

Shemot 1-5 - Rav Shalom Carmy - Spring 2019

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Intro to the Class

Literary-Theological: 'Theological' denotes our direct goal to understand dvar Hashem, but, additionally, 'theological' means for us here that we are focused on Jewish theology (so we are going to be privileging Chazal and Rishonim). 'Literary' means for us that 'how something is written' is an essential part of what something *is*.

Example of confronting Western Culture: When you talk to some Jews, the point of Yetziyat Mitzrayim is something like the American Revolution. There are even books about this, but even in general culture, when Liberal Presidents in the US talk about the Bible, they talk about the Universal values that are shown in Yetziyat Mitzrayim... freedom in the political sense... political thought was definitely influenced by interpretations of the stories of Shemot. But there could be distortion by thinking that way. We aren't necessarily adopting those outlooks.

Intro to Shemot - The Placement of Shemot, the Start and the End

Obvious observation: Shemot comes after Breishit, and before Vayikrah. Rav Carmy quipped that If this were a Marx Brothers' movie, then the following scene might unfold:

Mr. Ravioli would be playing piano and finish his first piece. The audience would then ask him, "Mr. Ravioli, what is the next [book]?!" He would then answer, "number two!"

Mr. Ravioli, what would he call the 2nd sefer? “Shemot” he’d say. That’s important because there are 5 books in Chumash, and somebody might suggest that maybe you can just call it one sefer and the beginning and end of one book is arbitrary. Bible Critics sometimes erroneously suggest this.

You can ask even in a frum way: over 20 years ago, there was a guy in some Protestant seminary, and then he went to work for Lyndon Johnson, and afterwards he became a Liberal-secular character. He did a TV show on Breishit, and he got people to think about this - including a Rosh Yeshiva at JTS. At one point, some frum people set up a response for this, and they used the internet. While discussing the whole business of Breishit, one of the frum people asked: “how can we talk about only Breishit as a separate book! We aren’t so critical to say it is a separate book to the rest of Tanach!” Well, the Gemara and many Rishonim refer directly to the beginning of subsequent Sefarim in the Torah. Chazal make assumptions that there ARE separate books.

Why does Breishit end where it ends? Death of Yosef as the end? Shemot begins where it begins, but what is Shemot about that it starts where it starts?

Ramban - Introduction to Shemot

Breishit has one theme: Creation (where the story of Avot is also part of creation). In effect, Ramban is adopting the meaning of Breishit as in ‘sefer Yetzira’. Ramban’s understanding of Avot being part of this is reminiscent of his ‘Maaseh Avot Siman L’Banim,’ which to him means that happenings that were ‘created’ in the Avot’s situations are basically a blueprint of human history.

Shemot, he says, is about the first Galut, which was ordained in Brit Bein HaBitarim, and also the Geulah from that. Galut and Redemption. That is why Shemot begins with genealogy.

[This isn’t one long book of Torah... this is a new book, so from a literary point of view, you have to have an appropriate opening to the book and you can’t simply reference something in an earlier book.]

Shemot won’t end with Yetziyat Mitzrayim, because real redemption means going back to the previous status quo. Once they get Hashem back among them with the building of the Mishkan, they will be redeemed.

Question on Ramban: Why isn’t redemption defined as getting back to Israel? As far as the Ramban is concerned, redemption is not simply yetziyat mitzrayim, and it isn’t even Matan Torah, it is *returning to the previous state*. But were they in the previous ‘State’ (pun intended)?

The Mishkan is a central point to the Ramban. Redemption is that just as the Avot had a distinctive relationship with God, so too the people of Israel were able to get that back to having that relationship with God, as symbolized by the founding of the Mishkan.

Seems like this plays into the Machloket between the Rambam and the Ramban about the purpose of the Mishkan: Rambam → place to give Korbanot. Ramban → 'Assu li Mikdash VShachanti BTocham'.

Even if you say that the building of the Mishkan doesn't end with the end of Shemot, you can say like the author Anthony Trollope in the 19th century who wrote long books and the always ended with a marriage where everything is happy even if the same characters have issues in later volumes of the same story. If the Torah carried Shemot until the end of Shmini, then it would end on a bad note of Nadav and Avihu, so from a literary standpoint, it makes sense that if the book would end with "the mishkan" then it would end before the stories of Shmini.

Rabbi Yechezkel Sarna - Daliyot Yechezkel

He takes mussar from Ramban's words about what is still considered galut and what is considered geulah.

When Bnei Yisroel were first in Egypt, they had it great. Nevertheless, they were still in galut. No matter how good things are, you have lost your freedom in galut.

He introduces an element that if the point was truly to get back to where Bnei Yisroel were before Galut then the Mishkan is not enough.

Abarbanel - Introduction to Shemot

Introduction to Sefer Shemot. Abarbanel talks about why Hashem separated between the books of Breishit and Shemot. There are **four** reasons for this:

1. **Individual vs Nation:** Breishit is about *individuals* and Shemot is about the *nation*. Sefer Yeshidim vs Sefer HaAm
2. **Yichus and the Nation:** The Torah wants to talk about the perfection of people. It all begins with the Avot because it proves to us that the people of Israel ARE distinguished in terms of Yichus.¹ To the Abarbanel, Yichus was very important². So Breishit is about the Fathers and Shemot is about the Children.

¹ Rav Carmy's father was an American immigrant who thought: "you are what you do, not who your grandfather was". But there were others like The Rav who thought that Yichus was important to him. Someone once met Shai Agnon in a store, and Shai Agnon said that "every person should know their yichus at least back to Adam HaRishon".

² Imagine if someone asked Avraham Avinu "what was Terach was really like?!" as an attempt to learn about the Yichus that Avraham had. It is clear that some connections are more important than others, to us.

3. **Avot vs Moshe:** Breishit is about Avot, but we have such a focus on the “begat” section of Breishit. From Shemot on, the central focus is about Moshe Rabbeinu.
 - Rav Carmy: Why should you emphasize Moshe? Shemot is about Halakha: Matan Tora, “HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem”, “Mishpattim.” Is it all about the personality of Moshe? What the Abarbanel says is a Chiddush, because Lichora you can say that Bnei Yisroel play a very central role!³
4. **Background vs the Ikkar Story:** the Ikkar is Shemot. The goal is for there to be a galut which leads up to Geulah, but we need to know how Bnei Yisroel get into Galut in the first place!

Perak Alef

Perek 1:1 - How Sefer Shemot Begins

Why is the story going back to the beginning with genealogy? Why would the Torah use *resumptive-repetition*?

Eben Ezra - Continuation of Breishit

Why start with a “vav”? Because at the end of Breishit we have the posterity of Yosef in his own lifetime, and now we continue from the end of Breishit to the beginning of Shemot which deals with the other parts of Bnei Yisroel. This is all a lead-up to the pasuk about the fact that Bnei Yisroel multiply. The Torah makes this distinction itself in Ki tavoh 26:5

"וְעָנִיתִי וְאָמַרְתִּי לִפְנֵי יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהֵיךְ אֲרָמִי אֲבִי וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיִם וַיְגַדְּ שָׁם בְּמִתִּי מָעֻט וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגֹוִי גָדוֹל עָצוֹם וָרֹב."

Eben Ezra is picking up with this idea.

Ramban - Echoing Breishit, Not Continuing

(Shemot 1:1) Shemot is echoing what we had in Breishit, even though they are two separate books. Even though they are two separate books, they are adjacent, and this is of fundamental importance. The Torah is interested in this general point, and that is why it doesn't go all the way down to all the generations. There is a similar phenomenon also appears in Sefer Ezra and at the end of Divrei Hayamim. Ezra begins with the same thing as how Divrei Hayamim ends. This is how we know that Ezra is a continuation of what happened at the end of Divrei Hayamim.

Responding to what Eben Ezra says, Ramban objects. On what grounds does he object? Rav Carmy explained two possible objections. Maybe Ramban was so compelled with the idea that

³ There is a gemara in Brachot 34b which says that when Moshe was pleading with God not to destroy Bnei Yisroel, God said to Moshe that he would make a new nation from Moshe, but Moshe didn't want that to be so. Seemingly, Moshe wasn't the same type of personality as the Avot. He didn't want to be an Av Hamon Goyim.

this issue is about broader thematic connections, and not just about connecting with the LAST words of Breishit to the first words of Shemot. Alternatively, it could be that according to Ramban, Breishit and Shemot have different goals in mind, and what Eben Ezra says couldn't be right that the "vav" at the beginning of Shemot means to directly link the two books so intimately.

The Ramban says that the point that Rashi quoted about the "chibah" that Bnei Yisroel were to God, but Ramban maintains that Rashi's point does not link between the end of Breishit and the beginning of Shemot.

Rashi - Why Count Again?⁴

Rashi seemingly isn't bothered in the same way that Eben Ezra and Ramban are bothered. If you like something, you'd count them! Rashi doesn't seem to address why the census is specifically here.⁵

Malbim - Sociological Definition of Bnei Yisroel

Malbim's Diyukkim between Brieshit and Shemot Genealogies

Why does the Torah repeat the names? There isn't even a complete list of all 70 names! The Malbim answers that the Torah wanted to tell us that when Bnei Yisroel came to Mitzrayim they were highly respected for three reasons, but then they lost the importance in all three areas. Firstly, they were personally respectable. Secondly, they all loyal to Yaakov as one, not as shevatim.

Things were great before Egypt. Now things are bad for Bnei Yisroel. This is why there is a second enumeration. There are subtle differences between the two enumerations, and this is a really important thing to note as an introduction to the sefer.

The interesting thing about the Malbim is that from a **sociological** point of view, he is dealing with the question of 'what did Bnei Yisroel look like?' Some say that we weren't a nation until after yetziyat mitzrayim. *Mahara* says in *Gevurat Hashem* that Bnei Yisroel needed to be a certain size before being a nation and being able to leave mitzrayim. The Malbim seems to say that there is some sort of structure to the people who went down to Mitzrayim. This isn't a family, but it isn't a nation. What is the sociological context? Maybe '*clan*' is a good word.

⁴ Rashi is not always interested in what the pasuk means in its broader context. Perhaps Rashi is concerned about another sort of issue in the pasuk; namely, the resumptive-repetition.

⁵ Willy Kluger pointed out that Rashi says that in general the Torah has a census after a tzarah. If the sociological issues that Rav Carmy brought up in terms of the Malbim (later), then maybe that is the tzarah that this census is being followed.

“Toldot” vs “Sheimot”

In Breishit, we have a word for description of genealogy: Toldot. In the rest of Chumash, we don't have such a word. To a large extent, the word Toldot as a description of genealogy disappeared after vayeshev. There's an exception: Toldot of Aharon in Bamidbar. If we were trying to define what is happening in Shemot with genealogies, we wouldn't find Toldot! Also in Perek Vav of Shemot, we have “eileh shemot bnei leivi...”, “rashei beit avotam...”, etc.

No one else talks about this question. Rav Carmy thinks that this is showing a sociological shift. Toldot means that the “Mollid” is at the center. This is a diyuk that Malbim makes too about Yaakov no longer being in the center of Bnei Yisroel. Now each of the tribes have their own center.

Perhaps the new genealogy at the beginning of Shemot is to show this sociological shift. This is not the same “toldot” framework as before.⁶

In דברי הימים and בראשית you see the word תולדות. You only find this in בראשית and דברי הימים. You find it once by אלה שמות בני יעקב we have וארא ח. אלה שמות בני ישראל. בני אהרן, that's it. Here we have תולדותם. ← Why is there this shift? Maybe because in sociological terms, when I look at כלל ישראל there are three different kinds of sociological concepts that I could allude to:

1. יציאת מצרים, the nation. The מהר”ל says that there is no Jewish Nation until ששים ריבוא. He has a sociological insight: you can't have a nation with a small number of people.
 2. A family. Blood relations. The patriarch is sitting at the head of the table.
 3. But there's an intermediate level: let's call it a clan. It's not that everyone is centered around the patriarch. There is a closeness among all of these people, but they're not a family anymore.
- This is what the מלבי”ם is describing. When they went down to מצרים they were a family. But now each one of the brothers is a head of a family.
- The מלבי”ם doesn't explain why this shift happens. When they became more numerous the relationship changed. The nature of things is that quantity does produce quality. The change in quantity changes the quality.

Perek 1:7 - “Vayishretzu”

(ז) וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל פָּרוּ וַיִּשְׁרְצוּ וַיִּרְבּוּ וַיַּעֲצְמוּ בְּמֵאדָּ מְאֹד וַתִּמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ אֹתָם:

⁶ Rav Carmy accepts that this is not stated openly in the text. This is reading between the lines, and this is why it is something which no one commented on before. Rav Carmy accepts that this is not a bold diyuk.

Rashi - Many Kids (Chazal)

“Vayishretzu” means that they had multiple births. This is the way that Chazal understands this as well, as we see in the Midrash that Bnei Yisroel had six children at once.

What's Pshat of the Pasuk?

➤ Mishlei 6:6

- Mishlei 6:6 says that ants do work very hard, and you can look to them for good influences → “לך אל נמלה עצל ראה דרכיה וחכם”.
 - But in general, Tanach doesn't see bugs as positive. But, we can't necessarily leap from our view of bugs to say that ‘literarily’, here in Shemot, it is a bad thing.

