
then will seven years of famine begin,
when people would be hungry and thin.
In order there not be too little to eat,
in order such a disaster defeat,
build granaries and places to store
supplies of corn and much, much more.

Find a man, discreet and wise,
give him control and let him advise;
post many overseers all through your land
make sure they follow your every command;
take a fifth of the plentiful years
and store it away for the coming lean years.

Pharaoh and all of his servants approved,
their doubts and their fears now completely removed.

Pharaoh declared to Joseph:
None is discreet and wise as you,
and no other is as good and true.
He gave him jewelry and clothes that were new,
and the very finest retinue,
and said: You will see that you'll be ruler next to me.
All my subjects will soon understand
that you, Joseph, will rule this land.

Part 4

Joseph, at thirty years of age,
was already acknowledged as a sage.

Pharaoh gave him a spouse to wed
and two sons were born from that marriage bed.

Joseph went out through Egypt's domain
and carried out his plan for grain;
so well-planned was his wise reign
that his goal for food he did attain.

The food he gathered in the seven good years
against the time of fears and tears,
was plentiful as grains of sand,
more than enough for Egypt's land.

The time of plenty came to an end
and famine swept the hungry land.
The food stores opened up their doors
and vast amounts of grain were poured;
The hungry were fed, to life were led..

To other lands the famine swept
and people there with hunger wept,
for granaries there had not been filled,
and sterile fields lay bare, untilled.
To Egypt now these peoples turned,

hoping they would not be spurned.

Joseph did not food withhold;
with compassion corn was sold.

By Joseph, the former slave,
who from God the counsel gave
were multitudes from cruel death saved
and he in history engraved.

To Canaan as well the famine came,
and Jacob to his sons exclaimed:
I hear that Egypt has much corn,
go there and buy, that we not mourn.
You older ten, go you there;
buy what corn they will you spare.

Part 5

Joseph was in full command,
and wisely dealt with huge demand.
Among the ones who came to buy-
from Egypt's ample food supply –
were Joseph's brothers ten
whom he'd now see again.

They came before Joseph ;
Joseph – resplendent in Egyptian dress,
gold jewelry did him caress.

High upon a gilded chair
he sat, with noble and majestic air.

His brothers bowed right to the ground
not knowing they had Joseph found,
but Joseph did them recognize
decided he would them chastise.

He glared, declared:
You are spies! You came here to scrutinize!

They responded with dismay:
No! No! they cried:
We are twelve sons of one man, from Canaan
The youngest does at home abide
and another has already died.

But they begged to no avail,
and three days they spent in jail,
their fate to bewail.

Then Joseph said to them:
You may take the corn away
but there's a price you have to pay.
As proof of what you say,
and to this agreement bind

leave Simeon behind,
You must soon appear back here,
with your youngest brother dear,
then all will be at peace
and Simeon will be released.

The brothers spoke among themselves::

God has to us sent this punishment
for our wicked sinful deed.

We heard our brother Joseph plead,
he begged in anguish to be freed,
but we, from jealousy and greed
did not him heed.

Reuben spoke out:

Did I not say to let him go,
to mercy show?

And now we have this time of woe!

They didn't know
that Joseph understood,
for an interpreter between them stood.
Joseph turned away and wept a tear
as they were to him very dear.
Still, he had Simeon bound before their eyes,
his true feelings to disguise
and perhaps them also to chastise.

He said:

Now, take your corn and leave

so your father will not grieve.

He ordered:

As to their sacks – put corn inside,
and each payment put in and hide.
'Twas Joseph's plan to cause chagrin
and bring to him his Benjamin.

So to Canaan they went back,
corn and money in each sack.

When there was no food left,

Jacob said:

Though I be of sons bereft
go – take gifts and double cash;
to Egypt dash.

With Benjamin leave,
even though I be bereaved.

And so it came to pass
that feeling much harassed,
his brothers to Egypt returned
and came to court their fate to learn.

When Joseph saw them come in
with his brother Benjamin,
he left the room to cry,
yet he continued with his lie.

He commanded:
Once again, put in their payments with their grain,
and to the sack of Benjamin
put in
my silver cup from which I sup.
The steward sent to them waylay,
after they were on their way,
searched around and the cup found.

To Joseph they were all returned
their protestations roughly spurned.
They pleaded innocence of that offence.

They cried:
We know not whence that cup came ,
Benjamin is not to blame;
thievery never was our aim.
Please mercy show and let us go.

Joseph declared:
I won't accept your plea- Benjamin must stay with me
only he will not be free.
The rest of you may leave,
no punishment will you receive.

