



## פרשת שמות

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

### Knowing His Name

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## Part I. The Tower of Strength

### The Name is a Fortress

There's a statement in Mishlei (18:10) as follows: 'מגדל עז שם ה' – the name of Hashem is a tower of strength, בו ירוץ צדיק ונשגב – and into that tower of the name of Hashem the righteous will run and find protection.

Now we have to understand this verse a little more fundamentally than we would at first sight because we note that it doesn't say that 'Hashem is a tower of strength'. That's what it should say: 'מגדל עז ה'. No; it says 'מגדל עז שם ה' – the name of Hashem is the tower. It's the name of Hashem that is described as a fortress in which we find shelter.

Just to back that up with another verse: 'אלה בארבע רגלים – These come with their chariots, ואלה בסוסים – and these come with their horses, ואנחנו – and what do we come with? בשם ה'אלהינו נזכיר – with the name of Hashem that we mention (Tehillim 20:8). We proclaim, we make known, the name of Hashem; that's our army, our fortress. And again

we note that it doesn't say Hashem is our power but the name of Hashem.

### Forever With Him

Now that's worth studying because if you'll look through the *kisvei hakodesh*, you're going to discover that the name of Hashem is a recurrent theme. Again and again it mentions the name of Hashem; *sheim Hashem, sheim Hashem*. And so it's worth understanding what it's all about.

And that brings us to the subject of tonight. Hashem's name is not an abstract concept, something to do only with letters and mystical ideas. It's much more than that; it's a way of life. By understanding His name, by thinking into it, that becomes a fortress for you. And the more you put into it, the more it goes into your bones and you become eternalized; you become one with Hashem. That's what it means 'the name of Hashem is a tower of strength', בו – and into that name, ירוץ צדיק – the one who seeks righteousness should run, ונשגב – and he'll remain protected forever because he'll live forever in that name.

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## Holy Identification

Everybody remembers how when Hakadosh Baruch Hu spoke to Moshe Rabbeinu at the burning bush and sent him to the Bnei Yisroel in Mitzrayim, Moshe Rabbeinu asked, “When they will ask me, *מה שמו*, *what’s the name of Hashem*, *מה אמר אליהם* – *what shall I say to them?* (Shemos 3:13).

Now, Hakadosh Baruch Hu had already introduced himself to Moshe: *אֲנֹכִי הָאֱלֹהִים אֲבֹתֶיךָ הָאֱלֹהִים* – ‘*I’m the G-d of your fathers, Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov*,’ so to identify Hakadosh Baruch Hu nothing else was necessary. It’s as clear as could be that the Bnei Yisroel all had the knowledge of the experiences from their forefathers. You see from their names which were full of love of Hashem and praise of Hashem and entreating to Hashem that they understood the greatness of the principles that Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov had inculcated into them.

Look at the list of names; all the names of their children included the name of Hashem. It’s a remarkable thing. *יְקֻוֹתֵי אֱלֹהִים* – ‘*My hope is Hashem*’. *שְׁלוֹמֵי אֱלֹהִים* – ‘*My welfare is Hashem*’. And his father was *צוּרֵי שָׁדַי* – ‘*My rock is Hashem*’. *עַמְּרוֹם* – ‘*The people of the Most High One*’. Even the women were named according to Hashem. *יוֹכָבֵד* – *Hashem is my glory*. And these weren’t names given after some uncle or some grandfather. They were original names; names that breathe *ahavas Hashem* and *yiras Hashem*.

## Getting to Know Him

So what did Moshe Rabbeinu request? What does it mean, ‘What should I tell them when they ask Who is sending me?’

Now pay attention to something very important: To know Hashem’s name means to know Him and that’s the rock bottom of the Torah. The Chovos Halevavos says that. He makes a statement in *Sha’ar Habechinah*; he says your service to Hashem and your love to Hashem depend on how much you know about Him. The

Rambam also, at the end of *Moreh Nevuchim*, explains that our perfection is measured by how much we are aware of the attributes of Hashem.