➤ Breishit 1:20-21

(כ) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִשְׂרְצוּ הַמַּיִם שֶׁרָץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה וְעוֹף יְעוֹפֵף עַל הָאָרֶץ עַל פְּנֵי רִקְיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם:
(כא) וַיְבָרֶא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַתַּיִנִּים הַגְּדֹלִים וְאֶת כָּל נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה הַרְמִשֵּׁת אֲשֶׁר שֶׁרְצוּ הַמַּיִם לְמִינֵהֶם
וְאֶת כָּל עוֹף כָּנָף לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב:

- These verbs “sheretz” seem like *blessings*!

➤ Shemot 1 (Local context)

- Another point is that “Yishretzu” is between “Paru” and “Yirbu Meod”, so it doesn't seem to have mashmaut as being bad.

Seforno's Preemptive Comment

The seforno says that “Vayishretzu” has a negative connotation. After the first generation died in Mitzrayim, they behaved like insects. How could Seforno read it negatively if the evidence is so strong the Vayishretzu has positive connotation!

The Seforno got this idea from ideas in **Yehezkel 20** about the Jews being bad. It says that even in Mitzrayim the people did Avodah Zara. In tanach, this is the only place that refers to the Jews being ovdei avodah zara in Mitzrayim. Chazal talk about it, but Tanach itself does not talk about it in Shemot. Chazal say on Yechezkel that Hashem kept a grudge for 850 years against Bnei Yisroel in Mitzrayim, and he held it in until Yechezkel. Finally, when it came to Chorban Bayit Rishon, the Navi lets out this long-held grudge out into the open.

The seforno seems to have just taken the Psukim in Yechezkel and injected them into Shemot. In his introduction to Shemot, Seforno explicitly brings up the Psukim in Yechezkel. As a history course, this is useful. But, in terms of actually reading Shemot, what the Seforno says doesn't seem to be in the Pasuk.

Fundamental Pshat Question

Rav Carmy wants to ask then, “why doesn’t the Torah say anything about the sins of Bnei Yisroel in Mitzrayim?” Well, apparently, the Torah chose not to emphasize the condemnation of Bnei Yisroel yet. This is an important thing to have in mind looking forward.

Perek 1:8 - “Melech Chadash”

Rashi - Citing Machlokket Chazal in Eruvin 53a

Rashi cites the Machlokket⁷ about whether this was a new king completely, or the same king who changed his policies.

The second side seems unlikely. It is unlikely for a person to suddenly change his policies overnight. It makes more sense for this to have been a new king. But, this isn’t a question of “obvious truth” versus “non-obvious, therefore false”. Rav and Shmuel here aren’t just trying to argue which is a more obvious insight.⁸

Hyksos Point

Hyksos: a people of mixed Semitic and Asian descent who invaded Egypt and settled in the Nile delta c. 1640 BC. They formed the 15th and 16th dynasties of Egypt and ruled a large part of the country until driven out c. 1532 BC.

Maybe this was the shift in the “Melech Chadash”.

“Lo Yadah Et Yosef”

Rav Carmy is comfortable to say that even if it was the same King as before, if you can mention Yosef’s name in Jeopardy is not enough. Really, knowing Yosef is much more and they would have to take Yosef into account. If a King wants society to forget things, then propaganda would make it easy.

⁷ ויקם מלך חדש - רב ושמואל חד אמר חדש ממש. וחד אמר, שנתחדשו גזרותיו:
אשרי לא ידע - עשה עצמו כאלו לא ידע:

⁸ Example of Rav and Shmuel having an argument which isn’t just “Black” vs “white” - Both sides have deep insights:

Rav and Shmuel had an argument about where “hodu” and “kush” are in the beginning of the Megilla. One says that they were Turkey and Ethiopia, and one says that they were right next to each other, and just as he ruled these things that were right next to each other, he had a handle on all the 127 provinces.

So we have four explanations to this מחלוקת רב ושמואל:

1. Shallow - this is the way that תנ"ך operate
2. Historical - Hiksos. Definitely not פשט
3. פשט oriented discussion - being מדייק in מלך and חדש. The fact that Rashi quotes them both shows that he thinks that they both are important for פשט.
4. Philosophical - The real issue is not the *identity* of the new פרעה. It's whether or not we view the תורה with the perspective that the גזרה will happen anyway, or that the individual characters have an affect on the history. I think that the מהר"ל is touching on this issue. His language is obscure. Proto-Hegelian ideas.

Maharal - Chakira about Storytelling

"חד אמר חדש ממש וחד אמר שנתחדשו גזירותיו". בפרק כיצד מעברין (עירובין נג.) מאן דאמר חדש ממש, דכתיב "חדש", ומאן דאמר שנתחדשו גזירותיו, דלא כתיב 'וימת וימלוך'. ואם תאמר למאן דאמר 'חדש ממש' לא לכתוב "חדש" רק 'ויקם מלך על ישראל אשר לא ידע את יוסף', וממילא ידענו שהוא חדש, ויראה דמי שסובר 'חדש ממש' הוצרך למכתב "חדש" לומר לך שלא היה זה מלך שזה לראשון רק מלכות אחרת, שאין מלכותו מתייחס אל המלכות הראשון, ולא דומה לו, וזה יקרא 'חדש ממש'. ובשביל שהיה 'חדש ממש' ולא היה מענין המלכות הראשון, היה גוזר גזירות רעות. ונראה כי שני האמוראים טעם מחלוקתם וסברתם הוא זה; שמי שסובר מלך 'חדש ממש' סובר שהתחדשות המלך על מצרים גרם להם השעבוד, כי המלכות כאשר תמשך בהמשך אחד לא יבא שינוי לאשר בארצו, והקב"ה מהעדא מלכין ומוקים מלכין, ותחת אותו המלכות ראוי ישראל לשעבוד גדול. ומאן דאמר 'שנתחדשו גזירותיו' מפני שהגזירה היא מהקב"ה שיהיו ישראל בשעבוד - אין צריך עתה רק התחדשות הגזירה. וכאשר תבין ענין זה תדע שאין צריך לך לומר אף למאן דאמר 'שנתחדשו גזירותיו' לומר שהיה זה פרעה הראשון אשר היה בימי יוסף, כי קשה לומר שהיה רשע כל כך חי ימים הרבה, אלא שהעיקר הוא שראוי לך לדעת כי כל מלכות אשר ימלוך הוא ובנו ובן בנו נקרא הכל מלך אחד, וכן צריך אתה לומר בכמה מקומות שכל המלכות אשר ימלוך בהמשך מלכותו - הכל מלך אחד יקרא, והתחדשות המלכות אשר אינו מענינו של המלך הראשון - זה נקרא 'מלך חדש'. ולמאן דאמר 'מלך חדש ממש' רוצה לומר שהיה מלכות שלא מענין מלכותו ולא מזרעו. ולמאן דאמר 'שנתחדשו גזירותיו' היה מענין מלכות הראשון או מזרעו, רק מפני שנתחדשו גזירותיו נקרא "מלך חדש".

The Maharal's argument is that if you think that "chadash" really doesn't make sense if you think that it is a new king because if you say "vayakam" then it is obvious that he is new! But you still need to say "chadash" because you need to tell us that there is no continuity from one king to the next. This would explain why Bnei Yisroel became slaves in Mitzrayim

The one who says that there wasn't a new king, doesn't attribute the slavery of Bnei Yisroel to the new king, because there wasn't a new king.

The Maharal seems to be addressing the following question about the story here in Shemot:

- If you read a text, you can have a Chakira: is a novel driven by plot or driven by the characters. **E.M. Forster** claimed that maybe the characters of a novel have to fit into the plot or maybe the plot needs to help bring out the changes in the characters. People say that Tragedy is driven by plot, and they say that Shakespeare is driven by the characters.

- How much is there a plot here in Shemot which the character of Paroh need to conform to? How much is the story being brought about by the character of Pharaoh? These two questions are the Mashel above.
- **[Ramban's Mihalech:** Rav Lichtenstein explained to Rav Carmy why the Rav loved the Ramban's Peirush on the Torah so much. The Ramban balanced the fact that the Avot were "larger than life" and were just meant to fit into the Torah's "plot" and the fact that the Avot were fundamentally human.]
- According to the Machloket in Eruvin 53a, which pshat is more 'character oriented' and which pshat is more "plot oriented"?
 - Plot Driven: "Melech Chadash" = New King. This is because he is just meant to fit the plot that right now God wants Bnei Yisroel to be slaves in Sefer Shemot.
 - Character Driven: "Melech Chadash" = Same King; Changed Gizeirot. This is because it was the character himself that drove the plot towards Bnei Yisroel becoming slaves.

With that in mind, let's look back at the Maharal:

The מהר"ל also says that if you think that נתחדשו גזרותיו that doesn't necessarily mean that it is the same פרעה. Because a very long time elapsed! That would mean that the old פרעה lived a long time. If נתחדשו גזרותיו then he was a רשע, why would we want a רשע like that to live such a long time? So he says that if you have a king and his successor is like him then as far as we're concerned story-wise it is the same king.

Perek 1:9-10 - Difficulties in Pharaoh's Psychology

(ט) וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל עַמּוֹ הִנֵּה עִם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב וְעֲצוּם מְמֹנִי:
(י) הֲבֵנָה נִתְחַכְמָה לוֹ כֵּן יִרְבֶּה וְהָיָה כִּי תִקְרָאנָה מִלְחָמָה וְנוֹסֵף גַּם הוּא עַל שְׂנְאֵינוּ וְנִלְחֵם בָּנוּ וְעָלָה מִן הָאָרֶץ:

1. Why is Pharaoh concerned about the people leaving? If Pharaoh is concerned about Bnei Yisroel, then why would he *want* them to stay?
2. Why is there an imagination that a war would start-up? There might be a conflict in Egypt between them and other Cnaanites, and the Jews might take the side of the Cnaanites?
3. Pharaoh doesn't speak unilaterally... he speaks to his nation, not his advisors and ministers. This is quite odd for two reasons: *Philosophically* and *Pshat*.
 - a. Pshat: is Pharaoh addressing an elite cabinet of advisors? Or is Pharaoh addressing the whole nation?
 - b. Philosophical: Who exactly is persecuting the Jews? Pharaoh, or the Egyptian people. How much is Pharaoh deciding, and how much are the people deciding?
 - i. If we look at Chumash Itself, what do the Egyptians get punished for?! If the whole issue was Pharaoh's rule, then why would the people get punished

- ii. The **Rambam** Perek 6 in Hilchot Tshuva implies that the Egyptians were punished for what they did, and each Egyptian had the freedom not to be involved.
- iii. The **Ramban**⁹ (Breishit 15:14) thinks that the Egyptians enslaved the Jews by God's will. So everything is okay with what they did, theoretically. They were punished because they went beyond enslaving the Jews, and they weren't doing everything for the sake of God.

Rashi - Addressing Pharoh's Concerns

The Pshat approach of Rashi in terms of Pharoh's concerns of Bnei Yisroel leaving Mitzrayim is that Bnei Yisroel would leave whether or not Pharoh allows it. Perhaps Rashi means that Pharoh does not want to miss the opportunity to expel the Jews, because he wants that satisfaction.

And Rashi additionally brings a drash which seems to imply that the pasuk means that the Mitzrim would be expelled. The Midrash implies that what Pharoh said was said euphemistically.

It is clear that Rashi saw difficulties to have to deal with.

Machlokket Rashi/Ramban - "Hava Nitchochma Lo"

Also, to Rashi, what is the "cleverness" that Pharoh is referring to? Rashi suggests that Pharoh wanted to have a conference to discuss what exactly to do about the Jews. The Midrash says that Pharoh wanted to outsmart God!

The **Ramban** thought that this "cleverness" is that they don't want to be caught doing what they are doing! This is consistent with the Midrash in Gemara **Sotah 12a** which says that "vayassimu alav sarei missim" means that EVERYONE worked on the infrastructure in Mitzrayim, not just the Jews, not just the Egyptians, but also Pharoh.

⁹**רמב"ן בראשית ט"ו:יד** = "וגם את הגוי אשר יעבדו": וגם לרבות ד' גליות על ששעבדו את ישראל, לשון רש"י. ועל דרך הפשט יאמר, כאשר דנתי את בניך בגלות ועבוי על עון, גם את הגוי אשר יעבדו אדון על החמס אשר יעשו להם: והנכון בעיני, כי טעם וגם, אף על פי שאני גזרתי על זרעך להיות גרים בארץ לא להם ועבדום וענו אותם, אף על פי כן אשפוט את הגוי אשר יעבדו על אשר יעשו להם, ולא יפטרו בעבור שעשו גזרתי: והטעם כמו שאמר הכתוב (זכריה א יד) וקנאתי לירושלם ולציון קנאה גדולה וקצף גדול אני קוצף על הגוים השאננים אשר אני קצפתי מעט והמה עזרו לרעה, ואומר (ישעיה מז ו) קצפתי על עמי חללתי נחלתי וגו'. וכן היה במצרים שהוסיפו להרע כי השליכו בניהם ליאור, וימררו את חייהם וחשבו למחות את שמם, וזה טעם דן אנכי - שאביא אותם במשפט, אם עשו כנגזר עליהם או הוסיפו להרע להם. וזהו מה שאמר יתרו כי בדבר אשר דדו עליהם (שמות יח יא), כי הזדון הוא שהביא עליהם העונש הגדול שאבדם מן העולם. וכן כי ידעת כי הזידו עליהם (נחמיה ט י):

Seforno - Mitzri Animosity Towards Jews

ונוסף גם הוא על שונאינו. כי בהיותם נבדלים ממנו במילה ובלשון ובדעות העברים, באופן שלא יכלו המצרים לאכול את העברים לחם (בראשית מג, לב) הם לנו לאויבים בלי ספק, ויגלו שנאתם אז בעת צרות המלחמה:

According to the Seforno, there is a built in animosity towards the Jews that the Mitzrim had. Perhaps this could stem from the differences in culture.

