

Week 13 - SHEMOT (Names)  
Exodus 1:1–6:1; Isaiah 27:6–28:13, 29:22–23; Jeremiah 1:1–2:3; Romans 12:1–21

“God has a Greater Plan for even our Failures”

“These are the **names** [ve'eleh shemot] of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family.” Exodus 1:1

In last week’s Torah Reading, the first of the five books of Moses, Genesis, ended with the deaths of Jacob and Joseph.

This week, we begin the second book of the Torah, Exodus, called **Shemot** in Hebrew, which means names.

This Reading describes the suffering of the Israelites under bondage to the Egyptians, the birth of Moses and his miraculous salvation from out of the Nile River. It also describes his calling to deliver Israel and his encounter with Pharaoh.

**Exodus 1:1-6:1**

**Exodus 1:1-5**

**Israel Increases Greatly in Egypt**

1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household: <sup>2</sup> Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, <sup>3</sup> Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, <sup>4</sup> Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. <sup>5</sup> **All the descendants of Jacob were SEVENTY persons; Joseph was already in Egypt.**

**THE DESCENDANTS OF JACOB NUMBERED SEVENTY IN ALL; JOSEPH WAS ALREADY IN EGYPT (1:5)**

**GENESIS 46:27: ALL THE SOULS OF THE HOUSE OF JACOB WHO CAME INTO EGYPT WERE SEVENTY**

But if you count them, you find only sixty-nine; the seventieth is Jocheved the daughter of Levi, who was born between the boundary walls as they entered Egypt.

(Talmud, Bava Batra 123a)

“<sup>59</sup> The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt (And she bore to Amram Aaron and Moses and Miriam their sister).” Numbers 26:59

**Jochebed** name *meaning* and declaration: “**glory of Jehovah**” or “Jehovah glory”, the first person in Scripture to have a name compounded with Jehovah . . . the announcement of Jehovah, as the name of God, was not made for the first time in history.

According to traditional rabbinic biblical chronology, Moses was 80 years old when the Exodus occurred, the Israelites had been in Egypt for 210 years in total, and thus in combination with the rabbinical claim that Jochebed was born on the border of Egypt, as her parents had entered it, this would require Jochebed to have been 130 years old when she gave birth to Moses.

**Like Moses, Like Yeshua**

Although only 70 descendants of Jacob (whom God renamed Israel) came into the Land of Egypt at Joseph’s invitation, **they soon multiplied into such a great and mighty people that the new pharaoh, who did not know Joseph, felt threatened by them.** He feared that the Israelites might join Egypt’s enemies in battles against them.

**ALL THE SOULS OF THE HOUSE OF JACOB WHO CAME INTO EGYPT WERE SEVENTY (46:27)**

When they reached the border of Egypt, they added up to sixty-six; together with Joseph and his two sons, they were one less than seventy. What did G-d do? He entered into the count with them, in fulfillment of what is written, “*I will go down with you into Egypt.*”

(Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 39)

“<sup>3</sup> Then he said, ‘I am God, the God of your father. **Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt**, for there **I will make you into a great nation.** **I myself will go down with you to Egypt,** and **I will also bring you up again**, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes.” Genesis 46:3-4

The fact of the matter is that God always provides a way out of our time(s) of adversity before we even enter into to our time(s) of adversity (“<sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation **he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.**” 1 Corinthians 10:13). The mother of the deliver, Moses, was born before Jacob’s family even set foot into Egypt. **How “Awesome” is that?** And yet the reality to Jacob’s families new position, and our ultimate inheritance, is that Joseph, a type of “Messiah”, provided the entire family a safe haven (“<sup>14</sup> So Joseph said to his brothers, ‘Come near to me, please.’ And