Because just to say words and to think of who knows what, so you’re directing your thoughts to nothing. *Deveikus* means your mind should cling to Hashem. But you have to know what you’re clinging to; as close as you can approximate, you should be able to come close to Hashem in your mind. Otherwise, you’re clinging to nothing. Or maybe you have certain imaginary pictures in your mind and you’re directing your thoughts to something that’s false.

## A Puppet God

It’s like Mohammed and his god. Because when we have a look at Mohammed’s god we understand that really Mohammed was holding a big puppet. He had a big ragdoll named Allah and that doll was saying everything Mohammed wanted him to say. Mohammed wasn’t a prophet – he was a ventriloquist; he was just throwing his voice through Allah’s mouth.

The Koran after all, that’s what Allah is supposed to be speaking; Mohammed swore that every word came from Allah but what it really meant is that he was holding a big puppet named Allah on his arm and he’s talking into his mouth. “Mohammed! There’s no prophet like Mohammed,” Allah said. But it’s all imagination and *sheker*; the ventriloquist was putting words into the mouth of the puppet.

## A Mamzer God

Now, because I’m an equal opportunity disparager of false gods so I’ll point out that the other one, the Christian one, the one who supposedly never died is the same story. I don’t want to talk in public about what they say about their god but it’s one of the most shameful things in history.

A child was born from a woman who said, “I admit; it’s not from my husband,” and they make

him into a god. It's worse than a puppet god; it's a *mamzer* god.

And so, *lehavdil*, it's not enough to say you have a "Hashem". It depends what you're thinking. You have to *know* Him; you have to know Who you're talking about, Who you're talking to. You must have certain accurate ideas about Hashem.

### **More Than Letters**

Otherwise, what will you think about? Just the word 'Hashem'? *Yud-kei-vav-kei*? So you'll write it on a piece of paper and hold it in front of your eyes: *Yud-kei-vuv-kei*. You'll always picture these words in the air in front of you, *Yud-kei-vav-kei*. It's better than nothing but it's not much better.

There are so many concepts, true concepts, that are included in knowing Hashem, in knowing His name, and the more you know, the more perfect you become. The name becomes your *migdal oz*, your fortress of strength.

Now, we must know that Moshe, our great master, wanted to create a perfect people. He was *ohev Yisroel* and with all of his heart he desired the benefit of the Am Yisroel. And so he wasn't merely satisfied that they should increase and multiply and go out to freedom and enter their own land. That's wonderful but Moshe Rabbeinu wanted them to become as great as he could make them.

### **Moshe our Teacher**

And don't think it's exaggerated because doesn't a father or even a mother from good families intend to make the child the best that they can? So Moshe Rabbeinu who was a father of the Am Yisroel, he loved them with all of his heart and he intended to elevate them to the very highest levels. That was his life ambition.

And so whatever knowledge Moshe Rabbeinu gained from Hakadosh Baruch Hu there's no question that he taught it to the Bnei Yisroel; it's not for nothing he's 'Moshe our Teacher'. For forty years in the wilderness, he did nothing but teach.

And it wasn't only forty years; it continued after that too. They taught it to their children and they to theirs. To this day the teachings of Moshe Rabbeinu are in our blood.

Even *ma'amarei Chazal*, you have to know, came from Moshe Rabbeinu. Mishlei surely came from Moshe Rabbeinu. Only that the ideas and the words weren't formalized in a *sefer*. Later there came a great man, great men, who put them into certain words. But all the teachings and doctrines that our nation possess – and we have a lot of doctrines; if anybody has doctrines, it's the Am Yisrael. We're a nation of teachings – all the philosophy of the mind is found by us – and it all came from our great Teacher, Moshe Rabbeinu, who taught our nation all the Torah ideals and principles.

### **Describe Yourself**

And so, when Hakadosh Baruch Hu broached the subject of redeeming the Am Yisroel and Moshe Rabbeinu asked Hashem for His name to tell the people, he wasn't looking for Hashem's name so he could look Him up in a phone book; he didn't want to know the name in order to use it for something or other. What he wanted was to know how he could approach the Bnei Yisroel now and introduce the subject of Hashem to them in such a manner that they should attain a higher understanding of Hashem. He wanted to know what he could tell them about Hashem that will direct their thoughts towards Him more closely and accurately.