For example, when Senator Lieberman was running for Vice President he was pushed by a TV interviewer to answer how exactly he could justify representing the people as their vice president, but would not want his children marrying the non-Jews.

Understanding Pharoh's Arguments

Taking all this together, we can still wonder whether Pharoh really means what he is saying, or whether Pharoh is, in effect, giving contradictory arguments. If you want public support, you don't need to have consistent arguments, you just need the people on your side.

Pharoh is saying "we have to find a way to..." → Meaning, he is bringing up a crisis, but is not suggesting a solution.

Ramban 1:10 - The Subtle Story of Pharoh's Anti-Jew Propaganda

In fact, the Ramban Shemot 1:10 held that Pharoh had an uphill battle to get the Egyptians on his side that the Jews are bad. According to Ramban, Pharoh is speaking to his whole people, and they are not convinced that they should team-up against the Jews. Pharoh wanted therefore to do something which the people would not understand, so he started out with taxes/labor. Pharoh made everyone work, and he even worked himself. Pharoh couldn't tell his butchers to go out and kill the Jews, so he just subtly told people that they could voluntarily throw the Jewish babies into the river.

[Similarly, Kristallnacht was not ordained by the German government. It was organized, but ultimately it was voluntary.]

Perek 1:11-14 - The Beginning of Slavery

(יא) וַיְשִׁימוּ עָלָיו שָׂרֵי מִסִּים לְמַעַן עֲנֹתוֹ בְּסִבְלָתָם וַיָּבִין עַרְי מַסְכְּנוֹת לַפְּרָעָה אֶת פָּתָם וְאֶת רַעְמֵסִס:
(יב) וַיֹּאמֶר יְעֻנֹּה אֹתוֹ כֵּן יִרְבֶּה וְכֵן יִפְרֹץ וַיִּקְצֹוּ מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
(יג) וַיַּעֲבֲדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפָרָךְ:
(יד) וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת חַיֵּיהֶם בְּעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה בְּחֹמֶר וּבְלִבָּנִים וּבְכָל עֲבֹדָה בְּשָׂדֶה אֶת כָּל עֲבֹדָתָם אֲשֶׁר עָבְדוּ בָּהֶם בְּפָרָךְ:

Rashi

Rashi thinks that this is a sign that slavery had already begun. He gets that from the “sarei Missim”. Others disagree and think that this is not quite slavery yet. However, it is clear that by the end of Pasuk 14, Bnei Yisroel are enslaved.

Dostoevsky - Working People Hard

The way to break someone spiritually and mentally is to give them meaningless work.

The Gemara in Sotah 11: also says that it is assur to work people “bPharech,” and the Peirush hadvarrim is that you can’t give people meaningless work.

Perek 1:15 - Miyaldot Halvriyot (Jewish/Non-Jewish)

(טו) וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְמִילֵדֹת הָעִבְרִיּוֹת אֲשֶׁר שֵׁם הָאִמָּה שִׁפְרָה וְשֵׁם הַשְּׂנִיית פּוּעָה:

Where these Jewish women or non-Jewish women who were midwives FOR the Jews.

Rashi quotes the Gemara that says that they were shifrah and Puah, but there are other Pashtanim who say that they were non-Jewish.

The earliest where we find that the miyaldot were non-Jewish is in Josephus. Also, the Malb”im and Shad”al (Shmuel Dovid Luzzato) hold this, but they are more recent. There might be a theological motive to try to identify non-Jewish tzadikkot.

Perek 1:16 - Pharoh’s Command Regarding the Jewish Babies

(טז) וַיֹּאמֶר בְּיָלְדָם אֶת הָעִבְרִיּוֹת וּרְאִיתָן עַל הָאֲבָנִים אִם בֵּן הוּא וְהִמָּתְן אֹתוֹ וְאִם בַּת הוּא וְחִיָּה:

Explanation for Pharoh’s Concern for Baby Boys

Why is Pharoh more concerned about the men than the woman? Well, Pharoh is concerned for war, so he is more worried about the warriors. Also, if Pharoh would wipe out the men and make children with the women of the losing side.

Chazal were not so sure about why Pharoh wanted to kill the men and not the women. They say that Pharoh had some sort of Astrology that the Jewish champion was about to be born, and Pharoh wanted to prevent the Jewish savior to be born. This would explain why this law only lasted for a while. Once the window which the astrologers identified ended, the Jews were

allowed to keep their children again. Alternatively, maybe Pharaoh just lost interest in addressing the “Jewish problem” through this rule.

Perek 1:17-20 - The Miyaldot

Were The Miyaldot Jewish or non-Jewish?

(יז) וַתִּירָאן הַמִּילְדוֹת אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים וְלֹא עָשׂוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֲלֵיהֶן מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וַתַּחֲיֶינן אֶת הַיְלָדִים:
(יח) וַיִּקְרָא מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לַמִּילְדוֹת וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶן מִדּוּעַ עֲשִׂיתֶן הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וַתַּחֲיֶינן אֶת הַיְלָדִים:
(יט) וַתֹּאמְרֶינן הַמִּילְדוֹת אֶל פַּרְעֹה כִּי לֹא כְנָשִׁים הַמִּצְרִיּוֹת הָעֶבְרִיּוֹת כִּי חַיּוֹת הֵנָּה בְּטָרֶם תָּבוֹא אֲלֵהֶן הַמִּילְדוֹת וַיִּלְדוּ:
(כ) וַיִּטֹּב אֱלֹהִים לַמִּילְדוֹת וַיִּרְבּוּ הָעָם וַיַּעֲצֻמוּ מְאֹד:

Logical motivation for this Safek:

- 1) If the Miyaldot were Jewish, then why would Pharaoh trust them to kill the Jewish babies?
- 2) If the Miyaldot were Egyptian, then why would they help the Jewish mothers and babies?

Linguistically, it seems more Pashut that these were “Jewish Midwives” not “midwives of the Jewish”.

Morally, If they were non-Jewish, then morally, we can use them as a reference of non-Jews helping Jews.

Psychologically, maybe Pharaoh wouldn't have trusted Jewish women, but Pharaoh really wants to get Jewish Midwives to cooperate with him, in order to corrupt them. This is an attempt, perhaps to tear the Jews apart. Examples of this in history:

- ⇒ In the 1820s, the Russians started drafting Jews to the army. The Russians delegated the choices of who would go to the army from the Jewish community to the Jewish community themselves. This caused a lot of Jealousy and animosity.
- ⇒ Also, during the Holocaust, Jews were delegated to make life/death decisions for their fellow Jews.

Josephus, in his “*Antiquities of the Jews*” (Book II, Ch. 9, Sec. 2)¹⁰ talks about this issue. He assumes that the Miyaldot that Pharaoh spoke to were Egyptian. Also, Josephus says that he commanded the midwives at the same time as the rest of the people of Egypt. That isn't what the Pasuk says, Josephus wasn't being midayek in this. Josephus isn't saying the miyaldot are Egyptian because he wants to make Egyptians seem humanistic; he probably just thinks that this is the better Pshat.

What are the nafka minnah in this question? If they are Egyptian, then the Torah would be emphasizing the breaks in Pharaoh's ranks! Perhaps the Egyptian weren't all buying into joining Pharaoh in his enslavement of the Jews. Perhaps this works with the Rambam's whole

¹⁰ <http://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/ant-2.html>

Propaganda approach. Also, the Miyaldot are Yorei Hashem, and if they are non-Jewish, this is more interesting to think about.

“Ki Chayot Heina” - Meaning

Rashi explains this to mean that the women of the Jewish people are good at giving birth. Rashi also quotes the Midrash that says that they were “like animals” that they didn’t need midwives, so they were able to evade the decree of their baby boys being killed.

“Chai” can mean to be alive (as opposed to dead), or it can mean vibrant (as opposed to being debilitated).

Perek 1:21-22 - “VaYaas Lahem Batim”

(כא) וַיְהִי כִּי יִרְאוּ הַמִּלְדֹּת אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם בָּתִּים:
(כב) וַיֵּצְאוּ פֶרְעָה לְכָל עַמּוֹ לֵאמֹר כָּל הַבֶּן הַיְלֹד הַיָּאֲרָה תִשְׁלִיכֶהוּ וְכָל הַבֵּת תַּחֲיוּן:

Rashi - Blessing From God

God established Yocheved and Miryam as being the forebearers of Kohanim and Malachim. Even if you don’t adopt the Gemara that says this, you can still say that they were established as respectable families.

Rashbam - Punishment From Pharoh

Pharoh put them under house arrest. Pharoh didn’t trust them, and he wanted to keep an eye on them.

Perak Bet

Perek 2:1 - “Ish MiBeit Levi”

(א) וַיֵּלֶךְ אִישׁ מִבֵּית לֵוִי וַיִּקַּח אֶת בֵּת לֵוִי:

Some Haarot on the Pasuk:

- 1) We also have “*Vayass LaHem Battim*” - which is the Bracha that God gave the Miyaldot. So there is a precedent for this term. It is important to note that this word “Beit” is an honorary term, so that might actually give a motivation for the understanding that the Miyaldot were given the Beit Malchut and Beit Kehunah.

The Meaning of “Vayelach”

2) What does ‘Vayelech’ mean here?

- a) **Rashi** says that Amram and others divorced their wives because it was dangerous to have children, and rather than risking the death of their children they separated. Due to Miriam’s insistence, Amram and Yocheved got back together. That is what Vayelech means.
- b) **Eben Ezra** took Vayelech much more literally, and he explains that Bnei Yisroel weren’t living very close to each other, and Amram had to go far away to find her and take her. He didn’t marry the girl next door. This seems like a deliberate disagreement with Rashi.
 - i) Why is it that Eben Ezra doesn’t mention Rashi? There are only five places where Eben Ezra mentions Rashi. The Scholarship today about Eben Ezra point out that he disagrees with Rashi, but he may not have wanted to have an open conflict with Rashi.
- c) **Ramban** argues that if the Shidduch involved geography, then the Pasuk would probably have mentioned this fact. The word Vayelech doesn’t mean “locomotion”, it means that Amram was finally motivated, and he finally took Yocheved.

Who is the Bat Levi?

3) ‘Bat Levi’ also seems to mean: “someone from Shevet Levi”, but Chazal don’t take this pshat, they say that this was literally the daughter of Levi, and they say that Yocheved is the daughter of Levi.

- a) This brings up the question of the actual age of Yocheved. Moshe was 80 when Bnei Yisroel left Egypt, and Bnei Yisroel were in Mitzrayim for 210 years, which implies that Yocheved was 130 when Moshe was born
 - i) **Eben Ezra** in Vayigash (46:23) says that it is impossible that Yocheved was the daughter of Levi, because then Yocheved would have been too old for giving birth to Moshe, because if she was 130 then the Torah would mention that she was so old.

4) ...ובדרש כי יוכבד נולדה בין החומות, גם זה תמה, למה לא הזכיר הכתוב **הפלא שנעשה עמה שהולידה משה והיא בת ק"ל שנה? ולמה הזכיר דבר שרה שהיתה בת תשעים?** ולא די לנו זה הצער, עד שעשו פייטנים פיוטים ביום שמחת תורה, יוכבד אמי אחרי התנחמי והיא בת ר"נ שנה, וכי אחיה חי כך וכך שנים. דרך אגדה או דברי יחיד, והנכון בעיני שיעקב בחשבון וממנו יחל, כאילו אמר כל נפש בניו ובנותיו עם נפשו שלשים ושלש, והראיה ע"ז שאמר בתחלה יעקב ובניו. ואם יטען טוען ויאמר, כי הנה כתוב ויהי כל נפש יוצאי ירך יעקב שבעים נפש (שמות א, ה), **דע כי הכתוב לא חשש להוציא אחד משבעים...**

- i) **Ramban** disagreed with Eben Ezra, and so did the **Maharal**. It is unusual for a woman to give birth at 90 for the first time, but it is not as special for women to have their third child when they were old.
- 5) It seems like the Pasuk is trying to say that being from Beit Levi is an important thing.

