

MIDRASH RABBAH

SHEMOT (EXODUS RABBAH)

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Full translation and explanatory summary accessible to all



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MIDRASH EXODUS RABBAH - PARASHA SHEMOT

Chapter 1

1. The Vital Role of Discipline

The text opens by connecting the listing of Jacob's sons to the proverb regarding the rod and discipline. It argues that withholding discipline leads to ruin and hatred, citing the failures of Abraham with Ishmael, Isaac with Esau, and David with his sons Absalom and Adonijah. Conversely, it praises the discipline applied to Isaac and Jacob, which led to their righteousness. This concept is extended to God's relationship with Israel, asserting that God chastises Israel specifically because He loves them, granting them the Torah, the Land, and the World to Come through suffering.

"And these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob; each man and his household came" (Exodus 1:1). This relates to the verse: "He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him early" (Proverbs 13:24).

Ordinarily, in the ways of the world, if a man is told by his friend, *"So-and-so struck your son,"* he would pursue that person to the point of risking his life. What then does *"He who spares his rod hates his son"* come to teach us? To teach you that anyone who withholds discipline from his son will eventually see him fall into evil ways and will come to hate him.

Thus we find with **Ishmael**, for whom his father **Abraham** felt great affection. Because he did not rebuke him, **Ishmael** fell into evil ways; **Abraham** eventually hated him and sent him away from his house empty-handed. What did **Ishmael** do? When he was fifteen years old, he began bringing idols from the marketplace, playing with them and worshipping them, just as he had seen others do. Immediately: *"Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking (metzahek)" (Genesis 21:9).* Now, *"mocking"* refers to nothing other than **idolatry**, as it is said: *"And they rose up to play (letzahek)" (Exodus 32:6, regarding the Golden Calf).*

Immediately: *"She said to Abraham: Cast out this bondwoman and her son... lest my son learn his ways."* Immediately: *"And the matter was very grievous in Abraham's sight... because he had gone into evil ways."* **God** said to **Abraham**: *"Let it not be grievous in your sight...";* from here you learn that **Abraham** was secondary to **Sarah** in **prophecy**.

Immediately: *"And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water..."*, to teach you that he now hated **Ishmael** because he had turned to evil, and he sent him and his mother **Hagar** away empty-handed, driving him from his house for that reason.

For would it enter your mind that **Abraham**, of whom it is written: *"Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold,"* would send away his wife and son without clothing or sustenance? Rather, it is to teach you that once he turned to evil ways,

Abraham no longer cared for him. What was his end? After being driven out, he sat at the crossroads and became a highwayman who robbed people, as it is said: *"And he shall be a wild ass of a man"* (Genesis 16:12).

Similarly, *"Isaac loved Esau"* (Genesis 25:28). Therefore, **Esau** fell into evil ways because his father did not rebuke him. As we have learned, **Esau** the wicked committed five transgressions on that day: he violated a betrothed maiden, committed murder, denied the **resurrection of the dead**, denied the **Fundamental Principle (God)**, and despised the birthright. Furthermore, he craved his father's death and sought to kill his brother, as it is said: *"Let the days of mourning for my father be at hand..."*. He caused **Jacob** to flee from his parents, and he himself went to **Ishmael** to learn evil ways from him and to add to his wives, as it is said: *"And Esau went unto Ishmael."*

Likewise with **David**, who did not chastise his son **Absalom** nor rebuke him; he fell into evil ways and sought to kill his father, lay with his concubines, and caused him to flee barefoot and weeping. Because of him, many thousands and tens of thousands fell from **Israel**, and he caused **David** many endless hardships, as it is written: *"A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son."* And what is written afterward? *"O Lord, how many are my adversaries!"* For evil ways within a man's own household are harder to bear than anything.

...from the war of **Gog and Magog**. For regarding the war of **Gog and Magog** it is written: *"Why do the nations rage?"* (Psalms 2:1), and further it is written: *"O Lord, how many are my foes"* (Psalms 3:2).

Similarly, **David** acted with **Adonijah** by not rebuking him with discipline or chastising him; therefore, he turned to evil ways (lit. *"went out to an evil culture"*), as it is written: *"His father had never saddened him in all his days"* (I Kings 1:6), and it is written: *"And he was born after Absalom"* (I Kings 1:6).

But was not **Absalom** the son of **Maacah** and **Adonijah** the son of **Haggith**? What then is the meaning of *"he was born after Absalom"*? Rather, because he turned to evil ways and his father did not discipline him and it is written of **Adonijah** that his father never saddened him he too turned to evil ways [like **Absalom**]; therefore, it is written: *"he was born after Absalom."*

2 Divine love revealed through trial and rigor

The Midrash reverses the usual perspective by asserting that divine punishments and the trials imposed on the Patriarchs are the true marks of exclusive love and the election of Israel.

"And he who loves him seeks him with discipline" (Proverbs 13:24): This refers to the **Holy One, Blessed be He**, who, because He loved **Israel** as it is written: *"I have loved you, says the Lord"* (Malachi 1:2) multiplies their suffering. You find that the **Holy One**,

Blessed be He, gave three good gifts to **Israel**, and He gave none of them except through suffering: the **Torah**, the **Land of Israel**, and the life of the **World to Come**.

The **Torah**, as it is written: "*Happy is the man whom You discipline, O Lord, and whom You teach from Your Torah*" (Psalms 94:12). The **Land of Israel**, as it is written: "*And you shall know in your heart [that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you]*" (Deuteronomy 8:5), and what is written after it? "*For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land*" (Deuteronomy 8:7).

The **World to Come**, as it is written: "*For the commandment is a lamp and the Torah is light... [and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life]*" (Proverbs 6:23).

Whoever disciplines his son causes the son to increase his love for his father and to honor him, as it is said: "*Discipline your son, and he will give you rest*" (Proverbs 29:17), and it says: "*Discipline your son while there is hope*" (Proverbs 19:18). This increases love for him, as it is said: "*And he who loves him seeks him with discipline*"; because he seeks him with discipline, therefore he loves him.

You find that **Abraham** disciplined his son **Isaac** and taught him **Torah** and guided him in his ways, as it is written of **Abraham**: "*Because Abraham obeyed My voice*" (Genesis 26:5). And it is written: "*These are the generations of Isaac, son of Abraham*" (Genesis 25:19), to teach you that he was like his father in every way: in beauty, wisdom, wealth, and good deeds.