Then Judah said:
I beg of you, take me instead.
Without him, our father will be dead.

Let me take my brother's place
that father once more see his face.

Joseph heard and then broke down,
and put aside his golden crown.
He wept, no more his secret kept,
for all about him saw and heard
his next words:

Behold, I am Joseph whom you sold!

Come near to me and see, said he,
his heart now filled with ecstasy.

But be not angry nor aggrieved.

God's Holy Will has been achieved.

He sent me here to preserve life
when everywhere was famine rife.

As far as I can gauge
for five more years will famine rage.
God sent me here to steer, to commandeer;
He gave me command of Egypt's land.

Hurry, tell father what I've explained,
so that you should not be blamed.

To our father also tell
that in Goshen you will dwell.

I'll take care of you
in your circumstances new.

He and Benjamin kissed and hugged
as love at their heartstrings tugged.

What a reunion was this!
as all were in bliss
and wept and kissed;
a family together again,
living in their own domain.

The brothers told Jacob the joyous news
from Joseph's interviews.

God spoke to Jacob that same night:
Jacob, Jacob, I am God, the God of your father –
never any other.

Go to Egypt without fright,
I shall keep you in my sight.
I'll make of you a great nation
your twelve sons its foundation.

So Jacob and all his kin,
all who belonged to him,
went into Goshen, in Egypt's land,
obedient to God's command,
and he died there,
in prophecy and in prayer.
He was buried in Canaan
in a cave used by Abraham.

Then Joseph's brothers with fear quaked
that vengeance on them he would take
for their iniquitous mistake.
But he said, for their sake:
I will not you forsake.
You tried to evil do if you could
but God turned it into good.
I'll take care of you, and feed –
that is my creed.
He was comforting and kind,
and graciously to them did bind.

Before Joseph died
to his family he prophesied:
God will bring you once again into Canaan,
the land of Abraham..
By Holy God, I do this swear
in this, my dying prayer.
Thus Joseph the excellent,
Joseph - God's instrument,
died content.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Moses, Giver of Laws ¹

*God's monumental instrument
for mankind's enlightenment.*

Part 1

Many years came and went
since Jacob was to Egypt sent.
Joseph's generation died,
Hebrews thrived and multiplied.
So much did they expand
that they filled the Pharaoh's ² land.
But their increase, and their might,
was a threat, in Pharaoh's sight.
His court heard him groan and say:
What if they do us betray
and not our enemies slay,
but instead make of us their prey?
So he new orders gave
and made them into lowly slaves.

¹ Exodus

² A Pharaoh who did not know Joseph.

No longer could they shepherds be,
no more did they have luxury;
they lived in abject poverty
and had no more liberty.
Work places were with Hebrews filled,
their bitter toil did cities build,¹
acreage of fields they tilled
and heavy tools they had to wield.

Bleeding backs beneath the lash
made weeping eyes and teeth to gnash.
Hopeless, helpless, they became
beneath this Pharaoh's brutal reign.

To destroy them was his aim,
to genocide, no less, attain.
He sent out a stern command
to Hebrew midwives in the land:
kill Hebrew babies who are male,
smother them before they wail!
But they were not afraid –
they disobeyed, excuses made;
they explained:
Hebrew women birth so fast
'fore we arrive the birthing's past!

¹ Pithom and Ramses

Pharaoh spoke with rage :
let me write another page!
I command - without fail -
drown all the Hebrew baby males!
wrest them from their mother's breast,
whether they suck or walk or crawl,
take them all and drown them all.
Oh! what a terrible sight!¹
Babies screamed and cried with fright;
mothers in their tragic plight
for their children tried to fight;
but they lost, in that dreadful holocaust.

Part 2 .

One mother of the Levi clan
had a plan.
She hid her newborn baby boy
whom she loved with pride and joy;
for three months she kept him hid
knowing that the law forbid.
He will not die, she said,
in terror and in dread.
She made a very tiny ark ²

¹ Author's image.

² Basket

in which her baby could embark;
down the river it could float
like a little boat.

She placed the ark among some reeds
hoping he'd be found and freed.
Sister Miriam hid to see
what the baby's fate might be.