Anonymity of Ish Leivi and Bat Leivi

- 6) These two characters are anonymous. Why?
 - a) **Ramban** explains that really the yichus of Amram and Yocheved is supposed to appear in Vaerah. Since the Yuchsin is going to be in Vaera, there is no need for the names here. Also, the Torah "might have been in a hurry to get to Moshe".
 - i) So why is it so important that the yichus should be in vaera and not here in Shemot? Maybe the Ramban answered that the other shvatim are mentioned in Vaera as well.
 - b) **Maharal**¹¹ (*Gevurot Hashem 16*)
 - i) The Eben Ezra is wrong that the torah's goal is to talk about crazy things that happen in history. So just because it was "crazy" doesn't mean that the Torah needs to make a big deal out of it. Sarah's miraculous pregnancy is recorded because she is a great matriarch of the Jewish people.
 - ii) We aren't told about Amram and Yocheved's names because by presenting Moshe as the son of two anonymous parents, the Torah underlines that Moshe is different than other people. He has anonymous parents. Having a given name makes you a particular person.
 - iii) Moshe descended from Amram and Yocheved as a man, not as a descendent of them.
 - iv) The Story of Moshe requires that he be separated from his family from birth, because he was destined to lead Bnei Yisroel since creation. Maharal's approach was very metaphysical, and he understood Moshe as being very disconnected from society. He was lonely. He didn't have a childhood.
 - c) Another perspective on the anonymous Jewish parents: Moshe was born a Jew, but he didn't grow up as a Jew. [Moshe grew up in the palace of Pharaoh, he didn't have the inhibitions that other Jews might have had talking to Pharaoh.]

Perek 2:2-10 - Moshe's Birth

(ב) וַיְהִי הָאִשָּׁה וַיֵּלֶד בֶּן וַיִּרְא אֹתוֹ כִּי טוֹב הוּא וַתְּצַפְנֵהוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה יָרְחִים:

¹¹ <https://tablet.otzar.org/pages/?&restore=1&pagenum=95&book=602538>

Rashbam says that it is out of the question to say that Yocheved noticed that her baby was “good” because all babies look good to their mothers.

Perek 2:2

(ג) וְלֹא יָכְלָה עוֹד הַצִּפּוֹנוֹ וַתִּקַּח לוֹ יִתְבַּת גִּמָּא וַתַּחמְרָה בַּחֲמֵר וּבְזָפֶת וַתִּשֶׂם בָּהּ אֶת הַיֶּלֶד וַתִּשֶׂם בְּסוּף עַל שִׁפְתֵי הַיָּאֵר:
(ד) וַיִּתְצַב אַחֲתוֹ מִרְחֹק לְדַעַה מַה יַּעֲשֶׂה לוֹ:
(ה) וַיִּתְרֹד בֵּת פַּרְעֹה לְרַחֵץ עַל הַיָּאֵר וַנַּעֲרִיתֶיהָ הִלְכֹת עַל יַד הַיָּאֵר וַתֵּרָא אֶת הַתֵּבָה בַּתּוֹךְ הַסּוּף וַתִּשְׁלַח אֶת אֲמָתָהּ וַתִּקְרָהּ:

Rashi quotes two possibilities about the “Amatah”. Either she sent her servants or she stretched out her own arm.

(ו) וַתִּפְתַּח וַתֵּרָאֶהוּ אֶת הַיֶּלֶד וְהִנֵּה נֶעַר בֶּכֶה וַתַּחמַּל עָלָיו וַתֹּאמֶר מִי־לִי הָעֶבְרִים זֶה:
(ז) וַתֹּאמֶר אַחֲתוֹ אֶל בֵּת פַּרְעֹה הָאֵלֶךְ וַקְרָאתִי לָךְ אִשָּׁה מִיִּנְקָת מִן הָעֶבְרִית וַתִּינֶק לָךְ אֶת הַיֶּלֶד:

“If you believe that this is a Hebrew child, then maybe I can fetch you a Hebrew wet-nurse?”

(ח) וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ בֵּת פַּרְעֹה לְכִי וַתֵּלֶךְ הַעֲלָמָה וַתִּקְרָא אֶת אִם הַיֶּלֶד:
(ט) וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ בֵּת פַּרְעֹה הִילִיכִי אֶת הַיֶּלֶד הַזֶּה וְהִינֵקֶהוּ לִי וְאֲנִי אֶתֵּן אֶת שְׂכָרְךָ וַתִּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה הַיֶּלֶד וַתִּינֵקֶהוּ:
(י) וַיִּגְדֵּל הַיֶּלֶד וַתְּבֹאֶהוּ לְבֵת פַּרְעֹה וַיְהִי לָהּ לֵבָן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מֹשֶׁה וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי מִן הַמַּיִם מָשִׁיתִהוּ:

Etymology of Moshe's Name

The name Moshe can be interpreted in two ways:

1. Eben Ezra says that it means “Son” in Egyptian. Bat Pharoh knew Egyptian, so this makes sense.
2. Or it could mean “min hamayim hishituhu”. Maybe Bat Pharoh studied Hebrew? Or maybe the Torah is providing the etymology?

We have a precedent for having two separate etymologies based on different perspectives.

Etymology of Bavel:

1. “Bab El” - Gate of God.
2. “Sham Balal Hashem” - “Balal”.

For Moshe, this seems like a hint that Moshe was living some sort of “double life.”

Perek 2:11-22 - Moshe's Early Years - Mitzrayim + Midyan

Moshe's Readiness to Get Involved With Bnei Yisroel

How readily did Moshe want to kill people? Did he observe bad things right away and kill right away? Or did Moshe observe bad things for a year and then finally come to be able to kill an Egyptian?

The **Rambam** emphasized Moshe getting involved in 2:45. Rambam understands that Moshe was passionate and took risks. And again, when Moshe was a fugitive, he gets involved with the daughters of Yitro and their struggles with the mean men who were bothering them. This is inherent in Rambam's understanding for what role the Navi plays and what character he had.

"...ודע שכמו זה הכח לא נבדל ממושה רבינו מעת השיגו לגדר האנשים, ולזה התעורר להרוג את המצרי, ולמנוע הרשע משני הנצים, ומחוזק זה הכח בו עד שאחרי פחדו וברחו והגיעו למדין והוא גר ירא, כאשר ראה מאומה מן העול לא משל בעצמו מהסירו ולא יכול לסובלו, כמו שאמר ויקם משה ויושיעו."

Echad HaAm wrote a lot about how Moshe stood for justice. Moshe stuck his neck out for the sake of justice.

Did Moshe have a hot temper? Well, the same Rambam that held that Moshe got involved and took risks also observed that Moshe had the chisaron that he lost his temper when he hit the rock.

Also, among the goyim, there is a tendency to be critical of Moshe because, lichora, Moshe was a murderer. There are Christian thinkers (**Goethe**) who think that this incident with Moshe killing the mitzri shows that Moshe was not a refined person and that Moshe acts with his fist a lot.

Moshe Goes to Midyan

Did Moshe go right away? Did Moshe delay somewhere?

The **Ramban** assumes that he didn't go directly to Midyan because fugitives generally do not go to populated places right away.

Moshe Meets the Daughters of Yitro - Haarot

- It seems to be missing what the name of 'The Kohen of Midyan' is. There are a lot of anonymous people in Moshe's story.
- Also, what does the title 'Kohen' imply about the father of these 7 daughters? Maybe this isn't necessarily a religious leader. Maybe just a leader or high-official of another kind.

- **Rashi** (and Chazal) say that the 'Kohen Midyan' means here a religious leader. They understand that 'Kohen Midyan' is a religious personality who was adept at Avodah Zara, but eventually became open to not being an Oved Avodah Zara. Chazal even say that the reason why Yitro's daughters are being abused is because Yitro was a little rogue in terms of his religious beliefs.
- The daughters were abused a bit. Did this always happen? Did this happen only once? This is not clear.
- Moshe intervenes. Moshe seems to not be able to remain neutral. Moshe fought off the abusers and he gave water to the daughter's tzon.
- ReuEl is the name which Yitro gets first.
- When Moshe comes to Midyan, he is identified as an Egyptian.
- If ReuEl hadn't intervened to get Moshe involved in the family, then Moshe would have just been on his way.

Yitro's Influence on Moshe

Among Bible scholars, they want to understand that 'Kohen Midyan' is an important religious philosopher. Everything original for Yahadut that Moshe was Michadesh, came from his father in law. This is known as the **Kenite Hypothesis** - *The Kenite hypothesis supposes that the Hebrews adopted the cult of Yahweh from the Midianites via the Kenites*. The argument for this is that if there is something new that Moshe teaches, he must have gotten this from somewhere.

Who Exactly Is Moshe's Father in Law - Yitro/ReuEl/Chovav

In Perek Bet, we just meet ReuEl. In Perek Gimel, we hear of a man named Yitro. Throughout Perek Gimel and Daled he is called Yitro. At the end of Perek daled, Yitro is called Yeter. In Parshat Yitro, Yitro is called Yitro. In Bamidbar, there is a figure called Chovav ben ReuEl.

Who exactly is Moshe's father in law? Well, people in the street would say that it is Yitro.

Ibn Ezra Short Commentary on Shemot + Peirush on Bamidbar:

Yitro is the father in law (as people assume), and ReuEl is Yitro's father. "Avihen" can just mean "patriarch", so it isn't hard to say this.

⇒ Chovav is another name for Yitro - Chovav Ben ReuEl is also Yitro. **Ramban** says that calling Chovav two names might be the same thing as Yishaya and Yishayahu; Yonatan and Yehonatan.

Rashi: ReuEl is the same person as Yitro - Moshe's father in law. Since Chovav is explicitly the son of ReuEl, then maybe Chovav is Moshe's brother-in-law. ReuEl is twice in Chumash, and Yitro is almost every time. ReuEl being the same as Yitro is less Pashut, because ReuEl is so much less common. Chovav is brother in law - Yitro's son. Why would he be called ReuEl here at all?

Also, it is very likely that “Choten” doesn’t mean father-in-law, but ‘in-law’. Meaning: in-law includes father-in-law, and grandpa-in-law, uncle-in-law, etc. aka anyone in the tziporah’s family. This is evident in the Arabic language.

The Mifarshim are satisfied coming up with Teirutzim, but what is bothering Rav Carmy is “why is there variation in the names in the first place?”

The Name “ReuEl”

R’ Dovid Zvi Hoffman noticed that one of Esav’s descendents in Breishit 36 is named ReuEl. Is this significant? An answer that could be given, a bit of a stretch, is that רעואל is a general name for the head of the clan. The basis for this is that one of the families of עשו is רעואל. So once we see that רעואל is used for a bigger household then maybe we could say that that made its way to מדין. R’ Hoffman says that if we ignore other psukim then we can say that Yitro is Moshe’s father in law and Choten means other “In-laws” aside from father in law, but this is Dochak as it is not taking into account enough things. In terms of the names ReuEl and Yitro, R’Hoffman assumes that he had two names.

Maybe, as the **Daat Mikra** suggests, ReuEl is a more intimate name. We can have someone who has one name officially, but in their family they are referred to as something else. Moshe relates to Yitro as Yitro, because he doesn’t feel close enough to call him ReuEl.

The Motif of Well-Meetings - Robert Alter’s Observation

If you want to understand Tanach, it might be better to treat Tanach as real literature, not the way that Bible critics approach Tanach. He opened himself to two types of criticism: Once you explain Tanach as a unified text, then why do you need all the Bible criticism? If you are a professor of Tanach, then why doesn’t Alter hold that the Bible is multiple texts? If scholarship told you that there were multiple authors in modern literature, then would you not accept them?

In one of his early books, he pointed out an idea called ‘*type-scenes*’. Alter suggested that from a literary point of view that certain scenes are regularly addressed by different authors (e.g. sunsets, rain, etc.). There is a particular genre of story, and then the story is adapted to the certain circumstance that the author is addressing. Then you can ask the question, “why does this author say it like this and why does that author say it like that?”

One of the examples that Alter was interested in in his book ‘The Art of Biblical Narrative’ was the meeting of Yitro’s children and Moshe at the well. Eliezer and Rivka, Yaakov and Rachel, Moshe and 7 daughters... a lot of people meet at a well. This is a motif. It is understood that for shidduchim, the meeting at the well is an interesting model. (Nowadays we meet at hotel lobbies.) This meeting of Moshe with the 7 daughters is unique because there are so many

women. The thing that causes the marriage is the father-in-laws input. The “love at first sight” of meeting at the well wasn’t enough.

Perek 2:23-24 - Death of “Melech Mitzrayim”

כ"ג) וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָרַבִּים הֵם וַיָּמָת מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וַיָּאָנְחוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־הָעֲבֹדָה וַיִּזְעְקוּ וַתַּעַל שׁוֹעַתָם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים מִן־הָעֲבֹדָה:
כ"ד) וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נַאֲקָתָם וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת־אֲבֹרָהֶם אֶת־יִצְחָק וְאֶת־יַעֲקֹב:
כ"ה) וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּדַע אֱלֹהִים:

Rashi: Rashi is bothered because it is not clear from the Pasuk why it is that Bnei Yisroel were bothered by the death of Pharoh. Thus Rashi quotes the midrash that Pharoh did not die; rather, he got tzaraat and he wanted to bathe in the blood of the Jewish boys.

