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EZRA 8: 1 Now these are the heads of their fathers' households, and this is the genealogy of those who went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king:

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The genealogy of the chief persons who went with Ezra from Babylon, Ezr 8:1-14. He gathers them together at Ahava; and finding among them no Levites, he sends confidential persons to the river of Ahava, who return with many Levites and Nethinim, Ezr 8:15-20. He proclaims a fast at Ahava for Divine protection on their journey, Ezr 8:21-23. He delivers to the care of the priests etc., the silver, gold, and sacred vessels, that they might carry them to Jerusalem, and deliver them to the high priest, Ezr 8:24-30. They depart from Ahava, and come to Jerusalem, Ezr 8:31, Ezr 8:32. The vessels are weighed and the weight registered, Ezr 8:33, Ezr 8:34. They offer burnt-offerings to God, Ezr 8:35; deliver the king's commissions to his lieutenants, by whom they are furthered in their work, Ezr 8:36.

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EZRA 8: 2 Of the sons of Phinehas, Gershom. Of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel. Of the sons of David, Hattush.

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Verse 2

Gershom - One of the descendants of Phinehas, son of Eliazar.

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EZRA 8: 3 Of the sons of Shecaniah, of the sons of Parosh, Zechariah; and with him were reckoned by genealogy of the males one hundred fifty.

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Verse 3

Of the sons of Shechaniah - There were three of this name; the second is mentioned Ezr 8:6, and the third Ezr 10:2. They were all different persons, as may be seen from their fathers' houses.

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EZRA 8: 4 Of the sons of Pahathmoab, Eliehoenai the son of Zerahiah; and with him two hundred males.

EZRA 8: 5 Of the sons of Shecaniah, the son of Jahaziel; and with him three hundred males.

EZRA 8: 6 Of the sons of Adin, Ebed the son of Jonathan; and with him fifty males.

EZRA 8: 7 Of the sons of Elam, Jeshaiiah the son of Athaliah; and with him seventy males.

EZRA 8: 8 Of the sons of Shephatiah, Zebadiah the son of Michael; and with him eighty males.

EZRA 8: 9 Of the sons of Joab, Obadiah the son of Jehiel; and with him two hundred and eighteen males.

EZRA 8: 10 Of the sons of Shelomith, the son of Josiphiah; and with him one hundred sixty males.

EZRA 8: 11 Of the sons of Bebai, Zechariah the son of Bebai; and with him twenty-eight males.

EZRA 8: 12 Of the sons of Azgad, Johanan the son of Hakkatan; and with him one hundred ten males.

EZRA 8: 13 Of the sons of Adonikam, who were the last; and these are their names: Eliphelet, Jeuel, and Shemaiah; and with them sixty males.

EZRA 8: 14 Of the sons of Bigvai, Uthai and Zabbud; and with them seventy males.

EZRA 8: 15 I gathered them together to the river that runs to Ahava; and there we encamped three days: and I viewed the people, and the priests, and found there none of the sons of Levi.

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#### Verse 15

The river that runneth to Ahava - Ahava was a river itself, which is supposed to be the same that is called Diava or Adiava, in the province of Adiabene; and perhaps the place whence the people of Ava came who were brought by the king of Assyria to Palestine, 2Kgs 17:24.

None of the sons of Levi - None that were simply Levites. He found priests, and they were sons of Levi; but no Levites that were not priests.

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EZRA 8: 16 Then sent I for Eliezer, for Ariel, for Shemaiah, and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and for Elnathan, and for Nathan, and for Zechariah, and for Meshullam, chief men; also for Joiarib, and for Elnathan, who were teachers.

EZRA 8: 17 I sent them out to Iddo the chief at the place Casiphia; and I told them what they should tell Iddo, and his brothers the Nethinim, at the place Casiphia, that they should bring to us ministers for the house of our God.

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#### Verse 17

At the place Casiphia - The most judicious commentators are agreed that by Casiphia, the Caspian mountains, between Media and Hyrcania, are intended; where, probably, the Nethinim were employed in working silver mines: קֶסֶף keseph, from which the word comes, signifies silver.

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EZRA 8: 18 According to the good hand of our God on us they brought us a man of discretion, of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; and Sherebiah, with his sons and his brothers, eighteen;

EZRA 8: 19 and Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiiah of the sons of Merari, his brothers and their sons, twenty;

EZRA 8: 20 and of the Nethinim, whom David and the princes had given for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinim: all of them were mentioned by name.

EZRA 8: 21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek of him a straight way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

EZRA 8: 22 For I was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the way, because we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God is on all those who seek him, for good; but his power and his wrath is against all those who forsake him."

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#### Verse 22

I was ashamed to require - a band - He had represented God, the object of his worship, as supremely powerful, and as having the strongest affection for his true followers: he could not, therefore, consistently with his declarations, ask a band of soldiers from the king to protect them on the way, when they were going expressly to rebuild the temple of Jehovah, and restore his worship. He therefore found it necessary to seek the Lord by fasting and prayer, that they might have from Him those succours without which they might become a prey to their enemies; and then the religion which they professed would be considered by the heathen as false and vain. Thus we see that this good man had more anxiety for the glory of God than for his own personal safety.

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EZRA 8: 23 So we fasted and begged our God for this: and he was entreated of us.

EZRA 8: 24 Then I set apart twelve of the chiefs of the priests, even Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brothers with them,

EZRA 8: 25 and weighed to them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, even the offering for the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his princes, and all Israel there present, had offered:

EZRA 8: 26 I weighed into their hand six hundred fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels one hundred talents; of gold one hundred talents;

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#### Verse 26

Silver vessels a hundred talents - That is, The weight of all the silver vessels amounted to one hundred talents; not that there were one hundred vessels of silver, each a talent in weight.

Reckoning in round sums, 650 talents of silver at 450 the talent, amount to 292,500 sterling. Silver vessels, 100 talents, amount to 45,000; gold, 100 talents, at 7,000 per talent, amount to 700,000 independently of the 20 basons of gold, amounting to 1000 drachms. Now the golden drachm or daric was worth about 1. 2s., therefore these basons were worth 1100; the whole amounting to 1,038, 600 sterling. But these different weights and coins are variously computed; some making the silver talent only 353 11s. 10 1/2 d., and the talent of gold 5057 15s. 1 1/2 d., calculations which I have elsewhere introduced.

Two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold - What these were we cannot tell. The Syriac translates *nechoso corinthio toba*, to be vessels of the best Corinthian brass; so called from the brass found after the burning of Corinth by Lucius Mummius, which was brass, copper, gold, and silver, all melted together, as is generally supposed. But it was probably some factitious metal made there, that took the polish and assumed the brightness of gold, and because of its hardness was more durable. There is still a certain factitious metal of this kind, made among the Asiatics. I have seen this metal often made; it is as bright and fine as gold, takes a most exquisite polish, and will scarcely tarnish. I have kept this exposed to every variation of the air, even among old iron, brass, copper,

etc., for twenty years together, without being scarcely at all oxidized. It requires much art in the making, but the constituent materials are of small value. Vessels of this metal, because of their lustre and durability for ornamental and domestic uses, are in many respects more valuable than gold itself. The only difficulty is to get at first the true color, which depends on the degree of heat, and the time employed in fusion; but there are, however, proper rules to ascertain them. This metal is widely different from the or molu of France and England, is less expensive, and much more valuable.

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EZRA 8: 27 and twenty bowls of gold, of one thousand darics; and two vessels of fine bright brass, precious as gold.

EZRA 8: 28 I said to them, "You are holy to the LORD, and the vessels are holy; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering to the LORD, the God of your fathers.

EZRA 8: 29 Watch, and keep them, until you weigh them before the chiefs of the priests and the Levites, and the princes of the fathers' households of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the rooms of the LORD's house."

EZRA 8: 30 So the priests and the Levites received the weight of the silver and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem to the house of our God.

EZRA 8: 31 Then we departed from the river Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go to Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was on us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the bandit by the way.

EZRA 8: 32 We came to Jerusalem, and stayed there three days.

EZRA 8: 33 On the fourth day the silver and the gold and the vessels were weighed in the house of our God into the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest; and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them was Jozabad the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the son of Binnui, the Levite;

EZRA 8: 34 the whole by number and by weight: and all the weight was written at that time.

EZRA 8: 35 The children of the captivity, who had come out of exile, offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel, twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and twelve male goats for a sin offering: all this was a burnt offering to the LORD.

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#### Verse 35

Twelve bullocks for all Israel - Though of tribes there were only Judah and Benjamin, yet they offered a bullock for every tribe, as if present. There can be little doubt that there were individuals there from all the twelve tribes, possibly some families of each; but no complete tribe but those mentioned above.

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EZRA 8: 36 They delivered the king's commissions to the king's satraps, and to the governors beyond the River: and they furthered the people and God's house.

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## Verse 36

The king's lieutenants - אַחַשְׁדַּרְפְּנֵי achashdarpenev: this is generally understood to mean lieutenant or deputy, and is probably of Persian origin, though here greatly corrupted. The Vulgate renders it regis satrapis, to the satraps of the king, which is the Persian satrab. A viceroy in Persian is soubahdar; viceroys, soubahdaran. Darafreen signifies a person in whom one has confidence; and achi is an epithet of a vizir. These two words conjoined will make nearly that of the text. But I do not give any of these etymologies with confidence. Other words might be proposed as candidates, but where there is so little certainty, conjecture is useless. Were it necessary a dissertation might be written on the Persian words, and Persian forms of speech, in this and the two following books; but probably after my toil few of my readers would thank me for my pains.