they came near. And he said, ‘I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup> And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. <sup>6</sup> For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. <sup>7</sup> And **God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. <sup>8</sup> So it was not you who sent me here, but God.’” Genesis 45:4-8) for his family to prosper, multiply (“But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong . . . <sup>8</sup> Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup> And he said to his people, “Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. <sup>10</sup> Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” Exodus 1:6-10), and ultimately be “raptured” (covered from God’s ultimate Wrath on his enemies), in a city that He designate in Egypt, “the World”, for their provision, protection, and ultimately their deliverance into their future inheritance, “Goshen”, meaning, a land or place of plenty and comfort. It was in “Goshen” that God’s people were protected from the Wrath of God, through the plagues, beginning with the fourth plague, “Flies”, as read in Exodus 8:22 (“But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth.” Exodus 8:22; “<sup>26</sup> Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, was there no hail.” Exodus 9:26), which symbolically is the number of “divine appointments” and “divine/appointed rest”:**

The number 4 derives its meaning from creation. On the fourth day of what is called 'creation week' God completed the material universe. On this day he brought into existence our sun, the moon, and all the stars (Genesis 1:14 - 19). Their purpose was not only to give off light, but also to divide the day from the night on earth, thus becoming a basic demarcation of time. They were also made to be a type of signal that would mark off the days, years and seasons.

Interestingly, the Hebrew word for 'seasons' in Genesis 1:14 is *moed* (Strong's Concordance #H4150), which literally translated is "appointed times" (divine appointments) in reference to God's festivals. This is the earliest known allusion to what would later be called the Holy (or Feast) days (periods) of worship, which are seven in number.

The 4th of the Ten Commandments is to remember and keep God's holy Sabbath day (Exodus 20:9-11). The Sabbath day is tied directly to the creation week. God himself made the period between Friday sunset and Saturday sunset extra special when he rested on it after bringing everything into existence the previous six days (Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:11).

<http://www.biblestudy.org/bibleref/meaning-of-numbers-in-bible/4.html>

#### Exodus 1:6-7

<sup>6</sup> Then Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. <sup>7</sup> **But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.**

To counter the growing strength of the Israelites, **the Egyptians forced them into bitter labor, building store cities for Pharaoh and working the fields.**

#### Exodus 1:8-21

##### Pharaoh Oppresses Israel

<sup>8</sup> Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup> And he said to his people, “Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. <sup>10</sup> Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” <sup>11</sup> Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. <sup>12</sup> But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. <sup>13</sup> So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves <sup>14</sup> and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.

<sup>15</sup> Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah,

<sup>16</sup> “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, **if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.**”

<sup>17</sup> **But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live.**

<sup>18</sup> So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and let the male children live?” <sup>19</sup> The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” <sup>20</sup> So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. <sup>21</sup> And **because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.**

When they continued to multiply, Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew midwives to kill all newborn males. **But at least two, Shiphrah and Puah, did not. God, therefore, supernaturally protected their lives, even blessing them with families and multiplying the Israelites even more.**

### **Exodus 1:22-2:9**

<sup>22</sup> Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “**Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile**, but you shall let every daughter live.”

### **The Birth of Moses**

<sup>2</sup> Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. <sup>2</sup> The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months.

<sup>3</sup> When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank. <sup>4</sup> And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. <sup>5</sup> Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. <sup>6</sup> When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, “This is one of the Hebrews' children.” <sup>7</sup> Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, “Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?” <sup>8</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, “Go.” So the girl went and called the child's mother. <sup>9</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, “Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed him.

The Levite parents of Moses had such great faith that, in order to save their son, they defied Pharaoh's order and hid him for the first few months of his life.

But babies grow and, eventually, he could no longer be hidden, so they put him in a basket and set him afloat on the Nile among the reeds.

**Even in this desperate circumstance, the protective hand of God was on this boy of destiny.** Pharaoh's daughter spotted the basket. When she saw the Hebrew baby inside, she had pity on him and took him as her own.

**Instead of drowning in the Nile or dying at the hands of the Egyptians as the other newborn boys did, Moses was raised in Pharaoh's palace as a prince of Egypt.**

This dramatic account of the infant Moses **parallels the life of the infant Jesus**, who was sentenced to death by the order of King Herod, among all the other Jewish male infants in Bethlehem.

*“Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi.” Matthew 2:16*

Just as Moses was saved by his mother, so was Jesus saved by the obedience and faith of his earthly father, Joseph, who was warned in a dream to flee to Egypt.

### **The Flight to Egypt**

<sup>13</sup> Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” <sup>14</sup> And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

### **Herod Kills the Children**

<sup>16</sup> Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. <sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

<sup>18</sup> “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.” Matthew 2:13–18

**What irony that the very place of danger (EGYPT) and death for the Hebrew babies in the days of Moses became a place of refuge for Jesus when He was but a baby!**

And just as Moses was a Prophet of God, so was Jesus prophesied to be the Ultimate Prophet of God, himself, the Redeemer of Man-Kind.

### **A New Prophet like Moses**

<sup>15</sup> “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers - **it is to him you shall listen** - <sup>16</sup> just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ <sup>17</sup> And the Lord said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. <sup>18</sup> **I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth,**

**and he shall speak to them all that I command him.**<sup>19</sup> *And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it (with collateral idea of avenging) of him.” Deuteronomy 18:15-19*

#### Exodus 2:10

<sup>10</sup> When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him **Moses**, “Because,” she said, “I drew him out of the water.”

Because Pharaoh’s daughter drew the baby from the Nile, she called him **Moshe** from the word **moshech**, meaning pull or draw. And a picture of what God was prophetically going to do for the Israelites by “**DELIVERING**” them out of Egypt, with the **FULL SUPPORT** of Egypt.

#### Exodus 2:11-15

##### Moses Flees to Midian

<sup>11</sup> One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. <sup>12</sup> He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. <sup>13</sup> When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, “Why do you strike your companion?” <sup>14</sup> He answered, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid, and thought, “Surely the thing is known.” <sup>15</sup> When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.

**Even as a young man, Moses felt the calling to deliver his people, but he stepped ahead of God’s timing.**

In the process of defending this Israelite slave, Moses killed the Egyptian and fled to Midian to escape Pharaoh’s death decree over him. **Exodus 2:15**

*Again* in Midian, Moses expressed his calling as a deliverer by saving the daughters of the Priest of Midian who had come to the well where he sat.

#### Exodus 2:16-22

<sup>16</sup> Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. <sup>17</sup> The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock. <sup>18</sup> When they came home to their father Reuel, he said, “How is it that you have come home so soon today?” <sup>19</sup> They said, “An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock.” <sup>20</sup> He said to his daughters, “Then where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread.” <sup>21</sup> And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah. <sup>22</sup> She gave birth to a son, and he called his name Gershom, for he said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.”

**Moses spent the next 40 years shepherding sheep in the land of Midian, a period of time that God used to prepare him to shepherd His people Israel out of Egypt.**

#### Exodus 2:23-3:6

##### God Hears Israel's Groaning

<sup>23</sup> During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of **Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help**. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.

**<sup>24</sup> And God <sup>1</sup>HEARD their groaning, and God <sup>2</sup>REMEMBERED his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. <sup>25</sup> God <sup>4</sup>SAW the people of Israel—and God <sup>5</sup>KNEW (like a familiar friend).**

##### The Burning Bush

**3** Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. <sup>3</sup> And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” <sup>4</sup> When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” <sup>5</sup> Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” <sup>6</sup> And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

The Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses from out of the flame of a **bush that burned but was not consumed**. **This real and yet symbolic imagery spoke to the fact that God was in His peoples affliction, the thorn bush, and although the bush was burning, afflicted, God’s people would not be consumed by their affliction.**

*“Just as the thorn bush is burning and is not consumed, so the Egyptians will not be able to destroy Israel.”*