Two possible *downsides of Rashi*: The Pasuk says that Bnei Yisroel cried about the “work” not about “Pharoh” or anything else. Secondly, the pasuk says that Pharoh died, not that Pharoh got Tzaraat.

Ramban: chazal say what Rashi said, but Al Derech HaPshat, the Midrash doesn’t help us. The way humans are, when bad kings die, the people have hope. But when they saw that the death of the king and that things got even worse, then they were extremely downtrodden.

Perek 2:25 - “Vayeda Elokim”

Bnei Yisroel’s Cries to God

Note that Bnei Yisroel don’t indicate any level of Tshuva. You can’t necessarily say that Bnei Yisroel didn’t sin, because the Psukim in Yehezkel tell us that they do sin (these psukim are referenced earlier in the notes).

Tefillah vs Zaakah

The word *tefillah* does not occur. The word *Zaakah* occurs. The distinction between them, as the **Rav** says in the 1978 Tradition Journal that Tefillah is an intellectual process where one evaluates their relationship with God. Zaakah is something which even an animal can do. This isn’t tshuva or introspective... this is just an animalistic expression of pain and suffering. The Rav noted the last Pasuk here in Shemot Bet. There is no turning towards God, this is just Zaakah.

The **Ohr HaChaim** notes that Bnei Yisroel didn’t even ask for help from God. They just cried out in personal pain. The Pasuk tells us that this zaakah was described as “Min Haavodah” because

it was caused by the pain of the work, not because of the desire for help from God. When a person has cancer chas vshalom, they can cry out because they don't like cancer - that they don't want to die, or they can cry out because they have pain.

God's Response to the Zaakah - Vayar and Vayeda

God hears their outcry, and He remembers the Brit with Avraha, Yitzchak and Yaakov, God saw and God knew.

What's the Difference by "Vayar" and "Vayeda"?

- ⇒ **Rashi** says that God saw and also paid attention.
- ⇒ **Eben Ezra** says that God saw what the public could see, and God knew also what was being done secretly as well
- ⇒ **Ramban** says that until now God did not hear or see, but now he hears and is no longer going to hide His face.
 - He adds that there are a lot of factors in God's listening: Suffering, The Brit, etc.
 - He also argues that in essence the Jewish people were not worthy of the Geulah. God is acting even though they don't deserve it.

Rav Carmy added that the Pasuk does not even mention that they weren't worthy of God listening. This is an important thing, because the Ramban understands that this is very much in the background that the Psukim in Yehezkel say that Bnei Yisroel sinned.

Perek 2- Four Things Which Were Missing in The First Two Perakim of Shemot

- 1) The Psukim the whole time so far in Shemot are still assuming the Brit Bein HaBittarim. Without this, you would have no knowledge of why Bnei Yisroel are here in Mitzrayim.
- 2) You would know nothing of any promises that God made to the Jewish people.
- 3) Also, the sin the Yehezkel referred to is missing!
- 4) Also, God has been missing. Until this passuk, God is not there in the story! God appears briefly in connection to the miyaldot, but that is not really essential.
 - a) In some ways these facts are scarier than Eicha, because stating that someone is "missing" implies the existence! But in the first two perakkim of Shemot, the absence of God isn't even noted.
 - b) Think: So did they understand that there was a God? Did they know about Brit Bein Habittarim? It happened a long time ago! Maybe their sins were so bad that the promise is gone? This hester Pannim is so deep.
 - c) The crying out that Bnei Yisroel did was Zaakah, not tefillah, the Ramban says that they weren't worthy of sin... However, God still "saw" and "knew".

Summation Point: Also many names are absent: “*ish leivi*,” “*bat leivi*,” “*Ish Mitzri*,” “*Kohen Midyan*,” etc. In a time where there is a *Deus Absconditus* - ‘*Keil Mistater*,’ then there will also be a ‘homo-absconditus,’ because in the ancient world, if people don’t believe in God (or a god), then they aren’t really of significance. Loss of God represents an “abandoned world” in this ancient period.

Perek Gimmel

Perek 3:1 - Where was Moshe Shepherding?

Choreiv

This place is more or less identical to the area of Har Sinai. Elsewhere in Shemot, and particularly in connection with Matan Torah, Har Sinai is called “Har Sinai”. Elsewhere in this Perek and also in Dvarim, this district is called Choreiv.

Daat Mikra says that this was a dry area, and that’s why it is called Choreiv.

Mountain of God

Rashi says that this term is used because of what the mountain will be in the future. He says this because if you were reading Shemot consecutively, then maybe someone wouldn’t know that the Torah was given on this mountain.

Prior Significance of This Mountain?

What is the Nafka Minnah whether or not the mountain was already important?

In the beginning of Parshat Yitro, Yitro turns up at Har Sinai (18:1-5). What was Yitro doing there at “Har HaElokim”? Was he there to meet Moshe? How do we know that Moshe was there before Yitro got there? Right before, Bnei Yisroel are in Rifidim.

The Gemara already discussed whether Yitro came before or after Matan Torah! **Rashi** reflects the position that Yitro came after, but **Ramban** holds that Yitro came before. According to Rashi, the question of how Yitro knew to come to Har Sinai is that Moshe was there. According to Ramban, how did Yitro know to go to Har Sinai? Perhaps it would be easier to say that Yitro would know where to go, because this “Har HaElokim” has been a holy place all along.

Perek 3:2-4 - Moshe's Soliloquy - Over Narration

(ג) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְתֵּר נָא וְאַרְאֶה אֶת הַמַּרְאֶה הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה מִדּוּעַ לֹא יִבְעַר הַסֵּנֶה:
(ד) וַיֵּרָא יְקֹזֵק כִּי סָר לִרְאוֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹהִים מִתּוֹךְ הַסֵּנֶה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי:

Explaining the Arichut

Why is it that Moshe has to talk to himself? Why does the Pasuk have to have this Arichut?

Then the next pasuk also narrates unnecessarily about what God does!

Rav Carmy explains: By lengthening this pasuk and the next pasuk, the Torah is implying that this entire encounter requires what Kabbalah and Chassidut would refer to as a Tarutah D'Ltattah (as opposed to Tarutta DLEilah - an arousal from above). In situations where you speak about an arousal from below is one where we say that the humans are taking the initiative. Moshe's talking to himself is showing us that Moshe devoted his own attention to this phenomenon. This arichut is showing that this event is something which Moshe views as highly significant and engaging.

Note that God need not answer this question.

Perek 3:5-6 - God talks to Moshe

Moshe hid his face - Two approaches

In Chazal, there are two approaches to this:

- **Humility:** On one hand, maybe Moshe was right to hide his face. Moshe was humble, and it is not appropriate to stare at God. The **Ramban** further notes that Moshe now is new to Nevuah. By and large, the notion that this is a positive thing is accepted.
- **Lost Opportunity:** On the other hand, as the Midrash Shemot Rabba quotes, perhaps Moshe missed an opportunity. Moshe lost his opportunity. Moshe should have been bolder at this point. The Ramban, and the average Joe will not gravitate towards this option.

“Elokei Avicha” - What is Avicha Referring to?

(ו) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי אֱלֹהֵי אַבְיָךְ אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וַיִּסְתֵּר מֹשֶׁה פָּנָיו כִּי יָרָא מִהִבִּיט אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים:

Who is Avicha?

- **Eben Ezra** says that “Aicha” is a header, which is elaborated by “Avraham Yitzchak, Yaakov”.
- **Ramban**
 - Like Eben Ezra, Ramban first says that “Avicha” means “The God of your fatherS” - in plural.

- Later on, Ramban quotes Shemot Rabba that the Pasuk is referring to the God of Amram.
- Ramban gives a third explanation: The Torah does not call someone who is alive as an “Eved Hashem”, and similarly, God cannot say “Your God,” so he says “Your father’s God.”

Amram’s Relevance at this pivotal Moment

However, Rav Carmy asks further that the Midrash in Shemot Rabba says that God came to Moshe in the voice of his father Amram. The Ramban makes the point on the Aseret Hadibrot that Kivud Av is on the first side of the Dibrot because Kivud Av isn’t a social matter of right and wrong, but an “Adam LMakom” right and wrong. Psychologically, this is a very important, but frightening point. In the context of this Midrash, this point is very powerful - God even comes to Moshe in his father’s voice.

Why do we have to hear in this pasuk about the involvement of Amram in this narrative? Given that there is a good psychological parallel between the voice of God and the voice of one’s father, why is it so important to bring up Amram here.

Going back to an earlier point, God was silent in the first two perakim of Shemot until the end. There seems like there is a huge disconnect between God and the people. This isn’t just Moshe’s first Nevuah, but this the beginning of God’s reestablishment of His relationship with Bnei Yisroel. God doesn’t say “I am the God who appeared to Avraham...” - God is articulating his identity as the God of Bnei Yisroel. This is why Amram plays an important role here. This isn’t just a general association, this is the closest of relationships.

Perek 3:7-12 - Understanding the “Ot” that God gives Moshe - That God will give Bnei Yisroel the Torah

Rashi’s Explanation of the Exchange Between Moshe and God

Moshe asks, according to Rashi, firstly, who am I to go to Pharoh, and secondly, why are the Jews worthy of being taken out of Mitzrayim?

God responds that He will be with Moshe, and He gives Moshe symbols. What is this Symbol? An “Ot” is usually something which you use to verify the shlichut, but God says that “Ot” will be that after they leave Mitzrayim they will serve God on this mountain. Rashi explains that Moshe’s problem was that the people weren’t worthy to leave Mitzrayim, so God answered that they actually are worthy, and to show you that, I am willing to give Bnei Yisroel the Torah.

Questions on Rashi: If you learn like Rashi, then this is the first time that Matan Torah is mentioned as a major factor in the Exodus. Yeshivish people will love this. Obviously Matan

Torah is the important part. According to Rashi, Matan Torah is the reason to leave Mitzrayim. In Brit Bein HaBitarrim, God doesn't mention the Torah! MAYbe God isn't so Yeshivish!

Eben Ezra's Peirush

Moshe's concern is, "who am I to stand up to Pharaoh, and who am I that I should be able to lead the people." The response of God is that, "what you do with Pharaoh will be to take the people out in order to do Avodat Hashem."

Ramban's Peirush

God told Moshe two things. God will save Moshe and the people, and he will also take them out. Moshe was worried that he won't be able to lighten Bnei Yisroel's load and take them out of Mitzrayim, and he also wasn't sure he would be able to take Bnei Yisroel out of Mitzrayim and make them follow me! The Ramban holds that Moshe did not have a great obstacle to get the people to follow Moshe to begin with. If you promise people something, and they don't have to do anything, then they will believe you. However, as soon as people are expected to do something - go to war, etc - then the people will not listen. Then the "Ot" is clear according to this Peirush: This "Ot" anticipates that the only real issue with Bnei Yisroel following Moshe that requires an "Ot" is when they are expected to do something like go to war. Therefore, the "Ot" of Matan Torah is in perfect order, as it shows the strength of the relationship between Moshe and God, and Bnei Yisroel will trust Moshe and follow him after that sign.

Netziv's Peirush

The Netziv also understands that Moshe's authority needs to be buttressed. Just because Moshe can get Bnei Yisroel out of Mitzrayim doesn't mean he can continue to be the political leadership and set up government for them. Everyone has a different outlook, and particularly Jews are an Am KShei Oref. But Matan Torah will give Moshe credibility and authority in dealing with people, because once they see Moshe's close relationship with God they will treat Moshe with respect.

Perek 3:13 - Moshe Asks For God's Name

What is the meaning of Moshe's Request?

Rashi/Eben Ezra - How Will God Relate To Bnei Yisroel?

Moshe was asking God, not what His email or phone number is, rather he was asking how God is going to relate to Bnei Yisroel. God answers "Aheye Asher Aheye," that He will be with Moshe.

Discussion of Rashi's Comment:

- Rav Carmy is reminded of the fact that for a long time, God was a stranger to the Jewish people during the first couple of perakim in Shemot. So what is happening here is that God needs to create a relationship with Moshe and the Jewish people after a long period of detachment.
- This is the explanation of "Anochi, Elokei Avicha": Why drag Amram into this? The Midrash says that God sounded like Amram to Moshe. The pasuk says "Anochi Elokei Avicha" because apart from the analogy, there has been such a lack of communication for so long that God needs to redefine the relationship between man and God.

Ramban - What Unique Relationship Will Moshe Have With God?

"The Moon is wearing a red neck-tie tonight". "No, it is magenta." - That's a spy's code conversation.

Is this the Pshat of "the name of God" here. Perhaps it is just a "code" to use to show that Moshe is trustworthy.

Ramban doesn't think this could be pshat, because if Bnei Yisroel know the code, then for sure Moshe would know and it wouldn't show credibility? And on the other hand, if Bnei Yisroel don't know the code, then how could they understand Moshe's use of the code?

Ramban doesn't like Eben Ezra's approach either.

According to the Ramban, Moshe was already a very wise man at this point. The question that Moshe was asking is, "what name of God is going to govern my mission?" More specifically, Moshe is asking the question at this point and not earlier because God spoke about doing avodah to him on har sinai (Matan Torah), and now Moshe needs to know what to do because "Kel Shakai" and "Elokim" are not good enough of a relationship between him and God because his shelichut of the Torah is much more intimate. Moshe needs to understand his specific role to God and to the people.

