

פרשת
וַאֲרָא
Parashat Va'era

*Shemot / Exodus 6:2-9:35, Ezekiel 28:25-29:21
Matthew 12:1-14*

**The Lord wants to use You in the midst
of Your brokenness and Imperfections**

This week's Torah portion opens with the Lord revealing himself in a new way saying, ב וַיְדַבֵּר אֲלֵהֶם אֵל-מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי יְהוָה: ג וַאֲרָא אֵל-אַבְרָהָם אֵל-יִצְחָק וְאֵל-יַעֲקֹב בְּאֵל שְׁדַי וְשְׁמִי יְהוָה לֹא נִודַעְתִּי לָהֶם: *6:2 God spoke further to Moses and said to him, 'I am the Lord; 6:3 and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, Lord, I did not make Myself known to them. (NASB, Shemot / Exodus 6:1-2)* Based upon this text, the Lord called upon the memory of how He had worked in the lives of those He had called previously, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. *Ramban on Exodus 6:3 states "By My ineffable name expressing the essence of all existence (I AM THAT I AM) I was not known to them to introduce innovations changing the natural course of events. Therefore tell the Children of Israel that I am the Lord and let them know My great name (El Shaddai) through which I shall perform for them wonders that they may know that I am the Lord who does these things."* The idea here is that the lord is revealing His ability to do unnatural things, to turn both our lives and this world upside down in order to bring glory to His name, to fulfill His promises on earth, and to bring redemption to His people. As the Lord called Moshe to go to

his people and to Pharaoh, we are told in *Shemot / Exodus 6:9*, ט וַיֹּדֶם
בַּר מֹשֶׁה כֹּן אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה מִקְצָר רוּחַ וּמִעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה:
6:9 So Moses spoke thus to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses on account of their despondency and cruel bondage. (NASB) According to the account of Moshe being sent by God to His people, we learn that the peoples burdens were so great they had trouble believing, and so they could not hear from the Lord. Is your burden so great that you cannot hear the Lord or have trouble having faith? According to the Apostolic Writings, the eleven disciples had just witnessed the Messiah risen to life after having given his life upon the cross. All seemed lost until hope was restored on seeing Him again, yet some still doubted (see *Matthew 28*). What Yeshua did, instead of dismissing those who had doubts, He commissions them to go and change the world! This is exactly what the Lord God our Father in heaven did with Moshe, following the rejection of the people, telling him, *6:10 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 6:11 'Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the sons of Israel go out of his land.'* *6:12 But Moses spoke before the Lord, saying, 'Behold, the sons of Israel have not listened to me; how then will Pharaoh listen to me, for I am unskilled in speech?'* *6:13 Then the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron, and gave them a charge to the sons of Israel and to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt. (NASB)* Yeshua said, *"I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go..."* Found within the Torah and Yeshua's statements are several significant insights. Our own doubts do not negate the Lord's calling on our lives. For example, you may never be the most talented person in a given area of your life. This should not be a reason for resisting to serve the Lord. Consider this that *"others will always be elevated above you in this world."* This is the perspective of being humble, and is how Yeshua taught according to *Matthew 23:11 But the greatest among you shall be your servant. (NASB)* Moshe had doubts about himself (*6:11*) but yet the Lord called him and He still calls you, and He desires to use you in your brokenness and imperfection just as He sought to use Moshe in his. We must be completely dependent on Him for the outcomes of our lives and ministry. While Yeshua is commissioning the disciples in this passage, the call also goes out to everyone who are called His children by faith. We are called to make disciples in this world, to demonstrate the power

of God working in our lives, and to lead others in truth, to live in His righteousness, and to seek His righteousness all the days of our lives. Realize that the Lord has led you to this moment in your life for the purpose of serving Him. This is who we are, and the descriptions that we are given according to the Torah.

This week we are looking at *Shemot / Exodus 6:2-13*.