And therefore Moshe Rabbeinu said, "How can I describe You? *Mah shemo*? *Shemo* doesn't mean merely a name; a name means a description. "How can I describe You to them?"

וַיֹּאמֶר לְאֱלֹקִים אֵל מִשֶּׁה - And Hashem said to Moshe, "Here's what you should say: אֲהִי־הָ אֲשֶׁר אֲהִי־הָ - I shall be what I shall be. That's My name."

Now, there is very much depth in those words, in that name. Very very much! And when Moshe Rabbeinu gained this great knowledge that was



said in these words he didn't keep it to himself; he gave it over to the people. And he didn't just say the words like a *ba'al korei* reads the words in the *beis hakenesses*; Moshe Rabbeinu explained it to them. He taught it to the Bnei Yisroel.

### Deep Simplicity

Now, Moshe Rabbeinu's *peirush* was *al pi peshuto*. He didn't invent ideas – some people do that; they don't know what the *possuk* really means so they think up thoughts and say *drashos*. Moshe Rabbeinu was telling them the *omek hapshat*, deeper and deeper; and the people studied this for forty years in the wilderness and they came closer and closer to Hashem thereby. They lived with these thoughts for the forty years in the wilderness and from those ideas that are included in the name, אֱהִי־הָאֱשֶׁר אֱהִי־הָ, our nation became imbued with all the idealism that lives with us today.

Of course, if we're going to make an attempt to study this name, the number one thing to know is that I'm just saying things like a beginner says. But we are fortunate to have our traditions, the ideas, the *peirushim*, that came down to us all the way back from those forty years. And so we must attempt therefore in an *ofan pashut* – without going into imaginary *peirushim* – to understand in the most simple manner what they understood: What does this name signify? And the more you know, the more you can spend your life in the *migdal oz*, the strong fortress, of the *sheim Hashem*, of Hashem's name.

## Part II. His Towering Presence

### You Can't Know Me

And so we begin now on our endeavor to know Hashem by means of His name, אֱהִי־הָאֱשֶׁר אֱהִי־הָ.

'I will be what I will be' means, first of all, that you won't know Me. You want to know My name, My description? The first thing to know is that you'll never know Me in this world. 'I shall be what I shall be' means "Make no error; don't make any

mistake about it – you'll never discover Me while you're in this world. You'll keep searching and understanding more and more but 'I will be what I will be.'" A man in his life will never discover the truth of Hashem.

And the reason is because just like a stone cannot tune in to airwaves that are being transmitted from a radio station – a stone doesn't have any apparatus to catch the sounds moving through the air. And even if it did, it doesn't have any ears; ears are even more complicated than the radio apparatus.

So for a stone to hear the radio, it's impossible. And that's how much it's impossible for a person who lives in the flesh to have any concept of Hakadosh Baruch Hu that approaches reality. לֹא יִרְאֵנִי הָאָדָם וְחַי – You cannot see Me while you're alive (Shemos 33:20). After you die then it's a different story but as long as you're enclosed in the *batei chomer*, in the house of clay – that's the body – it's impossible for man to tune in to the truth of Hashem.

So the first thing is, אֱהִי־הָאֱשֶׁר אֱהִי־הָ – whatever I'll tell you about Myself you should know it will be impossible to fully understand. That's the first *peirush*: 'I shall be whatever I shall be.'

### Keep Trying

Now, it doesn't mean that man should desist from searching for knowledge of Hashem. On the contrary, this first *peirush* of the name is a summons to continue forever coming closer and closer to Hashem by learning more and more about Him. 'I will be what I will be' declares that no matter how great is one's wisdom, he has never completed the task of searching for more understanding of the ways of Hashem and His attributes. He must keep understanding until his last breath. וְלִגְדֹלְתוֹ אֵין חֶקֶר – Even though there's no searching out the end of His greatness (Tehillim 145:3), וְגִדֹלְתְךָ אֶסְפְּרֶנָּה – but still I'll continue to speak about Your greatness as much as I can (*ibid.* 6).