**Illustration:** this is where the **Blessing** of Ephraim and Manasseh becomes relevant, when Israel faces affliction:

**Genesis 41:50-52**

<sup>50</sup> Before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. Asenath, the daughter of Potiphra priest of On, bore them to him. <sup>51</sup> Joseph called the name of the firstborn **Manasseh**. “For,” he said, “*God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father’s house.*” <sup>52</sup> The name of the second he called **Ephraim**, “*For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.*”

**Genesis 48:14-16, 20**

<sup>14</sup> But Israel crossed his hands and put his right hand on the head of the younger boy Ephraim. Then he put his left hand on Manasseh, even though Manasseh was the firstborn. <sup>15</sup> And Israel blessed Joseph and said,

“My ancestors, Abraham and Isaac, worshiped our God,  
 and that God has led me all my life.

<sup>16</sup> **He was the Angel who saved me from all my troubles.**

And I pray that he will bless these boys.

**Now they will have my name**

and the name of our ancestors, Abraham and Isaac.

I pray that they will grow to become great families and nations on earth.”

<sup>20</sup> So Israel blessed them that day. He said,

“*The Israelites will use your names*

*whenever they bless someone.*

*They will say,*

*‘May God MAKE YOU like Ephraim and Manasseh.’”*

**Why do we bless our sons to “be like Ephraim and Manasseh”?**

Jacob . . . blessed his two grandsons and added the following words: “*With you, Israel will bless, saying, ‘May G-d make you like Ephraim and like Manasseh.’*” This is why we bless our sons with the words: “*May G-d make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.*”

Perhaps one might say that the highlight of their character is their remarkable upbringing. They were born and raised in Egypt, in a profoundly secular society, a place where the people were not of high character. Yet they remained faithful to the morals and ideals that were espoused by their grandfather Jacob, as they were transmitted through their father Joseph. To be great amongst great people is also a challenge, but to maintain a high level of spirituality and character amongst a society that is devoid of morals and ethics is the real test. This is why Jacob chose these two boys to be his own. They were able to prove true strength of character. How does one know if a fish is healthy? If it can swim upstream; against the tide of society.

This is what we wish for our children, too. We would love to forever protect them in our loving, nurturing environment. However, that is usually not a possibility – nor should it be. There will be times in their lives when the beliefs and morals that we raised them with will be challenged by their peers, society or the environment. “Be like Manasseh and Ephraim,” we bless/tell them. Have the strength to be able to withstand the pressures of society and do the right thing.

[https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/520258/jewish/Why-do-we-bless-our-sons-to-be-like-Ephraim-and-Manasseh.htm#footnote1a520258](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/520258/jewish/Why-do-we-bless-our-sons-to-be-like-Ephraim-and-Manasseh.htm#footnote1a520258)

From the midst of this burning bush at the foot of Mount Sinai, God told Moses he had heard the cries of His People and was sending Moses to go back to Pharaoh in His name and His power on His behalf.

**By this point, this prince of Egypt had been so humbled by his lengthy wilderness experience that he seemed to lack confidence when it came to his role as a leader of a nation.**

First, Moses asked for the name of the One sending him. God answered with His name, **Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh**, widely translated as **I am that I am**, the Hebrew grammatical form is *actually in the future tense*.

Therefore, God’s name is *more accurately translated* as **I will be what I will be**.

**\*\*\*\* The message to Moses is perhaps that God can look after the details of the future. He will be to us whoever and whatever He chooses to be: father, friend, comforter, counselor, or even disciplinarian. We can trust in God’s infinite wisdom to be who we need in our lives at each moment in time. \*\*\*\***

At Sinai, Moses beheld the heart of the simple man of God.