Pharaoh's daughter was his favourite¹ -
she was exquisite.
Her jet-black hair was long and straight,
her darkened eyes expressive, great.
No child had grown within her womb
no motherhood did her illumine.
As she bathed at riverside
God did the tiny basket guide.
She bade her maid:
That basket that I see,
fetch and bring it here to me.
When she saw the infant weep,
she wanted him to keep.
Compassion filled her heart
and she did not want from him to part.
She exclaimed: This child is of the Hebrew clan

¹ Author's image

and she said to Miriam
Go - find a woman of his kind, who will him nurse
and I will pay her from my purse.
What luck! what pluck!
Miriam brought his own mother, not another.
and a deal was struck –
that his mother give him suck.
And she was paid
each time there was a feeding made.

When the nursing was all done,
he was adopted as a son.
Pharaoh's daughter, his new mother
gave him a name
to be of holy fame –
as Moses ¹ would he hence be known,
in his youth, and when he'd grown.

Part 3

Moses, a prince, a royal son,
whose face shone like the sun,
was tall and handsome, strong and brave, ²
all that his mother ever craved.

¹ Because she drew him from the river.

² Author's image

One day, 'mongst Hebrew slaves he went,
saw hardships that they underwent,
saw bleeding backs, bowed and bent,
how with exhaustion they were spent.

He saw a vicious punishment,
and could bear no more, could not ignore,
knocked the Egyptian boss to the ground,
thought no one saw, or was around.

The overseer struck his head
and fell down dead.

Then it was spoken of by Hebrew slaves
that with violence the prince behaved.

Moses spoke in fear and dread:

Surely is this story spread!

Pharaoh heard of it and said:

Let Moses the prince be dead!

and so from Egypt Moses fled.

Part 4

The desert was cruel and hot and dry,¹

hot enough an egg to fry;

the yellow pitiless sun blazed high

in the cloudless azure sky.

The blowing sand, the biting flies

¹ Author's image

hurt the skin and stung the eyes.

The cutting wind so strong did blow ¹
that walking was both hard and slow.

Moses trudged against the blast
determined and steadfast,
until at last

he came upon a watering well,
near which Jethro and his daughters dwelled.

Some shepherds drove the girls away
but Moses came and helped them stay.

By marriage to the oldest one
new life for Moses had begun,
and he begat Gershom, a son.

A new king now sat on Egypt's throne,
and the Hebrews sighed and groaned,
as they toiled in Egypt's land
beneath his brutal savage hand—
slaves on a downward slippery slope,
without help or hope.

God in His heaven saw their pain
saw them tortured , saw them slain,
and looked upon them once again
to rescue from that cruel domain -
which service He would to them grant

because of His old covenant.

Moses Jethro's sheep did guide
onto a mountainside
where God came and did abide.
There he saw an awesome sight –
a bush was burning bright
with an angel deep inside.
Although the bush was in a fiery plume
it was not by flame consumed.
Moses turned to gaze upon that bush ablaze
when he heard God call, to him forestall.

God said to him:

Moses, Moses, here am I!

Draw not nigh.

Your shoes you must untie
and take them off; you must comply
for the ground you occupy
has by me been sanctified.

Where you stand is holy land.

I am the God of Abraham
and of the Hebrew clan.

Moses did as God had bade,
hid his face and was afraid.

God said:

I've heard my people's cries

and see how they agonize:
I've seen their suffering and their pain
under this cruel Pharaoh's reign.

Their slavery must cease
so I will bring about release –
to a land where they'll be free,
a land of milk and honey,
where Canaanites and others dwell –
this I now to you foretell.

I now fulfill My covenant;
to the Pharaoh you'll be sent
to set my people free,
to take them from their agony,
to pursue their destiny.

Moses protested:
Who am I, that I should do this deed
and ask that Hebrew slaves be freed?

Said God:

I will surely be with you, as this mission you pursue.

Go - tell the Pharaoh: let my people go.

When they're out of Egypt's land
you'll serve me here and understand.

Moses said:

What if your people ask Your Name?
God explained:
My name is I AM THAT I AM,¹
the God of Abraham,
My name, which will forever live
now unto you and them I give.
Tell the elders what I've said
and that in the time ahead
you and they will to the Pharaoh say:
We wish in the wilderness to stay
for three whole days
where to our God we'll sacrifice and pray.
I'm sure the king won't let you go, no! no!
but I will smite Egypt's land
with my Mighty Hand,
and then he'll let you go,
and clothes and jewels will he bestow.

Moses said:
They won't believe
that I've these words from You received.
So God showed him two signs divine:
His rod changed to a snake, ready to attack,
and then changed back;
His hand was turned leprous and white

¹Exodus 3:14.

and then God made it healthy and right.

And, God said :

If they won't hear you, I'll them subdue;
I'll turn their water into blood.
Said Moses: Oh Lord, at speech I am a dud;
my tongue is slow and words don't flow.

And the Lord God answered him:

I'll show you the way
and teach you what to say.
Moses argued again, but in vain,
for God was angered and He said:
Aaron your brother can speak well and compel;
he'll speak for you in your interview.
Go – take with you your rod
to do the miracles from God.
So Moses did as he was bid.
With wife and son, to Egypt he returned
to carry out all that he had learned.

Aaron, receiving God's impress
went out into the wilderness,
that he might Moses meet
and, with a brother's kiss him greet.
Moses told of God's design,
the tasks that He'd to them assigned;

he told of all the words and signs,
how Pharaoh would be undermined.
With the people Moses shared
all that God to him declared.
The Hebrews heard and they believed
that their God would them relieve,
release them from their servitude.
Their happiness they did exude,
gave Him their heartfelt gratitude.

What a scene:
Pharaoh's court convened;
Pharaoh, cloaked in splendour and in luxury,
Moses and Aaron, clothed in homespun, oozing poverty.
Moses and Aaron said to the great Pharaoh:
The Lord our God has said – let My people go
unto the wilderness, where I will bless
their sacrifice to Me;
for this they must be free
for days that number three.

The Pharaoh answered with disdain –
You'll have no gain.
Who is this Lord, that I should Him obey?
I know not Him, nor His way.
I will not send the slaves away,
here they are and here they stay!

Aaron and Moses answered:
Our God said we must Him obey,
in the desert stay, to sacrifice and pray.
If we don't go where we are sent
we might receive His punishment.
Please, we pray, relent.

Said arrogant Pharaoh:
I will *not* let your people go.
My heavy hand you soon will know.
You wish that they their work forsake,
well – that's your big mistake.
Then Pharaoh sent out this command
to the taskmasters in the land:

Tell the slaves:
Make all your bricks without our straw,
and they must be without a flaw.
So the slaves searched hard for stubble
in the fields and in the rubble.
The taskmasters urged them on again:
You must your quotas still maintain!

The Hebrew foremen, beaten in vain,
went to the Pharaoh to complain:
strawless bricks cannot be made –
bricks of any grade;
and then they knelt, much afraid.

Pharaoh declared:

Believe that you'll not straw receive
and you your quotas must achieve
or for sure you will be grieved.
The foremen saw that they were caught,
in a spot with evil fraught;
the Pharaoh could not by them be fought
and they were very much distraught.

Then help from Moses they besought,
and why had Moses trouble brought?

To God went Moses with lament:

Why have You this evil sent
which does the Hebrew slaves torment?

Why have I been sent,
for there has been no betterment,
instead there has been detriment!
for Pharaoh has been virulent
with his malicious punishment.

And the Lord said to Moses:

Now you shall see how I shall set them free.
Pharaoh will rue what I shall do.
He will release them from their woe,
and with a strong hand let them go.
By his command they'll leave his land!

I AM the Lord!
To Abraham, Isaac and Jacob I've appeared
and they all have Me revered.
And now – I to you proclaim,
that JEHOVAH 's My true Name!
With them I made a covenant
and promised I would to them grant
the fertile rich land of Canaan
as homeland for their homeless clan.

Tell the children of Israel
that they will in Canaan dwell.
They are my people; I AM their God;
I AM their strength and rod.
I've seen their hardship
'neath the whip.
I'll take them out of Egypt's land,
on a journey overland
to a heritage of their own,
where their own seeds can be sown,
where their destiny they shall fulfill
according to My promise and My will.

Moses told the people what God said,
but they felt misled;
they did not believe,
and his purpose was not achieved.

God said to Moses:
Go to Pharaoh– I'll tell you what to say,
both you and Aaron must obey.
I will harden Pharaoh's heart
that he not let the slaves depart,
then – I'll do wonders, miracles and signs
which will together all combine,
so Pharaoh will be undermined,
so that they'll remove his blind.
He will no longer My will flout
and he will let My people out.
After each plague that I will send
Pharaoh will not move or bend
but he will harden more his heart,
and not let the slaves depart.

The signs and miracles are these
that will the Egyptian's seize:
Firstly as a sign from God,
Aaron's rod turned to a snake and then turned back into a
rod
Then magicians in their hate,
did Aaron's action imitate,
and rods to snakes also create.
Aaron's snake the others ate,
which did the courtiers devastate.

Then, came plagues numbering ten.
After each, Pharaoh felt tormented and relented;
then God hardened Pharaoh's heart
and he let not the slaves depart.

Plague I: All the waters turned to blood,
the Nile became a gory flood;
for seven days, everywhere
Egyptians fell into despair.