Like it says, **לֹא עָלֶיךָ הַמְּלָאכָה לְגַמֵּר** – it's not your duty to learn the whole Torah, **וְלֹא אָתָּה בֶּן חוֹרִין לְבַטֵּל** – but you cannot excuse yourself (Avos 2:16). You can't say, "Well, since I can't learn the whole Torah, I won't bother to know Shas." No! You have to bother as much as you can. And so, even though you'll never know the truth about Hashem, but as much as you can you have to endeavor all your life to know. Exactly how, that's a separate subject; it's not our subject now. It's a lifetime of study, a lifetime of understanding, **וְלֹא אָתָּה בֶּן חוֹרִין לְבַטֵּל** **מִמְּנָה**.

And so **אֲהֵיָה אֲשֶׁר אֲהֵיָה** means, keep at it! Because that will be your greatness; it'll be your *migdal oz*, your tower of strength. In this world you'll find your greatness in that name and then after you leave this place all of that understanding you worked to achieve – all of 'I will be what I will be' – will be understood by you in ways that you can't even imagine now. Because in the Next World you'll get the apparatus and tools to understand fully.

### Dummies at the U.N.

It's like coming to the U.N., *lehavdil*. I once went to the U.N. many years ago, when I was a young man. I wasted some time and I sat down in the visitors' gallery. Now, I didn't know any Russian or French but they had there earphones that you can dial in to any language you want. You understand English? Dial English and all their words will come into your ears in English. The Chinaman is talking Chinese, but you hear it in English. You want to hear it in French? Press the French button. Russian? Press the Russian button.

But it only works if you have the earphones. If you have the earphones, you can understand what's going on. Without them you sit there like a dummy.

Olam Haba is the same thing. You need earphones to enjoy Olam Haba. **צְדִיקִים יוֹשְׁבִים** **וְעֵטְרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרֹאשֵׁיהֶם** – *The righteous sit in the Next World and they're wearing crowns on their heads,*

**וְהֵנִיחַם מִזִּיּוֹ הַשְּׂכִינָה** – *and they are delighting in the splendor of the Shechinah* (Brachos 17a). You need a crown on your head to appreciate Olam Haba.

And what's the crown, says the Rambam? **לְפִי הַדַּעַת שֶׁקָּנִינוּ** – According to the *daas* you acquired in this world, that's your crown in Olam Haba. In the U.N. they furnish earphones but in the Next World you have to bring your own earphones along. And you get it by practicing up studying Hashem, thinking about Him, in this world. The earphones are whatever *daas* you acquired in this world; that's the fortress of His name where you can find your protection. 'I will be' means 'Keep seeking Me because it's never ending. And the more you do, the more you'll have forever.'

### Unlock the Secret of Existence

Now we come to another *peirush* in **אֲהֵיָה אֲשֶׁר אֲהֵיָה**. It's connected; it's a complementary *peirush*. If the charge of **אֲהֵיָה אֲשֶׁר אֲהֵיָה** is to seek Hashem and to understand Him, *kiv'yachol*, then the second *pshat* in that name is one of the keys for unlocking the secret for *how* we seek Him. Because **אֲהֵיָה אֲשֶׁר אֲהֵיָה** means that the first thing to think about as you make your way through this world is that wherever you look, you're looking at Him.

I'll explain that. "You want to know about Me?" Hashem says. "You want to study Me? The first thing to know is that the world came into existence and remains in existence because of My command: *Yehi*– It should be. And therefore the whole universe is *ehe-yeh asher ehe-yeh*. Existence is only what I want it to be."

And so if you're going to understand anything about Hashem, you first have to know that the whole existence is Him; there's no being in the world except Him. He is the One Who creates being; He creates existence. He creates reality by willing it into existence.

### The Only Truth

And that means that nothing in the universe has true existence at all. No matter how real the world seems to us, it's only a form of persuasion;

it's an illusion that Hakadosh Baruch Hu planned for His purposes.