**“Man is a tree of field.” (Deuteronomy 20:19):**

<sup>19</sup> “*When you besiege a city for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an axe against them. You may eat from them, but you shall not cut them down. Are the trees in the field human, that they should be besieged by you?*”

But the field has many types of trees. The Talmud compares the righteous Torah scholars to fruit trees, which bestow beauty, fragrance and nourishment upon the world. The fruit trees also burn — they burn with the ecstasy of their Torah study, with the fervor of their prayer, with the warmth of their good deeds. But theirs is a fire that burns and burns out, a fire that is sated by the words of Torah and prayer and the fulfillment of the divine will.

But the thorn bush burns with a fire that is never satisfied. The simple Jew\*, who cannot fathom the depths of Torah, who can barely articulate his prayers, who has little understanding of the significance of a mitzvah — his is a thirst never quenched. His heart burns with a yearning for G-d he can never hope to still, with a love he can never hope to consummate.

When Moses . . . beheld the heart of flame that smolders within the thorn bush, he was humbled by the sight. “I must turn aside to see this great sight,” he said: I must move from where I am and strive to awaken in myself the insatiable fire of the simple Jew.

(Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov)

\***Meaning of Jew:** Anyone who rejects idolatry is called a Jew. One who acknowledges G-d's existence and submits to His authority—to the extent that he is willing to sacrifice his life for the sanctification of His name—he is called a Jew.

### Exodus 3:7-14

<sup>7</sup> Then the Lord said, “**I have surely <sup>1</sup>SEEN the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have <sup>2</sup>HEARD their cry because of their taskmasters. I <sup>3</sup>KNOW their sufferings, <sup>8</sup> and I have <sup>4</sup>COME DOWN TO DELIVER THEM OUT of the hand of the Egyptians and to <sup>5</sup>BRING THEM UP OUT of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.**”

<sup>9</sup> And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. <sup>10</sup> Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” <sup>11</sup> But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

<sup>12</sup> He said, “But I will be with you, and **THIS SHALL BE THE “SIGN” FOR YOU, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.**”

<sup>13</sup> Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” <sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, “**I am who I am.**” And he said, “**Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I am has sent me to you.’**”

G-d said to Moses: *You want to know My name? I am called by My deeds.* I might be called E-l Sha-dai, or Tzevakot, or Elokim, or HaVaYaH. *When I judge My creatures, I am called Elokim. When I wage war on the wicked, I am called Tzevakot. When I tolerate the sins of man, I am called E-l Sha-dai. When I have compassion on My world, I am called Ha-Va-Ya-H...*

(Midrash Rabbah)

### AND ELOKIM (G-D) SPOKE TO MOSES AND HE SAID TO HIM, I AM HAVAYAH!” (6:2)

“That “**Havayah**” is greater than (any) Elokim,” Exodus 18:11 (and Ex. 6:2) . . . All the miracles performed by G-d in Egypt which **defied all known laws of nature**, were invoked by this **In – ef – fa – ble** (too great or extreme to be expressed or described in words) **Four-lettered Name of God**. All other attributes (i.e. names) of G-d are derived from the **Ineffable Name, “Havayah”** (One Name to Rule The All), which symbolized G-d as a composite of the Hebrew words from “He **was**, He **is**, He **will be**”, the One who created the world and Who is eternal. The name “Elokim”, on the other had, symbolizes nature (i.e. the laws of nature).

It is here that we learn the name that God uses to demonstrate His Redemption, “**Havayah**” (the Ineffable (too great or extreme to be expressed or described in words) Four-lettered Name of G-d – “**Now that’s a Four-Letter Word worth using!**”).

Pharaoh had no difficulty in accepting G-d in His attribute as Elokim . . . but when the Torah writes, “*And **Havayah** hardened Pharaoh’s heart*”, the meaning is that it was the use of that name that made Pharaoh’s heart become obstinate. This the reason that Moses never used a different name for G-d when confronting Pharaoh.

