

Enslavement in Egypt: Happenstance or Retribution
Parshat Shemot
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שמות א' א-ה'

וְאֵלֶּה

(א) שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים מִצְרָיִם אֵת יַעֲקֹב אִישׁ וּבֵיתוֹ בָּאוּ: (ב) רְאוּבֵן שְׁמֵעוֹן לֵוִי וַיהוּדָה: (ג) יִשְׁשַׁכָּר זְבֻלֹן וּבִנְיָמִן: (ד) גָּד וַנַּפְתָּלִי גָד וְאַשֶּׁר: (ה) וַיהוֹי כָּל־נַפְשׁ יִצְחָק יַעֲקֹב שִׁבְעִים נֶפֶשׁ וַיֹּסֶף הֵיךְ בְּמִצְרַיִם:

Exodus 1:1-5

(1) **AND These** are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each coming with his household: (2) Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; (3) Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; (4) Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. (5) The total number of persons that were of Jacob's issue came to seventy, Joseph being already in Egypt.

Why does the Exodus begin with the list of names of Jacob's sons who came to Egypt?

רש"י על שמות א' א-ה'

ואלה שמות בני ישראל. אע"פ שמנאן בחייהם בשמותם, חזר ומנאם במיתתם, להודיע חבתם, שנמשלו לכוכבים, שמוציאם ומכניסם במספר ובשמותם (שמות רבה), שש' "המוציא במספר צבאם לכלם בשם יקרא" (ישעיהו מ'):

Rashi on Exodus 1:1

אלה שמות בני ישראל AND THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — Although scripture has already enumerated them by name whilst they were living, when they went down into Egypt (Genesis 46:8-27), it again enumerates them when it tells us of their death, thus showing how dear they were to God — that they are compared to the stars which also God brings out and brings in by number and name when they cease to shine, as it is said, (Isaiah 40:26) "He bringeth out their host by number, He calleth them all by name" (Exodus Rabbah 1:3; Tanchuma Yashan 1:1:2).

בראשית מ"ו ח-כ"ז

(ח) וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים מִצְרָיִם יַעֲקֹב וּבָנָיו בְּכֹר יַעֲקֹב רְאוּבֵן: (ט) וּבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן חֲנוּךְ וּפִלְוָא וַחֲצֹרֹן וְכֹרְמִי: (י) וּבְנֵי שְׁמֵעוֹן יִמְיִן וְאֶהֱד וַיְכִין וְצַחֵר וְשָׂאוּל בֶּן־הַפְּנֵעִי: (יא) וּבְנֵי לֵוִי גֵרְשׁוֹן קָהָת וּמֵרָרִי: (יב) וּבְנֵי יְהוּדָה עֶר וְאוּנָן וְשָׁלָה וְפָרֶץ וְזָרַח וַיְמִת עֶר וְאוּנָן בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיְהִי בְנֵי־פָרֶץ חֲצֹרֹן וְחִמּוּל: (יג) וּבְנֵי יִשְׁשַׁכָּר תּוֹלַע וּפִזָּה וַיָּוֵב וְשִׁמְרֹן: (יד) וּבְנֵי זְבֻלֹן סֹרֵד וְאֵלֹן וַיְחַלֵּאֵל: (טו) אֵלֶּה בְנֵי לֵאָה אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה לַיעֲקֹב בְּפָדָן אֲרָם וְאֵת דִּינָה בְתוּלָה כָּל־נַפְשׁ בָּנָיו וּבְנוֹתָיו שְׁלֹשִׁים וּשְׁלֹשׁ: (טז) וּבְנֵי לֵאָה שׁוֹנִי וְאֶצֶּבֶן עָרִי וְאֶרְוֹדִי וְאַרְאֵלִי: (יז) וּבְנֵי אֲשֶׁר יָמְנָה וַיְשׁוּנָה וַיְשׁוּרִי וּבְרִיעָה וְשָׂרָח אֲחֵתָם וּבְנֵי בְרִיעָה חֶבֶר וּמִלְכִּיאֵל: (יח) אֵלֶּה בְנֵי זֵלְפָּה אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן לָבֶן לֵאָה בְתוּלָה וְתִלְדָּה אֶת־אֵלֶּה לַיעֲקֹב שֵׁשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה נֶפֶשׁ: (יט) בְּנֵי רַחֵל אֵשֶׁת יַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף וּבְנִימִן: (כ) וַיֻּלֵּד לְיוֹסֵף בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה־לוֹ אֶסְנָת בַּת־פּוֹטִי פֶרַע כֶּהֵן אֶן אֶת־מְנַשֶּׁה וְאֶת־אֶפְרַיִם: (כא) וּבְנֵי בְנִימִן בְּלָע וּבְכֹר וְאַשְׁבֵּל גָּרָא וְנַעֲמָן אֲחִי וְרָאשׁ מַפִּים וְחַפִּים וְאֶרֶד: (כב) אֵלֶּה בְנֵי רַחֵל אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָה לַיעֲקֹב כָּל־נַפְשׁ אַרְבָּעָה עֶשְׂרִי: (כג) וּבְנֵי־דָן חֲשִׁים: (כד) וּבְנֵי נַפְתָּלִי יַחֲצֵאֵל וְגוּנִי וַיִּצֵּר וְשֵׁלֹם: (כה) אֵלֶּה בְנֵי בְלָהָה אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן לָבֶן לְרַחֵל בְתוּלָה וְתִלְדָּה אֶת־אֵלֶּה לַיעֲקֹב כָּל־נַפְשׁ שִׁבְעָה: (כו) כָּל־הַנָּפֶשׁ הַבָּאָה לַיעֲקֹב מִצְרָיִם יָצְאִי יָרְכוּ מִלְּבָד נָשִׁי בְנֵי־יַעֲקֹב כָּל־נַפְשׁ שְׁשִׁים וָשֵׁשׁ: (כז) וּבְנֵי יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר־יָלְדוּ בְּמִצְרָיִם נֶפֶשׁ שְׁנַיִם כָּל־הַנָּפֶשׁ לְבֵית־יַעֲקֹב הַבָּאָה מִצְרָיִם שִׁבְעִים:

Genesis 46:8-27

(8) **And these are the names of the Israelites, Jacob and his descendants, who came to Egypt.** Jacob's first-born Reuben; (9) **Reuben's sons:** Enoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. (10) **Simeon's sons:** Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Saul the son of a Canaanite woman. (11) **Levi's sons:** Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. (12) **Judah's sons:** Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah—but Er and Onan had died in the land of Canaan; and Perez's sons were Hezron and Hamul. (13) **Issachar's sons:** Tola, Puvah, Iob, and Shimron. (14) **Zebulun's sons:** Sered, Elon, and Jahleel. (15) Those were the sons whom Leah bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, in addition to his **daughter Dinah**. Persons in all, male and female: 33. (16) **Gad's sons:** Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli. (17) **Asher's sons:** Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah, and their sister Serah. Beriah's sons: Heber and Malchiel. (18) These were the descendants of Zilpah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Leah. These she bore to Jacob—16 persons. (19) The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel were **Joseph and Benjamin**. (20) To Joseph were born in the land of Egypt Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath daughter of Poti-phaera priest of On bore to him. (21) **Benjamin's sons:** Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard. (22) These were the descendants of Rachel who were born to Jacob—14 persons in all. (23) **Dan's son:** Hushim. (24) **Naphtali's sons:** Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem. (25) These were the descendants of Bilhah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Rachel. These she bore to Jacob—7 persons in all. (26) All the persons belonging to Jacob who came to Egypt—his own issue, aside from the wives of Jacob's sons—all these persons numbered 66. (27) And Joseph's sons who were born to him in Egypt were two in number. Thus the total of Jacob's household who came to Egypt was seventy persons.

Why does Exodus repeat the list from Genesis 46 but exclude the grandchildren?

רמב"ן על שמות א':א

טעם וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת כִּי הִכְתוּב יִרְצֶה לְמַנּוֹת עֵינֵי הַגְּלוֹת מֵעַת רִדְתָּם לְמִצְרַיִם, כִּי אִזּוֹ גָּלוּ בְּרֹאשׁ גּוֹלִים, כֹּאֲשֶׁר פִּרְשְׁתִּי, וּלְפִיכֶּי יִחְזֹר אֶל תַּחֲלַת הָעֵינֵן שֶׁהוּא מִפְּסוּק "וְכָל זֶרְעוֹ הֵבִיא אֹתוֹ מִצְרָיִמָּה" (בראשית מו ז), וְשֵׁם כְּתוּב אַחֲרָיו "וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים מִצְרָיִמָּה" וְגו', וְאוֹתוֹ הַפְּסוּק בְּעֶצְמוֹ הוּא שֶׁהִחְזִיר בְּכֶאֱן, כִּי אִף עַל פִּי שֶׁהֵם שְׁנֵי סָפָרִים, הַסְּפֹר מִחֻבֵּר בְּדִבְרֵים בָּאִים זֶה אַחֵר זֶה, וְכֹאֲשֶׁר הִזְכִּיר בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב קִצֵּר בְּבְנֵי בְנָיו וְכָל זֶרְעוֹ, וְהִחְזִיר הַכָּלל כֹּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר שֵׁם (שם מ"ו כ"ז) כֹּל הַנֶּפֶשׁ לְבֵית יַעֲקֹב הַבָּאָה מִצְרָיִמָּה שְׁבָעִים.....

