

# שְׁמוֹת

## SHEMOT/NAMES Shemot/Exodus 1:1-6:1

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**Bereshith** (Genesis) is the account of **individuals striving** to live their **lives** in the **presence of an Almighty Elohim**, and attempting to **embrace His mission** even during His **times of silence**. But in the book of **Shemot**, the **individuals** have become a **people** in a **foreign land**. We move through a **couple hundred years of virtual silence** regarding their time in **Egypt**. What little we know is covered in **one verse of Shemot**:

*Shemot 1:7 But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.*

**Joseph** had purposely **planted his father's family** in the land of **Goshen**. There they could live a **set-apart life** from the **Egyptians**. It was a place where they could **continue their lives as shepherds**, caring for their **flocks**. Does the above verse, however, imply that many of the **Israelites** had **left Goshen** and "**filled the land?**" **Not all** of the land of **Egypt** was **conducive to raising sheep**. Had many of the **sons of Israel** **separated** from the family and **acquired other occupations** that **gained them wealth** as **defined by Egypt?**

Now after hundreds of years and **no direct word from יהוה Elohim**, the **new king of Egypt** finds himself **threatened** by the **numerous** and **successful Israelites**. The sages say that the **work** the Egyptians imposed on them was **veiled as national service**, but it soon gave way to **subjugation and enslavement**:

*Shemot 1:8 Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup> And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; <sup>10</sup> "come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land." <sup>11</sup> Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses.*

According to *The Sacred Bridge* by Rainey and Notley, the city of **Raamses** had **temples** to several gods; in particular **Ra (sun god)** and **Seth** (the god of the dust of the earth). Those who were once **Israelite shepherds** were now in the business of building something **dedicated to a sun god**. After hundreds of years, no doubt the **stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, and the **promises** associated with them **seemed far removed** from the minds of their **descendants**.

From **enslavement**, we will quickly move to the **first stage of liberation**. The **story of the redemption** of the **children of Israel** will **begin with the birth of a baby!** **Moshe** (Moses) was **born** into a family from the tribe of **Levi**. At that time, there was an **edict** by the king that **all newborn baby boys** were to be **thrown** into the **Nile River**. We know the story well of **Moshe** being placed in a **basket** or an "**ark**" (same Hebrew word as Noah's ark - תֵּבָה) where he was **found** by the **daughter of Pharaoh**, **adopted**, and **named**:

*Shemot 2:10 And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moshe, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."*

What was the **significance** of the **name** that **Pharaoh's daughter** selected for the **baby?** It's possible that we can gain some **insight** by understanding more about **Pharaoh and the Nile**:

*Ezekiel 29:3 "Speak, and say, 'Thus says Adonai יהוה: "Behold, I am against you, O Pharaoh king of Egypt, O great monster who lies in the midst of his rivers, Who has said, 'My River is my own; I have made it for myself.'"*

**Pharaoh** not only **believed** he was a **god**, but he also **believed** he had **created the Nile River “for himself.”** This is **helpful** in **understanding why Pharaoh suggested the babies be thrown into the River.** He was allowing the **River to decide who would live** and who would **die.** The **Nile River** made the **judgment**, and thus he was able to wash his hands of the **babies’ murders.**

**Pharaoh** thought of **himself** as a **god**, which is why he **named his daughter, Bithiah (בִּיתְיָה)** which means **“daughter of god”**:

*1 Chronicles 4:17 The sons of Ezra were Jether, Mered, Epher, and Jalon. And Mered's wife bore Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa.<sup>18</sup> (His wife Jehudijah bore Jered the father of Gedor, Heber the father of Sochoh, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah.) And these were the sons of Bithiah (בִּיתְיָה) the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took.*

**Bithiah** is the name of the woman who **saved and named Moshe.** Her **father** was **“god of the Nile”** and she was the **“daughter of god.”** The **Netziv** (famous Russian Jew of the 1800’s) suggests that the name **“Moshe”** comes from the **ancient Egyptian word** for **“son”**:

*Shemot 2:10 ... and he became her son. So she called his name Moses (מֹשֶׁה), saying, "Because I drew him out (meshitihu - מִשִּׁיתִּיּוֹ) of the water."*

Other **ancient Egyptian language** sources also **confirm** that **Moshe (מֹשֶׁה)** means **“son.”** With this definition in mind, it explains the **reason why Bithiah** thinks the **child is hers.** She knew the child had **Hebrew parents**, but in a way she was **claiming** that the **Nile gave birth** to her **son.** The **baby emerged** from the Nile **alive**, which had **significance for Bithiah.** He was therefore declared **“son”** of the Nile. By **this name** she was obviously **positioning** him to become the **next Pharaoh**, or at least to **take his place** among the **pantheon of Egyptian gods.** The **future savior of Israel** would be seen as an **Egyptian god!!** Also, according to this reasoning, the word **meshitihu (מִשִּׁיתִּיּוֹ)** is **not related to the name Moshe**, but **rather is the reason** (because I drew him out) **why she called him (son) Moshe.** This is a **play on words** so common to **Hebrew.**

**Acts 7** gives us just a bit more information on **Moshe’s upbringing**:

*Acts 7:22 "And Moshe was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.*

And what was the **“wisdom of the Egyptians”**? It would have been a very **secular education**, including **instruction on the Egyptian gods – Orisis, Hekt, Apis, and Ra.** And remember, **Moshe** himself would have been **thought of** by the **Egyptian culture** as one of these **“gods.”** Now after all these years in Egypt, the **Israelites** would **not have been ignorant of this “god” Moshe.** Imagine their surprise when this **“god of Egypt”** turns out to be involved in the **redemption of Israel!!!** I hope that you are not missing these **shadows of Messiah Yeshua** in the **life of Moshe!**

**Moshe** will become the **crucial link** throughout the rest of the Torah in the **development and maturation** of a **motley bunch of slaves** who will become the **chosen people.** It will take **80 years** for **Moshe** to be ready

to play his role in their **redemption**. We will focus on **four events** in his life that are a part of the **maturing process**:

1. **Moshe kills the Egyptian** who strikes the **Hebrew**
2. **Moshe** addresses the **two fighting Hebrews**
3. **Pharaoh's attempt on Moshe's life** and his subsequent **flight to Midian**
4. **Rescue** of the daughters of the **priest of Midian**

#### 1. **Moshe kills the Egyptian** who strikes the **Hebrew** -

*Shemot 2:10 And the child grew (vayegdal - וַיִּגְדַּל), and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moshe, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."<sup>11</sup> Now it came to pass in those days (bayamim hahame - בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם), when Moshe was grown (vayegdal - וַיִּגְדַּל), that he went out (vayatza - וַיֵּצֵא) to his brethren (ach - אָח) and saw (ra'ah - רָאָה) their hard labor. And he saw (ra'ah - רָאָה) an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren (ach - אָח).<sup>12</sup> So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.*

In these two verses, the Torah uses the same Hebrew phrase “and he grew” (וַיִּגְדַּל) twice. In 2:10, it describes the age when Moshe was weaned. In 2:11 it points to Moshe being elevated to a position of authority in Pharaoh's house. The repeat of this verb in these two verses is meant to draw your attention to two different types of “growth.”

Twice in verse 2:11, Moshe refers to the Israelites as his “brethren” (ach - אָח). This identification becomes part of his “growth” process. Moshe grew up in Pharaoh's house as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. In that house, the Egyptians were his “brethren.” Now, instead, his actions will be dictated by a deep identification with his Israelite “brethren.”