### Pharaoh duped himself . . .

In this we realize that G-d never interfered with Pharaoh’s decision-making process at all. *Pharaoh duped himself*. The case of his obstinacy was the meaning “I”, as in “**I am Havayah**” (6:2 and Ex. 4:22). When G-d said to Moses, “*I shall make the heart of Pharaoh obstinate*” (7:3), the implied meaning is: “*My revelation to him that **I am Havayah**, will harden his heart*” . . . **Pharaoh, therefore, limited his acknowledgement of the origin of G-d’s claim, “I am”, to Elokim, thereby excluding Havayah.**

### Exodus 3:15-4:10

<sup>15</sup> God also said to Moses, “*Say this to the people of Israel: ‘**The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, (I AM THE TRIUNE GOD, “FATHER (FATHER OF MANY NATIONS), SON (JOY OF MY SALVATION), AND COMFORTER (ONE WHO WRESTLES WITH GOD AND MAN AND PREVAILS))” has sent me to you.** This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.* <sup>16</sup> Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, “I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt,<sup>17</sup> and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.”’ <sup>18</sup> And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, ‘The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three

days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.’<sup>19</sup> But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand.<sup>20</sup> So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go.<sup>21</sup> And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty,<sup>22</sup> but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians.”

### Moses Given Powerful Signs

**4** Then Moses answered, “But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you.’”<sup>2</sup> The Lord said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A staff.”<sup>3</sup> And he said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it.<sup>4</sup> But the Lord said to Moses, “Put out your hand and catch it by the tail”—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand—<sup>5</sup> “that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”<sup>6</sup> Again, the Lord said to him, “Put your hand inside your cloak.” And he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous<sup>[l]</sup> like snow.<sup>7</sup> Then God said, “Put your hand back inside your cloak.” So he put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh.<sup>8</sup> “If they will not believe you,” God said, “or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign.<sup>9</sup> If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”

<sup>10</sup> But Moses said to the Lord, “Oh, my Lord, **I am not eloquent**, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.”

**Moses was afflicted with a speech impairment so that no one should think that his success in transmitting the Torah to the world was due to his oratory skills. Rather, it derived solely from the fact that “the divine presence spoke from his throat.”**

*(Derashot HaRan)*

### Exodus 4:11-23

**<sup>11</sup> Then the Lord said to him, “Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?”**

<sup>12</sup> Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.”<sup>13</sup> But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.”<sup>14</sup> Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses and he said, “Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.<sup>15</sup> You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do.<sup>16</sup> He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him.<sup>17</sup> And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs.”

### Moses Returns to Egypt

<sup>18</sup> Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, “Please let me go back to my brothers in Egypt to see whether they are still alive.” And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.”<sup>19</sup> And the Lord said to Moses in Midian, “**Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.**”<sup>20</sup> So Moses took his wife and his sons and had them ride on a donkey, and went back to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the staff of God in his hand.

<sup>21</sup> And the Lord said to Moses, “**When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.**”<sup>22</sup> Then you shall say to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son,<sup>23</sup> and I say to you, “Let my son go that he may serve me.” If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.”

Even with this assurance, Moses still feels unqualified for the task, especially since he is slow in speech. He begs God to send someone else; therefore, He allowed Aaron, Moses’ brother, to accompany him and act as his spokesperson.

When they reached Pharaoh, the message to be delivered to him would be: “Thus says the Lord, ‘Israel is My firstborn son, and I say to you, “Let my son go that he may serve Me.”’” **Exodus 4:22–23**

### Exodus 4:24-

<sup>24</sup> At a lodging place on the way the Lord met him and sought to put him to death.<sup>25</sup> Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses'<sup>[k]</sup> feet with it and said, “Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!”<sup>26</sup> So he let him alone. It was then that she said, “A bridegroom of blood,” because of the circumcision.

<sup>27</sup> The Lord said to Aaron, “Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.” So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him.<sup>28</sup> And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord with which he had sent him to speak, and all the signs that he had commanded him to do.<sup>29</sup> Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel.<sup>30</sup> Aaron spoke all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people.<sup>31</sup> And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped.

### Making Bricks Without Straw

5 Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’”<sup>2</sup> But Pharaoh said, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.”<sup>3</sup> Then they said, “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.”<sup>4</sup> But the king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get back to your burdens.”<sup>5</sup> And Pharaoh said, “Behold, the people of the land are now many,<sup>6</sup> and you make them rest from their burdens!”<sup>6</sup> The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen,<sup>7</sup> “You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves.”<sup>8</sup> But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it, for they are idle. Therefore they cry, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God.’<sup>9</sup> Let heavier work be laid on the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words.”

<sup>10</sup> So the taskmasters and the foremen of the people went out and said to the people, “Thus says Pharaoh, ‘I will not give you straw. <sup>11</sup> Go and get your straw yourselves wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced in the least.’”<sup>12</sup> So the people were scattered throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw.<sup>13</sup> The taskmasters were urgent, saying, “Complete your work, your daily task each day, as when there was straw.”<sup>14</sup> And the foremen of the people of Israel, whom Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, “Why have you not done all your task of making bricks today and yesterday, as in the past?”

<sup>15</sup> Then the foremen of the people of Israel came and cried to Pharaoh, “Why do you treat your servants like this? <sup>16</sup> No straw is given to your servants, yet they say to us, ‘Make bricks!’ And behold, your servants are beaten; but the fault is in your own people.”<sup>17</sup> But he said, “You are idle, you are idle; that is why you say, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord.’”<sup>18</sup> Go now and work. No straw will be given you, but you must still deliver the same number of bricks.”<sup>19</sup> The foremen of the people of Israel saw that they were in trouble when they said,

“You shall by no means reduce your number of bricks, your daily task each day.”<sup>20</sup> They met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for

them, as they came out from Pharaoh;<sup>21</sup> and they said to them, “The Lord look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.”

<sup>22</sup> Then Moses turned to the Lord and said, “O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? <sup>23</sup> For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all.”

### Conclusion:

- **Oppressive circumstances cannot prevent God from carrying out His purposes and fulfilling His promises.**

We might suffer under some sort of bondage or pain for what seems like a very long time, but we can rest assured that God hears our cries.

He remembers the covenant we have with Him through our Messiah Jesus, which provides a way out of our spiritual bondage and into our inheritance — if only we accept it.

- Though God is true to His promises, **we still need to keep crying out to Him for deliverance** and waiting in faith and hopeful expectation to move on our behalf in our spiritual and our earthly afflictions.

God is not deaf, nor aloof to our suffering. His arm is not too short to save: *“The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles.” Psalm 34:17*

- Though Moses entered Egypt and delivered God’s message to Pharaoh, **nothing changed immediately.**

*Pharaoh refused to let the Hebrews go and intensified their affliction.*

- Moses might have felt like he failed God, but **God has a greater plan for even our failures,** and they end in glorifying His name.

**The people turned on Moses and Aaron in their bitterness. Moses responded by turning to the Lord.** With raw honesty, Moses asked why He had not delivered His people as He promised.

*“Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why is it You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all.” Exodus 5:22–23*

- **We might also feel this way when it seems we are doing what God has asked us to do, and things get worse, not better.**



How did God respond to Moses? “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.’” Exodus 6:1

Sometimes, when God is preparing to do something great and mighty in our lives, the situation can worsen for a time. As we move toward our destiny, pharaoh represents those who oppress us — even Satan, the spiritual enemy of our souls, who resists our freedom with all his might.

<sup>12</sup>For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Ephesians 6:12

- **In such circumstances, we should not give up our faith, for in due time we will see God’s mighty hand and outstretched arm deliver us in His perfect way and time.**

“Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.” Romans 12:12

Next Week’s Reading:

**Week 14 - VA’ERA (And I Appeared)**  
**Exodus 6:2–9:35; Ezekiel 28:25–29:21, Revelation 15:1–16:20**