

# Parashat Shemot

## פרשת שמות

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<http://www.matsati.com> | [matsati@matsati.com](mailto:matsati@matsati.com)

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## Hope's Focus

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Exodus 1:1-6:1

הפטרה: Isaiah 27:6-28:13

הברית: Acts 7:17-35

החדשה: 1 Corinthians 14:18-25

Triennial cycle: *Shemot / Exodus 1:1-2:25*

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In the opening verses of Parashat Shemot, we learn that Yoseph (Joseph) dies and Pharaoh decides to enslave the children of Yisrael (Yaakov) because they feared the multitude of people the children of Yisrael had become. The Scriptures say *Shemot / Exodus 1:13 The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously; 1:14 and they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all kinds of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them. (NASB)* Though the people were placed under hard labor, enslaved to Pharaoh, they still had hope in the God of Yisrael and obeyed God rather than Pharaoh. *1:17 But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but let the boys live. (NASB)* The people waited, in the midst of their bondage in slavery, for answers from the Lord. The process of waiting can either isolate or unite us, tear us apart or bind us together. Waiting on the lord for answers to prayer can cause serious problems in our lives if our hope is not focused correctly. Have you become dispassionate, less obedient, and neglected the pursuit of God's presence in your life and His promises as a result of not having had answers to your prayers?

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## שמות 1:13-17

13 אֵתוּ בְּן יִרְבֵּה וּבֶן יַפְרֹץ וַיִּקְצוּ מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ  
14 מִצְרַיִם אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפִרְדֹּ: וַיִּמְרְדוּ אֶת־תַּיִיהֶם  
בְּעִבְדָּה קָשָׁה בַחֲמֹר וּבִלְבָנִים וּבְכָל־עֲבָדָה בַשָּׂדֶה אֶת  
15 כָּל־עֲבָדָתָם אֲשֶׁר־עֲבָדוּ בָהֶם בְּפִרְדֹ: וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ  
מִצְרַיִם לַמִּילֻדֹת הָעִבְרִית אֲשֶׁר שֵׁם הָאִחָת שִׁפְרָה וְשֵׁם  
16 הַשְּׁנִית פּוּעָה: וַיֹּאמֶר בִּילְדֹכֶן אֶת־הָעִבְרִיּוֹת וְרֵאיתֶן  
עַל־הָאֲבָנִים אִם־בֶּן הוּא וְהַמַּתֵּן אֹתוֹ וְאִם־בַּת הוּא  
17 וְחָיָה: וְתִירָאן הַמִּילֻדֹת אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים וְלֹא עֲשׂוּ כַאֲשֶׁר  
18 דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהֵיךָ מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וְתַחַיֵּין אֶת־הַיִּלְדִּים: וַיִּקְרָא

### Shemot / Exodus 1:13-17

1:13 The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously; 1:14 and they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all kinds of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them. 1:15 Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other was named Puah; 1:16 and he said, 'When you are helping the Hebrew women to give birth and see them upon the birthstool, if it is a son, then you shall put him to death; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live.' 1:17 But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but let the boys live. (NASB)

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Life at times can seem to be a waiting game when it comes to understanding the reasons why things happen to us the way they do. Most people have hope when their circumstances change or when circumstances are in the process of changing, but the real test of faith is to hold onto hope while our circumstances are not changing. In Parashat Shemot, Yisrael had the expectation that God would send His deliverer, a type of messiah, to deliver them from the bonds of slavery. Yisrael waited for 400 years for this to happen. The expectations that come with their hopes were that God was going to deliver them but they did not know when that moment would come and how it would occur. When Yeshua came as the Messiah the people were disappointed because their hopes did not meet with their expectation of what the Messiah was going to do when he got here. The reason is their expectations and hopes were not based upon the Word of God. God has ordained purpose in waiting because it exposes what is in our hearts and for faith. Waiting causes us to bind ourselves to God and to His promises. What are you binding your hopes to when circumstances do not change? If you do not get what you is waiting for it will drag you over a cliff if the hope that you have is not based upon God's word. Regardless of what happens we need to be persistent in our obedience to God, consistent in our pursuit of God's presence, and patient to wait upon what God has promised us in hope and believe that it will occur. There is an important lesson here on being persistent in the pursuit of God and his promises in the portion of scriptures for this week. Another example of this kind of persistence can be found in the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) in Luke and the struggle that Mary was going through after the Angel Gabriel said to her that she was going to conceive a child who was going to be the Messiah of Yisrael.

**Luke 1:8-37**

*1:8 Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, 1:9 according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 1:10 And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. 1:11 And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. 1:12 Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him. 1:13 But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. 1:14 'You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 1:15 'For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. 1:16 'And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. 1:17 'It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' 1:18 Zacharias said to the angel, 'How will I know this for certain for I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years.' 1:19 The angel answered and said to him, 'I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. 1:20 'And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time.' 1:21 The people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple. 1:22 But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute. 1:23 When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home. 1:24 After these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant, and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, 1:25 'This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away*

85 *my disgrace among men.’ 1:26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from  
God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, 1:27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name  
was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. 1:28 And  
coming in, he said to her, ‘Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.’ 1:29 But she  
was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.  
90 1:30 The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.  
1:31 ‘And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name  
Him Jesus. 1:32 ‘He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the  
Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 1:33 and He will reign over the  
house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.’ 1:34 Mary said to the angel,  
95 ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ 1:35 The angel answered and said to her, ‘The  
Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;  
and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. 1:36 ‘And behold, even  
your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called  
barren is now in her sixth month. 1:37 ‘For nothing will be impossible with God.’  
(NASB)*

