

## 5782 - Exodus 1:1-6:1 - Sh'mot (Names)

<sup>14</sup>These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family:

1. שמות אלה—*And these are the names.* The second book of the Torah introduces the history of the Jews as a nation, a nation founded upon the individual and family histories recounted in Genesis. This natural connection is indicated in the text by the connecting letter ו [and] at the beginning of this verse. The Jewish people trace their origins to the family unit.<sup>1</sup>

שמות—*The names.* The *Book of Exodus*, which recounts the first exile and redemption of the Jewish people, is commonly referred to as *Shemos, names*. **This title draws our attention to the importance of maintaining Hebrew names, especially when living in the midst of a foreign people.** We are told that our ancestors did not change their names in favor of Egyptian names and that this loyalty helped them to maintain their Jewish identity. Similarly, in every period when the Jewish nation was under foreign domination the Hebrew name has proved to be one of the most important safeguards for preserving its religion. In fact, this practice was one of the meritorious qualities which made the Israelites deserving of redemption from the slavery of Egypt. The first passage of Shemos hints at some of the other merits which contributed to their redemption: family spirit and feeling, the formation of large families, a high level of morality, the preservation of the Hebrew language, and the spirit of brotherhood (*Shemos Rabbah*, 1; *Tanchuma*).

a. The book should have commenced with the word אלה, without the prefix ו just as the last Book of the Torah commences with the words אלה הדברים, “these are the words,” without a prefix ו. The reason the Torah wrote the prefix letter ו in this instance was to establish a continuity with the paragraph describing the descent of Ya’akov to Egypt in Genesis 46,8. The Torah wanted to be sure that we understand that what is mentioned there and what is mentioned here are one and the same thing.<sup>2</sup>

b. The word “name” (שם) in Hebrew is NOT a reference to someone’s (or something’s) “designation” that simply makes it possible to distinguish him (or her or it) from others.

c. The concept of personal names in the Hebrew Bible often included the idea of a person’s existence, character, and reputation—**often the plural form of *shem* is rendered as “persons” (cf., Exo 1:1).**

1) 1 Samuel 25:25

May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. **He is just like his name—his name is Fool, and folly goes with him.**

d. Matthew 1:21

She (*Miriam*) will give birth to a son, and **you are to give him the name Yeshua, because he will save his people from their sins.**”

1) In Greek texts of the Apostolic Writings, the name “Yeshua” is rendered Ἰησοῦς (*Iêsous*). It becomes “Iesus” in Latin. The Anglicized version is “Jesus.”

2) But, Ἰησοῦς is the way the name Joshua (Heb. יהושע [Y’hoshua]) is transliterated in the Septuagint (LXX). “Y’hoshua” (Joshua) means “**the LORD is salvation.**”

3) Yeshua was named “Yeshua”—NOT “Y’hoshua (Joshua)—because “**he would save**” ... (Matthew 1:21)

וְקָרָאתָ אֶת־שְׁמוֹ יְשׁוּעַ כִּי הוּא יִשׁוּעַ אֶת־עַמּוֹ מִחַטָּאתֵיהֶם:

(v’ka-ra-tah et sh’mo *yeshua* ki hu *yo-shi-ah* et amo me-cha-to-tei-hem)

4) The “wordplay”<sup>3</sup> between יְשׁוּעַ (*Yeshua*) and יוֹשִׁיָּע (*yo-shiah*) is **only a wordplay in Hebrew.**

a) Greek: “he is called Ἰησοῦν (*Iêsous*) because he will σώσει (*sode-zo*) his people from their sins.”

b) English: “he is called **Jesus** because he will **save** his people from their sins.”