That's what the Rambam says at the beginning of *Yad Hachazakah*. There's only One true thing: *Hashem Elokim emes*, says the *navi* (Yirmiyahu 10:10). So the Rambam says it means that *הוא לְבַדּוּ* – *He Alone is true*, *וְאֵין לְאַחַר לְאֵמֶת כְּאֵמֶתוֹ* – *and nothing else is true like He is* (Yesodei HaTorah 4:1).

*כִּי הוּא אָמַר וַיְהִי* – *Hashem said 'Let it be', and it came into existence* (Tehillim 33:9) means that whatever is in the world is only because Hashem's word is upholding it. If He wishes He could withdraw His word and the whole universe would fall back not into *tohu vavohu* – it would fall back into *ayin*. *Ayin* means nothing at all!

### **Nuclear Power**

Now, it could be it's not so easy for us to understand that but the truth is that even if a person went to college and had his mind corrupted by the educators, what do they teach him there? They teach him that at the beginning you didn't have any animals, you didn't have any plants; at the beginning there were just atoms.

And even atoms, they say, were the result of a great deal of development. An atom is a very organized and complicated matter; it's more complicated than a computer. So they have to say that at the beginning there were no atoms. What *was* there? So they say that at the beginning there was some kind of energy.

And so you see that they are *modeh*, they have to admit that there was something even before atoms, before matter. And then, by some queer accident, the energy became organized into certain energy particles that revolved around a nucleus in a certain organized way and that made an atom.

### **They Just Don't Understand**

"Somehow, in ways we do not yet understand," they say, "the energy started bumping into each other and finally it got tired of this disorderly

conduct and they became organized together, made a union, and they became now an atom."

So why do we have to listen to these dreamers who are manufacturing accidents from nothing? They don't understand but we do because the Torah tells us the truth. It was *ayin*, it was nothing, until *וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי* , until Elokim said 'Yehi' (Bereishis 1:3,6,14).

Now Elokim is *alef lamed*, *א-ל*, which means energy. *Kel* means power, energy. He's not energy of course; He's more than energy. But He's the *source* of energy. And when He said, 'Let there be energy', immediately – without any long period of time – energy became organized in atoms and in molecules; and by His word they became sky and planets and stars and earth and plants and animals. It didn't take long because Hakadosh Baruch Hu is able to make it out of nothing; He's able to organize it into various forms because it's His word and that's all. He said 'Let it be,' and everything came into existence immediately by His command.

And therefore the whole universe is *אֲדֹמָה-הִיא*, *I shall be*, *אֲשֶׁר אֲדֹמָה-הִיא*, *what I shall be*. It means 'Existence shall be whatever I say it shall be. Because it's My word that makes it be.'

### **Raining Cats and Dogs**

That's why the rain that is falling today from the clouds, a year from now it will be something else; it will be grass and fruit and animals. In twenty years it will be transformed into men and women walking on the streets. What are men and women after all? They're 80% rain that came down once from the skies. That's the truth. All of us came down once in the rain. The rain became food that we ate and that water is in us today; so 80% of us came from the skies. And the other 20%? It came in ways that are even more wonderful – it came from the air. We are water and air. A tiny fraction comes from the soil.

That's plain chemistry. There are no secrets about that. The whole scientific world agrees that we come from sunshine, air, carbon dioxide and



water with a minute addition from the earth. How can that happen? How is it that water and sunshine and carbon dioxide combine to make human beings eventually?

It's because Hashem's word will be whatever He wants it to be. Today it's water. Tomorrow it's snow. Another time it's ice. Then it turns to water vapor and steam.

Now we're accustomed to that already but is water vapor and ice the same thing? It's impossible to picture in our minds that they are the same materials. Here is steam and here is ice. Are they the same? They're the same only because of אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה.

### **Magic Tricks of Chemistry**

And the whole universe is the same thing. Salt, let's say. Just like steam and ice are so different, you have to know salt is different from the original materials. Salt is sodium chloride; it's a combination of sodium and chloride. Now sodium is a burning chemical. If you take some sodium, it would burn a hole straight through your stomach down to your shoes. And chloride is a poison gas. So it's a poison and another poison. But when you put them together it becomes table salt, a nutrient, one of the necessities of life.