Shemot / Exodus 6:2-13

6:2 God spoke further to Moses and said to him, 'I am the Lord; 6:3 and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, Lord, I did not make Myself known to them. 6:4 'I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned. 6:5 'Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. 6:6 'Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 6:7 'Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 6:8 'I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the Lord.' 6:9 So Moses spoke thus to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses on account of their despondency and cruel bondage. 6:10 Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 6:11 'Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the sons of Israel go out of his land.' 6:12 But Moses spoke before the Lord, saying, 'Behold, the sons of Israel have not listened to me; how then will Pharaoh listen to me, for I am unskilled in speech?' 6:13 Then the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron, and gave them a charge to the sons of Israel and to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the

sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt. (NASB)

ב וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי יְהוָה: ג וְאָרָא
אֶל-אַבְרָהָם אֶל-יִצְחָק וְאֶל-יַעֲקֹב בְּאֵל שְׁדַי וּשְׁמִי יְהוָה לֹא
נֹדַעְתִּי לָהֶם: ד וְגַם הִקְמַתִּי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אִתְּם לְתֵת לָהֶם אֶת-
אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֶת אֶרֶץ מִגְרִיהֶם אֲשֶׁר-גָּרוּ בָּהּ: ה וְגַם | אֲנִי שָׁמַ-
עֲתִי אֶת-נַאֲקַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם מַעֲבָדִים אִתְּם וְאֶזְכֹּר
אֶת-בְּרִיתִי: ו לָכֵן אֹמֵר לְבְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי יְהוָה וְהוֹצֵאתִי
אֶתְכֶם מִתַּחַת סִבְלַת מִצְרַיִם וְהִצַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מֵעַבְדֹתָם וְגִאֲלֹתִי
אֶתְכֶם בְּזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה וּבְשִׁפְטִים גְּדֹלִים: ז וְלִקְחֹתִי אֶתְכֶם
לִי לְעָם וְהִיִּיתִי לְכֶם לֵאלֹהִים וַיִּדְעֹתֶם כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
הַמוֹצִיא אֶתְכֶם מִתַּחַת סִבְלוֹת מִצְרַיִם: ח וְהִבֵּאתִי אֶתְכֶם
אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַתִּי אֶת-יָדִי לְתֵת אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק
וּלְיַעֲקֹב וְנָתַתִּי אֹתָהּ לְכֶם מִוְרֶשֶׁה אֲנִי יְהוָה: ט וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה
כֵּן אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה מִקְצֶר רוּחַ וַיִּמְעַבְדֻהָ
קִשָּׁה: פ י וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: יא בֹּא דַבֵּר
אֶל-פְּרַעְזָה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ: יב
וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה לְפָנָיו יְהוָה לֵאמֹר הֵן בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא-שָׁמְעוּ אֵלָי
וְאִידֹ שָׁמְעֵנִי פְרַעְזָה וְאֲנִי עָרַל שִׁפְתָיִם:

These Scriptures provide us with an awesome picture of the Love of God in the statements “*I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel,*” and “*I have remembered My covenant.*” (6:5) There is a passage in *Devarim / Deuteronomy*30 that describes the full return and redemption of the Jewish nation which states the following:

It will be that when all these things come upon you – the blessing and the curse that I have presented before you – then you will take it to your heart among all the nations where the Lord your God has dispersed you; and you will return unto the Lord your God, and listen to his voice, according to everything that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and all your soul. Then, the Lord your God will bring back your captivity, and have mercy upon you, and He will gather

you in from all the peoples to which the Lord your God has scattered you. If your dispersed will be at the ends of the heaven, from there, the Lord your God will gather you in, and from there He will take you. The Lord your God will bring you to the land that your forefathers possessed and you shall possess it; He will do good to you and make you more numerous than your forefathers. The Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, to love the Lord your God, with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

The Lord your God will place all these curses upon your enemies and those who hate you, who pursued you. You shall return and listen to the voice of God, and perform all His commandments that I command you today. God will make you abundant in all your handiwork – in the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your animals, and the fruit of your land – for good, when the Lord will return to rejoice over you for good, as He rejoiced over your forefathers, when you listen to the voice of the Lord your God, to observe His commandments, and His decrees, that are written in this Book of the Torah, when you shall return to the Lord your God, with all your heart and all your soul.