Know that he was thirty-seven years old when his father bound him on the altar; and although it is written: "*Abraham was old, advanced in years*" (Genesis 24:1), he bound him and tied him like a lamb, and **Isaac** did not refuse.

Therefore: "*Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac*" (Genesis 25:5); this is the meaning of: "*and he who loves him seeks him with discipline.*"

Similarly, **Isaac** sought discipline for **Jacob**, for **Isaac** taught him **Torah** and disciplined him in his house of study, as it is said: "*Jacob was a plain man [dwelling in tents]*" (Genesis 25:27), and he learned what his father taught him. Afterward, he departed from his father and hid in the **House of Eber** to study **Torah**.

Therefore, he merited blessing and inherited the land, as it is said: "*And Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan*" (Genesis 37:1).

And **Jacob** our father also disciplined his sons and rebuked them and taught them his ways, so that there was no dross in them. Thus it is written: "*And these are the names of the sons of Israel who come to Egypt*"; Scripture equates them all to **Jacob**, for they were all righteous as he was. This is: "*and he who loves him seeks him with discipline.*"

3. The descent into Egypt: a continuity in righteousness

The grammatical analysis of the coordinating conjunction emphasizes that the sons of Jacob entered Egypt with the same spiritual integrity and the same righteousness as those of their father.

Another explanation: "And these are the names." **Rabbi Abbahu** said: Wherever it says "These" (**Eleh**), it disqualifies that which came before; but "And these" (**Ve-eleh**) adds praise to the former.

"These are the generations of the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 2:4) disqualified the **Tohu** and **Bohu**. "And these are the names" adds praise to the seventy souls mentioned above, for they were all righteous.

"And these are the names of the children of Israel who come to Egypt with Jacob... every man and his household came." **Israel** is weighed as equal to the host of heaven. Here it says "names," and regarding the stars it says "names," as it is said: "He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by names" (Psalms 147:4). So too, when **Israel** went down to Egypt, the **Holy One, Blessed be He**, counted their number, and because they are compared to stars, He called them all by names. This is what is written: "And these are the names of the children of Israel..."

"Who come (**Haba'im**) to Egypt": Does it mean they are coming today? Had they not already been in Egypt for many days? Rather, as long as **Joseph** was alive, they did not feel the burden of the Egyptians; when **Joseph** died, they placed the burden upon them.

Therefore, it is written "who come," as if they entered Egypt on that very day. "With Jacob": all these were through the power of **Jacob**, who gathered commandments and good deeds, and merited to establish twelve tribes. "Every man and his household came."

4. Prophetic Symbolism of the Tribes' Names

The commentary analyzes the specific names of the tribes, interpreting them not just as identifiers but as prophetic allusions to Israel's future redemption and relationship with God (e.g., Reuben seeing affliction, Simeon hearing prayers). It also addresses the non-chronological listing of the tribes, explaining that this creates equality between the sons of the wives and the handmaids, positioning them all as the structural "ceiling of the world."

"And these are the names of the children of Israel": they are mentioned here for the sake of the redemption of **Israel**.

REUBEN: as it is said: "I have surely seen (**Raoh raïti**) the affliction of My people" (Exodus 3:7).

SIMEON: on account of: "And God heard (**Vayichma**) their groaning" (Exodus 2:24).

LEVI: because the **Holy One, Blessed be He**, joined Himself (**Nit-haber**) to their trouble: "from the midst of the bush" (Exodus 3:2), to fulfill what is said: "I will be with him in trouble" (Psalms 91:15).

JUDAH: because they gave thanks (**Hodou**) to the **Holy One, Blessed be He**.

ISSACHAR: because the **Holy One, Blessed be He**, gave them the reward (**Sekhar**) for their servitude: the spoil of Egypt and the spoil of the sea, to fulfill what is said: "*and afterward they shall come out with great substance*" (Genesis 15:14).

ZEBULUN: because the **Holy One, Blessed be He**, caused His Presence (**Shekhinah**) to dwell in their midst, as it is said: "*And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them*" (Exodus 25:8); and "**Zebulun**" refers to the **Temple**, as it is said: "*I have surely built a house of habitation (**Zebul**) for You*" (1 Kings 8:13).

BENJAMIN: on account of: "*Your right hand (**Yeminekha**), O Lord, is glorious in power*" (Exodus 15:6). **DAN:** on account of: "*And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge (**Dan anokhi**)*" (Genesis 15:14).

NAPHTALI: on account of the **Torah** and commandments which the **Holy One, Blessed be He**, gave them, of which it is written: "*Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb (**Nofet tzufim**)*" (Psalms 19:11).

GAD: on account of the manna that the **Holy One, Blessed be He**, fed them, which was "*like coriander seed (**Gad**)*" (Exodus 16:31).

ASHER: because all who heard of their redemption and greatness praised them (**Me-achrin**), as it is written: "*And all nations shall call you happy (**Ichrou**), for you shall be a delightful land*" (Malachi 3:12).

JOSEPH: because the **Holy One, Blessed be He**, will in the future again (**Yosif**) redeem **Israel** from the wicked kingdom just as He redeemed them from Egypt, as it is written: "*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set His hand again (**Yosif**) the second time...*" (Isaiah 11:11).

5 Joseph's Humility and the Equality of the Tribes

The text highlights the absence of hierarchy between the sons of the wives and those of the maidservants, as well as the unalterable humility of Joseph who, despite his royalty, never dominated his brothers.

This is what **Rabbi Joshua of Sikhnin** said in the name of **Rabbi Levi**: Why are the names of the tribes not listed in the same order in every place? Rather, sometimes this one precedes that one, and sometimes that one precedes this one. This is so that people should not say that the sons of the mistresses (**Leah** and **Rachel**) come first and the sons of the handmaids (**Bilhah** and **Zilpah**) come last; to teach you that these were not greater than those.

Another explanation: Why did He put these before those? Because they are the "*ceiling of the world.*" One who fixes a ceiling properly places the thickness of one beam next to the head of another that is not equal, therefore He alternates their order.

And from where do we know they are the ceiling of the world? As the prophet **Isaiah** says: "*Listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel, my called one*" (Isaiah 48:12).

*"And all the souls that came out of the loins of **Jacob**... with **Joseph** who was in Egypt, were seventy."* Another explanation: *"And **Joseph** was in Egypt"* : although **Joseph** attained kingship, he did not become haughty toward his brothers or his father's house. Just as he was small in his own eyes at the beginning when he was a slave in Egypt, so he remained small in his own eyes after he became king.

6. The Death of Joseph and Miraculous Growth

Following the death of Joseph who remained humble despite his power and his entire generation, the text describes the supernatural fertility of the Israelites. The women gave birth to multiple children at once (counts ranging from six to twelve), causing the population to "swarm" and fill the land, which triggered Egyptian anxiety.

*"And **Joseph** died, and all his brothers, and all that generation."* This teaches you that as long as one of those who went down to Egypt remained alive, the Egyptians did not enslave **Israel**.

*"And the children of Israel were fruitful and swarmed" , although **Joseph** and his brothers died, their God did not die; rather, "the children of Israel were fruitful and swarmed."*

Another explanation: Each woman gave birth to six at one birth, as it is said: *"And the children of Israel were fruitful (1), and swarmed (2), and multiplied (3), and became mighty (4), in very (5) much (6)."* Some say twelve, as it is written: fruitful (2), swarmed (2), multiplied (2), became mighty (2), in very much (2), and the land was filled with them (2), making twelve. *"And they became mighty"*: some say six at one birth. And do not be surprised, for the scorpion, which is among the swarming things, gives birth to seventy. **Rabbi Nathan** says: *"And the land was filled with them"* like thickets of reeds.

7. The New King's Counsel and Betrayal

A "new" king arises (interpreted as either a literal new ruler or one with renewed, harsher decrees) who chooses to ignore Joseph's past contributions. Fearing Israel's numbers, he consults with Balaam, Job, and Jethro. They plot to subjugate the Israelites, specifically choosing water as the means of destruction to avoid the divine retribution associated with the sword, though this plan ultimately leads to their own drowning.

"Now there arose a new king": when the Egyptians saw this, they renewed decrees against them; this is what is written: *"And there arose a new king."* **Rav** and **Shmuel** disagree: one says it was literally a new king, and the other says his decrees were renewed, meaning he innovated decrees and punishments against them.

The reason for the one who says *"literally a new king"* is because it is written *"new."* The reason for the one who says *"he renewed his decrees"* is because it is not

written *"he died and another reigned."* *"Who knew not Joseph"*: according to the one who says it was a new king, it is understandable; according to the one who says he renewed his decrees, how does he interpret this? It means he acted as though he did not know **Joseph** at all.

The Rabbis say: Why is he called a *"new king"* if he was **Pharaoh** himself? Because the Egyptians said to **Pharaoh**: *"Come, let us plot against this nation."*

He said to them: *"You are fools! Until now we have been eating from what is theirs (due to **Joseph**), so how can we plot against them? Were it not for **Joseph**, we would not be alive."* When he would not listen to them, they removed him from his throne for three months, until he said to them: *"Whatever you desire, I am with you,"* and they restored him. Therefore, it is written: *"And there arose a new king."*

The Rabbis opened the discussion of this verse with the passage (*Hosea 5:7*): *"They have betrayed the Lord, for they have begotten foreign children; now a month (Hodesh) shall devour them along with their portions."*

" This teaches you that when **Joseph** died, they abolished the covenant of circumcision, saying: *"Let us be like the Egyptians."* From here you learn that **Moses** circumcised them upon their departure from Egypt. And because they did this, the **Holy One, blessed be He**, turned the love the Egyptians had for them into hatred, as it is said (*Psalms 105:25*): *"He turned their heart to hate His people, to plot against His servants,"* to fulfill what is said: *"Now a month shall devour them."*

"A new king": who arose and renewed his decrees against them. *"Who knew not Joseph"*: Could it be that he did not know **Joseph**? **Rabbi Abin** said: It is like a parable of one who stoned the king's friend. The king said: *"Behead him, for tomorrow he will do the same to me."*

Therefore the Scripture wrote of him: today he *"did not know **Joseph**,"* and tomorrow he is destined to say: *"I do not know the Lord"* (*Exodus 5:2*).

8. The Nature of the Egyptian Oppression

The oppression is described as calculated and psychological. Pharaoh himself participated in labor to force the Israelites' compliance through shame. The servitude included impossible tasks, such as switching gender roles in labor, and forcing them to build on unstable ground. However, despite these efforts to diminish them, God ensured that the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied.

"And he said to his people": he was the first to give counsel, therefore he was the first to be smitten. He was the first to counsel, as it is written: *"And he said to his people,"* and he was smitten first, as it is written (*Exodus 7:29*): *"And upon you, and upon your people, and upon all your servants [shall the frogs come up]."* *"Come, let us deal wisely with him (lo)"*: it does not say *"with them"* but *"with him."*

Rabbi Hama son of Rabbi Hanina said: He said, "*Come and let us deal wisely with their God. If we judge them by the sword, it is already written: 'For by His sword the Lord will judge all flesh' (Isaiah 66:16) Let us judge them only with water, for so the Holy One, blessed be He, swore that He would not bring a flood upon the world, as it is said (Isaiah 54:9): 'As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth.'*"

But they did not know that He would not bring a flood upon the entire world, but upon one nation He would; and upon them He would not bring it, but they would come and fall into it, as it is said:

"They shall be poured out by the sword; they shall be a portion for foxes" (Psalms 63:11). "For in the thing wherein they dealt proudly (zadu)..." (Exodus 18:11): in the pot they cooked, they themselves were cooked.

Rabbi Hiyya said in the name of **Rabbi Simon**: Three were in that counsel: **Balaam, Job, and Jethro**. **Balaam** who advised was killed. **Job** who was silent was judged with suffering. **Jethro** who fled his descendants merited to sit in the Chamber of Hewn Stone (the **Sanhedrin**).

"And get him up out of the land": it does not say "*and we shall go up*" but "*and he shall go up.*" **Rabbi Abba bar Kahana** said: It is like a man who curses himself but hangs his curse on others.

Another explanation: "*And get him up out of the land*" whenever Israel is at the lowest descent, they rise.

David said: "*For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly cleaves to the earth*" (Psalms 44:26). At that moment: "*Arise for our help, and redeem us for Your mercy's sake*" (44:27).

9. The machinery of enslavement: from trickery to torture

Description of the gradual implementation of slavery, beginning with the lure of paid work and ending in cruelty intended to break the people physically and morally.