5) Ironically, even though the name “Jesus” is *the* name by which Yeshua is known throughout the English-speaking world—in his own time he was *never* called by that name. Nor was he even called “Jesus” in the first English translations of the Apostolic Writings.

a) The spelling of the name “Jesus” has been in use **for less than 400 years.** This can easily be seen in the fact that the 1611 King James Version of the Bible still spelled His name “Ie-sous,” not “Jesus”. **The name *Iesous* was used in Greek, Latin, and English until the 17th century,** when the letter “J”

1 Rabbi Elie Munk, *The Call of the Torah, Shemos*, (Mesorah Publishing, Ltd.), pp. 2-12).

2 Rabbi Eliyahu Munk, *Torah Commentary by Rabbi Bachya ben Asher, Vol. 3*, (Lambda Publishers, Inc), p. 742.

3 Wordplay: Playful use of words—verbal wit (Merriam-Webster). Word play is quite common in oral cultures as a method of reinforcing meaning (Wikipedia).

was introduced as a replacement for the letter “I” when used as a consonant. However, it was still pronounced “Yea-soos” for many years before it eventually took on the “g” sound that we know today in the word “Jesus.” This means the pronunciation of **the name “Jesus” is a very recent development in the English language.**<sup>4</sup>

2. This title (*Sh’mot*) draws our attention to **the importance of maintaining Hebrew names ...**

“See how Jesus said it in Hebrews 8:6-13 and Matthew 9:16-17. In Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus says, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ... So, with **his coming, the law has been fulfilled and has passed away.**”<sup>5</sup>

Hebrews 8:13

<sup>13a</sup>By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one **obsolete ...**

CJB—By using the term, “new,” he has made the first covenant “old” ...

—**Obsolete**—no longer in use, superseded by something newer, **though possibly still in use.**

—**Old**—worn-out, archaic, antiquated, outmoded, out-of-date **OR deep-rooted, long-standing, timeworn?**

a. *παλαιόω* (*palaios*)—to make ancient or old, **to become old, to be worn out, of things worn out by time and use, to declare a thing to be old and so about to be abrogated.**

1) Isaiah 51:6

<sup>6</sup>Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will **wear out (i.e. “grow old”)** like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail.

2) Isaiah 65:22

<sup>22</sup>For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones **will long** enjoy the work of their hands.

3) Sirach<sup>6</sup> 11:20 (NJB)

Stick to your job, work hard at it and **grow old** at your work.

4) Sirach 14:17

All living beings **become old** like a garment, for the decree from of old is, “You must surely die!”

5) Baruch<sup>7</sup> 3:10

Why, Israel, why are you in the country of your enemies, **growing older and older** in an alien land ...

b. *בלָהַ* (*balah*)—to wear out, become old, to wear out by use, use up completely, to enjoy, use to the the full.

1) Genesis 18:12

<sup>12</sup>So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, “After I am **worn out** (i.e., “old”) and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?”

<sup>13b</sup>and what is obsolete (*παλαιόω* [*palaios*])—“old”) and outdated will soon disappear.

CJB—and something being made old, something in the process of aging, is on its way to vanishing altogether.

a. *γηράσκω* (*gerasko*)—to grow old (of things and institutions), to fail from age, be obsolescent.

1) Obsolescent—**in the process of becoming obsolete, in the process of being replaced by something newer and better.**

b. *זָקַן* (*zaken*) *be an old man, woman; age, become old.*

1) Genesis 18:13

<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Will I really have a child, now that **I am old?**’”

2) Genesis 24:36

<sup>36</sup>My master's wife Sarah has borne him a son **in her old age**, and he has given him everything he owns.

3) Joshua 23:1

<sup>1</sup>After a long time had passed and the LORD had given Israel rest from all their enemies around them, Joshua, by then a **very old man**,<sup>2</sup>summoned all Israel—their elders, leaders, judges and officials—and said to them: “I am **very old**.<sup>3</sup>You yourselves have seen everything the LORD your God has done to all these nations for your sake; it was the LORD your God who fought for you.