How does that miracle take place? Because Hashem said so, that's all. אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה. Nobody can explain how poisons become nutrients. אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה – *I shall be whatever I shall be.* I'm the One Who said that chlorine should be a poison gas and I'm the One Who said that sodium is a chemical that burns through all your tissues if you swallow it *chalilah*. And I'm the One Who said that when they combine they become such a potent force in life. Every cell in the body has some salt in it. It's necessary for life to function. It's אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה; everything is only because Hashem wants it to be that way.

### **Hard But True**

It's a hard concept but it's the truest concept and therefore you have to think about it always. I

say 'always'; we can't do it *always* but we can think it over again and again. As we make our way through the world we do it with the understanding that the sidewalk is the *dvar Hashem*. The trees? It's 'I will be what I will be.' The people, the cars, it's all His word.

We can train ourselves to think that way and the more we do it, the more we are running into the fortress of His name. That's what it means to run into the fortress of His name; to make your way through the world with this understanding of Hashem's name, that all around you, there's nothing but Hashem's will. It's all אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה, 'My word shall be whatever I say it shall be.'

## *Part III. The Eternal Tower*

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### **Speaking Forever**

Now, another *peirush* on these words, another room in the fortress we can run into, we should understand as follows: אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה means that everything we do in this world is forever. Hashem says, "I'm going to be what I will be. And because I'm going to be forever, therefore whatever takes place is going to last forever; it's going to be with Me forever."

You know, when you speak kind words to other people, so those words live on in the memory of those whom you speak to, sometimes for many years. I can tell you about myself; I'm ashamed to tell you this story but I remember when I was twelve years old, I bumped into a *galach*. How it happened is a whole story but a *galach* was speaking to me and he said some words of encouragement to me. He didn't really mean it, but he said it anyhow. And to this day I remember what he said. I remember his words exactly.

It's a good idea by the way. Let's say you see a little boy and he's *davening* nicely so you shake his hand and tell him so. He'll be so complimented; you'd be surprised - he'll remember it all his life. Words live on in people's minds.

### **Alive Forever**

But 'I will be what I will be' means much more than that; because even the wisest people's memories go lost sooner or later. With Hakadosh Baruch Hu, however, it's **יִזְכֹּר לְאֱלֹקִים** – *Elokim remembers*; and His remembering is something entirely different. It's alive within His *daas*! The act lives on forever!

That act of you shaking hands with a little boy or you saying kind words to your troubled wife, or anything else, remains forever. It's like a video that never breaks; the tape never wears out.

But a video is only a joke of course; it's only pictures. Your acts are actually forever. Because once Hashem sees it and He records it, it continues with Him, in His Mind; and just as He lives forever, your deeds will live forever with Him. There's no such thing as past tense by Hakadosh Baruch Hu; everything is forever and ever. **אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה** means that there's nothing that's done, that's finished. There's never a stop to any act of a human being. 'I will be what I will be' means that 'I'll be forever and because I'll be forever, therefore whatever you said, whatever you did, even what you thought, will be alive in My Mind forever. In My everlasting Mind it's remembered forever and ever what happened!'

### **Forever In His Mind**

Now that borders a little on *kabbalah*, but that is the truth of the Torah, that there's no past. It's not merely a form of speech. All the things that we think are in the past are actually alive today because to Hakadosh Baruch Hu there's no past.

How long will it last? Maybe a million years? No, more than that. Maybe billions, trillions? No, that's nothing. **בְּרִיךְ הוּא לְעַד וְקַיָּים לְנֵצְחַת**. He lives forever! And we'll be forever like He is forever. Our *maasim* and *dibbur* and *machshavos* will be forever with Him.

Now, that's a *peirush* in Hashem's name that you can never think about enough. Nothing is temporary! Nothing is fleeting! Whatever you do is

forever! Every second of your life in this world becomes eternally valuable because of that name. Everything matters forever because Hashem said, 'I will be what I will be.'

And that's a name of Hashem that those who seek righteousness should take refuge in. Of course, you need a lot of *emunah* to accept that attitude, but that doesn't make it any less true. It's a fundamental attitude, a *yesod* of *yehadus*, a *yesod* of *emunah*, and it's a fortress that everyone is obligated to seek refuge in. Live in that name, that forever fortress; that you'll be in His thoughts and His thoughts are forever.