"And they set over him": it does not say "*over them*" but "*over him.*" The **School of Rabbi Eleazar son of Rabbi Simeon** taught: this teaches that they brought a brick-mold and hung it around **Pharaoh's** neck. If any Israelite said to them, "*I am delicate,*" they would say to him: "*Are you more delicate than Pharaoh?*" "

Taskmasters (sarei missim): something that imposes (massim) bricks. "*To afflict him with their burdens*": to afflict **Pharaoh** with the burdens of Israel. "*And he built store cities (miskenot) for Pharaoh*":

Rav and **Shmuel** disagree. One says they endanger (mesakenot) their owners. The other says they impoverish (memaskenot) their builders, for anyone who engages in building becomes impoverished.

The **Rabbis** say: treasure houses. "*Pithom and Raamses*": one says its name was Pithom, and why was it called Raamses? Because one by one they would crumble (mitrosses).

The other says Raamses was its name, and why Pithom? Because one by one the mouth of the deep (pi tehom) swallowed them.

"But the more they afflicted him, the more he would multiply and the more he would spread out." It does not say "*they multiplied*" but "*he will multiply*" (future tense): **Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish** said: The **Holy Spirit** brought them tidings that thus they would multiply.

"And they were grieved (vayakoutzou) because of the children of Israel": this teaches that Israel were in their eyes like thorns (kotzim).

"And the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor (befarekh)": **Rabbi Eleazar** said: "*with a soft mouth*" (be-fe-rakh) [by persuasion]. **Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahman** said: with crushing. And they did so to every Israelite: whatever work they did on the first day was set as a decree to do the same amount every single day.

"And they embittered their lives...": at first with mortar and bricks, then with all manner of service in the field, and finally with "*all their service.*"

Rabbi Jonathan said: this teaches that they would exchange the work of men for women and the work of women for men.

Pharaoh issued four decrees against them. At first, he commanded the taskmasters to pressure them so they would complete their quota and not sleep in their homes, thinking to diminish them from procreation.

The taskmasters said to them: "*If you go to sleep in your houses, by the time we send for you in the morning, the day will have advanced and you will not complete your quota.*" So they would sleep on the ground.

God said to them: "*I said to their father Abraham that I would multiply his children like the stars, and you plot so they will not multiply? Let us see whose word stands, mine or yours!*" Immediately: "*the more they afflicted him, the more he multiplied.*"

10. Righteous Women and the Midwives

The survival and redemption of Israel are attributed to the righteous women who maintained family life and seduced their husbands to ensure procreation despite the slavery. They gave birth miraculously in fields, protected by God. The text also identifies the midwives Shiphrah and Puah as Jochebed and Miriam, praising them for defying Pharaoh, preserving the lives of the infants, and standing up for their people.

Rabbi Akiva expounded: In the merit of the **righteous women** who were in that generation, **Israel** was redeemed from Egypt.

What did they do? When they went to draw water, the **Holy One, blessed be He**, prepared small fish in their pitchers. They would draw half water and half fish, and bring them to their husbands and cook for them two pots, one of hot water and one of fish. They would feed them, wash them, anoint them, give them drink, and consort with them between the sheepfolds. In reward for lying between the sheepfolds, **Israel** merited the spoil of Egypt.

And when they became pregnant, they would come to their houses, and when the time of birth arrived, they would go and give birth in the field under the apple tree.

The **Holy One, blessed be He**, would send an angel from the high heavens to clean them and beautify them. And He would provide for them two round stones, one of oil and one of honey.

When the Egyptians noticed them and wanted to kill them, a miracle was performed for them and they were swallowed into the ground. The Egyptians would bring oxen and plow over them, but after they left, the children would sprout and come up like the grass of the field. When they grew up, they came in great flocks to their homes. And when the **Holy One, blessed be He**, revealed Himself at the Sea, they recognized Him first, as it is said: *"This is my God, and I will glorify Him"* (Exodus 15:2).

When he saw that they were appearing and multiplying, he decreed against the males; as it is written (Exodus 1:15): *"And the king of Egypt spoke to the midwives, etc."* Who were these midwives?

Rav said: A daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law, **Jochebed** and **Elisheba daughter of Amminadab**. **Rabbi Samuel bar Nachman** said: A woman and her daughter, **Jochebed** and **Miriam**. **Miriam** was only five years old then, for **Aaron** was three years older than **Moses**.

Our Sages of blessed memory said: She used to go with **Jochebed** her mother and attend to her needs, and she was diligent, for even while a child is small, he is recognizable. This is what **Solomon** said (Proverbs 20:11): *"Even by his deeds a lad is known, etc."*

*"The name of one was **Shiphrah**"*: because she would beautify (**meshaperet**) the newborn when he emerged covered in blood. *"**Puah**"*: because she would sputter (**nofaat**) wine into the infant after its mother.

Another interpretation: *"**Shiphrah**"*, because **Israel** fructified (**paru**) and multiplied because of her. *"**Puah**"*, because she would revive (**maphia**) the infant when people thought it was dead.

Another interpretation: *"**Shiphrah**"*, because she improved (**shiprah**) her deeds before **God**.

Another interpretation: *"**Puah**"*, because she appeared (**hofiah**) for **Israel** before **God**.

Another interpretation: *"**Puah**"*, because she stood up (**hofiah panim**) against **Pharaoh**; she stuck up her nose at him and said to him: *"Woe to that man when **God** comes to exact punishment from him!"* He was filled with fury against her to kill her. *"**Shiphrah**"*, because she would smooth over (**meshaperet**) her daughter's words and

appease him for her sake. She said to him: *"Do you pay attention to her? She is but a child and knows nothing."*

Rabbi Hanina bar Rav Isaac said: *"Shiphrah,"* because she established Israel for God, for whose sake the heavens were created, as it is written (*Job 26:13*): *"By His breath the heavens are bright (shifrah)."* *"Puah,"* because she stood up against her father, for **Amram** was the head of the **Sanhedrin** at that hour.

When Pharaoh decreed and said: *"Every son that is born..."*, **Amram** said: *"Is it for naught that Israel begets children?"* Immediately, he sent **Jochebed** away and separated himself from marital relations, and he divorced his wife when she was three months pregnant.

All of Israel stood up and divorced their wives. His daughter said to him: *"Your decree is harsher than Pharaoh's. For Pharaoh decreed only against the males, but you decree against males and females. Pharaoh is wicked and it is doubtful whether his decree will be fulfilled, but you are righteous and your decree will certainly be fulfilled."* He stood up and took back his wife, and all Israel stood up and took back their wives. Thus she is *"Puah,"* for she stood up against her father.