Based upon the Scriptures, obeying the commandments of God brings great blessing into our lives. Modern theologies however teach that the commandments are burdensome and have been done away with in the Messiah Yeshua. The point of the conclusion of the Torah (Devarim / Deuteronomy) is that disobedience (sin) also brings with it a curse. The idea here is that the Lord is searching and seeking out His people. If we are living with no regard for sin in our lives, the Lord will begin to work to draw us back even to bringing calamity into our lives for that specific purpose.

In the Scriptures, the Lord has revealed Himself as a merciful and powerful God to deliver His people. The Torah provides the picture of Teshuvah (Repentance) and redemption of God's people in the opening



chapters of the book of Shemot / Exodus. When bad things happen, we are to seek the Lord for the answers, we are turn to His ways, to His Messiah Yeshua, and humbly pray and turn our lives to be in line with His Words. This concept of mercy and redemption are found in the name of God that He was revealing in a new and powerful way to Moshe and the people. The rabbis have the following to say concerning this new and powerful way of the Lord's revelation of His Name.

Rashi on Shemot / Exodus 6:3, Part 3

וּשְׁמִי ה' לֹא נֹדַעְתִּי לָהֶם *BUT BY MY NAME THE LORD WAS I NOT KNOWN TO THEM — It is not written here לֹא הִוְדַעְתִּי לָהֶם [My name the Lord] I did not make known to them, but לֹא נֹדַעְתִּי לָהֶם [by My name, the Lord], was I not known [unto them] — i. e. I was not recognized by them in My attribute of “keeping faith”, by reason of which My name is called ה', which denotes that I am certain to substantiate My promise, for, indeed, I made promises to them but did not fulfill them [during their lifetime].*

Rashi points out the particular usage of the Hebrew text and how it is written, that it is “*by the Name*” the Lord is making Himself known. The way the Name (YHWH, יהוה) is being used to reveal who the Lord is, is in His attribute of “*keeping faith.*” The Lord is keeping faith with His people as an example for us to also keep faith with Him.

Sforno on Shemot / Exodus 6:3, Part 3

וּשְׁמִי ה' לֹא נֹדַעְתִּי לָהֶם *the letter ב in the expression וּשְׁמִי ה' לֹא נֹדַעְתִּי לָהֶם applies to the word וּשְׁמִי. In effect what G'd is saying is that He has not made a point of becoming familiar to the patriarchs by His attribute Hashem when appearing to them, such as in the example mentioned. This was because He never experienced the need to change the laws of nature on their behalf. Seeing that the patriarchs could not have passed on knowledge about Me which I had not revealed to them, they in turn had not been able to pass on such knowledge to their*

children. I have to do this now in order to ensure that I can preserve the Children of Israel as My people.

Sforno takes a closer look at the Hebrew text saying the letter bet causes the name “*El Shaddai*” to refer to “*my name.*” The point of the Lord not revealing Himself in His Name (יהוה) to the patriarchs was in the sense that He did not need to change the natural order of things. The idea is that the Lord is able to do all things, even to creating a miracle for the purpose of saving His people. This new way of revealing God’s Name and Awesome Power is to facilitate the commitment to memory the events of the Exodus and redemption of His people. To remember the love of God and his faithfulness to us, and to transmit that to our children for their preservation, so they would be able to also believe and trust in the Lord God in heaven too.