וְרַש"י כְּתַב (רש"י על שמות א':א) אַע"פ שֶׁמִּנְאָן בְּחִיָּיהֶם חֲזָר וּמִנְאָן אַחֵר מִיתַתֵּן בְּשְׁמוֹתֵם לְהוֹדִיעַ חֲבָתָם שֶׁנִּמְשְׁלוּ כְּכּוֹכְבִּים שְׁמוֹצִיאָן בְּמִסְפָּר וּמִכְנִיטֵן בְּמִסְפָּר, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר הַמּוֹצִיא בְּמִסְפָּר צָבָאָם לְכֹלֶם בְּשֵׁם יִקְרָא (ישעיה מ כו). וְאֵלֹו דְּבָרֵי אֲגָדָה (שמו"ר א' ג'), וְהֵם דְּבָרִים שֶׁל אֱמֶת בְּעֵינֵי הַחֲבוּב שֶׁהִקְב"ה מְחַבֵּבֵן וְכוּפֵל שְׁמוֹתֵם תְּדִיר, אֲבָל קִשּׁוּר הַפְּסוּקִים וְחִבּוּרֵם בְּנֹא"ו הוּא כְּמוֹ שֶׁפִּרְשְׁתִּי:

Ramban on Exodus 1:1

AND THESE ARE THE NAMES OF The meaning [of the connective vav — v'eileh, ('and' these are) — when it would have sufficed to say, "These are the names of ...,"] is that Scripture desires to reckon the subject of the exile from the time they went down to Egypt. It was then that they were the first of the exiles to go into exile (Amos 6:7), as I have explained. It is for this reason that He returns to the beginning of the subject [stated in the Book of Genesis], which is the verse, And all his seed he [Jacob] brought with him into

Egypt. There it is written afterward, And these are the names of the children of Israel, who came into Egypt, etc. This is the very same verse that He repeats here. Even though they are two separate books, the narrative is connected with subjects which follow one another successively. Here, once He mentioned the children of Jacob, He adopted a concise approach to his children's children and all of his seed [and did not mention them by name as He had done in the Book of Genesis]. Rather, He alluded to them only generally, just as He had said there, All the souls of the house of Jacob, that came into Egypt, were threescore and ten.

....

Rashi wrote: "Although Scripture had already enumerated them whilst they were living, it again enumerates them by name, following their death, in order to show how they were beloved by G-d. They are compared to the stars which G-d also brings out by number and brings in by number, as it is said, He bringeth out their host by number, He calleth them all by name." These are words of homiletic exposition, and insofar as they indicate the love of G-d for the tribes — how the Holy One, blessed be He, loves them and repeats their names always — they are words of truth. But the matters of the connection of the verses and how they are joined by the vav — [v'eileh shemoth — ('And' these are the names of...)] — is as I have explained.

If the 'vav' is to connect the stories from the book of Exodus to the stories of the book of Genesis, what stories are we connecting?

- **Are we focusing on just these characters and their relationship to one another?**

Why are the Israelites in Egypt?

- **Famine?**
- **Opportunity?**
- **Rabbi Charlotte Marcus: Because they sold their brother, Joseph into slavery!!!)**

What was that Amos verse about?