Then the Ramban makes the following point: Certain writers like R'Saadya Gaon and the Rambam talk about 'Aheye Asher Ayehe' is not just a name of God, but YKVK also appeals to a philosophical argument for the existence of God. Moshe wants to establish religious truth to the Jewish people.

The **Ramban** has reservations about this:

- Firstly, because it claims that God is teaching Moshe 'Medieval Philosophy' and all the metaphysical arguments for God.
- Even if we have these proofs, it doesn't solve all philosophical problems (like creation, hashgacha, etc.).
- Also, who says that the people are Apikorsim?

Perek 3 - God's Name

Highlighting the Names of God in the Third Perek

- (א) וּמֹשֶׁה הָיָה רֹעֶה אֶת צֹאן יִתְרוֹ חֹתֵנוּ כֹּהֵן מִדִּין וַיִּנְהַג אֶת הַצֹּאן אַחֵר הַמִּדְבָּר וַיָּבֹא אֶל הַר הָאֱלֹהִים חֲרֹבָה:
- (ב) וַיֹּרֶא מִלְּאֶךָ יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹוֹ בִּלְבַת אִשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הַסֵּנֶה וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה הַסֵּנֶה בֵּיעַר בְּאֵשׁ וְהַסֵּנֶה אֵינּוּ אֵכָל:
- (ג) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְרָה נָא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת הַמֶּרְאֶה הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה מִדּוּעַ לֹא יִבְעַר הַסֵּנֶה:
- (ד) וַיֹּרֶא יְקֹוֹק כִּי סָר לְרֹאוֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹוֹ אֱלֹהִים מִתּוֹךְ הַסֵּנֶה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי:
- (ה) וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל תִּקְרַב הֵלֶם שֶׁל נַעֲלֶיךָ מֵעַל רִגְלֶיךָ כִּי הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עוֹמֵד עָלָיו אֲדַמַּת קֹדֶשׁ הוּא:
- (ו) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְהִנֵּה אֲנִי אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּסְתֵּר מֹשֶׁה פָּנָיו כִּי יָרָא מֵהִבִּיט אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים:
- (ז) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקֹוֹק רְאֵה רְאִיתִי אֶת עֲנִי עָמִי אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֶת צַעֲקָתָם שָׁמַעְתִּי מִפְּנֵי נִגְשָׁיו כִּי יִדְעֹתִי אֶת מַכְאֹבָיו:
- (ח) וְאֵרַד לְהַצִּילוֹ מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וְלִהְיוֹתָם לִי מִן הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֶל אָרֶץ טוֹבָה וְיִרְחַבָּהּ אֶל אָרֶץ זָבֶת חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ אֶל מְקוֹם הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהָעַמִּי וְהַפְּרָזִי וְהַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוֹסִי:
- (ט) וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה צַעֲקַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּאָה אֵלַי וְגַם רְאִיתִי אֶת הַלְחָץ אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם לֹחֲצִים אֹתָם:
- (י) וְעַתָּה לָכֵן וְאֶשְׁלַחְךָ אֶל פְּרַעֲוֹ וְהוֹצֵא אֶת עַמִּי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם:
- (יא) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים מִי אֲנֹכִי כִּי אֵלֶךְ אֶל פְּרַעֲוֹ וְכִי אוֹצִיא אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם:
- (יב) וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ וְזֶה לְךָ הָאוֹת כִּי אֲנֹכִי שְׁלַחְתִּיךָ בְּהוֹצִיאָךְ אֶת הָעָם מִמִּצְרַיִם תַּעֲבֹדוּן אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים עַל הָהָר הַזֶּה:
- (יג) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי בָא אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתִּי לָהֶם אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם וְאָמְרוּ לִי מֶה שָׁמוֹ מֶה אָמַר אֱלֹהִים:
- (יד) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶהְיֶה שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם:
- (טו) וַיֹּאמֶר עוֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה כֹּה תֹאמַר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְהִנֵּה יְעֻקֵּב שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם זֶה שְׁמִי לְעֹלָם וְזֶה זִכְרִי לְדֹר דֹּר:
- (טז) לָךְ וְאֶסְפַּתְּ אֶת זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם נִרְאָה אֵלַי אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם יְעֻקֵּב וַיֹּאמֶר פֶּקֶד פְּקֻדֹתַי אֹתְכֶם וְאֶת הָעֲשׂוֹי לָכֶם בְּמִצְרַיִם:
- (יז) וְאָמַר אֶעֱלֶה אֹתְכֶם מֵעַנִי מִצְרַיִם אֶל אָרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהָעַמִּי וְהַיְבוֹסִי אֶל אָרֶץ זָבֶת חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ:
- (יח) וְשָׁמַעוּ לְקֹלְךָ וּבֹאֲתָ אִתָּה וְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וְאָמַרְתָּם אֱלֹוֹ יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרָיִים נִקְרָה עָלֵינוּ וְעַתָּה גִלְכָה נָא דֶרֶךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים בַּמִּדְבָּר וְנִזְבַּחָה לַיהוָה:
- (יט) וְאֲנִי יִדְעֹתִי כִּי לֹא יִתֵּן אֹתְכֶם מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְהֵלֶךְ וְלֹא בִיד חֲזָקָה:
- (כ) וְשְׁלַחְתִּי אֶת יָדִי וְהִפֵּיתִי אֶת מִצְרַיִם בְּכָל נִפְלְאוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֶעֱשֶׂה בְּקִרְבּוֹ וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן יִשְׁלַח אֹתְכֶם:
- (כא) וְנָתַתִּי אֶת חֹן הָעֵם הַזֶּה בְּעֵינֵי מִצְרַיִם וְהָיָה כִּי תִלְכוּן לֹא תִלְכוּ רֵיקָם:
- (כב) וְשָׂאֵלָה אִשָּׁה מִשְׁכַּנְתָּהּ וּמִגֵּרַת בֵּיתָהּ כְּלִי כֶסֶף וְכְלִי זָהָב וְשִׁמְלֹת וְשִׁמְתָם עַל בְּנֵיהֶם וְעַל בְּנֹתֵיהֶם וְנִצַּלְתֶּם אֶת מִצְרַיִם:

Some Comments About Relevance of God's Names for Biblical Criticism

For Bible critics, the different names of the god of the Bible is an indication of different authors.

Author J uses YKVK, and Author E/P uses Elokim.

The obvious answer is that even people can have more than one name due to literary context. *General Washington, Mr. President, Mr. Washington, etc.* Maybe God is both a Judge and also an intimate deity.

However, the Psukkim that we are reading right now have a particular challenge to non-critics. J believed that YKVK was always around, and that's why in Breishit the Torah refers to him in. Other people held that the Avot did not know the YKVK, and that name was only added to the Torah at a later time.

Maybe Moshe knew all the names now, and then he asks God which name to share with Bnei Yisroel, and then God says to use a different name. This is Gufa the discovery of the YKVK name, according to some traditions.

The Avot Did Not know the Shem Havaya?

Daat Mikra's Discussion

1. What's the connection between the name of God and redemption?
2. What is the explanation for the Avot not knowing the Shem Havaya?

Three Approaches to these questions:

1. The Avot did not know the Shem Havaya.

- a. If you're a Bible Critic, then you'd say that this is only according to E/P, but not J.
- b. How did the Avot use the Shem Havaya then, if you assume only God-author?
You have to say that the text was written from the viewpoint of later people.
 - i. This is a little Dochak, but it is better to give some Teirutz rather than leaving it unanswered.
- c. Rav Carmy: Sometimes, if you don't have a good answer, leave it alone. Don't Kvetch around with a weak answer.
- d. **Yesod:** The Shem Havaya is unique to the relationship between Hashem and Bnei Yisroel as a whole.
 - i. The Rambam even says in Moreh Nevuchim says that the Shem Havaya is the proper name, and the use of this name is very important, and Moshe is the main Navi and he was also a Navi for others, unlike the Avot who were Naviim for themselves.

2. The Shem Havaya was known, but forgot in Mitzrayim.

- a. This fits with the Rishonim that we saw about Moshe using the Shem Havaya is a code. But the Ramban, and Rav Carmy disagree with this view.
 - i. Why should the secret word work? If the people know it, then why would it be hard for Moshe to know it? If they don't know it, then what would Moshe knowing it actually do?
- b. This doesn't fit with "Shmi Hashem Lo Nodati Lahem" in VaEra

3. **The Shem Havaya wasn't forgot, it is just that the names of God signify different relationships. The Redemption will be the Middah of Havaya.**
 - a. If it is true that Moshe was asking about how God will relate to the Jewish people, then it is very relevant whether or not the people can understand the nuance of what Moshe would say. This is unlikely, so this interpretation is unlikely.

Perek 3:21-22 - The Spoils of Mitzrayim

- 1) Why does God introduce this so early? Moshe didn't need this until later.
- 2) Is this fair that God is giving the Jewish people the Mitzrim's spoils?
 - a) Story of Geviha Ben Pesisa in **Sanhedrein 91a**: "No, the Jews are owed by the Mitzrim for all those years of free labor."
 - b) The Greek translation literature of the Bible does not reflect any embarrassment on this issue - They don't modify any of the Psukkim.
 - c) The author of "The Exploitation of Egypt" raises the question about whether there actually was a confrontation about the money like the story with Geviha ben Pesisa? This would not have worked in the Jews favor.
 - d) The **Rashbam** says that the word "Shaal" doesn't mean "borrowed", it means "asked for". This is true in the English language.

Perek Daled

Perek 4:1 - "They won't believe me!"

Didn't God just finish telling Moshe that Bnei Yisroel *would* listen to him. Is Moshe justified in what he said:

1. **Rashi** quotes Chazal at the beginning of this perek: Moshe should not have gone against what Hashem told him.
2. **Eben Ezra** says that this isn't a machloket. God promised success with the Zikeinim, but God didn't promise about the rest of the people.
 - a. Evidence for Eben Ezra: Later in Bishalach we have "Vayaaminu BaHashem UBMoshe Avdo," and this is an indication that it wasn't until then that they believed
3. **Ramban** the Ramban has greater sympathy for Moshe in this whole conversation with God in general. It is one thing to say that Moshe will take them out of Mitzrayim, but it is much harder to believe that Moshe will give the Torah.
 - a. The Ramban view the Avot as larger than life figures without turning them into plastic statues of ossified Tzidkut.

Perek 4:2-5 - The Siman of the Snake - Fear

Why did God ask Moshe to pick up the snake by the tail? It is safer to lift it by the head.

The **Netziv** emphasizes that when someone is afraid suddenly, it is not deliberate fear - this is instinctive, and does not have spiritual value.

Moshe picked up the animal by the tail, so this is not instinctive.

Perek 4:2-7 - The Two Signs - Purpose?

1. Perhaps this is just about proving things to people.
2. Perhaps there is also an element of rebuke for Moshe.
 - a. Perhaps the rebuke is about Lashon Hara.
 - i. God puts Moshe through two experiences which make him think about what just happened. Perhaps he was speaking lashon hara by saying Bnei Yisroel would not believe God.
 - b. Perhaps these two experiences are just both very frightening and humbling
 - i. God wanted Moshe to have these experiences.

Perek 4:8 - “Acharon”

In Biblical Hebrew, the word “Acharon” can mean last or second.

In **Chagai**, there is a reference to the Beit Hamikdash HaAcharon - the last one. Meaning, the 2nd was the last one. Christian polemicists like to say that this means that there will be no 3rd Beit Hamikdash. We can just quote Shemot 4:8 to say that “Acharon” can just mean “Latter” or “second”.

Perek 4:9 - The Third Siman

Why three? Why not go straight to the third?

Literarily, the punchline is always the third option. Ayeen the Philosopher Police man's dog who knew that a villain ran down one of three roads. He smelled the first two, and realized that the villain didn't go down those two, so he immediately sprinted down the third. Why doesn't the story just have the dog get it right the first time? Because of the suspense.

Alternatively, it could be that different people will be impressed with different signs.

Perek 4:10 - Moshe's Speaking Ability

1. Moshe could be saying, "*I'm not a public speaker.*"
2. Moshe could be saying, "*I have a speak impediment.*"
 - a. Chazal and Mefhorshim raise this issue and they even explain why he had the speech impediment; namely, the '**hot coal vs. crown**' aggada.
3. Moshe could be saying, "*I don't speak egyptian very well.*"
 - a. The **Rashbam** says this. In Yechezkel, it compares someone who can't speak the Lingua Franca is considered to have a speech impediment.
 - i. But didn't Moshe grow up there?
 1. No, **Rashbam** says that he ran away when he was younger and it has been many years.

Why would God choose someone who is not a good speaker?

The Rashbam asks this question. Even Gemara doesn't think that this has anything to do with being inarticulate. Non-Jewish books talk about real impediments to speech, but these are not good theories.