There is a third set of double verbs. Moshe “sees” (ra'ah - רָאָה) their suffering and he “sees” (ra'ah - רָאָה) an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. The second “see” means to merely perceive with one's eyes. The first “see,” however, means that he “saw into their suffering.” This is made clear by the grammatical form of the Hebrew - וַיִּרְאֵם בְּסִבְלָתָם. If the suffering was the direct object of his “seeing” it would have been expressed - וַיִּרְאֵם אֶת-סִבְלָתָם. Rashi explains that the Torah is expressing that Moshe is not only identifying with, but perceiving with his heart as well. He becomes one with the suffering slave.

“In those days” (bayamim hahame - בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם), and “he went out” (vayatza - וַיֵּצֵא) are other interesting phrases found in verse 11. In what days? Obviously, these are “the days” in which Moshe “went out” to his real “brethren,” to those with whom he discovers his brotherhood. These are “the days” in which his heart begins to beat in sync with his “brethren.” This national identification is what causes Moshe to react to the incident at hand.

#### 2. **Moshe** addresses the **two fighting Hebrews** -

*Shemot 2:13 And when he went out (vayatza - וַיֵּצֵא) the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion (ray'ah -*

לֹא־יָדָעִים?"<sup>14</sup> Then he said, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" So Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!"

We already know that "going out" (vayatza - נִצַּחֵם) means that Moshe is leaving the Egyptian household where he still lives in order to become one with his brethren. Imagine how disappointed this idealistic Moshe must feel as he now watches two Hebrews fighting amongst themselves. This day Moshe reacts quite differently.

He asks, "why are you striking your companion (ray'ah - לֹא־יָדָעִים)?" Notice he does not refer to him as "brother." Yesterday Moshe reacted spontaneously to his feelings of identification. This second day his rebuke comes with a certain amount of distancing. The one being addressed by Moshe is not happy. He accuses Moshe of being a "judge." People don't always like being judged by Moshe:

*John 5:39* "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.<sup>40</sup> "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life...<sup>45</sup> "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you -- Moshe, in whom you trust.<sup>46</sup> "For if you believed Moshe, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.<sup>47</sup> "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

This second day, Moshe has grown beyond his blind patriotism. In Shemot 2:13, he is able to address the one who was wrong rather than just embrace him because he is a Hebrew brother. His eyes had been opened to the injustices of Egypt and had decided to help his brethren. But this second day he becomes aware of something else. Amongst the children of Israel there is also injustice. The man involved in the wrongdoing would prefer to continue in his set ways. He has no interest in having someone come and try to change him or his habits. To justify his actions, he even challenges Moshe's patriotism....are you going to treat me, your brother, as you treated the Egyptian, a stranger to you?

Shemot 2:14 tells us that "Moshe feared" because "surely this matter is known." What is it that is now out in the open? Is it the mere fact that he killed an Egyptian? Or is it Moshe's change in attitude that he no longer identifies himself as an Egyptian, but has joined in heart and soul with the Israelites? This would make him a rebel of the kingdom. Pharaoh would fear that he could end up leading a rebellion against him. Moshe had come "out of the closet" so to speak. There is a price to pay when you divulge your Hebrew identity....when you "cross over" (definition of Hebrew) and see yourself as an Israelite.

### 3. Pharaoh's attempt on Moshe's life and his subsequent flight to Midian -

*Shemot 2:15* When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moshe. But Moshe fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.

When Moshe fled Egypt, did he leave with a sense that there was no possibility of changing the situation of his brethren? Did he believe there was no hope of saving Israel as long as the people themselves had no intention of correcting the injustices among them? Moshe had a desire to help them out of their physical state of servitude to Pharaoh, but felt helpless as long as they were not willing to change their moral situation. And now that he is cut off from his Egyptian roots, he finds that he is not welcome by his Hebrew brethren either. As a side-note this is a reoccurring cycle. Those early believers who kept Torah (Torah is synonymous with Moshe) were soon rejected by both the unbelieving Jews and by the church who soon strayed from the commandments of Elohim. Perhaps even you have felt rejection by your former church family as you have pursued Torah (Moshe), and it is a fact that most Jews are also not happy about the remnant of non-Jewish believers who are beginning to align their lives with Torah truths. I would like to add, however, that this is an attitude that we are beginning to see change. There are

many Jews who are recognizing their “brethren” and welcoming them into the house of Israel. It is exactly this remnant which the evil one is seeking to harm during the tribulation:

*Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of Elohim and have the testimony of Yeshua the Messiah.*

Let’s return to our parasha. Moshe’s “fleeing from the face of Pharaoh,” and “settling in Midian” shows that he is attempting a complete cultural break. He is letting go of both Egypt and his identification with his brethren. Divine providence has kept him from joining with the Israelites just because he feels comfortable with their cultural ways. The Almighty has a plan for bringing this Egyptian back to his Hebrew family. First Moshe must see himself as a stranger, settling in a strange land to which he has no connection at all. Let’s continue to see how the Father orchestrates His plan:

#### 4. Rescue of the daughters of the priest of Midian -

*Shemot 2:16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father's flock.<sup>17</sup> Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moshe stood up (koom - קָוַם) and helped (yasha - עָשָׂה) them, and watered their flock.*

These verses describe a third reaction to an incident by Moshe. In the first, Moshe reacted patriotically out of identification with his “brethren.” Then in the second incident between the Hebrew and the Egyptian, he reacted as a judge, in rebuking the wrongdoer. The root of his action was justice. In 2:17, Moshe has no identification with the seven daughters, nor does he verbally judge the shepherds that he drives away. As Moshe plays the Messianic role, note that Yeshua also said that He did not come initially to judge:

*John 12:47 "And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.*

Okay, keep in mind Yeshua’s words that he came to “save” the world. Let’s take another look at Shemot 2:17. Notice what Moshe did for the daughters - “he stood up and helped them.” The Hebrew word for “stood up” is qum (קָוַם). It is a word that means “to rise up” or to “resurrect”! The Hebrew word for “helped” is yasha (עָשָׂה) more commonly translated as “saved.” In fact it is the root of Yeshua (יֵשׁוּעַ)!

Moshe acts because he has developed a heart for the oppressed. Like Yeshua, Moshe’s help (salvation) is first, and then he takes them to the water (symbol of Torah) to drink.

*John 3:16 "For Yah so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

*John 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.*

The seven daughters were shepherdesses and were attempting to water their father’s flock. They had filled the troughs with clean, clear water, but evil shepherds drove them away. The result was stirred up, muddied water for their flocks. הִהוּהוּ made it clear how He feels about shepherds who muddy the water for His flock in Ezekiel:

*Ezekiel 34:18 "Is it too little for you to have eaten up the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the residue of your pasture -- and to have drunk of the clear waters, that you must foul the residue with your feet?<sup>19</sup> "And as for My flock, they eat what you have trampled with your*

*feet, and they drink what you have fouled with your feet."* <sup>20</sup> 'Therefore thus says Adonai יהוה' to them: "Behold, **I Myself will judge between the fat and the lean sheep.**" <sup>21</sup> "Because you have pushed with side and shoulder, butted all the weak ones with your horns, and scattered them abroad," <sup>22</sup> "therefore **I will save My flock, and they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.**

There are several **comparisons** between the **story of Moshe** and the **story of Jacob**. **Both men:**

- **Flee** from someone who wants to **kill them**
- **Sit at a well** and **meet shepherds** there
- **Meet their future wife** at the well
- **Help** out the **women** at the well
  - **Jacob** rolls the heavy rock off the mouth of the well
  - **Moshe** helps the women against the shepherds
- **Water** the **flock**
- Are **invited** to  **dwell in a father's house** where only **afterwards marriage** is discussed
- **Shepherd** the **flocks** of their **respective fathers-in-law**
- **Ask permission** of his **father-in-law** to **return to his land** and at the same time יהוה' is **revealed** to them

It is because of these many **similarities** that their **differences** are **highlighted**. When **Jacob met Rachel**, she was **mentioned by name** in the **story**, and he **immediately knew** he wanted to **marry** her. Consequently, he was **forced to live with Laban**, and their **relationship** was **not good**. The **name of Moshe's future wife** was **not mentioned** at the well, and the **story** seems to **emphasize** the **relationship Moshe** had with **her father**.

**Moshe** comes to the **home** of the seven daughters because **Reu'el invites him**. The text does **not** indicate that it is **for the purpose** of **marrying one of his daughters**. A **relationship** is instead **established between the men:**

*Shemot 2:20 So he said to his daughters, "And where is he? Why is it that you have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread."* <sup>21</sup> *Then Moshe was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moshe.*

Who is **Reu'el**, also known as **Jethro**, and **what causes Moshe** to become so **drawn to him**? **Rashi** writes – And the **priest of Midian** had **separated himself from idolatry** and they (his own community) **banished him** from their midst. **Ebn Ezra** writes – every "priest" referred to in Tanach **serves either HaShem or idols....and Yitro** (Jethro) was a **priest to HaShem**.

According to these commentators, **Jethro** was **not a priest of idolatrous worship**, but rather a **servant of יהוה**. This is also indicated by the **meanings** of his **two names in Shemot**. **Reu'el** (רַעֲוִאל) means "friend of El" and **Jethro** (יִתְרוֹ) means "his remnant." The sages have painted **Jethro** as a **spiritual figure** who is **cut off from others** out of a feeling that there is **no possibility of influencing people to change their ways**. Because of the things they have in **common**, the **close relationship** that **Moshe** will **establish with Jethro** is quite **understandable**.

As a **result of living with Jethro**, **Moshe** is given **Zipporah** as a **wife**. Unlike the wives of the patriarchs, we are **told nothing of her character or actions** before marriage. Apparently, the Torah's point is that the **connection between Jethro and Moshe** is the **primary relationship**, and the **marriage** is merely an

**extension** of that **relationship**. **Moshe grows close to Jethro**...therefore he **marries his daughter**. As we continue our **comparison of Moshe with Yeshua**, we can see that as **Yeshua** has been in the **midst of the people of this world**, He too has **taken a wife** from there.

A **son** is **born to Moshe** and his wife:

*Shemot 2:22 And she bore him a son, and he called his name **Gershom** (גֶרְשֹׁם); for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land."*

The **naming of Moshe's first son** gives us a **brief glimpse** into his **thoughts** at this point. He names him **Gershom** (גֶרְשֹׁם) which means **"foreigner."** **Immediately after** this naming, the **Torah takes us back to the story of the Israelites**. Is there a **connection** then **between Moshe's naming of Gershom and Elohim's decision to "remember" His covenant with His people?**

*Shemot 2:23 Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the **children of Israel groaned** because of the **bondage**, and they cried out; and their cry came up to Elohim because of the **bondage**.<sup>24</sup> So Elohim heard their groaning, and **Elohim remembered** (zakar - זָכַר) **His covenant** with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.<sup>25</sup> And Elohim looked upon the children of Israel, and **Elohim knew them**.*

First, let's be reminded of the **definition** of **"remember"** (zakar - זָכַר). The fact that Elohim **"remembered"** does **not mean** that **He ever truly "forgot."** I like **Brad Scott's definition** of **"zakar"** which is **"to act on behalf of."** So in **Shemot 2:24**, Elohim is going to once again **"act on behalf"** of the **covenant** and the **children of Israel** because **He "knows" them**.

To find the **connection** between the **naming of Moshe's son** and **Elohim's remembrance of the covenant**, we shall return to **Bereshith** (Genesis) and an **announcement made** during the **cutting of the covenant**:

*Bereshith 15:13 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that **your descendants will be strangers** (gerim - גֵרִים) in a land that is not theirs, where they will be **enslaved** (avdume - אַבְדָּם), and they will **afflict** (eenu - עָנָו) them **four hundred years**."*

To **fulfill the terms of the covenant**, the sons of Israel will have to **endure three conditions**. **Two** of these **conditions** have **already been mentioned** **numerously** in our **Shemot** text:

- **Enslaved** (אַבְדָּם) Shemot 1:13, 14; 2:23
- **Afflicted** (עָנָו) – Shemot 1:11, 12
- **Strangers/sojourners** (גֵרִים)

What about the **third condition**? Did the **Israelites in Egypt** see themselves as **"strangers/ sojourners"** in a **foreign land**? Earlier we saw a **connection** between **Moshe and Jacob**. It is interesting that in **Jacob's exile** he also underwent **"afflictions and enslavement"**. In fact, the word for **slavery** (אַבְדָּם - evd) appears **14 times** in **Jacob's story**. Notice also how **Jacob describes his status in Laban's household**:

*Bereshith 32:4 And he commanded them, saying, "Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: "**I have sojourned** ( גֵרָה) with Laban and stayed there until now."*

Apparently, one must **recognize** that they are a **"stranger"** **before the Almighty begins to "remember"** (**act on their behalf**) **them**. With this **understanding**, let's return to the **naming of Moshe's son**. "He

named him ‘Gershom’ (foreigner/stranger), for he said: **I was a stranger (גֵר) in a foreign land.**” By naming him Gershom, Moshe was **more than just acknowledging** that he was **estranged from his homeland**. He saw the **missing element required** (to be a “stranger”), according to the covenant of **Bereshith 15:13**, for the **redemption of the children of Israel to begin!** With this **understanding**, the **Father** will now be able to **use him mightily!** The book of **Acts** also notes that **Moshe** was indeed a “stranger”:

*Acts 7:29 "Then, at this saying, Moshe fled and became a stranger in the land of Midian, where he had two sons.*

The **Israelites** had made themselves **at home in Egypt**. They had **assimilated** into the **culture** in many ways. It is **not mentioned** that they yet thought of themselves as “strangers.” Unfortunately, they had to go through **trials** and **tribulations** to come to that **understanding**. Do you think of **yourself** as a “stranger?” Will it take the coming **tribulation** to remind us that this **world** is **not our home?**

**David** writes in the **Psalms** how he feels about this **earth**:

*Psalms 119:19 I am a stranger in the earth; Do not hide Your commandments from me.*

When speaking to those receiving an inheritance, **Yeshua** described Himself as a “stranger” who was served by the **righteous**:

*Matthew 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: <sup>35</sup> 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; <sup>36</sup> 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' <sup>37</sup> "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Adonai, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? <sup>38</sup> 'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? <sup>39</sup> 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' <sup>40</sup> "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'*

The book of **Hebrews** notes that all of the **patriarchs** thought of themselves as “strangers” and **looked forward** to the **heavenly city**:

*Hebrews 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. <sup>14</sup> For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. <sup>15</sup> And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore Adonai is not ashamed to be called their Adonai, for He has prepared a city for them.*

Let’s return to the parasha and take a look at the episode of the **burning bush**:

*Shemot 3:1 Now Moshe was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of Elohim. <sup>2</sup> And the Angel of יהוה appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. <sup>3</sup> Then Moshe said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." <sup>4</sup> So when יהוה saw that he turned aside to look, Elohim called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moshe, Moshe!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>5</sup> Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the*

place where you stand is holy ground." <sup>6</sup> Moreover He said, "I am the Elohim of your father -- the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob." And Moshe hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon Elohim.

The imagery of the “**consuming fire**” is one that is commonly seen throughout the Scriptures to describe the **manifestation of יהוה’s presence**. Soon we will read that in the **exodus**, the Almighty will **lead His nightly journeys** by the **pillar of fire**:

*Shemot 13:21* And **יהוה** went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and **by night in a pillar of fire to give them light**, so as to go by day and night. <sup>22</sup> He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the **pillar of fire** by night from before the people.

The **Israelites** are taken to the **mountain** where **יהוה** will **appear** to them **out of the midst of the burning summit** and give to them the **Ten Words** (commandments):

*Shemot 19:18* Now **Mount Sinai** was completely in smoke, because **יהוה** descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.

During the **dedication** of the **wilderness tabernacle**, **יהוה** will demonstrate His **approval** by the **descent of heavenly fire**:

*Vayikra/Leviticus 9:23* And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then **the glory of יהוה** appeared to all the people, <sup>24</sup> and **fire came out from before יהוה** and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

At the end of his life, **Moshe** describes the **Almighty**:

*Devarim 4:24* "For **יהוה** your Elohim is a consuming fire, a jealous El.

While His **fire** can be a **demonstration of approval**, the above verse also points out that **fire** is connected with His **jealousy**. In this respect, it becomes the **method of judgment**:

*Vayikra/Leviticus 10:1* Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before **יהוה**, which **He had not commanded them**. <sup>2</sup> So **fire** went out from **יהוה** and devoured them, and they died before **יהוה**.

*Zephaniah 3:8* " Therefore wait for Me," says **יהוה**, "Until the day I rise up for plunder; **My determination is to gather the nations** To My assembly of kingdoms, To pour on them My indignation, All my fierce anger; **All the earth shall be devoured With the fire of My jealousy**."

*2 Peter 3:7* But the **heavens and the earth** which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for **fire** until the day of judgment and perdition of **ungodly men**.

Now back to our **burning bush**. What was the **significance** of the **bush which was not consumed**? There are several explanations, but I will share one from a **Midrash** and **expand** it to include the **Messiah**. The **fire that burns in the midst of the bush** is like the **heart of the person**, while the **thorns that surround it** signify the **pain and difficulty of oppression**. For the **Israelites**, this would be the **burdens and afflictions of slavery**. And for the **Messiah**, who also was a “**consuming fire**”...He too wore that **crown of thorns** symbolizing all the **sin, pain, and suffering** He took on for **our benefit**. In other words, the **Almighty**

appeared to Moshe out of the **midst of the burning thorn bush** in order to show **His complete identification with their plight**. If Israel suffers under the whip of **Egyptian taskmasters**, then it is as if **the Almighty suffers with them** also. It will be **no different** when the **world suffers in the tribulation**. For those who identify with the Messiah, He will become the **“consuming fire” of protection**:

*Revelation 15:2* And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of Yah.<sup>3</sup> They sing the song of Moshe, the servant of Yah, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Adonai El Shaddai! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!"<sup>4</sup> Who shall not fear You, O Adonai, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."

For those who **reject Him**, He will be the **“fire of judgment”**:

*Revelation 20:14* Then Death and Hades were cast into the **lake of fire**. This is the second death.<sup>15</sup> And anyone not found written in the **Book of Life** was cast into the lake of fire.

In Shemot 3, **יהוה** reveals to Moshe His **personal name**:

*Shemot 3:13* Then Moshe said to Elohim, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The Elohim of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, '**What is His name?**' what shall I say to them?"<sup>14</sup> And Elohim said to Moshe, "**I AM WHO I AM**" (**אֲנִי הָאֵל אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי**). And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, '**I AM** has sent me to you.'"<sup>15</sup> Moreover Elohim said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: '**יהוה** Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob, has sent me to you. **This is My name forever**, and this is My memorial to all generations.'

His **name** reveals that His **attributes** are **limitless**. It appears to be the **composite** of:

- He was – (**הָיָה**)
- He is – (**הוּוֶה**)
- He will be – (**יִהְיֶה**)

We find this same **description** of **Yeshua**:

*Revelation 1:8* "I am the Aleph and the Tav, the Beginning and the End," says Adonai, "**who is and who was and who is to come**, the Almighty."

**Baruch HaShem!**

**Shabbat Shalom!**

**Ardelle**