"And he said: When you birth the Hebrew women...": Why did he command to kill them through the midwives? So that the Holy One, blessed be He, would not demand an accounting from him, but rather punish the midwives. *"And you shall see upon the stools (obnayim)"*: the place where the child is turned.

Another interpretation: *"Abnayim"* (stones): **Rabbi Judah bar Simon** said that the Holy One, blessed be He, makes a woman's limbs hard like stones at the time she sits upon the birthstool to give birth, for were it not so, she would die. **Rabbi Phinehas the Associate** said in the name of **Rabbi Jonah**, supporting **Rabbi Judah bar Simon**: *"Abnayim"* refers only to an anvil, which is a hard thing, as it is written (*Jeremiah 18:3*): *"I went down to the potter's house, and behold, he was doing work upon the wheels (obnayim)."*

Rabbi Hanin said: He gave them a great sign. Just as this potter has a thigh on this side and a thigh on that side and the anvil in the middle, so too a woman has a thigh on this side and a thigh on that side and the child in the middle. And some say: at the time she crouches to give birth, her thighs become cold like stones.

"If it be a son, then you shall kill him": He said to them: *"If it is a male, kill him; and if it is a female, do not kill her, but rather, if she lives, she lives, and if she dies, she dies."* They said to him: *"How shall we know if it is a male or a female?"*

Rabbi Hanina said: He gave them a great sign. If its face is downward, know that it is a male, for he looks at his mother towards the earth from which he was created. And when its face is upward, it is a female, for she looks at her creation, at the rib, as it is said (*Genesis 2:21*): *"And He took one of his ribs."* The Holy One, blessed be He, said: *"Wicked one! He who gave this advice is a fool."*

You should have killed the females! If there are no females, where will the males take wives? One woman cannot take two men, but one man can take ten or a hundred women." This is as written (*Isaiah 19:11*): *"The princes of Zoan are but fools,"* for they gave him this advice.

"But the midwives feared God": of them it is said (*Proverbs 31:30*): *"A woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised."* *"And they did not as the king of Egypt spoke to them":* it does not say *"for them"* but *"unto them"* (**aleihen**).

Rabbi Jose bar Hanina said: this teaches that he demanded to have relations with them, but they did not accept his advances. *"But they saved the children alive":* Since they did not do as he spoke to them, do we not know that they kept the children alive?

Why did the verse need to say: *"And they saved the children alive"*? There is praise within praise: not only did they not fulfill his words, but they even added to them by doing favors for them. Some mothers were poor, so the midwives went and collected water and food from the houses of the wealthy and gave to the poor ones, and thus they kept their children alive. This is what is written: *"And they saved the children alive."*

Some children were destined to emerge lame, or blind, or with defects; what did the midwives do? They stood in prayer and said before the Holy One, blessed be He: *"Lord of the Universe, let the child emerge in peace, so that Israel will not find reason to speak against us, saying 'Behold they emerged with defects because they sought to kill them'."* Immediately, the Holy One, blessed be He, heard their voice and they emerged whole.

Rabbi Levi said: *"You have mentioned the light matter, now mention the grave one."* Some were destined to die at the moment of birth, or their mothers were in danger of dying; they stood in prayer and said: *"Lord of the Universe, grant them a reprieve now and give them their lives, so that Israel will not say that we killed them."* And the Holy One, blessed be He, fulfilled their prayer.

Therefore: *"And they saved the children alive"* this refers to the mothers; *"the children"* literally the children.

Another interpretation: *"The midwives feared God,"* they adorned themselves with the deed of their ancestor **Abraham**, as the Holy One, blessed be He, testifies of him (*Genesis 22:12*): *"For now I know that you are a God-fearing man."* They said: *"Our father Abraham, peace be upon him, opened an inn and fed wayfarers who were uncircumcised, and for us, is it not enough that we do not feed them, but we must kill them? We shall keep them alive!"* When Pharaoh saw they did not follow his decree, he called for them. This is as written: *"And the king of Egypt called for the midwives."*

"For they are vigorous (hayot)": If you say they are midwives, does not a midwife need another midwife to assist her? Rather, they said to him: *"This nation is compared to the beasts (hayot) of the field that do not need midwives."* **Judah** is compared to a lion: *"Judah is a lion's whelp."* **Dan**: *"Dan shall be a serpent."* **Naphtali**: *"A hind let loose."* **Issachar**: *"A strong-boned ass."* **Joseph**: *"The firstborn of his bullock."* **Benjamin**: *"A wolf that ravens."* And of the rest it is written (*Ezekiel 19:2*): *"What was your mother? A lioness, she couched among lions."*

"And God dealt well with the midwives": What was this "good"? That the king of Egypt accepted their words and did not harm them.

Another interpretation: **Rabbi Berechiah** said in the name of **Rabbi Hiyya ben Rabbi Abba**: as it is written (*Job 28:28*): *"And He said to man: Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom."* What is the reward for fear? Torah. Because **Jochebed** feared the Holy One, blessed be He, she merited **Moses**, of whom it is written: *"That he was*

good," and the Torah was given through him, which is called "a good doctrine." And it is called by his name: "Remember the Torah of **Moses My servant**." And from **Miriam** came **Bezalel**, who was full of wisdom, and he made the Ark for the Torah. Thus: "And God dealt well with the midwives."

"And the people multiplied": to fulfill what is said (*Lamentations 3:37*): "Who is he that says, and it comes to pass, when the Lord commanded it not?" If Pharaoh commanded to kill the males, what did his decree avail since the Lord commanded it not? Rather: "The people multiplied and waxed very mighty."

11. The Dynastic Houses: The Reward for Fearing God

A complex genealogical analysis reveals how the fear of God manifested by the midwives established the eternal lineages of the priesthood (Levi) and Davidic royalty (via Miriam).

"And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that He made them houses": **Rav** and **Levi** discussed this. One said: **Houses of Priesthood** and **Houses of Levites**. And the other said: **Houses of Kingship**. Priesthood and Levites from Moses and Aaron; Kingship from Miriam, because David came from Miriam.

As it is written (*1 Chronicles 2:18*): "And Caleb the son of Hezron begot children of Azubah his wife and of Jerioth..." Azubah is Miriam. Why was she called Azubah? Because everyone had abandoned (**azavuha**) her. "He begot," but was she not his wife?

Rabbi Yohanan said: This teaches you that whoever marries a woman for the sake of Heaven, the verse accounts it to him as if he had sired her. "Jerioth": because her face was like curtains (**jerioth**). "And these are her sons (**baneiha**)": do not read "her sons" but "her builders" (**boneiha**). "Jesher," that is Caleb, who straightened (**yisher**) himself. "Shobab," who turned back. "Ardon," who subdued (**radah**) his inclination.

"And Azubah died": this teaches that she fell ill and was treated as if dead, and Caleb abandoned her. "And Caleb took unto him Ephrath": this is Miriam. Why was she called Ephrath? Because Israel multiplied (**paru**) through her. "And he took unto him": after she was healed, he performed the act of marriage with her again and sat her in a palanquin out of great joy.

And so you find in another place that Miriam is called by two names based on the events that occurred to her (*1 Chronicles 4:5*): "And Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah." Ashhur is Caleb, for he was the son of Hezron; and why was he called Ashhur? Because his face blackened (**hishiru**) from fasts. "Father": for he became like a father to her. "Tekoa": for he fixed (**taka**) his heart to his Father in Heaven. "Had two wives": she was like two wives.

"Helah and Naarah": she was not two, but was Miriam alone. Why these names? Because she was sick (**haltah**) and then was shaken (**ninaarah**) from her illness, and the Holy One, blessed be He, restored her to her youth (**naarut**). "And Naarah bore him": after she was healed.

"Zereth, Zohar, and Ethnan": Zereth, because she became a rival (**tzarah**) to her companions in beauty. Zohar, because her face was like the noonday (**tzohorayim**). Ethnan, because whoever saw her would bring a gift (**etnan**) to his wife.

Therefore it is written: *"And Caleb took unto him Ephrath and she bore him Hur."* And whence do we know that David came from Miriam? As it is written (*1 Samuel 17:12*): *"And David was the son of that Ephrathite man."*

In another place it says: *"And Koz begot Anub."* Koz is Caleb, who cut down (**katzat**) the counsel of the spies. *"Anub,"* he gathered good deeds at the time of the cluster of grapes (**anavim**). *"Hazzobebah,"* for he did the will (**tzivyono**) of the Holy One, blessed be He. *"And the families of Acharhel the son of Harum":* Acharhel is Miriam, because *"all the women went out after her (achareiha)."* *"Families":* he merited to establish families from her. *"Son of Harum":* she merited that David should come from her, whom the Holy One, blessed be He, exalted (**rimem**) in his kingdom.

12. Moses' Youth, Flight, and Marriage

*Moses grew up in Pharaoh's palace, where he precociously removed Pharaoh's crown. To test if this was an act of rebellion, Jethro suggested a test with gold and a hot coal. Gabriel guided Moses' hand to the coal, which he placed in his mouth, resulting in his speech impediment but saving his life. Upon reaching adulthood, Moses went out to his brethren and killed an Egyptian taskmaster who had assaulted an Israelite woman, using the Divine Name. Betrayed by Dathan and Abiram, Moses fled execution during which his neck miraculously hardened like ivory and arrived in Midian. There, he defended Jethro's daughters at the well. Jethro, an excommunicated priest who rejected idolatry, recognized Moses' special nature when the well water rose toward him. Moses swore an oath (**Vayoel**) to Jethro and married Zipporah, naming their son Gershom to mark his status as a stranger.*

"And Pharaoh charged all his people": **Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Hanina** said: He even decreed against his own people. Why did he do this? Because his astrologers told him: *"The savior of Israel has been conceived, but we do not know if he is an Israelite or an Egyptian."* At that moment, Pharaoh gathered all the Egyptians and said to them: *"Lend me your sons for nine months that I may cast them into the River."* This is why it is written: *"Every son that is born, ye shall cast into the river";* it does not say *"every son of Israel,"* but *"every son,"* whether Jew or Egyptian. But they refused to accept this, saying: *"An Egyptian son will never redeem them; the savior must be from the Hebrews."*

"Into the river ye shall cast him": Why did they decree to cast them into the river? Because the astrologers saw that the savior of Israel would be stricken by means of water, and they thought he would drown. But it was only because of a well of water (Meribah) that the death sentence was decreed upon him, as it is said: *"Because ye believed not in Me."*

The Sages say they took deep counsel so that the Holy One, blessed be He, would not punish them with water, for they knew that He pays *"measure for measure,"* and

they were certain He would not bring another flood upon the world. Therefore, they decreed to drown them in water.

"And every daughter ye shall save alive": Why did Pharaoh need to keep the females? They said: *"Let us kill the males and take the females for wives,"* for the Egyptians were steeped in immorality.

"And there went a man of the house of Levi": Where did he go? **Rabbi Yehuda bar Rabbi Zevina** said: He went following the advice of his daughter. It is taught: **Amram** was the leader of the generation, etc. *"And he took a daughter of Levi"*: it does not say *"he took her back,"* but *"he took."*

Rabbi Yehuda bar Rabbi Zevina said: He performed a formal act of marriage; he sat her in a canopy (**chuppah**) while **Miriam** and **Aaron** danced before them, and the ministering angels said: *"A joyful mother of children."*

"A daughter of Levi": Is it possible she was 130 years old and called a *"daughter"*? **Rabbi Hama bar Hanina** said she was **Yocheved**, conceived on the way and born between the walls (entering Egypt). She is called *"daughter"* because, according to **Rabbi Yehuda bar Zevina**, signs of youth were miraculously renewed in her.

"And the woman conceived and bore a son": **Rabbi Yehuda** said: Her birth is compared to her conception; just as her conception was without pain, so was her birth without pain. From here we learn that righteous women were not included in the decree of Eve. *"And she saw him that he was good"*: **Rabbi Meir** said: *"Tov"* (Good) was his name.

Rabbi Yoshiya said: *"Tuvia"* was his name. **Rabbi Yehuda** said: He was fit for prophecy. Others say he was born circumcised. **The Sages** say: When Moses was born, the whole house was filled with light.

"She hid him three months": Because the Egyptians only counted from the time he *"took"* her back, but she was already three months pregnant. *"She could no longer hide him"*: Why? Because the Egyptians would go to every house where they suspected a birth, bringing a small Egyptian baby to cry so that the Israelite baby would hear and cry with him.

13. The providential rescue: Pharaoh's daughter and the ark of bulrushes

Providence orchestrates the rescue of the deliverer in the very heart of danger, by the hand of the oppressor's daughter who, touched by grace, disobeys her father to save the Hebrew child.

"She took for him an ark of bulrushes": Why bulrushes? **Rabbi Elazar** said: Because the property of the righteous is dearer to them than their bodies, so that they do not stretch their hands to robbery (rushes being inexpensive).

Rabbi Samuel bar Nahman said: It is a soft material that can withstand both soft and hard conditions. *"She daubed it with slime and with pitch"*: slime/clay on the inside

and pitch on the outside, so that the righteous child would not smell the bad odor. *"She put it in the flags by the river's brink"*:

Rabbi Elazar said this was the Red Sea (which reaches the Nile). Why did she cast him there? So the astrologers would think he had already been thrown into the water and would stop searching for him.

"And his sister stood afar off": Why did Miriam stand afar? **Rabbi Amram** said in the name of **Rav**: Because Miriam used to prophesy: *"My mother is destined to bear a son who will save Israel."* When Moses was born and the house filled with light, her father kissed her head and said, *"My daughter, your prophecy is fulfilled."* But when they cast him into the river, her mother struck her on the head, saying, *"My daughter, where is your prophecy now?"* Therefore, she stood afar to see what would be the end of her prophecy.

"To wash herself at the river": To cleanse herself from the idols of her father's house. *"And her maidens walked"*: **Rabbi Yohanan** said *"walking"* here implies death (they were struck down). They said to her: *"Our mistress, it is the way of the world that when a king decrees, even if the world does not keep it, his children do, yet you transgress your father's command!"* Immediately **Gabriel** came and smote them to the ground. *"And she sent her handmaid (Amatah)"*:

Rabbi Yehuda and **Rabbi Nehemiah** disagree; one says *"her hand"* and one says *"her servant."* The one who says *"her hand"* points to the word **Amatah** (which also means a cubit/forearm). **Her arm miraculously grew. The Sages** say the daughter of Pharaoh was a leper, and when she touched the ark, she was healed; therefore, she had great compassion for Moses.

"And she opened it and saw him": **Rabbi Yose bar Hanina** said: She saw the **Divine Presence (Shekhinah)** with him. *"And behold, the babe (na'ar) wept"*: He is called a child (**yeled**) and then a youth (**na'ar**).

Rabbi Yehuda said: He was a child but his voice was like a youth's. **Rabbi Nehemiah** said: This makes Moses appear blemished; rather, his mother had made a youth's wedding canopy for him in the ark. **Gabriel** struck Moses so he would cry and arouse her mercy.

"This is one of the Hebrews' children": How did she know? **Rabbi Yose bar Hanina** said: She saw he was circumcised. *"This" (Zeh)*: She meant *"This one falls into the river, but no other,"* for once Moses was cast in, the decree was annulled. The astrologers saw that the savior was *"judged by water"* and told Pharaoh to stop the decree, not knowing he would later be punished at the *"Waters of Strife" (Meribah)*.

"Moses said to Israel: Because of me you were all saved." **Rabbi Hanina bar Papa** said that day was the **21st of Nissan (Red Sea)**. **Rabbi Aha** said it was the **6th of Sivan (Torah)**.

"Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter...": Moses refused to nurse from Egyptian women. God said: *"Shall the mouth that is destined to speak with Me nurse from something impure?"* Furthermore, God did not want the Egyptians to say: *"I nursed the one who speaks with the Shekhinah."*

*"The maiden (**Almah**) went"*: She went with alacrity (**Zirizut**). Pharaoh's daughter said: *"Take this child"* (**Heiliki**), prophesying unknowingly *"She-liki"* (What is yours). **Yocheved** received a reward for nursing her own son.

14. The awakening of the Hebrew prince: justice, exile and destiny

The story of Moses' maturation shows his rejection of palace comfort to embrace the suffering of his brothers, a moral choice that leads him to the fateful act and his flight toward his destiny.

"And the child grew": He was nursed for 24 months but grew unnaturally fast. Pharaoh's daughter loved him as her own. Pharaoh would kiss him, and Moses would take the crown from Pharaoh's head and place it on his own.

The magicians were frightened and advised killing him. **Jethro** suggested testing him with gold and a burning coal. **Gabriel** pushed his hand toward the coal; Moses put it in his mouth, burnt his tongue, and thus became *"heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue."* Though Moses had many names, God only used the name **Batya** gave him: Moses.

"Moses was grown and went out unto his brethren": He was 20 or 40 years old. He saw their burdens and wept, helping them carry their loads. God said: *"You left your own affairs to see the sorrow of Israel; I will leave the upper and lower worlds to speak with you."* Moses also secured the **Sabbath** rest for them.

"He spied an Egyptian": He saw through the **Holy Spirit** that an Egyptian taskmaster had forced himself upon the wife of an Israelite (**Shlomit bat Divri**). Moses saw what the Egyptian did in the house and what he intended to do to the husband. He killed him using the **Divine Name**.

The next day, he saw **Dathan** and **Abiram** fighting. He said to the wicked one: *"Why do you smite your fellow?"* (Even lifting a hand to strike makes one *"wicked"*). They informed on him. Pharaoh tried to execute Moses, but his neck became like a pillar of ivory. Moses fled miraculously as an angel took his place or the guards were struck dumb and blind.

"He sat down by a well": Following the path of the **Patriarchs**. **Jethro (Reuel)** had been a priest of idols but realized they were nothing. He was excommunicated by his town, and thus his daughters had to tend the sheep. Moses saved them from the shepherds who had harassed them. They told their father: *"An Egyptian delivered us,"* because of his clothes.

Jethro realized he was a descendant of Jacob because the water of the well rose toward him. **Zipporah** ran like a bird to bring him in, and Moses married her.

"And Moses was content" (Vayoel):

Rabbi Yehuda says this means he swore to him, for **Vayoel** signifies nothing other than an oath, as it is said (*I Samuel 14:24*): *"And Saul adjured (Vayoël) the people."* Why did he make him swear? He [Jethro] said: *"I know that your forefather Jacob, when Laban gave him his daughters, took them and left without his knowledge; perhaps if I give you my daughter, you will do the same to me."* Immediately he swore to him, and he gave him Zipporah.

Rabbi Nehemiah said: He agreed to lodge with him, for **Vayoel** signifies lodging, as it is said (*Judges 19:6*): *"Be content (Hoël), I pray thee, and tarry all night."* **Our Sages of blessed memory** said: He took it upon himself to shepherd his flock, and **Vayoel** signifies a beginning: as soon as he married his daughter, he began and accepted to shepherd his flock.

"And she bore a son, and he called his name Gershom": it is the way of the righteous to name their children according to the event.

Regarding **Joseph**, what does it say? (*Genesis 41:51-52*): *"And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh... and the name of the second he called Ephraim,"* in order to remember the miracles the **Holy One, blessed be He**, had performed for him.

So too, **Moses** named his son Gershom because of the miracle God performed for him, for he was a stranger (**Ger**) in a foreign land and the **Holy One, blessed be He**, made him prosper there.

"And it came to pass in the course of those many days": these were days of sorrow, therefore they are called "many" (long). Similarly (*Leviticus 15:25*): *"And if a woman has an issue of her blood many days,"* because they were days of sorrow, they are called "many." *"And the king of Egypt died"*: meaning he was struck with leprosy, and the leper is considered as dead, as it is said (*Numbers 12:12*):

"Let her not, I pray, be as one dead," and it says (*Isaiah 6:1*): *"In the year that King Uzziah died." "And the children of Israel groaned"*: why did they groan? Because the magicians of Egypt said [to Pharaoh]: *"You have no cure unless we slaughter one hundred and fifty Israelite children in the evening and one hundred and fifty in the morning, and you bathe in their blood twice a day."*

As soon as Israel heard this harsh decree, they began groaning and lamenting. *"And they cried out" (Vayiz'ayu)* is a term of lamentation, as it is written (*Ezekiel 21:17*): *"Cry (Ze'ay) and howl, son of man." "And their cry (Shav'atam) came up to God"*: it does not say *"their shout,"* but their plea, as you say (*Job 24:12*): *"And the soul of the wounded cries out (Teshavé'a)." "And God heard their groaning" (Naaqatam)*: the groaning of the wounded, as you say (*Ezekiel 30:24*): *"And he shall groan with the groanings (Naaqot) of a wounded man,"* and (*Job 24:12*): *"From out of the city, the dying groan."*

"And God remembered His covenant": Israel did not deserve to be saved because they were wicked, but they were redeemed through the merit of the fathers. Thus it is written: *"And God remembered His covenant."* **Our Sages of blessed memory** said: a miracle happened for them and he was healed of his leprosy.

"And God saw the children of Israel," as it is said (*Exodus 3:7*): *"I have surely seen the affliction of My people." "And God knew" (Exodus 3:7): "For I know their pains."*

Another explanation: "And God saw" that they had no good deeds by which they could be redeemed. Thus it is explained through Ezekiel (16:7): "I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field...".

It should only have said "thy hair was grown" and then "thy breasts were fashioned," for the lower sign usually comes before the upper one.

But what is "thy breasts were fashioned"? This refers to **Moses** and **Aaron** who were ready to redeem them, as it is written (*Song of Songs* 4:5): "Thy two breasts are like two fawns." "Thy hair was grown": the end-time of redemption had arrived. "But thou wast naked and bare": without good deeds. Therefore it says: "And God saw," for they had no deeds by which to be redeemed.

13. The Cry of Israel and Divine Remembrance

The narrative shifts to the intense suffering of the Israelites. The "death" of the King of Egypt is interpreted as him being stricken with leprosy, leading to a horrific decree to bathe in the blood of Israelite children. The Israelites' reaction is described through various terms for crying (Vayiz'aqu, Shav'atam, Naaqatam), reflecting different depths of pain and prayer. God "remembered" the covenant not because of the people's current righteousness they are described as "naked" of good deeds. but due to the merit of the Patriarchs and the future acceptance of the Torah. The phrases "God saw" and "God knew" are analyzed deeply: God saw their future failings (the Golden Calf) but also knew the hidden thoughts of repentance in their hearts. Ultimately, redemption was set in motion through the combination of ancestral merit and the "blood of the covenant" (circumcision and the Paschal lamb).

"And God saw the children of Israel and God knew": the **Holy One, blessed be He**, knew that He must redeem them for His name's sake because of the covenant He made with the fathers. Thus it says (*Exodus* 2:24): "And God remembered His covenant," and so it says through Ezekiel (20:9): "But I wrought for My name's sake." Another explanation: "And God saw":

Reish Lakish said, He saw that they were destined to rebel at the Red Sea, as it is written (*Psalms* 106:7): "They rebelled at the sea, even at the Red Sea." "And God knew": He knew they were destined to say (*Exodus* 15:2): "This is my God."

Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said: He saw they were destined to say (*Exodus* 32:4): "These are thy gods, O Israel." "And God knew": that they were destined to prioritize "we will do" over "we will hear."

And the **Rabbis** say: "And God saw" that the intermediate ones repented, and even the wicked thought of repenting, as it is written (*Song of Songs* 2:13): "The fig tree putteth forth her green figs." "And God knew": that even one towards his fellow did not know, but the **Holy One, blessed be He**, alone knew that this one directed his heart and that one directed his heart and they repented.

And even though they repented, they would not have gone out from there were it not for the merit of the fathers, because the **Attribute of Justice** was accusing them for

the Calf they were destined to make. Regarding this, it is said (*Exodus 12:22*): "*And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop,*" corresponding to their humbling themselves to repent like the hyssop.

"And dip it in the blood that is in the basin (Saph)": by the merit of the **Torah** they were destined to receive, as it is written at the giving of the Torah (*Exodus 24:8*): "*And Moses took the blood.*" *"And strike the lintel":* for **Abraham** was the greatest of converts, and just as the lintel is high, so was he the greatest of the patriarchs. *"And the two side posts":*

by the merit of **Isaac** and **Jacob**. This teaches you that through the merit of all these they went out. Another explanation: *"And God saw"* the abstinence between them. *"And God knew"* that the time He spoke of to **Abraham** was near, and He revealed Himself to **Moses** to inform him while he was a shepherd.

Back Cover

The *Midrash Rabbah* is one of the pillars of classical Jewish thought. Through *Shemot Rabbah*, the Sages re-read the narrative of Exodus not as a simple historical chronicle, but as a profound reflection on servitude, power, and human responsibility.

Why is Moses chosen?

What really triggers the deliverance of Israel?
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