There are Baalei Machshava who take this very seriously:

Drashot HaRan say that if Moshe had been a good speaker, it would detract from his message, because we'd think that he was just charismatic and glittery. If Moshe had the tongue of silver, then we would say he's a demagogue and a crowd-pleaser. Now he's more authentic.

Maharal claims that Moshe is a combination of human and non-human. Moshe's way of thinking is so different, and it is easy to imagine that eh has a hard time communicating, as it is above peoples'

{ My Idea: The idea of Moshe having a stutter or speech impediment is contributing to the character development of Moshe. A speech impediment can be a very humbling experience, but it can also lead someone to get angry quickly, as they can't get their words out. Both of these things are qualities that we see in Moshe very starkly. }

Perek 4:13-14 - Moshe Says No - God Got Angry

Moshe refuses, and says that God should send other people. God gets very angry.

Perek 4:15-17 - Aharon is Going to Come Along Too

This seems like it is a nice ending. Moshe will go, and God addressed Moshe's concerns by sending Aharon along with him too. However...

The Malbim - The Bidieved Situation - Predestination

God is not just angry because Moshe is out of order like **Rashi** said. If it wasn't for Moshe's doubts, then Moshe would have just gone down. Now God needs to add in Aharon to the mix, and the intimacy of Moshe and Bnei Yisroel is foiled to a degree. This is a Bidieved Plan. The Malbim is not like the **Maharal**, because the Maharal felt that no such intimate relationship was ever possible.

- This is an important inyan because it shows that things are not 100% BaShert. The Malbim is presenting the "free-will -position" that the divine plan is not closed, and the actions of the people are significant in the development of the world.
 - One extreme: Why is the Matzah Commemorating the fact that they left Egypt quick, but they already do Matzah before that happen! So it is clear that the accidents of history are not consequential when it comes to the actual Halacha. The **Beit HaLevi** took a very theo-centric position on this and said that the Halacha of Matzah goes back to before the world was created. The fact that the people didn't have time to bake the matzah is because they needed to set the stage.
 - Another Extreme: What people choose will actually affect history. There are different ways that history can go and what is happening in the present with individuals is important. → {Me: This idea is troubling and I do not understand how this can be true and still argue that what happens in the Torah is divine "emet" in a more serious sense aside from "this is what happened." If people chose to do something, then when the Torah reports it, it is TRUE, but is it EMET? The answer might be that the way the Torah presents the actions done as a result to human free-choice is the EMET below the report on historical occurrences.}

Perek 4:18 - Moshe's Request From Yitro to Leave

Questions

1. Why is Moshe going to Yitro? Does he actually need permission?
 - a. This could be a matter of courtesy.
 - b. **Rashi** says that Moshe actually did need permission. This is based on the **Mechilta** which understands that in Perek 2:21 when it says

"וַיֹּאֶל מֹשֶׁה לְשָׁרֵת אֶת הָאִישׁ וַיֵּתֵן אֶת צִפְרָה בְּתוּלָה לְמֹשֶׁה"

it doesn't just mean that Yitro agreed for Moshe to live there, it also means that there was more of a legal commitment. There were also other parts of this legal agreement; namely, that only one of Moshe's children could be circumcised.

→ There was a religious gap between Yitro and Moshe.

→ Yitro understands this gap.

2. How much does Yitro know about Moshe's background?

- a. Perhaps Yitro knew everything about Moshe, because Moshe would volunteer information to his father in law as a courtesy.
 - i. **Abrabanel** thinks Yitro knows Moshe's past. This will be explained in (3b) below.
- b. Maybe Moshe hid many things from Yitro
 - i. There is proof for this from the Pasuk here (4:18) because Moshe doesn't say "God told me to leave." It seems clear that Yitro is not telling Yitro everything about his distant past and the more immediate past of God telling Moshe to go to Egypt.
 1. This has implications about what type of relationship Yitro and Moshe had. Was Yitro a full partner here? Rav Carmy says no.

3. What is Yitro's Response of "Lech LShalom"?

- a. "Go in peace".
- b. The **Abarbanel** says differently. The backdrop according to him is that Yitro knows a lot about Moshe's distant past, and based on that, Moshe going back to Egypt is a dangerous undertaking. Thus, Yitro is giving a Bracha to Moshe that he should have success. Yitro knows that there is a warrant for the arrest of Moshe.
 - i. **Rav Carmy** takes issue with this understanding based on the phrase, "Lech LShalom." If this would be the end of the conversation, then the phrase would just mean, "go in peace." However, the Torah does not make any attempt regularly to reproduce a tape recording of what a person might say. Even long-winded novels don't try to do that. The Pashtut is that Yitro wished him well.

Perek 4:19 - Another Nevuah - Same or New?

Why is there another Nevuah now?

1. **Eben Ezra** held that the Pasukim are not in chronological order, and this pasuk actually occurred earlier.
 - a. But if this is going back to the previous period, then why isn't it earlier? Even though the order doesn't matter" the order does matter!
2. **Abarbanel** says that the NEvuah is in chronological order, and we need another Nevuah for the sake of Yitro. The Abarbanel understands that Yitro was concerned with Moshe

going back to Egypt because Moshe was wanted dead. Thus, God tells Moshe to tell Yitro that there is no longer any danger.

3. This Nevuah serves a different purpose than the previous nevuah:
 - a. **Rav Camry** The assumption here has bearings on what it means for a person to be courageous. People respond to challenges without thinking about the dangers involved. If someone falls in a river, then you should jump in, and only afterwards you consider the down-sides of jumping in the river. Applying this to the case of Moshe, we see that when God first appears to Moshe, Moshe has objections. Moshe could have objected, "I think they'll kill me - they want to pay me back for what I have done to them." Nevertheless, Moshe is clearly trying to avoid the mission on different grounds. Moshe is using arguments that do not pertain to selfishness. Then, afterwards, God tells him that he will also be safe that is **Pasuk 19**.
 - b. The **Ohr HaChaim** makes a diyuk from the word "Midyan". Moshe was not concerned about his enemies in Egypt when he was concerned with going to Egypt. He was not selfish, he was just worried about the mission. If the Torah had not written the word Midyan, then he would hold that the conversation took place earlier. Since the pasuk said midyan, the pasuk is trying to tell us that Moshe was clearly such a great Tzaddik that he was only informed by God afterwards that the people who wanted Moshe dead are gone.

What does it mean that all of Moshe's Enemies are Dead in Egypt?

1. The people are actually dead (**Seforno** even includes Jews that might have wanted Moshe dead).
2. **Rashi** says that the people who are "dead" are *Datan and Aviram* - the two men who Chazal say were the two Moshe stopped from fighting. The Gemara in **Nedarim 64** says that they were "dead" (socially dead) because they were Poor. Thus, even if Datan and Aviram would try to rile people up against Moshe, they would have no credibility.
 - a. The **Netziv** says that God promised Moshe that Pharoh cannot do anything bad to Moshe. So Moshe has no real fear of Pharoh or Egyptians. However, God gave no assurance before regarding the Jewish enemies that Moshe fears.

Perek 4:20 - Moshe Took His Family

1. Why not?! If it is a business trip, then this is not a good question. But otherwise, this is very important.
2. **Ramban** explains that if the Jewish people are going to be redeemed, and Moshe's family isn't there then they will be missing out.
 - a. Yetziyat Mitzrayim
 - b. Maamad Har Sinai
3. It would encourage the people to believe him, because he is putting his family on the line and he truly believes that the mission will be a success.

Perek 4:22-23 - God Tells Moshe that the Bechoim of Egypt Will Die

(כב) וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל פַּרְעֹה כֹּה אָמַר יְקֹזֵק בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
(כג) וְאָמַר אֵלֶיךָ שְׁלַח אֶת בְּנֵי יִעֲבָדֵנִי וְתַמְאֵן לִשְׁלַח הִנֵּה אֲנִי הֵיג אֶת בְּנֶךָ בְּכֹרֶךָ:

When is Moshe supposed to tell this to Pharaoh?

It seems obvious to Rav Carmy that this is not supposed to be on the first equantence, because that would escalate the situation for the Jews right away. You should start modestly, and THEN threaten. (Major Mefharshim say this as well.)

The idea is that *eventually* Moshe will tell Pharaoh about Makat Bechorot.

Why are we being given this information now, and not later?

God said it to Moshe now to help give Moshe courage. “*There is a secret weapon.*”

What is the meaning of “Bni Bichori Yisroel?”

- **Rashi:** Israel is greater than the non-Jews. In Tanach, the word Bechor is used to metaphorically indicate a special standing.
 - Rashi also quotes the midrash that says that this pasuk is ratifying the fact that Yaakov is the bechor.
 - Psychologists say that the Bechor gets the most attention. Thus, perhaps Israel has the most attention from God.
- **Eben Ezra:** The Bechor is just the child with the temporal precedent - *he go there first*.
 - Long Commentary: This is the nation whose forefathers served God already. Therefore, God has special concern for them. ⇒ Israel comes before other nations because of the Avot.
 - Eben Ezra also mentions on Shir Hashirim that the allegory begins with Avraham, not with other parts of Jewish history.
 - Short Commentary: Israel is the nation who God [will take] out of Egypt, and thus they are the first nation.
 - They disagree about where to start the history of Am Yisroel: Does it start with Yetziyat Mitzrayim, or does it start with the Avot.

Zechariya 12

(י) וְשִׁפְכֵנִי עַל בֵּית דָּוִיד וְעַל יוֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם רוּחַ חַן וְתַחֲנוּנִים וְהִבִּטוּ אֵלַי אֶת אֲשֶׁר דָּקְרוּ וְסָפְדוּ עָלַי
כְּמִסְפֵּד עַל הַיָּחִיד וְהִמְרָ עָלָיו כְּהִמְרָ עַל הַבְּכוֹר:

*Rav Kook*¹² (in his hesped for Hertzl) explained the way that one feels about the bechor and the way one feels about a 'ben Yachid':

"They will lament him as one laments an only son, and grieve for him as one grieves for the firstborn son." The lamentation for an only child is bereft of hope for future children. Elderly parents who have lost their only son, are totally forlorn. If the verse were to end on that note, it would spell utter doom, but the bitterness is mitigated by intellect. Intellect perceives that the nation has produced the soul of the Messiahs. The nation is not as elderly parents who have lost their only child, but rather as young parents who have lost their firstborn child. Being inexperienced at raising children, they did not attend properly to the child in its state of illness, so the child succumbed."

Perek 4:24-26 - The Brit Millah of Moshe's Son

(כד) וַיְהִי בַדֶּרֶךְ בְּמִלּוֹן וַיִּפְגְּשֵׁהוּ יִקְיָק וַיִּבְקֶשׁ הַמִּיתוֹ:
(כה) וַתִּקַּח צִפּוֹרָה צֹר וַתִּכְרֹת אֶת עַרְלַת בְּנָהּ וַתִּגַּע לְרַגְלָיו וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי חֲתָן דְּמִים אֶתָּה לִי:
(כו) וַיֵּרָף מִמֶּנּוּ אֶזְאָמָרָה חֲתָן דְּמִים לְמוֹלֵת:

Non-referent Pronouns

There was a man who collected all the ancient and non-Jewish interpretations of this section. The book has 200 pages, and it doesn't even contain the traditional Jewish commentaries.

The Confusion of the Language of the Pasuk

- Simple Pshat: Moshe did not manage to give a Millah to both of his sons, so God wants to punish him.
- **Targum:** Changes "Hashem" to "Malach Hashem". The Targum does this often when the presentation of God seems overly anthropomorphic.
- **Rashi:** Takes the idea of God.

But Why would the Torah not say Malach Hashem" or "Ish" like it did with Yaakov, for example?

Rav Carmy said that the confusion of these pasukim implies how frightening this whole scene was. If you want to use the fancy language of protestant theology, you would take the idea of the numinous God who is super frightening. **The Rav** also identifies with this position. There is something very frightening about the confrontation with God. The vicinity of God is electric and overwhelming. We are not meant to see things clearly always.

¹² <https://www.machonso.org/uploads/images/13-D-10-lamentation.pdf>

Why are these Pasukim so strange and difficult? **Rav Carmy** suggests that the point is that there is supposed to be a lesson from the juxtaposition of the Makat Bechorot and Bnei Bechori with this episode. God is threatening to non-Jews and Jews alike.

Another meaning of the juxtaposition: Pharoh's son getting killed should be scary for Moshe. He should not take it as nothing. Makat Bechorot is **Not** target practice, Moshe has to take it very seriously.

Perek Heh

Thematic Discussion: Hardening Pharoh's Heart

1. Should we be Midayek that there is a change from Pharoh's heart being hardened by himself and hardened by God?

- a. **Professor Zeligman:** 'double-causation.' "A did this" and "B did this" can both be true if A did something directly and B stood behind what A did.
 - i. **II Melachim 11-** Richavam listened to the young advisors and not the old advisors. The Navi uses the language that "God wanted Richavam to do that." This doesn't mean that there was a little man in Richavam that chose what Richavam would do. It means, "God wanted that result."
- b. **Rambam Perek 6 Hilchot Teshuva:** Pharoh forfeited his free will. Initially, Pharoh hardened his own heart. But then he did it so many times that he lost his free will.
 - i. Sometimes, Dr. Zekyll turned into Hyde without wanting to, because he lost his freedom.
- c. **Ramban 6:9:** This idea is not a psychological mechanism. For the Ramban, this is a punishment to Pharoh for his stubbornness that he is not going to be able to stop his heart from being hardened. "*Lmaan Shitti Ototei Eleh BKirbo*" - This is not a general Din of Schar VOnesh either, it is supposed to be a spectacle.
 - i. "*Baavur Zot... Areh Et Kevodi*" - another Raaya for Ramban.
 - ii. **Seforno** in Perek 4 says that the only Makkah that was a punishment to Pharoh was Makat Bechorot. So **Seforno** disagrees.

