

Va-Era

Exodus 6:2-9:35

This translation was taken from the JPS Tanakh

² God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am the Lord. ³ I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai, but I did not make Myself known to them by My name YHVH. ⁴ I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. ⁵ I have now heard the moaning of the Israelites because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. ⁶ Say, therefore, to the Israelite people: I am the Lord. I will free you from the labors of the Egyptians and deliver you from their bondage. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary chastisements. ⁷ And I will take you to be My people, and I will be your God. And you shall know that I, the Lord, am your God who freed you from the labors of the Egyptians. ⁸ I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession, I the Lord." ⁹ But when Moses told this to the Israelites, they would not listen to Moses, their spirits crushed by cruel bondage.

¹⁰ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹¹ "Go and tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the Israelites depart from his land." ¹² But Moses appealed to the Lord, saying, "The Israelites would not listen to me; how then should Pharaoh heed me, a man of impeded speech!" ¹³ So the Lord spoke to both Moses and Aaron in regard to the Israelites and Pharaoh king of Egypt, instructing them to deliver the Israelites from the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ The following are the heads of their respective clans.

The sons of Reuben, Israel's first-born: Enoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi; those are the families of Reuben. ¹⁵ The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Saul the son of a Canaanite woman; those are the families of Simeon. ¹⁶ These are the names of Levi's sons by their lineage: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari; and the span of Levi's life was 137 years. ¹⁷ The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, by their families. ¹⁸ The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel; and the span of Kohath's life was 133 years. ¹⁹ The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites by their lineage.

²⁰ Amram took to wife his father's sister Jochebed, and she bore him Aaron and Moses; and the span of Amram's life was 137 years. ²¹ The sons of Izhar: Korah,

Nepheg, and Zichri. ²² The sons of Uzziel: Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri. ²³ Aaron took to wife Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ²⁴ The sons of Korah: Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. Those are the families of the Korahites. ²⁵ And Aaron's son Eleazar took to wife one of Putiel's daughters, and she bore him Phinehas. Those are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites by their families.

²⁶ It is the same Aaron and Moses to whom the Lord said, "Bring forth the Israelites from the land of Egypt, troop by troop." ²⁷ It was they who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt to free the Israelites from the Egyptians; these are the same Moses and Aaron. ²⁸ For when the Lord spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt ²⁹ and the Lord said to Moses, "I am the Lord; speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I will tell you," ³⁰ Moses appealed to the Lord, saying, "See, I am of impeded speech; how then should Pharaoh heed me!"

Chapter 7

¹ The Lord replied to Moses, "See, I place you in the role of God to Pharaoh, with your brother Aaron as your prophet. ² You shall repeat all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh to let the Israelites depart from his land. ³ But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that I may multiply My signs and marvels in the land of Egypt. ⁴ When Pharaoh does not heed you, I will lay My hand upon Egypt and deliver My ranks, My people the Israelites, from the land of Egypt with extraordinary chastisements. ⁵ And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out My hand over Egypt and bring out the Israelites from their midst." ⁶ This Moses and Aaron did; as the Lord commanded them, so they did. ⁷ Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three, when they made their demand on Pharaoh.

⁸ The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ⁹ "When Pharaoh speaks to you and says, 'Produce your marvel,' you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and cast it down before Pharaoh.' It shall turn into a serpent." ¹⁰ So Moses and Aaron came before Pharaoh and did just as the Lord had commanded: Aaron cast down his rod in the presence of Pharaoh and his courtiers, and it turned into a serpent. ¹¹ Then Pharaoh, for his part, summoned the wise men and the sorcerers; and the Egyptian magicians, in turn, did the same with their spells; ¹² each cast down his rod, and they turned into serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed their rods. ¹³ Yet Pharaoh's heart stiffened and he did not heed them, as the Lord had said.

¹⁴ And the Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh is stubborn; he refuses to let the people go.

¹⁵ Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is coming out to the water, and station

yourself before him at the edge of the Nile, taking with you the rod that turned into a snake. ¹⁶ And say to him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you to say, "Let My people go that they may worship Me in the wilderness." But you have paid no heed until now. ¹⁷ Thus says the Lord, "By this you shall know that I am the Lord." See, I shall strike the water in the Nile with the rod that is in my hand, and it will be turned into blood; ¹⁸ and the fish in the Nile will die. The Nile will stink so that the Egyptians will find it impossible to drink the water of the Nile.'"