100 The text does not explicitly state that Zachariah and Mary were struggling  
with what the angel Gabriel had spoken to them but if we consider the context of  
the events that happened we can discern what might have been going on in their  
minds. *Luke 1:13* tells of the angel speaking to Zachariah saying that “*God has  
105 heard your prayer.*” The angel was telling Zachariah that his life was going to  
change, God has heard your prayers, and your wife is going to conceive a son.  
But not only was his son going to be born, the angel tells him that his son will be  
great in the sight of the Lord, he will be filled with the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy  
Spirit) even in the womb, he will not drink wine or liquor, and he will turn the  
110 hearts of many back to the Lord as to make the people ready, prepared for the  
Lord (see *1:13-17*). Do you think Zachariah was expecting what was going to  
happen to his son? Zachariah’s response suggests that he had doubts and his  
doubts resulted in his being struck dumb (mute) until the birth of his son. It  
appears that from Zachariah perspective he had some spiritual problems waiting  
115 on God’s promise. It may be that he had been praying and seeking the Lord for a  
long time that his wife would become pregnant and had become discouraged, his  
response to the angel is indicative of this.

120 Shortly after this (approximately 6 months, *1:36*) the angel Gabriel  
appeared to Mary and said “*you have found favor with God*” (*1:31*) and that “*...  
behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him  
Jesus.*” Can you imagine what was going through Mary’s mind as the angel  
spoke to her these things? Conceiving a child by God’s Holy Spirit, the people  
would probably believe that she had sex outside of marriage which would lead to  
her being stoned to death by the community. This is pure speculation on our part  
125 what Mary was thinking but what did Mary do after hearing these things from the  
angel Gabriel? She visited Elizabeth, the wife of Zachariah, someone who could  
empathize with her (*1:39-40*). In Mary’s case, waiting on the fulfillment of the  
promise of God to conceive a child was either going to both isolate and tear her  
apart or unit and bind her together with God and His promises. Mary’s actions  
130 show us that she chose to trust God and unite herself with her people by visiting  
Elizabeth. What Mary did was to go and visit the one that could really understand  
what was going on with her. This process of waiting exposed Mary’s heart as she  
bonded herself to God’s presence and His promises. In light of the scriptures we  
have read thus far, the question for us today is “*Am I regularly pursuing God’s*

135 presence with a bible in hand? Am I truly seeking that the Lord would speak to my heart? Have I kept my hope and faith on God and His promises?"

140 Hope takes on real concrete meaning when we place our hope in the promises of God. *Yeremiyahu / Jeremiah 29:11* says '*For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and hope.*' Jeremiah says that the Lord has a plan for you and me and that we are created with a capacity for hope that can lead to joy, peace, and experiencing the love of God. This only happens though when our hope is based upon God, His promises, and His Word (the Bible). If our hopes and dreams are based in our circumstances changing, we will spend a lot of our time in discouragement and discontentment. God says in *Yeshayahu / Isaiah 40* "... *that those who hope/wait on the Lord will renew their strength.*" We need to bind ourselves to God because that is what will lead to having the correct type of hope and in addition to that our strength will be renewed, we will be made stronger. *Romans 15:13* says that if the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) lives in you, and you are born new, then hope lives in you and you will overflow with the hope that God gives you. Even though nothing may be changing in our lives, we know the author of hope and God gives us faith in His word for our particular circumstances. As soon as Zachariah stepped out in faith writing that His son's name will be John, his tongue was loosed and he could speak.

155 So, what are God's promises? God's promises are that He is redeeming the world and saving His people from the bondage of sin. Look in Parashat Lech Lecha, God promised to Avraham that in his son all of the world would be blessed. Avraham waited 10 years after God spoke to him to see fulfillment of this promise and the birth of his son Yitzchak (Isaac). Do you have that kind of hope and faith to wait 10 years to see God's promises to you? What about 20 years, 30 years, or even 40 years? Having hope with the wrong focus will lead to discontentment and cause you to miss what the personal will of God is for your life. *2 Peter 3:9* says that the Lord is not slow in keeping His promises as some would count as being slow. He is not procrastinating. God is patiently waiting for the right time and moment because there is a purpose in the wait. That purpose is designed to draw us nearer to Him and to help us to learn and grow stronger. The psalmist asks the Lord in *Psalms 119:16* to "*Sustain me according to Your word, that I may live; And do not let me be ashamed of my hope.*" (NASB) The sustaining is accomplished in the Word of God, and so it is very important that we seek the Lord for answers in His Word, in the Bible.

170 In conclusion, I want to leave you with a thought. If you are thinking "*I have hope but I also fear that I am not doing things the way God wants me to do them or that I am not going to be good enough for God.*" These thoughts are the result of fear that rests upon not having placed faith in the promises of God. The promise that you can put your faith in with confidence is that if you confess your sins before God, if you confess Yeshua is Lord and that he has raised from the dead you are saved. If there are any promises in the bible to memorize, memorize this promise that salvation comes by faith in Yeshua God's Messiah. Memorizing the promises of God and praying the promises of God, the fear will just melt away and you will be filled with the hope and love that God wants you to have.

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*Romans 15:13* Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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*Yeshayahu / Isaiah 40:31* Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

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*Mishley / Proverbs 13:12* Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

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Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:  
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever