

Torah Portion: Shemot (Exodus 1:1-6:1)

[The focus of this Torah portion series is family structure and function as revealed in Scripture. I.e., headship, patriarchy, marriage, etc, graduating to understanding community and Israel as a whole. If you have not read other portions up to this point, you may want to as parts build on previous lessons in Torah, available at: <https://natsab.com/torah-portion-series/>]

Exodus begins several generations after Joseph. Israel has grown numerous and the transition from a man, Jacob, to a family of tribes has happened. The formation of Israel as a nation has not yet occurred, because that requires a constitution, something we will see in a couple portions at Mt. Sinai. We can, however, see that the family is tribal and, while under the rod of Pharaoh, is still relying to some degree on the leadership of elders, or tribal patriarchs.

To be very clear, Israel, is at its root a patriarchal tribal family. The context of the Torah, the context of all of Scripture and the context of the future restored Kingdom under the headship of Messiah is a patriarchal tribal family. We have seen this developing through the patriarchs and their leadership in the family. Scripture nowhere teaches or asserts anything other than patriarchal tribes functioning together as a nation according to the covenantal constitution of the Torah. It is this process of development and growth that we will witness and learn from in the coming weeks as the Torah portions transition from historical, as most of Genesis is, to Constitution or Laws, interjected with historical narrative to explain the formative and functional process.

Exodus 1:1 Now these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob; they came each one with his household: 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; 3 Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; 4 Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. 5 All the persons who came from the loins of Jacob were seventy in number, but Joseph was *already* in Egypt. 6 Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. 7 But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them.

The enemy hates patriarchy and hates headship. Just take a look at the world around and the process of history. Particularly in Scripture, the attack is most often against the seed and we see this tactic employed against Israel by Pharaoh.

Exodus 1:8 Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9 He said to his people, "Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we. 10 Come, let us deal wisely with them, or else they will multiply and in the event of war, they will also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us and depart from the land." 11 So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that they were in dread of **the sons of Israel**. 13 The Egyptians compelled **the sons of Israel** to labor rigorously; 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.

15 Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other was named Puah; 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."

While indeed, the whole of the people bear the burden, the attack is against the sons. It is the sons who bear the seed, carry the leadership and headship responsibility and become the patriarchs. To destroy the people, the enemy goes after the seed. Consider the cultural attack on men today. The enemy's tactic is more subtle, but the attempt to emasculate men and destroy their position of leadership and responsibility through various means has not changed. And, for the restoration of Israel, it is necessary for men to be restored to leadership and headship.

From the creation of Adam, we have seen over and over that God deals primarily with man, and it is man's responsibility to lead and teach his family. Remember, **I Corinthians 11:3** But I want you to understand that Messiah is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Messiah..... 7 For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. 8 For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; 9 for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.

Please pay attention as we move forward in the Torah. The commandments, with only one exception that I know of, are written to and given to the men, the sons of Israel. Each son/man then, like Adam, is responsible to teach and lead those under his authority. Man is the image and glory of God while woman is the image and glory of man. Each family is a microcosm of Eden and the nation as a whole, under the headship of Messiah, is also a microcosm of Eden.

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Messiah also is the head of the

congregation, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. 24 But as the congregation is subject to Messiah, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.....32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Messiah and the congregation. 33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she reverences her husband.

This is not a popular thing to say or teach, but it is rock solid truth that must be understood and entered into if we are to walk out Torah correctly. Families cannot and will not function properly without the man leading. As a people, we will not be restored and function properly without MEN leading. Male headship and leadership is imperative for a patriarchal tribal nation to be restored.

Make no mistake, women are valuable and are to be treated with love and honor. God demands such and any man that walks as the Messiah will love and honor the women under his headship. At the same time, we need to be sparkling clear, God's order is for men to lead women, not the other way around. Witness the entire testimony of Scripture. This brings us back to the main point that Israel is a patriarchal tribe and the nation is firmly established on the headship and leadership of men.

We must now move forward and begin considering Moses.

Exodus chapter 2 covers 80 years in very short order. Without waxing eloquent on arks and sheep, we can quickly understand that God is not quick or easy in his preparation of a man to lead. Often, the journey of preparation can be long and arduous with many lessons and pitfalls. Moses' is no exception.

After forty years of education and leadership skills in the court of Pharaoh, he gains another forty years of experience with fickle sheep in the wilderness of Midian. He may not have understood the lessons and path that God had him on, but God certainly did and was intentional in every step.

Men, patriarchal leaders, must understand that the position and responsibility is not inherited or bestowed. While acknowledgment from others and approval from other leaders helps to affirm him, the patriarch will earn his place, through experience, study, reflection, and God's direction. Further, in many circumstances, he will have a specific call from God. Even then, God may need to give him a push into the positions with the heaviest burden. Moses receives such a push in Exodus 3 as the Angel of the Lord grabs his attention from the midst of the burning bush, then proceeds to give very clear instruction and direction. Moses will function as a type of kinsman redeemer and an archetype of the Messiah (Deu. 18:15-18).

God specifically instructs Moses to,

Exodus 3:16 Go and gather **the elders of Israel** together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt. **17** So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'"

18 They will pay heed to what you say; and you with **the elders of Israel** will come to the king of Egypt and you will say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, please, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'

Patriarchal headship. Elders are patriarchs.

In Christendom, we were taught to elect or appoint elders leading us to view an elder as holding an office or position, but this is not the testimony of the Torah. Over and over in Scripture we see that the elders are the ones who sit in the city gates and act as judges and wise counsel for the city or community. They are the ones that are aged, the 'old,' who have the wisdom and leadership, the patriarchs, heads and leaders of families. 'Elder' is not an office they hold but who/what they are.

This leads to a thought that needs to be strongly considered. Was Paul instituting something new when he appointed, or instructed to be appointed, elders? Or, was Paul acting in a pragmatic temporary way until the new believers could begin to walk in patriarchal communities and grow/raise up elders, patriarchs to lead those communities of grafted in Israelites? As I study more deeply the patriarchal structure of Israel and the underlying family/marriage structure clearly taught in Torah, I see more and more that Paul was intentional in not only supporting but teaching these things both directly and indirectly (between the lines) in his letters written to those of the scattered house of Israel returning to the covenant. (I maintain, patriarchy and patriarchal leadership must be restored for the proper and full restoration of the whole house of Israel!)

[Currently researching a very interesting 'find' concerning Zipporah's circumcision of Gershom that may alter general thoughts on this passage...Tune in later for update, or see the Kindle/hardcopy edition when these notes are compiled into a

book...]

Exodus 4:28 Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD with which He had sent him, and all the signs that He had commanded him *to do*. **29** Then Moses and Aaron went and **assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel**; **30** and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. **31** So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped.

Moses and Aaron address the elders. This confirms again that Israel had a leadership structure in place even though they were in bondage. They already functioned as families, clans, and tribes. Unlike today's disparate Messianics, scattered across the planet, who seem content to not congeal into a people and learn to walk in community, Israel was functioning as a family and as tribes while in exile. This begs the question, when will we cease trying to form 'top down governments' or simply be disassociative with everyone with whom we disagree? When will we begin to walk with the brothers and sisters around us as family and function as small communities and enclaves to learn the humility of dwelling in peace and unity while the Father gathers us into communities? Must we wait for the hunters (Jer. 16:16) and the crucible of tribulation?

Leadership is hard. Often the Almighty asks us to do hard things. Addressing Pharaoh had to be a rather fearsome thing for Moses to do! Imagine, for example, being a nobody in Bolivia and going to the President of the United States and demanding that all of _____ people group (not necessarily hispanic, just creating

an example) be released, with resources in hand, to leave the country! This would be particularly impactful if the US was dependent on the _____ labor force for economic welfare. Moses needed some kind of serious spine to make demands of the most powerful man on the planet at that time. Yet, generally speaking, this is exactly the type of job God created man to do!

Exodus 5 And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let My people go that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness.'" **2** But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and besides, I will not let Israel go." **3** Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, otherwise He will fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."

Israel had been in Egypt, by some counting, for 283 years. Now, suddenly, their Mouthpiece is demanding that they be released. Predictably, Pharaoh was not happy and their burden was about to grow. But, so was that of Moses!!

Pharaoh required the Israelites to begin producing their own straw as well as make the bricks, so the foremen of the sons of Israel cried out to Pharaoh who blamed the increased work on Moses.

19 The foremen of the sons of Israel saw that they were in trouble because they were told, "You must not reduce *your* daily amount of bricks." **20** When they left Pharaoh's presence, they met Moses and Aaron as they were waiting for them. **21** They said to them, "May the LORD look upon you and judge *you*, for you have made us odious in Pharaoh's sight and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us."

Previously we noted that ‘leadership is hard,’ and now we see just how hard it can be. It is not enough that Moses has to face the ire of Pharaoh, particularly as the plagues wear on, but here he has to face the wrath of his own people! Most leaders called to hard places will stand in this very dark place at one point or another. It is a challenging chasm filled with questions and an open place of attack from the enemy. Doubt, depression, and rejection are often the companion of leadership. Moses here experiences that on multiple occasions throughout the Torah. Predictably, the Father has prepared him for this and as we will see over and over, the Almighty is big enough to accept Moses’ concerns, frustrations and even anger at times. (Only disobedience is not allowed as we will see in the future.)

22 Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, “O Lord, why have You brought harm to this people? Why did You ever send me? **23** Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people, and You have not delivered Your people at all.”

The final phrase is a bit humorous to me. I recognize a ‘microwave mentality’ in our generation, but I guess Moses was expecting great and mighty actions immediately. Truthfully, God often takes His time and has many purposes involved in His sequence or course of action. In the case of Pharaoh and God’s destruction of Egypt, the process will take months or more.

Leaders are often visionaries or men of great faith. Moses knew that God had declared the people would stand at Mount Sinai (3:12). This led to the faith and vision that would often press him forward even when the circumstances looked bleak. As a type of kinsman redeemer, he walks in a similar role as Joseph. He is

faced with adversity, both from his brothers and from Egypt yet he stays the course by faith. He is led by God and walks according to the vision he has been given, direct commands from the Almighty, and leads. He will find himself in this challenging chasm over and over for the next forty years!! Always, it is God who reveals Himself and exalts Himself, while Moses remains a humble servant.

6 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for under compulsion he will let them go, and under compulsion he will drive them out of his land."

Israel will enter a crucible of tribulation, then they will be surrounded by a hedge of protection. Moses will lead the way by his own faith and action ahead of the people. Patriarchs lead. Patriarchs walk where others fear to go. Patriarchs accept the challenges God asks of them, even if at times reluctantly. Moses typifies our Messiah and is an example for aspiring leaders and patriarchs to follow.

Paul walked a similar journey that was terribly hard. How often was he stoned and left for dead? Beaten with rods? Rejected by the very people he was seeking to save? Attacked, tried, and imprisoned by the powers that be?

Near the beginning of this portion, I quoted 1 Corinthians 11:3ff. Two verses before, Paul says,

1 Corinthians 11 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

Throughout Scripture there are examples of men who are leaders and walk the path of patriarchs, whether physical or spiritual (as in the case of Paul), for the

glory of God and the sake of Israel. May we do the same.

There is much more to consider in this portion regarding patriarchy, headship, and leadership, but this will be all the meat served up in this commentary. As always, many thanks to Jeremy, Robin, Paul and Milo for comments, corrections, input and thoughts that contribute to this growing body of work.

Shabbat Shalom!!