¹⁹ And the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron: Take your rod and hold out your arm over the waters of Egypt — its rivers, its canals, its ponds, all its bodies of water — that they may turn to blood; there shall be blood throughout the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and stone." ²⁰ Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord commanded: he lifted up the rod and struck the water in the Nile in the sight of Pharaoh and his courtiers, and all the water in the Nile was turned into blood ²¹ and the fish in the Nile died. The Nile stank so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile; and there was blood throughout the land of Egypt. ²² But when the Egyptian magicians did the same with their spells, Pharaoh's heart stiffened and he did not heed them — as the Lord had spoken. ²³ Pharaoh turned and went into his palace, paying no regard even to this. ²⁴ And all the Egyptians had to dig round about the Nile for drinking water, because they could not drink the water of the Nile.

²⁵ When seven days had passed after the Lord struck the Nile, ²⁶ the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: Let My people go that they may worship Me. ²⁷ If you refuse to let them go, then I will plague your whole country with frogs. ²⁸ The Nile shall swarm with frogs, and they shall come up and enter your palace, your bedchamber and your bed, the houses of your courtiers and your people, and your ovens and your kneading bowls. ²⁹ The frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your courtiers.'"

Chapter 8

¹ And the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron: Hold out your arm with the rod over the rivers, the canals, and the ponds, and bring up the frogs on the land of Egypt." ² Aaron held out his arm over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. ³ But the magicians did the same with their spells, and brought frogs upon the land of Egypt.

⁴ Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Plead with the Lord to remove the frogs from me and my people, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the Lord." ⁵ And Moses said to Pharaoh, "You may have this triumph over me: for

what time shall I plead in behalf of you and your courtiers and your people, that the frogs be cut off from you and your houses, to remain only in the Nile?" ⁶ "For tomorrow," he replied. And [Moses] said, "As you say — that you may know that there is none like the Lord our God; ⁷ the frogs shall retreat from you and your courtiers and your people; they shall remain only in the Nile." ⁸ Then Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh's presence, and Moses cried out to the Lord in the matter of the frogs which He had inflicted upon Pharaoh. ⁹ And the Lord did as Moses asked; the frogs died out in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields. ¹⁰ And they piled them up in heaps, till the land stank. ¹¹ But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he became stubborn and would not heed them, as the Lord had spoken.

¹² Then the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron: Hold out your rod and strike the dust of the earth, and it shall turn to lice throughout the land of Egypt." ¹³ And they did so. Aaron held out his arm with the rod and struck the dust of the earth, and vermin came upon man and beast; all the dust of the earth turned to lice throughout the land of Egypt. ¹⁴ The magicians did the like with their spells to produce lice, but they could not. The vermin remained upon man and beast; ¹⁵ and the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God!" But Pharaoh's heart stiffened and he would not heed them, as the Lord had spoken.

¹⁶ And the Lord said to Moses, "Early in the morning present yourself to Pharaoh, as he is coming out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: Let My people go that they may worship Me. ¹⁷ For if you do not let My people go, I will let loose swarms of insects against you and your courtiers and your people and your houses; the houses of the Egyptians, and the very ground they stand on, shall be filled with swarms of insects. ¹⁸ But on that day I will set apart the region of Goshen, where My people dwell, so that no swarms of insects shall be there, that you may know that I the Lord am in the midst of the land. ¹⁹ And I will make a distinction between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall come to pass.'" ²⁰ And the Lord did so. Heavy swarms of insects invaded Pharaoh's palace and the houses of his courtiers; throughout the country of Egypt the land was ruined because of the swarms of insects.

²¹ Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Go and sacrifice to your God within the land." ²² But Moses replied, "It would not be right to do this, for what we sacrifice to the Lord our God is untouchable to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice that which is untouchable to the Egyptians before their very eyes, will they not stone us! ²³ So we must go a distance of three days into the wilderness and sacrifice to the

Lord our God as He may command us." ²⁴ Pharaoh said, "I will let you go to sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; but do not go very far. Plead, then, for me." ²⁵ And Moses said, "When I leave your presence, I will plead with the Lord that the swarms of insects depart tomorrow from Pharaoh and his courtiers and his people; but let not Pharaoh again act deceitfully, not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord."

²⁶ So Moses left Pharaoh's presence and pleaded with the Lord. ²⁷ And the Lord did as Moses asked: He removed the swarms of insects from Pharaoh, from his courtiers, and from his people; not one remained. ²⁸ But Pharaoh became stubborn this time also, and would not let the people go.

Chapter 9

¹ The Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews: Let My people go to worship Me. ² For if you refuse to let them go, and continue to hold them, ³ then the hand of the Lord will strike your livestock in the fields — the horses, the asses, the camels, the cattle, and the sheep — with a very severe pestilence. ⁴ But the Lord will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of the Egyptians, so that nothing shall die of all that belongs to the Israelites. ⁵ The Lord has fixed the time: tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the land.'" ⁶ And the Lord did so the next day: all the livestock of the Egyptians died, but of the livestock of the Israelites not a beast died. ⁷ When Pharaoh inquired, he found that not a head of the livestock of Israel had died; yet Pharaoh remained stubborn, and he would not let the people go.

⁸ Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Each of you take handfuls of soot from the kiln, and let Moses throw it toward the sky in the sight of Pharaoh. ⁹ It shall become a fine dust all over the land of Egypt, and cause an inflammation breaking out in boils on man and beast throughout the land of Egypt." ¹⁰ So they took soot of the kiln and appeared before Pharaoh; Moses threw it toward the sky, and it caused an inflammation breaking out in boils on man and beast. ¹¹ The magicians were unable to confront Moses because of the inflammation, for the inflammation afflicted the magicians as well as all the other Egyptians. ¹² But the Lord stiffened the heart of Pharaoh, and he would not heed them, just as the Lord had told Moses.

¹³ The Lord said to Moses, "Early in the morning present yourself to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews: Let My people go to worship Me. ¹⁴ For this time I will send all My plagues upon your person, and your courtiers, and your people, in order that you may know that there is none like Me in all the

world. ¹⁵ I could have stretched forth My hand and stricken you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been effaced from the earth. ¹⁶ Nevertheless I have spared you for this purpose: in order to show you My power, and in order that My fame may resound throughout the world. ¹⁷ Yet you continue to thwart My people, and do not let them go! ¹⁸ This time tomorrow I will rain down a very heavy hail, such as has not been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. ¹⁹ Therefore, order your livestock and everything you have in the open brought under shelter; every man and beast that is found outside, not having been brought indoors, shall perish when the hail comes down upon them!" ²⁰ Those among Pharaoh's courtiers who feared the Lord's word brought their slaves and livestock indoors to safety; ²¹ but those who paid no regard to the word of the Lord left their slaves and livestock in the open.

²² The Lord said to Moses, "Hold out your arm toward the sky that hail may fall on all the land of Egypt, upon man and beast and all the grasses of the field in the land of Egypt." ²³ So Moses held out his rod toward the sky, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire streamed down to the ground, as the Lord rained down hail upon the land of Egypt. ²⁴ The hail was very heavy — fire flashing in the midst of the hail — such as had not fallen on the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. ²⁵ Throughout the land of Egypt the hail struck down all that were in the open, both man and beast; the hail also struck down all the grasses of the field and shattered all the trees of the field. ²⁶ Only in the region of Goshen, where the Israelites were, there was no hail.

²⁷ Thereupon Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron and said to them, "I stand guilty this time. The Lord is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. ²⁸ Plead with the Lord that there may be an end of God's thunder and of hail. I will let you go; you need stay no longer." ²⁹ Moses said to him, "As I go out of the city, I shall spread out my hands to the Lord; the thunder will cease and the hail will fall no more, so that you may know that the earth is the Lord's. ³⁰ But I know that you and your courtiers do not yet fear the Lord God." — ³¹ Now the flax and barley were ruined, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud; ³² but the wheat and the emmer were not hurt, for they ripen late. — ³³ Leaving Pharaoh, Moses went outside the city and spread out his hands to the Lord: the thunder and the hail ceased, and no rain came pouring down upon the earth. ³⁴ But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he became stubborn and reverted to his guilty ways, as did his courtiers. ³⁵ So Pharaoh's heart stiffened and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the Lord had foretold through Moses.