Plague II: All the fish in rivers died,
and all of Egypt's people cried.

Plague III: Frogs covered all the smitten land;
in every corner they were crammed.
Pharaoh begged the Lord:
Take them from the land away
only in the rivers let them stay;
then the frogs all died, stank up the land,
a horror for all to withstand.

Plague IV: And then there came the plague of lice
infecting man and beast and mice;
what a heavy price!

Plague V: Following came swarms of flies,
the Egyptians to chastise;
but in Goshen was no blight,
flies did not the Hebrews bite.

Plague VI: And next came a bad murrain,¹
animals sickened and in pain;

again, only Egyptian ones were slain,
for, in the Hebrew domain
all in good health remained.
This sign came at a given time
to prove 'twas God did that achieve,
to make the Pharaoh to believe.

Plague VII: Then came boils on everyone,
man and beast were overrun,
running sores, and blood and pain,
but only in Egypt's domain.

*God said to Moses:
Say to Pharaoh – let my people go,
or more plagues will fall on you,
and God's might will you undo.*

¹An illness that affects only animals.

*So God's power you will know,
He will now a terror show.*

Plague VIII: God sent thunder, rain, and giant hail,
which made Egyptians quake and wail;
with fire it burned upon the ground,
killed targets wherever found.
Never in Egypt was such a plight,
such a dreadful lethal sight,
as when God with hail the land did smite.
Only in Goshen was sunlight
and no killer hail in sight.

Plague IX: Locusts next were sent;
to all the trees and fields they went,
'till of trees and herbs the hail had left
the land was stripped and was bereft;

'Twas ravaged and made bare
with no green seen anywhere.

Plague X: Then thick darkness for three days;
not a glimmer of sun's rays.
But in Goshen there was light,
in all of it the sun shone bright.

Pharaoh hardened still his heart

and would not let the slaves depart.

God said to Moses:

Before this misery is past
the Pharaoh's heart will be aghast;
you must know,
he WILL let my people go.
All first-born are going to die,
and there will be such an outcry
as was never heard before
from Egyptian throats to pour.

The Pharaoh's heir will not be spared,
the parents left in deep despair;
the lowest, the least and all the beasts
will be bereaved and sorely grieved.

Moses thought: ¹

what a terrible loss and curse,
Could anything be worse?

God spoke:

The angel of death will the Hebrews ignore
if lamb's blood is smeared upon their door.

This will be the Lord's *passover*
when his people are passed over.

Eat only roast of lamb, bitter herbs, unleavened bread

¹ Author's image.

on this night of death and dread;
and in memory of this blight
always celebrate this night.

Pharaoh, from the depth of grief
to the Hebrews gave relief.
Wishing that they all were dead
with hate to Moses he declared:
Take your people and get lost!
Your presence makes too high a cost.
Go! I command you leave this land;
take your flocks and herds and leave
before we're even more bereaved.

The Hebrews did as Moses bid.
They took Egyptian fine garments
which happily to them were lent;
as well as jewels, silver, gold,
as God had to them foretold.
They took all that they might need
and they left – at long last freed!

The Lord led the way;
In a pillar of cloud by day
He showed them their way;
in a pillar of fire by night
He gave them the needed light.

After the deed was done
and the slaves were on the run,
Pharaoh's court had much regret,
concerned their needs would not be met.

The Pharaoh they beset—
who will work for us? they fussed;
without slaves, our life is black,
send the army, bring them back!

And God hardened the Pharaoh's heart
so he'd tell his army to depart.

In fury did they ride
swift horses side by side.¹

The best chariots in the land
rode at Pharaoh's cruel command;
six hundred strongly built, painted with gilt,
large spoked wheels, trimmed with red,
a scary sight, evoking dread.

Thundering steeds, at frantic speeds,
they surged into attack
with a rage demoniac;
their shouts rang out, their enemy to rout.

Meanwhile, Hebrews encamped by the sea
heard the sounds, wished to flee,
so to God they sent a plea.

¹ Author's image

With Moses they spoke, to disagree:

Its true we are a people free,
but have you brought us here to die?

How do your acts you justify?

In Egypt we were at least alive,
but out here we may not survive!

Moses spoke to them:

Don't be afraid, stand still;

watch and see what is God's will.

The pillar of cloud came right around
and stood between,

so by Egyptians dark was seen
but light shone on the Hebrew scene.

Moses said:

He'll save all of you this day,
you'll not be the Pharaoh's prey.

You'll never see Egypt again
and you will not be harmed or slain.