Rashbam on Shemot / Exodus 6:3, Pat 2

ה’ ושמי ה’, we have to explain the sequence as follows: “Although I have revealed Myself to the patriarchs as the attribute of Shaddai, My principal name, the one that represents My essence, etc.” We are faced with a repetition here, hence לא נודעתני להם, “I did not reveal Myself to the patriarchs as My principal attribute but only as My attribute Shaddai. But to you, Moses, I have revealed My principal attribute which I described as אהיה and זכרי ה’. In your lifetime I plan to fulfill My promise.”

Rashbam states something simliar to Rashi and Sforno, saying *I have revealed My principal attribute which I described as אהיה and זכרי ה’. In your lifetime I plan to fulfill My promise*, that the revelation of His Name is found within the context of “*the Lord remembering*” (זכרי ה’) in His faithfulness to bring to fulfillment His promises to the people. The express idea here that is being taught by the rabbis and in *Shemot / Exodus 6:3* is that the Lord has and is in the process of declaring to His people the power of His works and His mercy. The purpose is to give Israel the heritage of the nations (See *Tehillim / Psalms 111:6*).



The whole earth is the Lord's and He will give it to whom he sees fit. By His will He gave it to the people of the Land, and by His will He took it from them and gave it to Israel. The point is that the Lord had brought the people to this place for the purpose of revealing Himself in a powerful way, for forgiveness, deliverance, and to speak to the people in regards to who they are as His people.

In Midrash Tehillim 109, Part 4, the rabbis make the comment that without Israel, there would be no blessing in the world. What do you think they mean by making such a statement? Note how the Midrash quotes from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 28:8* saying, ח יצו יהוה אֶתְּךָ, אֶת-הַבְּרָכָה בְּאַסְמִיךָ וּבְכָל מִשְׁלַח יָדְךָ וּבִבְרָכָה בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ: *28:8 'The Lord will command the blessing upon you in your barns and in all that you put your hand to, and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God gives you. (NASB)* As we read these passages, we see how the Lord will bless those in the midst of the people, the blessing of God goes with His people. As we read the incredible story of the God of Israel's revelation at Mt. Sinai, it is easy to forget that the Jewish people waited over 400 years to hear the voice of God that seemed so familiar to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Going through history, 1400 years from the time of the giving of the Torah at Sinai, from the stories of Abraham and of Moshe, these remarkable stories tend to get lost in the reading of the Apostolic Writings. What is forgotten is that the Lord God of Israel is a God who follows a process. The dictionary defines "*process*" as a noun meaning "*a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end.*" The ways of the Lord most certainly falls within this description within his interactions with His people. The Lord was in the process of restoring His people to Himself from since the time of be'gan eden (בְּגֵן-עֵדֶן, in the garden of Eden). The Lord takes His time where each step is intentional in which the Lord moves his people closer and closer to restoration and redemption. The same may be said of our relationship with the Lord and with others. In our relationship with the Lord, we draw near, we study His word, and we put His word into practice in order to shape and to mold ourselves into the people He would have us to be. Most certainly, He is in the process of fulfilling every promise He ever made to the people of Israel, bringing them back to their Land from all the nations of their dispersion. It is within this context, the

Torah context, that we understand the message of the Midrash, where the rabbis make the comment that without Israel, there would be no blessing in the world. The Lord said in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 28:8* “*I will bless,*” just as He said in *Bereshit / Genesis 12:3* “*I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*” One of the promises is that Israel will be a blessing to the nations. Why do you think it is that today so many nations stand in opposition to Israel? Is it not because the evil one knows what God’s word says about His people? The Hebrew word for “*bless*” in this passage is *barach* (ברך). The word means to do or give something of value to someone else; it refers to a special favor, a mercy, or a benefit; a gift bestowed by God. The Torah endows the meaning of the word, infusing the blessing with holiness or divine purpose. It is the root of the word *brachah* (ברכה) which we find in countless passages in the Tanakh and the Writings of the Apostles which begin with the words, “*Blessed is he who...*” etc. The root meaning is “*to kneel*” showing the humility of the one bringing the blessing. This draws in the context of humbling ourselves before God and receiving mercy and being given a divine purpose to live our lives for Him, even in the midst of our brokenness and imperfections. When the Lord God made this promise of blessing to Abraham, He created a new way of looking at our relationship with Him. The beauty is found in the expressions of blessing through our relationship with Him, that is expressed through the cycle of interconnection and interdependence, with the God of creation dwelling in our midst. This relationship calls us to holiness, righteousness, and love through an everlasting covenant we are invited to participate in.