<sup>4</sup>Remember how I have allotted as an inheritance for your tribes all the land of the nations that remain—the nations I conquered—between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea in the west.<sup>5</sup>The LORD your God himself will push them out for your sake. He will

4 <https://www.unlearnthelies.com/how-yeshua-became-jesus.html>

5 [https://www.google.com/search?q=jesus+does+away+with+the+law&rlz=1C1CHBF\\_enUS967US967&dq=Jesus+does+away+with+the+law&aqs=chrome.0.0i512j0l22i3015j0i39012.5676j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=jesus+does+away+with+the+law&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS967US967&dq=Jesus+does+away+with+the+law&aqs=chrome.0.0i512j0l22i3015j0i39012.5676j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

6 Commonly called (*Joshua ben*) *Sira*, or the *Wisdom of [Joshua] the son of Sirach*, though in the Latin tradition it is known as *Ecclesiasticus* (i.e., the “church book”) ... The original document was written in Hebrew by Joshua ben Sira (ca. 180 BCE) and was later introduced and translated into Greek by his grandson around 132 BCE.

7 *Baruch* purports to be the work of the friend and secretary of the prophet Jeremiah (see Jer 32:12; 36:4) ... (its) two parts were probably brought together about 100 BCE.

drive them out before you, and you will take possession of their land, as the LORD your God promised you. <sup>6</sup>Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left ...

4) Proverbs 23:22

<sup>22</sup>Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when **she is old**.

5) 1Maccabees 16:2-3

<sup>2</sup>Simon summoned his two elder sons, Judas and John, and said to them, 'My brothers and I, and my father's House, have fought the enemies of Israel from our youth until today, and many a time we have been successful in rescuing Israel. <sup>3</sup>But now **I am an old man**, while you, by the mercy of Heaven, are the right age; **take the place of my brother and myself**, go out and fight for our nation, and may Heaven's aid be with you.'

6) Luke 5:33-39 (The Parable of Three Crazy Things People Never Do).

<sup>33</sup>They said to him, "John's disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking."

<sup>34</sup>Yeshua answered, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? <sup>35</sup>But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast." <sup>36</sup>He told them this parable: **1)** "No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one. Otherwise, they will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. **2)**

<sup>37</sup>And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. <sup>38</sup>No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. **3)**<sup>39</sup>**And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, 'The old is better.'**"

Matthew 5:17

<sup>17</sup>"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup>For truly I tell you, **until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.**

a. In Greek, the word "fulfill" means to "fill up"—**it is about quantity**—but that has absolutely nothing to do with its meaning in Hebrew. In Hebrew, it's about **quality**!

b. <sup>17</sup>to fulfill them (i.e., to establish them, bring them to fruition, make them real, carry them out).

1) Gr: πληρώσαι (*play-ro'-o*) = Heb: לקיים (*lekayem*)—to preserve, sustain, fulfill.

2) John 19:36

<sup>36</sup>These things happened ... that the scripture would be **fulfilled**: "Not one of his bones ... (Psa 34:20).

3) 2Peter 1:10

<sup>10</sup>Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election **sure** ...

c. <sup>17</sup>abolish ... fulfill

1) "Abolish" (or "destroy," "cancel") and "fulfill" are technical terms used in rabbinic argumentation.

a) Gr: καταλύω (*kataluo*)—to destroy = Heb: לבטל (*levatel*)—to cancel.

b) In Yeshua's time, *lekayem* (*fulfill*) was usually the antonym of *levatel* (*cancel, nullify*) and used in the sense of "preserve" or "sustain"—as a rabbinical term, it means "to sustain by properly interpreting."

c) Numbers Rabbah 19:33

The second occasion was when the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, *Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children* (ib. 5). Moses said to him: 'Sovereign of the Universe! Many are the wicked who have begotten righteous men. Shall the latter bear some of the iniquities of their fathers? Terah worshipped images, yet Abraham his son was a righteous man. Similarly Hezekiah was a righteous man, though Ahaz his father was wicked. So also Josiah was righteous, yet Amon his father was wicked. Is this proper, that the righteous should be punished for the iniquity of their fathers?' The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: 'You have taught Me something! By your life, **I shall cancel** (לבטל) **My words and confirm** (מקיים) **yours**'; as it says, *The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers* (Deut. XXIV, 16). 'And by your life, I shall record these words in your name'; as it says, *According to that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, as the Lord commanded, saying: The fathers shall not, etc.* (II Kings XIV, 6).

2) When a rabbi felt that his colleague had misinterpreted a passage of Scripture, he would say, "You are destroying (or canceling) the Law!" Sometimes, what was "destroying the Law" for one rabbi was "fulfilling the Law" (i.e., correctly interpreting it) for another.

3) Matthew 5:17ff. may have been inspired by a rabbinic discussion during which someone accused Yeshua of "destroying the Law."

Of course, neither Yeshua nor his accuser would ever think of *literally* destroying the Law—since that was *not* the issue!

4) The *issue* was Yeshua's understanding (or interpretation) of the Scriptures. Rather than “destroy(ing)” (i.e., *canceling*) or weakening the Torah, Yeshua said that *his* teaching actually “fulfill(s)” (or establishes) it.

a) Ecclesiastes Rabbah 11:8

The Torah which a person learns in this world is ‘vanity’ in comparison with **the Torah of the Messiah**.

1) Galatians 6:2

<sup>2</sup>Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ (i.e., **the Torah of the Messiah**).

2) Leviticus 19:18

<sup>18m</sup>Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but **love your neighbor as yourself**. I am the LORD.

b) *Yigdal*—a hymn which is part of the daily liturgy in the Synagogue.

... *God gave the Torah of truth to his people through (Moses)  
... the Torah will not be changed ... there will never be another Torah given by God ...*

3. Notice that the sons/tribes are NOT listed in the order of their birth.

<sup>1,2</sup>Reuben (1), Simeon (2), Levi (3) and Judah (4); <sup>3</sup>Issachar (9), Zebulun (10) and Benjamin (12); <sup>4</sup>Dan (5) and Naphtali (6); Gad (7) and Asher (8). <sup>5</sup>The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all; Joseph (11) was already in Egypt.

4. <sup>5</sup>... *Joseph was already in Egypt.*

a. There are two reasons why the Torah mentions Joseph last in this list of tribes. First, the Torah wanted to prevent the sons of the concubines becoming discriminated against as they might have if the Torah had listed them last.

This is why we find the tribes Dan, Naftali, Gad, and Asher listed before Joseph. A second reason ... is that Joseph was the most powerful and honoured of Yaacov's sons. **The Torah mentioned him last precisely as a reminder that a powerful and influential person who is liable to give himself airs and to become haughty due to the homage people pay to him should not do so.** Mentioning his name last is a gentle reminder to such people not to become too proud as a result of what others may think of them. We observe

that the more honour G'd paid to the righteous, the more humble they themselves became ...<sup>8</sup>

1) Luke 9:46-48

<sup>46</sup>An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. <sup>47</sup>Yeshua, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. <sup>48</sup>Then he said to them ... “For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest.”

5. <sup>5</sup>*The descendants of Jacob numbered **seventy in all** ...*

a. Genesis 46:26-27

<sup>26</sup>All those who went to Egypt with Jacob—those who were his direct descendants, not counting his sons' wives—numbered **sixty-six persons**. <sup>27</sup>With the two sons who had been born to Joseph in Egypt, the members of Jacob's family, which went to Egypt, were **seventy in all**.

1) Because this is not a symbolic number in the Bible, it must represent a genuine calculation based on the data just recorded. The key phrase is “who came to Egypt.” Accordingly, Er and Onan must be omitted because they died in Canaan (Gen 38:3-10). Verse 27 indicates that Manasseh and Ephraim are not included among the 66. They were born in Egypt and cannot be said to have come there. The computation would then be Leah 31 + Zilpah 16 + Rachel 12 + Bilhah 7 = 66 (Gen 46:8-26).<sup>9</sup>

a) Plus Dina (Gen 46:15) and Sereh (Gen 46:17).

b) Plus Ephraim and Manasseh, of whom it is said, **“<sup>27</sup>With the two sons who had been born to Joseph in Egypt, the members of Jacob's family, which went to Egypt, were seventy in all.”**

