

Enslavement in Egypt: Happenstance or Retribution

Parshat Shemot

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שמות א:א-ה'

(א) **וְאֶלְהָ** שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים מִצְרַיִם אֶת יַעֲקֹב אִישׁ וּבִתּוֹ בָּאָוֹ: (ב) רָאוּבֵן שְׁמַעֲוֹן לְוִי וִיהוּדָה: (ג) יִשְׁשָׁכֵר זְבּוּלֹן
וּבְנֵיָם: (ד) כֵּן וּנְפְתַלִּי גָּד וּאַשְׁר: (ה) וְיֵהִי כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ יִצְאֵי יְרֵךְ-יַעֲקֹב שְׁבָעִים נֶפֶשׁ וַיּוֹסֵף הַיְהָ בִּמְצָרִים:

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'
ואלה שמות בני ישראל. ע"פ שמנאנו בח"ם בשמות, חזר ומנאים בmittah, להודיע חכמתם, שנמשלו לכוכבים, שמוסיאם
ומכניםם במספר ובשמותם (שמות ר'ה), פ"ג, "המושיא במספר צבאים לכולם בשם יקרא" (ישעיהו מ):

Rashi on Exodus 1:1

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) **וְאֶלְהָ** שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים מִצְרַיִם יַעֲקֹב וּבְנָיו בֶּןְיַעֲקֹב רָאוּבֵן: (ט) וּבְנֵי רָאוּבֵן חָנָק וּפְלֹא וְחַצְׂנוֹ וְכְרָמִי:
(י) וּבְנֵי שְׁמַעֲוֹן יְמֹאֵל וַיְמִין וְאֶחָד וְיִכְּנָן וְצָהָר וְשָׁאָול בְּנֵי כְּנָעָנִית: (יא) וּבְנֵי לְוִי גְּרָשְׁוֹן קָהָת וְמְרָרִי: (יב) וּבְנֵי יְהוּדָה עַר וְאוֹנוֹ
וְשָׁלָח וְפָרָץ וְזָהָה וְיָמָת עַר וְאוֹנוֹ בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעָן וְיָהִינִּי בְּנֵי פְּרִזְׁץ חָצְרוֹן וְחַמּוֹלֶל: (יג) וּבְנֵי יִשְׁשָׁכֵר תּוֹלָע וְפָעוֹה וְיַזְׁבָּה וְשְׁמֹןָ: (יד) וּבְנֵי זְבּוּלֹן
סָרְד וְאַלְוָן וְיִחְלָאֵל: (טו) אלה בְּנֵי לאֹה אָשָׁר יָלַה דִּינָה בְּתָתוֹ כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ בְּנָיו וּבְנָטוֹתָיו שְׁלָשִׁים וְשְׁלָשָׁה: (טז)
וּבְנֵי גָּד צְפִינָה וְחַגִּי שְׁוֹנִי וְאַצְּבָן עָרִי וְאַרְוֹן וְאַרְאָלִי: (יז) וּבְנֵי אָשָׁר יְמָנָה וַיְשָׁהָה וַיְשָׁנֵה וְבְרִיאָה וְשָׁרָח אֲחָתָם וּבְנֵי בְּרִיאָה חָבֵר
וּמְלֵיכָאֵל: (יח) אלה בְּנֵי זְלָפָה אֲשֶׁר נִתְּנָה לְבָנָו לְאָהָב בְּתָתוֹ וְתָלָד אֶת-אָהָב לְעַלְבָב שָׁשׁ עֲשָׂרָה נֶפֶשׁ: (יט) בְּנֵי רָחֵל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲלֵב יוֹסֵף
וּבְנֵי: (כ) וַיּוֹלֶד יוֹסֵף בָּאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יָלַד הָלֹו אֶסְתָּה בְּתִ-פְּזָטִי פָּרָעָה כְּהוּ אָנָה-מְנִשָּׁה וְאָתָ-אֶפְרַיִם: (כא) וּבְנֵי בְּנִימָן בְּלֻע
וּבְכָר וְאַשְׁבֵל גָּרָא וְנוּמָן אֲחִי וְרָאשָׁ מִפְּרִים וְחַפְּרִים וְאֶרֶד: (כב) אלה בְּנֵי רָחֵל אֲשֶׁר יָלַד לְעַלְבָב כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ אֶרְבָּעָה עֲשָׂר: (כג) וּבְנֵי-יְהָ
חָשִׁים: (כד) וּבְנֵי נְפְתַלִּי יְחִצְׁאָל וְנוּנִי וַיְצָר וְשָׁלָם: (כה) אלה בְּנֵי בְּלַהָה אֲשֶׁר-נִתְּנָה לְבָנָו לְרָחֵל בְּתָתוֹ וְתָלָד אֶת-אָהָב לְעַלְבָב כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ
שְׁבָעָה: (כו) כָּל-הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַבָּאָה לְעַלְבָב מִצְרַיִם יִצְאֵי יְרֵךְ מִלְבָד נְשִׁי בְּנֵי-יַעֲקֹב כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ שְׁשִׁים וְשָׁשָׁה: (כו) וּבְנֵי יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר-יָלְדוּ
בְּמִצְרַיִם נֶפֶשׁ שְׁנִים כָּל-הַנֶּפֶשׁ לְבִית-יַעֲקֹב הַבָּאָה מִצְרַיִם שְׁבָעָה:

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 Arel. (17) **Asher's sons:** Iimnah, 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-phera 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 ואלה שמות כי הבהיר ירצה למנות עניין הנולות מעת רדתם למצרים, כי אז בְּלֹא בְּרָאשׁ גּוֹלִים, וכך שפרשתי, ולפיכך יזכיר אל תחלת העניין שהוא מפסיקו "וְכָל זָרָעָו הַבָּיָא אַתָּה מִצְרִימָה" (בראשית מו ז), ושם כתוב אחרינו "ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה" ונו', ואותו הפסיקו בעצמו הוא שיחזר בכאן, כי אף על פי שהם שני ספרים, הספר מחבר בדברים באים זה אחר זה, וכאשך הזכיר בני יעקב קוצר בבני בניו וכל זרעו, והחזר הכלל כאשר אמר שם (שם מ"ו כ"ז) כִּל הַנִּפְשָׁת לְבַית יַעֲקֹב הַבָּא מִצְרִימָה שְׁבָעִים.....

ויש"י כתוב (רש"י על שמות א' א') אע"פ שָׁמָנוֹן בְּחִיָּהֶם חֹזֶר וּמְנָאָן אַחֲרֵי מִתְחַנֵּן בְּשָׁמוֹתָם לְהַזְדִּיעַ חַבְתָּם שנמשלו כפוכבים שְׁמוֹצִיאָן בְּמִסְפֵּר וּמְכַנִּיסָּן בְּמִסְפֵּר, שנאמר המוציא במספר עצם לכלם בשם קרא (ישעה מ כו). ואלו דברי אנדרה (שםו"ר א' ג), והם דברים של אמרת עניין החיבור שהקב"ה מחייב וכופל שָׁמוֹתָם תְּדִיר, אֲבָל קַשּׁוֹר הַפְּסּוּקִים וְחַבּוּרָם בְּנָא"ו הוא כמו שפרשתי:

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 shemot — ('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'
לֹכַן עַתָּה יִגְלֹו בְּרַאשׁ גָּלִים וְסָרְמָנִים 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) הַמְנַהִים לִזְמָרָע וְתַגְשִׁזְׁוֹן שְׁבַת חֶםֶס: (ד) הַשְׁכְּבִים עַל-מְטוֹת שֵׁן וְסְרִיחִים עַל-עֲרָשׂוֹתָם וְאֲכָלִים כְּרִים מְצָאן וְעַנְלִים מִתְזָקָרְבָּק: (ה) הַפְּרַטִּים עַל-פִּי הַנְּבֵל כְּذַיְד חַשְׁבָּנו לְהָם כְּלִילִ-שִׁיר: (ו) הַשְׁתִּים בְּמַזְרָקִי יֵין וְרָאשֵׁית שְׁמָנִים יִמְשַׁחַו וְלֹא נְחַלְוּ עַל-שְׁבָר 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) הַכְּמַכְתָּה מִכְהֹו הַכְּהֹו אַמְּכְהֹרְג הַרְגְּיו הַרְגְּנו: (ח) בְּסַאֲסָאָה בְּשַׁלְחָה תְּרִיבָנָה הַגָּה בְּרוֹחָה הַקְּשָׁה בְּיַזְמָקְדִּים: (ט) לְכָן בְּזֹאת יְכָפֵר עַזְזִיְעָלָב וְזֹה כְּלִיפְרִי הַסְּרִ חַטְאָתָנו בְּשָׁוְמָנו> thinsp> כְּלִאָבָנִי מִזְבֵּח כְּאַבְנִי-גָּר מִנְפְּצָזָה לְאַיְקָמו אַשְׁרִים וְחַמְנִים:

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-חַדֵּשׁ עַל-מִצְרָיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִדְעַ אֶת-יְוָהָה:

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':ו-ז'

(ו) וַיַּעֲבֵר יְהוָה עַל-פָּנָיו וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים וְחַנּוּ אֶרְךָ אַפִּים

וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְאֶמֶת: (ז) נָצַר חֶסֶד לְאֶלְפִים נְשָׁא עֹז וּפְשֻׁעַ וְחַטָּאת
וְנִקְהָ'

לֹא יִנְקַה פְּקָדָו עֹז אֲבֹת עַל־בָּנִים וּעַל־בָּנִי בָּנִים עַל־שְׁלֹשִׁים וּעַל־רְבָעִים:

Exodus 34:6-7

(6) passed before him and proclaimed: "Yahweh! Yahweh! 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.