The Midrash continues saying the following:

And except for Israel, no lights would shine in heaven, as it is said, But for the people of My covenant I would not have established day and night, nor the ordinances of heaven and earth (Jeremiah 33:24); and the rain would not come down, for it is said, The Lord will open unto you His good treasure, the heaven to give the rain of your land (Devarim / Deuteronomy 28:12). Accordingly, the people of Israel said to the nations of the

earth, Because of us, the Holy One blessed be He does all these things for you, and yet you hate us, as is said, In return for my love they are my adversaries. At the festival of Tabernacles we offer up seventy bullocks of the seventy nations, and we pray that rain will come down for them.

The midrash states that Israel has caused the light to shine in heaven because the Lord had said that He has established day and night for His people. The rains that fall upon Israel are a part of that blessing the Lord would send to His people. As the rain is sent to Israel, so too it falls upon the nations, but yet the nations hate Israel and do not recognize the source of the blessing they have received. Note how Israel also offers up bulls upon the altar, 70 in all, corresponding to the 70 nations, and praying for the nations to receive the blessing of God. This is important because it is consistent with Yeshua's teaching in *Mathew 5:44 But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. (NASB)*

Midrash Tehillim 109, Part 4 concludes saying, *“Yet in return for my love they are my adversaries, still I am all prayer (Tehillim / Psalms 104:4). Will evil be recompensed for good? (Jeremiah 18:20). Even though they have laid upon me evil for good (Tehillim / Psalms 109:5), still I am all prayer.”* Note how the rabbis say even in the midst of hatred the enemy sends towards God's people, a child of God is to continue in prayer for the peace and prosperity of her enemies. Prayer for your enemies is one of the deepest forms of love, because it means that you have to really want that something good happen to them. This seems to be what is being expressed according to the Midrash and in this week's Torah Portion. The point is that in our actions, one might do nice things for his or her enemy without any genuine desire that things go well with them. On the other hand, going in prayer on their behalf is to go in the presence of the Lord God Almighty who knows your heart, and intercede with the Lord on their behalf. This may be for their blessing, it may be for their repentance, and it may be that they would be awakened to the enmity in their hearts. Praying for our enemies may also be concerned with stopping their downward spiral of sin, even if it takes a form of calamity to do so. The prayer for our enemies however

according to *Matthew 5:44* is always for their good. This is the attitude that Yeshua had when he hung upon the cross, saying “*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*” (*Luke 23:34*) Yeshua is calling us not just to do good things for our enemy, like greeting them and helping supply their needs; he is also calling us to want their best, and to express those wants in our prayers even when the enemy is doing the worse to us. Our hearts should want this for them and for the presence of God in their lives. We are to pray as the apostle Paul did for his people, especially for those who made life very hard for Paul. “*My heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.*” (*Romans 10:1*) Moshe had doubts about himself (*6:11*) but yet the Lord called him and He still calls you too. God’s desire is to use you in your brokenness and imperfection just as He sought to use Moshe in his. We must be completely dependent on Him for the outcomes of our lives and ministry. When Yeshua commissioned the disciples in *Matthew 28*, the call also goes out to everyone who are called His children by faith. We are called to make disciples in this world, to demonstrate the power of God working in our lives, and to lead others in truth, to live in His righteousness, and to seek His righteousness all the days of our lives. Realize that the Lord has led you to this moment in your life for the purpose of serving Him. This is who we are, and the descriptions that we are given according to the Torah.