The Lord will for you fight,
you'll soon see His Holy Might.

The Lord said to Moses:

Do not cry out to Me;

Speak to those who are now free;

bid them go— flee from foe;

lift up your rod

in the name of God!

Stretch out your hand, as I command!

The Red sea will then in two divide —

walls of water on each side,
and in between, like a ravine,
will be found safe dry ground.

Moses did as God had bid.
With thundering sound, appeared the ground
as waters parted, rolled away;
and Hebrews ran without delay
across the dry and safe and sandy way.
Egyptians charged into the sea
in pursuit of victory.

Then God to Moses said:
Stretch out your hand, to bring the waters back again
upon the chariots and the men.

Moses did as God had bid.
The roaring waters poured back down
and the Egyptians all were drowned.
Dead bodies littered all the shore,
no one was left of that large corps.
God's own plan destroyed them to a man,
their voices were forever stilled
by God's Power and God's Will.

The Israelites, on the other side,
having crossed the safe divide,
wept and shouted with delight.
They saw how their God could smite,
rescuing every Israelite,

and so they sang –
Oh! how they sang, of each detail
of their wonderful miraculous tale,
of how Egypt's might had failed
and how God's Power had prevailed,
of how they crossed on dry safe ground,
and how Egyptians had been drowned.
'Twas a song, long and strong,
a song of praise to God and victory
of people who now felt so free.
And Moses' sister Miriam danced –
she and the women danced as if entranced,
and sang their joyous song of their God's praise,
faces radiant and ablaze.

And perceiving what their God achieved,
Israelites feared, in Him believed,
believed His Power and his Might,
and His ability to smite.
Faith in Moses was then born
on that stupendous fateful morn.

Part 5

The wilderness lay straight ahead,
and through it were the people led.
When bitter water could not slake thirst
they complained and felt accursed –

but God gave
the sweet water that they craved
and his people thus were saved.

God said:

If you follow all my laws
I will not from you withdraw.
I will give you of My care,
anytime, and everywhere.

When hunger struck He did not fail,
but brought them quail.
In the mornings they were fed
with wondrous tasty manna bread.

And when there came a thirst – the worst,
God to Moses said - (so His people not drop dead):

I shall stand upon that rock,
its sweet water to unlock;
use the rod that is your own,
strike upon that rocky stone
and water will begin to flow
thus removing Israel's woe.

In month three, after they were free,
when they came to dry Sinai,
Moses spied
God's mount outlined against the sky.
Then Moses on that mountain trod
to converse with Holy God.

God said to him:

Say to all the Israelites,

how I did Egyptians fight;
how I brought you here on eagle's wings –
to Myself I did you bring.
If you are obedient, and if you keep my covenant
I'll treasure you above the rest
and you'll be blest.
You shall be a holy nation
for my world a foundation.

Moses told the elders what occurred
and passed to them God's sacred Word.

The people said:
we will God obey
and walk in His holy way.

And the Lord said to Moses:
I shall come in a thick cloud
and to my people speak aloud.
Sanctify them all
that no harm may them befall.
Let them cleanse all that they wear
and on day three they should prepare.
But– set a boundary around
that they not touch this holy mount.

On the third day, in the morn,
broke thunder, lightning, as a storm.
Upon the mount was a thick cloud,
and a trumpet voice, so very loud,
that people trembled, shook with fear
at God's presence, now so near!

Moses brought them to God meet,
but at a distance most discreet.

The Lord descended in a fire,
the mountain quaked as to expire,
and all of it was cloaked in smoke,
which much wonder did evoke.

And God said to Moses:
Only you and Aaron come to Me
to hear My laws and My decrees;
All the rest must stay away
or the price of death they'll pay.

And then God spoke the following Words
which forever must be heard:

I AM the Lord thy God, He said, ¹
out from Egypt I you led
and I saved you when you fled.
These commandments, ten and true
now I give to all of you.

I. I Am the only God to reign.

¹ Exodus 20: 2 to 17

- II. My holy Name take not in vain,
Do not My holy Name profane.
- III. Do not graven images make;
worship such as these forsake,
or punishment will overtake
you and your heirs for your mistake.
- IV Keep holy the Sabbath day.
- V Honour your parents in God's way.
- VI Do not murder.
- VII Adultery do not commit,
I do not this act permit.
- VIII Steal not that which others own,
reap only that which you have sown.
- IX Falsify not others' name, nor him falsely blame.
- X Covet not your neighbour's wife
nor his possessions, way of life.