עמוס ו"ז:

לְכֵן עֲתִידָהּ יִגְלוּ בְּרָאשׁ גְּלִים וְסָר מִרְיָח סְרוּחִים:

Amos 6:7

Assuredly, right soon

*They shall head the column of exiles;
They shall loll no more at festive meals.*

Remember to look around (Meaning: Rabbinic tests will often quote fragments of scripture with the assumption that you know, by heart, the verses that come before and after it. It is the rabbinic way of winking at you. So look around the verse quotes for context and greater understanding:

עמוס ו'ג-ו'

(ג) הַמְנִידִים לַיּוֹם רָע וְתִגְשׁוֹן שָׁבֶת חֶמֶס: (ד) הַשֹּׁכְבִּים עַל־מִטּוֹת שֵׁן וְסִרְחִים עַל־עֲרֻשׁוֹתָם וְאַכְלִים כָּרִים מִצֹּאן וְעֹגְלִים מִתּוֹךְ מִרְבֵּק: (ה) הַפִּרְטִים עַל־פִּי הַנֶּבֶל כְּדֹאִיד חֹשְׁבוֹ לָהֶם כְּלִי־שִׁיר: (ו) הַשֹּׁתִים בְּמִזְרְקֵי זֵין וְרֹאשֵׁית שְׁמָנִים יִמְשְׁחוּ וְלֹא נָחֲלוּ עַל־שִׁבְרֵי יוֹסֵף:

Amos 6:3-6

(3) Yet you ward off [the thought of] a day of woe

And convene a session of lawlessness. (4) They lie on ivory beds,

Lolling on their couches,

Feasting on lambs from the flock

And on calves from the stalls. (5) They hum snatches of song

To the tune of the lute—

They account themselves musicians like David. (6) They drink [straight] from the wine bowls

And anoint themselves with the choicest oils—

But they are not concerned about the ruin of Joseph.

From this week's Haftara....

ישעיהו כ"ז:ז-ט'

(ז) הַכִּמְכֶּת מִכֶּהוּ הַכֶּהוּ אִם־כֶּהָרֵג הִרְגִּיו הָרֵג: (ח) בְּסִסְאָהּ בְּשִׁלְחָהּ תִּרְיֶבְנָה הָגָה בְּרוּחוֹ הַקֹּשֶׁה בַּיּוֹם קָדִים: (ט) לָכֵן בּוֹאֵת יִכְפֹּר עוֹן־יַעֲקֹב וְזֶה כָּל־פְּרִי הַסֵּר חֲטָאתוֹ בְּשׁוּמוֹ / כָּל־אַבְנֵי מִזְבִּיחַ כְּאַבְנֵי־גֹר מִנְפָצוֹת לֹא־יִקְמוּ אֲשֶׁרִים וְחֲמָנִים:

Isaiah 27:7-9

(7) Was he beaten as his beater has been?

*Did he suffer such slaughter as his slayers? (8) Assailing them with fury
unchained,
His pitiless blast bore them off
On a day of gale. (9) Assuredly, by this alone
Shall Jacob's sin be purged away;
This is the only price
For removing his guilt:
That he make all the altar-stones
Like shattered blocks of chalk—
With no sacred post left standing,
Nor any incense altar.*

שמות א' ח'

וַיָּקָם מֶלֶךְ-חֹדֶשׁ עַל-מִצְרָיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדָע אֶת-יוֹסֵף:

Exodus 1:8

A new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph.

What did this King NOT know about Joseph?

- That Joseph was an Israelite?
- All the amazing things that Joseph did for Egypt and, therefore, Egyptian leadership should show more gratitude?
- What the brothers did to Joseph and therefore the harshness of the king was actually divine retribution for what the brothers did to Joseph. But when the king doesn't 'know' this, his actions aren't divine retribution but instead, just cruelty.

*But doesn't it say that God doesn't punish the children for the sins of the father?
Isn't God all forgiving? Don't we have liturgy that we chant on holidays and over
Yom Kippur?*

שמות ל"ד: וי'

(ו) וַיַּעֲבֹר יְהוָה עַל-פָּנָיו וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה יְהוָה אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אֲרוּךְ אַפַּיִם

וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְאֶמֶת: (ז) נֹצַר חֶסֶד לְאֲלֹפִים נִשָּׂא עֹן וּפָשַׁע וְחַטָּאָה וְנִקָּה

לֹא יִנָּקֶה פֶקֶד | עֹן אֲבוֹת עַל־בָּנִים וְעַל־בָּנֵי בָנִים עַל־שְׁלֹשִׁים וְעַל־רִבְעִים:

Exodus 34:6-7

(6) יהוה passed before him and proclaimed: “יהוה! יהוה! a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and faithfulness, (7) extending kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin—

yet not remitting all punishment, but visiting the iniquity of parents upon children and children’s children, upon the third and fourth generations.”

The Israelites were enslaved for several generations and God paid no heed. But then, for whatever reason, God notices their suffering at this point when the punishment turns into cruelty.