### **Eternal Promises**

Now, included in Hashem's eternal thoughts are His promises to us. That's absolutely included in **אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה** because it's apparent from Hashem's reply to Moshe, that the Bnei Yisroel wanted to know whether the *Elokei Avosam*, the G-d of their Fathers, had altered His love for them.

And so included in Hashem's response – "Tell them that *Ehe-yeh Asher Ehe-yeh* sent you" – is that just like I am forever, *My principles are forever*. 'I will be what I will be' means that 'My love for the Avos and their descendants will always continue unchanged and whatever I promised is going to take place. If I chose you as My nation, I told your ancestor Avraham Avinu that you will be My nation, so you're My nation forever and ever. And the fact that you're in Mitzrayim, a poor enslaved group in the power of a wealthy and domineering nation and they're utilizing you for *avodas parech* and they look down on you and despise you, that should mean nothing to you because **אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה**. What I promised that's going to happen; just like I will be forever, you will be with Me forever.'

And so when Hashem told Moshe His name, He was giving a *besurah tovah*, good tidings, that it was out of the question that He should ever reject us. And the people were fortified by that. When Moshe Rabbeinu reported back to them with this name, they were fortified forever because it's more



than a *besurah tovah* – it’s an eternal promise that is bound up in the essence of Hashem, in the eternity of Hashem.

### **Fortified Forever**

And so, that name is absolutely a fortress. Because whatever happens, whatever seems to be, the truth is actually that He’s not going to change. The Rambam says that in his Iggeres Teiman. He says there that just as it is impossible that Hakadosh Baruch Hu should stop existing, so it is impossible that we should go lost from the world. It’s included in His existence, in His name.

And the Rambam quotes a *possuk* in Malachi (3:6): **אֲנִי ה' לֹא שֹׁנֵיתִי** – I, Hashem, don’t change. **וְאַתֶּם בְּנֵי יִעֲקֹב לֹא בִלְיָתָם** – and you, the children of Yaakov, will not come to an end.

What’s the connection between the first half of the *possuk* and the second? It means just like I am forever, you are forever. ‘I will forever be what I shall be’ is a declaration that the Am Yisroel is chosen forever because He is forever. When I tell you what I’m going to be, that’s what I’m going to be forever.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn’t change His principles. He doesn’t change His loyalty. If He makes a covenant, **וַיַּעֲמִידָהּ לְיַעֲקֹב לְחֹק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִית**, then it’s an everlasting covenant.

### **Escaping the Promise**

Now that also needs a *peirush* because yes, the Am Yisroel is forever, but you must be part of the Am Yisroel. If someone wants to slip out of the Jewish people and get lost, so if they try they’ll succeed. **הֲבֵא לְטִמְאָ פִּוְתֻחוֹן לּוֹ** – Hakadosh Baruch Hu opens a lot of hatches, escape hatches.

A Jew who moves out, far away from Jewish communities – he doesn’t want to be in a Jewish ghetto, he likes to be among *goyim* – so Hashem says, “Alright, if that’s what you want then **וְאַבְרָתָם בְּגוֹיִם** – You’ll go lost. You like to live in Hawaii? Alright. You’ll have the same *sof* as the Hawaiians.” You want to escape from the Jewish people, there

are a lot of doors! It’s like a big ship at sea and there are a lot of hatches at the side and when they’re open, anybody who is a little reckless can jump out.

### **The Forever Nation**

But there’s always going to be a Jewish people. Even though **הַיְהוָה רְחוֹקֵיךָ יֵאבְדוּ** – those who are far off from You, Hashem, will go lost, but Your people that You have chosen and that are loyal to You will go on forever and ever.

Anyone who remains attached to the Torah nation, even though they’ll do sins and they’ll transgress – human beings are human and many times we do things; maybe we have things wrong with us right now too – but Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, ‘Since you are loyal to Me in general, you’re not going to go lost. I will be what I will be; and just like I’ll be forever, you too will never go lost forever and ever and ever.’