2) ***the total ... 70 persons*** The number 70 here, as elsewhere in biblical literature, is symbolic, expressing totality. The number 70 is the base of 10 multiplied by 7, a number expressing completeness. It reiterates the point made in verses 1 and 6-7, emphasizing the comprehensive nature of the descent to Egypt, because this event is seen as the fulfillment of Gen. 15:13. **Note that the Greek Septuagint, as well as the Exodus Qumran text, has a tradition of 75, which is not a stock number.**

a) Genesis 46:27 (LXX)

And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in the land of Egypt, were nine souls; all the souls of the house of Jacob who came with Joseph into Egypt, **were seventy-five souls.**

<sup>8</sup> Rabbi Eliyahu Munk, *Torah Commentary*—, pp. 744-745.

<sup>9</sup> David L. Lieber, Sr. Ed., *Etz Hayim, Torah and Commentary*, (The Jewish Publication Society), p. 282.

2) Acts 7:14

<sup>14</sup>After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, **seventy-five in all**.

b. Deuteronomy 10:22

<sup>22</sup>Your forefathers who went down into Egypt were **seventy in all**, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky.

c. Other “seventy(s)”

1) Genesis 50:1-3

<sup>1</sup>Joseph threw himself on his father and wept over him and kissed him. <sup>2</sup>Then Joseph directed the physicians in his service to embalm his father Israel. So the physicians embalmed him, <sup>3</sup>taking a full forty days, for that was the time required for embalming. And **the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days**.

2) Exodus 15:22-27

<sup>22</sup>Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. **For three days they traveled** in the desert **without finding water**. <sup>23</sup>When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter. (That is why the place is called Marah.) <sup>24</sup>So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?"

<sup>25</sup>Then Moses cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became fit to drink. There the LORD issued a ruling and instruction for them and put them to the test. <sup>26</sup>He said, "If you listen carefully to the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you."

<sup>27</sup>Then they came to Elim, where there were **twelve springs** and **seventy palm trees**, and they camped there near the water.

1) **On the third day, the waters of Marah were healed and they were refreshed.**

2) **What does God tell them after they drink—“If you listen carefully ...”**

3) 2Chronicles 36:17-21

<sup>17</sup>... God gave them all into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>18</sup>He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God ... and the treasures of the LORD's temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. <sup>19</sup>They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem ... <sup>20</sup>He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became serv-

ants to him and his successors until the kingdom of Persia came to power. <sup>21</sup>The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, **until the seventy years were completed** in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah.)

4) Sukkah 55b

R. Eleazar said: To what do **the seventy bullocks** [that were offered during the seven days of Sukkot] **correspond? To the seventy nations [of the earth]** (See Num 29:12-32).

d. Rabbinic Methodology

1) At the very end of the thirteenth century (1291 C.E.), the Bible scholar Bachya ben Asher of Saragossa noted that there are four ways of interpreting Scripture. These came to be known by the acronym *pardes*, spelled *pay resh dalet samech*—פָּרְדֵּס.

a) The pay of *pardes* stands for *peshat*, meaning “literal explanation of the text.” The commentator seeks to explain the plain meaning of the text and no more.

b) The *resh* of *pardes* stands for *remez*, meaning “allusion, allegory, symbolism.” The commentator compares words and phrases in one part of the Bible to similar words and phrases in other parts of the Bible and draws inferences from them.

c) The *dalet* of *pardes* stands for *derash*, a form of the word *midrash*, meaning “interpretation.” **Here the commentator probes beneath the literal meaning or a word or phrase in order to uncover an ethical or moral lesson that is thought to be implicit in the text.**

d) The *samech* of *pardes* stands for *sod*, meaning “mystery, secret.” Kabbalists (mystics) in particular are fond of probing the stories of the Bible to uncover the secrets of the Torah and of life itself. **Samekh (60) + vav (6) + dalet (4) = 70.**

e) These methods of interpretation are used in varying degrees and combinations by biblical commentators ... (They do so in order to) resolve obscurities and contradictions in the biblical text and to extract moral lessons from it.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Alfred J. Kolatch, *This is the Torah*, (Jonathan David Publishers, 1988), pp. 10-11.