2. The Mechanism through which Pharoh Loses His Free-Will

- a. **Rambam:** You use free will until you lose it through Habit.
- b. **Ramban:** You sometimes will be punished, and thus lose your free will.
- c. **Sefer Ikkarim** (15th c. J.Phil): Pharoh didn't lose his free will at all. God enabled Pharoh to act freely.
 - i. The average person who goes through the suffering of Pharoh would give in immediately. Thus God is actually being helpful.

- d. **Bineh La-Ittim** (17th c. Sefer Drush - Italian author): In sefer Shemot, it is important that Pharaoh has to say, "please leave."
 - i. When someone does something, you might be afraid to fight against them, or you might not. However, once YOU have to sign on the dotted-line, you feel that you have the power in the equation, even if there is pressure.
 - ii. The fact that Moshe needs Pharaoh to say, "yes" is exactly what enables Pharaoh to say no. The fact that GOD made Pharaoh the one who has to say "yes" gives Pharaoh the power.

3. What is Effect does this Discussion have on the Peshat of Sefer Shemot?

- a. The Point of Shemot is not just the story of how the slaves escaped Egypt. There is another story going on there as well. There is a power struggle between God and Pharaoh. There is an open question: "who is the Melech?"
- b. **Josephus, "Against Apion"** (Apion = Jew Hater in Egypt): Apion said that the Jews ran away from Egypt and there was nothing dignified about that. Josephus clarifies that they didn't run because they are despicable losers, the story shows the DIVINE kingship.
- c. This is also the point of the Makkot. Pharaoh is not the ruler.
- d. In order for this whole account to show that Pharaoh is not sovereign, the story requires that Pharaoh has to say, "you win, I lose, you may leave."
 - i. "Hashem HaTzadik, VAni VAmi HaRishaim." seems to be the end, but he turns around again.
 - ii. No matter how much blood a bully sheds of a little pipsqueak, he didn't win unless the little guy gives up.
- e. Turning the psychological issues into Pshat, we see a whole new view of Shemot, and we understand the whole motivation and the crux of the story.
- f. **Why do we have Kriyat Yam Suf, where Pharaoh changed his mind?**
 - i. The focus in Kriyat Yam suf fits with this idea. Pharaoh needs to decisively show that he is impotent.
- g. What is Shirat HaYam about?
 - i. The climax is, "Hashem Yimloch LOlam VaEd." This is a very strategic storytelling point because it shows the whole direction the story was going.
- h. **Malchut Hashem** is an important theme in Shemot.

Perek 5:20-23, 6:1 - Deepening of the Oppression - Moshe's Disappointment.

Why does Moshe kvetch "Lamah Shilachtani?" **Rashi** says that Moshe should *not* have kvetched. But even if you don't hold like Rashi, it is an important question. When Rav carmy was 5 years old he would have said, "Moshe is a human being, and when people turn on you, you give up." But Rav Carmy says the Rishonim do better:

1. **Eben Ezra:** Moshe was bothered that the shibbud got worse. He knew Pharoh would say no, but he assumed that once he goes to Pharoh there would be an easing on the shibbud.
 - a. Rav Carmy adds that Chazal say that once the makkot began the shibbud was slowed down. But at this point, things got worse!
2. **Ramban:** Moshe knew that pharoh would resist, but he thought the makkot would start right away, and things would move very quickly. Moshe was therefore disappointed that things didn't happen right away.
 - a. Rav Carmy adds that there is a chazal that say that Moshe actually went back to midtyan once things started getting schlepped out for longer.
3. This Machloket is not just trying to answer the attitude of Moshe. It may have reflected a difference in what they think Moshe was looking to achieve. What was Moshe's mission all about?
 - a. Eben Ezra: Moshe's focus is on liberation, so he thinks that his arrival in mitzrayim should cause at least a little softening of the oppression.
 - b. Ramban is more "religiously" oriented, and he thinks that Shemot is about God's intervention in the story of the JEws as slaves. That's why Moshe wanted for things to happen right away.
 - i. We have seen all along that ramban tries to present Moshe sympathetically. This is a big theme in Ramban's Peirush on Shemot.
 - ii. It is important to try to put together shittot of the rishonim about what is pshat in the Torah. It is not just independent psukim.
 - c. **Pasuk 6:1** →

.d (א) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקֹנֶן אֶל מֹשֶׁה עֲתָה תִּרְאֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶעֱשֶׂה לְפָרְעֹה כִּי בְיַד חֲזָקָה
יִשְׁלַחֵם וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה יִגְרָשֻׁם מֵאֶרֶצוֹ: ו

 - i. This seems to support Ramban!
 - ii. The Eben Ezra comments on this pasuk to explain how it also fits with his position. He introduces another aspect into the pasuk: between the lines there is a theme that once Pharoh starts to respond to the makkot, then Pharoh will allow the shibbud to be relaxed.
 1. Very often, what appears to us as a Kashya, the Rishonim are already aware of it.

Famous Q: "How many children had Lady Macbeth?" Some would say that if there isn't evidence from the play, then that isn't reading the play!!

The Ramban can tell us from the pasuk itself that God is telling Moshe what will happen to Pharoh. For Eben Ezra, it requires an extra step to explain pshat based on psychology. Perhaps you can argue that Eben Ezra is therefore, "*not reading the play.*"

Perek Vav

Perek 6:2-9 - The Biblical Critics and the Name of God

We discussed these themes in the 3rd perek. There are some differences in the mihalech though.

In Shemot, there is no implication (according to R'Carmy) that indicates that there is a *new* name. Here it sounds much more like a new name.

On the other hand, the verb does not really fit the Bible critics so well. If the critics were right, the pasuk should have been "*Ushmi Hashem Lo Hodaati Lahem.*" Rav Carmy therefore does not think that there is a need to make his arguments more convincing. The Bible critics have to account for "hamotzi meichaveiro Alav Haraaya".

Among the traditional approaches in the Rishonim are not so different than in Shemot.

According to Rashi, the pasuk is a rebuke to Moshe.

One Haarah about the Bible critics:

1. If you hold like the critics, these pasukkim are coming out of a vacuum. God's name is changing, so the pasuk has to stick it in somewhere. But this is just artificially spliced in.
 - a. In secular entertainment this happens when there are very awkward transitions. In the Berns and Allan comedy show was a TV show which was very unstaged. There were unreal qualities to the whole thing. They would stop and schmooze with the audience sometimes and ask, "what should I do in the plot now?" There was a new actor one time for the next door neighbor, and they just artificially stopped the action and turned to the audience to say, "*Rabboissai*, there is a new actor for our neighbour, and he is a fine actor."
2. This is a bad thing to do in real life. You can only do this in a TV show. In Chumash, this wouldn't be a good way to do something like this. This is a disadvantage of the Bible Critics.

Moshe wants to know what to do, how to explain things to the people...God had been a stranger to the people for so long.

Eben Ezra and Ramban tend to be a bit more "philosophical" in their interpretation of this puzzling text. For them, the semantic differences in the names of God are very important in terms of connotation.

1. This, **Eben Ezra** says, “Kel Shakai” means “without divine intervention”. God made promises to the Avot, but he did not intervene in the natural order to show the world My involvement. Now, I (God) Will intervene.
 2. **Ramban** criticises Eben Ezra. He says that in Breishit God *does* intervene... for example, God smote Pharaoh when Avraham was in Mitzrayim.
 - a. *This is Ramban Lshittato*: The Ramban held that from a metaphysical standpoint, there is no difference between the miraculous for nes nistar and nes nigleh.
 - i. The Eben Ezra can respond that even if Ramban is right from metaphysical perspective, from the human perspective there is a big difference between nes nistar and nes nigleh.
 - b. The Ramban also adopts another perspective as well. When you read perek Gimmel, it doesn't imply that Moshe repeated word for word what God had told him. In Vaera he says that God was speaking to Moshe, not to the people. Moshe can understand on a deep level, so he does “know the Ramban” and can understand deep things even if the people cannot.
-

“This is not a course in...”

- **American Pop Music from the 1960s.**
 - Context: Rav Carmy speaks about the minhag to count sheep when you are trying to sleep in the context of Rashi's comment that if you love something you will count them. Apparently there was a song “When a person cannot sleep, I count my blessings instead of sheep”!
- **Israeli Autobiographical History.**
 - Context: whether to discuss the biography of Shimon Peretz and what Rav Carmy thinks about the political realities for when France became anti-zionist all of the sudden. This related to the “melech Chadash” who didn't know Yosef.
- **Vatican Memorable History about the Hiccups of the Pope.**
 - Context: This came up because of the Maharal's shittah that the Torah isn't just trying to record amazing occurrences like the pregnancy of an 130 year old Yocheved. The Torah isn't Ripley's Believe it or not. Apparently there was a guy who had the hiccups for a long time. Rav Carmy mentioned that the Pope also had a hiccup issue a while ago.
- **English TV Serieses from the Early 1960's.**
 - Context: Rav Carmy wanted to give an example of a genre which always has a particular scene; namely, election day drama. This is like Robert Alter's theory of 'type-scenes' that happen a lot in Tanach, like the scene of people meeting at Wells.
- **Books about Presidential Elections.**
 - Context: Rav Carmy told a story to give a Mashal for Bible Criticism. When he was in high school he was a few years younger than everyone, and since it was standard-place for people to copy HW from each other, Rav Carmy allowed

people to copy from him. One time, his teacher made his friend read his HW out loud to the class. It didn't make any sense. Then the teacher took Rav Carmy's notebook and told his friend to read it and then it made sense. The teacher then accused the friend, "you idiot! You skipped a line!"

- **My Childhood.**

- Context: Rav Carmy told a story to give a Mashal for Bible Criticism. When he was in high school he was a few years younger than everyone, and since it was standard-place for people to copy HW from each other, Rav Carmy allowed people to copy from him. One time, his teacher made his friend read his HW out loud to the class. It didn't make any sense. Then the teacher took Rav Carmy's notebook and told his friend to read it and then it made sense. The teacher then accused the friend, "you idiot! You skipped a line!"

- **Irish Political History.**

- Context: Rav Carmy wanted to give an example of someone who has a real name, Éamon de Valera (who was the Menachem Begin of Ireland), but he also has a more personal name which his secretary called him. But the name was "Chief". This was a joke, obviously.

- **Freud's personal life.**

- Context: Rav Carmy wanted to give an example of something which you sometimes shouldn't look for deeper meaning in. Freud held that psychologically, bananas, cigars, etc. are associated with penises, but he would say "sometimes a cigar is a cigar!"

- **The Shaving Habits of Calvin Coolidge.**

- Context: Rav Carmy was talking about impressions that you have from the first time you meet someone. Apparently when Calvin Coolidge's wife first saw him, he was shaving, and when she found him after his heart attack, he still had shaving cream on his face too. Rav Carmy used this as an example of why it is important that Yitro is referred to as "Kohen Midyan" and not as Yitro. This is part of his idea that even the names of the people are gone in part from the first two perakim of Shemot.

- **Psychology and Religion.**

- Context: A student suggested that in general, people who have problems with God have problems with their parents. Rav Carmy said that there is some truth to that, but that he didn't want to get into it because, "this is not a course in psychology and religion."

- **The History of this institution [YU].**

- **Sitcoms from the 1990s.**

- Context: Rav Carmy was explaining the idea that sometimes people don't try very hard to understand you. Sometimes they don't ask to clarify. This is like the Seinfeld episode where he goes on a date with a girl who spoke quietly, and instead of trying to understand what she said, he just nodded and agreed to everything. It turned out that he agreed to wear a puffy shirt on TV.

- **The History of Leprosy and Other illnesses.**

- **Jewish Pop-Music.**
- **19th Century American History.**
 - Context: Rav Carmy was explaining the idea that Moshe brought his family along to Egypt with him (at least initially) in order to show that he truly believes that the mission will be a success. L'Havdil, Rav Carmy explained that we were too young to remember, but when Americans in the 19th century started going West in America, they would not bring their families along with them because they were not sure that they would be successful.
- **The Psychology of Child Bearing.**
 - Context: We were analyzing Shemot 4:23, "Bnei Bechori Yisroel," and discussing the implications of being the oldest child.
- **Baseball Strategy.**
 - Context: Rav Carmy was explaining the concept that if you have two languages with the same word, but one language has two meanings for the word and allows for "plays on words," that language is "richer" and is probably the source language for the word. Baseball must have copied from Hebrew because the word "sacrifice" in baseball explains the meaning for bunting to allow yourself to get out and allow the other person to advance a base. However, it doesn't capture the meaning of sending a fly ball in order to allow someone to round the bases faster.