After these sacred events,
God handed down His great judgments;¹
.Many statutes, rules He sent
the Ten Commandments to augment,
and ordinances that they should know,
that His holy way did show.
Of many things did God instruct,

¹ Leviticus; Numbers; Deuteronomy

a religion to construct.
On the mountain high, Sinai,
God gave Moses tablets two,
with Ten Commandments written true,
written for him and me and you,
written by the very Finger of God
on that mountain where He trod.

All this was a sign
of the Lord God's great design.

Part 6

While Moses was away so long,
the people – not spiritually strong –
did wrong.

Wanting a god that they could see,
they came to Aaron with a plea.

Aaron said: give me your gold.
He made a mold to hold the gold,
and from that a calf they could behold.

In the morning that next came
that golden calf their god became.
Although unfit they worshipped it.

They ate and drank and played
and from their God they badly strayed.

The Lord said to Moses:
Go back down below!
I tell you that you should know,
all is disrupted –
and your people are corrupted.
They worship a golden calf;
now they'll have an epitaph!
I will them reject, for they are stiffnecked.¹
Soon they'll meet their doom
for I will them consume.
But as for you –
I will make from you a great nation –
using you as its foundation.

In desperation Moses argued with the Lord:
What would the Egyptians say
if now you make the Hebrews pay?
And remember your own covenant
to Abraham you did present;
You said his seed you'd multiply
for them his land you'd sanctify.
So – please consent to relent.
And the Lord consented and relented.

Down the mountain Moses strode,

¹ Rebellious

from God's abode,
his face was stern, his eyes burned ¹

Grasped tightly in both hands,
by God's command,
were the tablets which God wrote,
His Commandments to denote.
By the Finger of God were they writ ,
for the world's benefit.

From the Hebrew camping grounds,
Joshua ² heard raucous sounds;
sounds of dancing and of song,
from the calf-worshipping throng.
Moses anger knew no bounds;
he broke the tablets on the ground.

The golden calf he burned to ash,
mixed that with water, made a mash,
forced the people it to drink –
a punishment from which to shrink.

He turned to Aaron, to upbraid,
that the golden calf was made,

¹ Author's image

² Joshua was waiting at the foot of the mountain

but Aaron lame excuses made
and blame upon the people laid.

Then standing at the campground gate
Moses gave a choice of fate.

He roared:

Who is with the Lord?

Let him come to me here, come near!

The Levis came to him, faces grim.

They heard Moses say:

The Lord has ordained –

kill those who in their place remained!

The Levis did as Moses bid.

Three thousand men were that day slain,
to remove their sinful stain.

Moses spoke unto those left

many saddened and bereft:

I'll ask the Lord that I atone

for the bad sin that was shown.

And to the Lord he said and pled:

the people sinned, but please forgive,

if not, do not let me live.

To Moses God declared:

You all will go into Canaan,

the land I promised Abraham.
An angel will I send to guide,
with all of you he will abide.

Those pagan tribes that now there dwell
I will soon drive out and quell;
but I will not go along
for your people are headstrong.¹
I might be tempted to consume
and then they might meet their doom..

The people then had much regret
and did fret
and put not on their ornaments
to show the Lord their penitence.

Then said the Lord to Moses:
Tell them I'll go along with them
and that I will not them condemn.

The Tabernacle² of the congregation,
of this newly-cleansed and ordained nation,
was visited by every one
who chose the Lord God for his own.

¹ Rebellious

² A portable tent-like place of worship.

When Moses went inside,
with the good Lord to abide
there stood a pillar of cloud
while God and Moses talked aloud,
conversing hidden face to Face
in that holy place,
as friend to Friend
when God chose to there descend;
and God knew Moses by his name,
gave him respect, gave him acclaim.
But never could Moses see God's Face,
for that would his life erase.

The Lord God said to Moses:
Make tablets like the two you broke,
at the time you were provoked;
in the morning up the mountain come again
the Ten Commandments to obtain.
And Moses did as God had bid.

The Lord came down in a cloud,
and spoke His Holy Name aloud.
He proclaimed:
The Lord, the Lord God is merciful,
good, long-suffering ¹ and truthful;

¹ Slow to anger

transgressions, iniquity, and sin
are forgiven man by Him.

Yet, the guilty ones will pay,
also the heirs of those who stray;
until the fourth generation
will they bear my condemnation.

Moses said to God:
Lord, come to us, forgive offence,
have us for Your inheritance.

And the Lord answered Moses:
I make with you a covenant
which I freely grant;
marvels for you all
will from me for you befall.