That’s a *midgal oz* if there ever was one! The permanence of Hashem’s principles, that He chose the Avos and will never forsake their children; that we are eternal like Him!

And so the name of Hashem, **אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה**, is absolutely a fortress for us to run to. It’s a name that should be reflected on always because it demonstrates so many ideals that perfect a person’s mind when he’s aware of them and thinks about them.

### **The Treasure Chest Name**

Now the *peirushim* we spoke about tonight are a valuable beginning to the subject. As I said before, these are only simple attitudes of understanding these words. I’m sure that if we had the Rambam here or even the Vilna Gaon they could add deeper commentaries that would take days and days; and of course Moshe Rabbeinu understood it in a way that subsequently nobody was able to understand.

But whatever words we did speak about, they’re absolutely included in what Moshe taught

the Bnei Yisroel; which means that we're thinking along with our forefathers. The same ideals they learned from Moshe Rabbeinu who had received them from Hashem, the thoughts that they were perfecting their minds with, we can do the same thing.

And so, don't be lazy about it. You didn't come here just to hear some words, to be entertained. You have some ideas now what to think; it's a great treasure chest – spend time thinking about them. And once you acquire these thoughts as part of your personality then from time to time in the privacy of your mind you can take out one of these thoughts and think about it. A different time you'll take out a different thought. And that's how you can spend your life in the *midgal oz*, the strong fortress, of the *sheim Hashem*, of Hashem's name.

### Have A Wonderful Shabbos

#### LET'S GET PRACTICAL

##### Knowing His Name

The purpose of Hashem revealing His name to Moshe Rabbeinu was so that we should study the *peirushim* of the name and live with those ideas as much as possible.

This week I will *bli neder* spend two minutes every day reviewing the four *peirushim* that we learned about. 1. That Hashem will forever be what He will be and we cannot possibly understand His ways. 2. That everything, all of existence as we know it is nothing but Him. 3. That He is forever. 4. As a result of that, we, His Chosen People are forever as well.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

441 - Lobbying for His Name | 721 - I Shall Be | 896 - The Eternal Lam  
952 - Forever and Ever | E-260 - You Act Forever

Listen: 718.289.0899 Press 1 for English and 2 for Thursday Night Lectures



**What is the Torah view of capital punishment by secular authorities?**



The Torah view is that it's a wonderful thing. **שִׁפְךָ דָּם** **וְהִאָרַם** – if somebody sheds the blood of a man, **בְּאָרַם** – by means of man, **וְהִשָּׁפַךְ** – his blood should be shed. The Torah says if somebody kills a human being you gentiles shouldn't wait for the Almighty to step in and take revenge. 'Don't wait for Me. I'll be very angry at you. It's your job to shed his blood.' It's an open verse in the Torah. And it's not for Jews alone. It's for everybody; it's one of the *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach*. They must kill murderers. And that's the only way.

How silly it was when they made a conference in Washington about crime and they spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on surveys. Every penny was thrown out in the garbage. They should have spent fifty dollars and they could have had a solution. For fifty dollars they could take a construction worker from Bensonhurst, an Italian construction worker, and take him to Washington and they say, 'Tony what do you say about punishing the murderer?'

Tony hasn't been corrupted by college. He hasn't listened to crazy theories, wacky statistics. All statistics are lies by the way; they're all doctored. So Tony hasn't been deceived. He knows the facts. The way to stop crime is to kill the criminal. That's all.

If you want to stop felonies? So call in Tony again and Tony will say 'What do you mean? You're going to give him color television and balanced meals? No; put him on a rock pile like the good old days.'

Any bum who thinks about a rock pile will think twice about doing a felony. The rock pile is not vacation time. The rock pile is a very difficult life and that's how a criminal is supposed to be treated. A felon has to be treated like a felon. It's crazy otherwise! They're encouraging crime otherwise. It's as simple as could be. The whole liberal establishment has gone crazy today.

And therefore how does the Torah view capital punishment? It's a necessity and without it a country cannot last.  
TAPE # 339 (November 20, 1980)