I now command,
journey on to Canaan land;
but do not fall into a snare
with the people who live there;
do not with them interact,
destroy religious artifacts;
their religions must be spurned
and their groves must be burned.
Worship only Me, your jealous Lord
who can destroy all with My sword.

Then the Lord
spoke for Moses to record:
Gave him the ordinances, things to do,¹
laws, rules and statutes to pursue;
told of ways that He'd assist –
much was written in God's list.

For forty days and forty nights
Moses stayed on Sinai's heights.
He did not drink, nor did he eat
while he lived in that retreat.
God's Commandments there he wrote
as to him God did them quote.

When he came down he did not know
that his face shone, was all aglow,
so much so that people feared
to him approach, to him come near.

He talked with Aaron and the rest,
informed them at the Lord's behest,
gave them all the Lord had told,
and naught did he from them withhold.
He did not fail
to hide his face behind a veil,

¹ In Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

only when with God he spoke
did he his radiant face uncloak.

Within the Tabernacle tent,
Moses, always reverent,
placed the sacred Ark, and all the rest
that by the Lord God had been blest.
He anointed it and sanctified,¹
ready for God there to abide.

Then a cloud covered all the tent
when the Lord was resident;
then 'twas with His glory filled,
and the people were all thrilled.
The cloud stayed o'er the tent by day
the Lord's presence to display;
and fire was on it in the night,
to shine for all of Israel's sight.

When the Lord's cloud did depart,
they knew they could a journey start,
And so – the Lord showed them the way
and they did not Him disobey.

¹ Numbers

Part 7 ¹

For forty years of fears and tears,
God led them through the wilderness
that they might learn not to transgress,
watching to see if they'd progress.

God wanted proof - to see
if they would learn humility,
eliminate iniquity, in all of its entirety,
keep His Commandments, walk in His way, ²
His ordinances not betray,
give to Him their reverence ³
and worship Him with diligence.

They were fed with manna bread,
and given water as He led,
yet He gave them hunger, gave them thirst
so that at times they felt accursed.
Once again, when thirst was at its worst,
God to Moses said:
Speak to this rock and ask ⁴
for water for your empty cask;

¹ From Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy

² Leviticus 26:3

³ Deuteronomy 8:6

⁴ Numbers 20 :7-12

but instead Moses went ahead,
struck twice the rock with his own rod –
the once he disobeyed his God.
Then, Moses heard the Lord God say,
the price that he would have to pay –
that he could not go into Canaan,
promised to the Hebrew clan.

But, through Moses, His instrument, again God sent
His statutes absolute;¹
the ordinances² that He gave
taught them how they should behave;
over and over came the Laws³
to do their duties without flaws.

Despite those who complained and sneered
Moses persevered.
He reminded how they'd been enslaved,⁴
and how the Lord God had them saved;
taught not to rob nor to defraud;
nor falsehoods, slanders to create;
taught them that they should not hate,
but love the stranger in their gate;

¹ Leviticus 20:22, and 25:18

² Leviticus 18:4

³ Leviticus 26:46

⁴ Leviticus 19:11-18 and 34

also to love and to keep dear
all the people who live near;
not to bear grudges, take vengeance,
and give to God their reverence.
He taught them to Lord God obey,¹
and the Lord taught them to say:²

“Hear O Israel,
the Lord our God,
the Lord is One;
thou shalt love thy God
with all thy heart
and with all thy soul
and with all thy might.”

God had chosen the Israelites³
to be holy in His sight,
that He might in them delight.

In forty years, the older ones had passed away,
the younger did not God betray.
Finally, God did not delay,
and they toward Canaan made their way.
Ahead the Jordan river lay;

¹ Deuteronomy 11:1

² Deuteronomy 6 :4

³ Deuteronomy 14:2

the view took Moses' breath away,
as God showed him a wondrous sight,
from a sunlit mountain height –
and said:

Across that river is Canaan
the land I promised Abraham.

You can see, but can't go there –
this last journey you can't share!
So Moses in Moab did reside until he died, –
still strong, his eyes still young.
After his hundred and twenty years
to his people he was dear.
At his death they wept and mourned
his memory with love adorned.

EPILOGUE

*Moses, God's choice to be His voice;
Moses, who spoke with Him, hidden¹ face to Face
in the Holy Sacred place;²
Moses, giver of laws, leader of men,
who brought us the Commandments Ten,
the laws God sent as cornerstone –
seeds sown from His Holy Throne.
Moses, whom God sent, Himself to represent.*

¹ Exodus 33:20.

² In the Tabernacle.