

The God Who Hears, Sees, and Knows

Torah Portion: Exodus 1:1–6:1

Focus Texts: Exodus 2:23–25; 3:7–12

Haftarah: Isaiah 27:6–28:13

Ketuvim HaNotsrim: Acts 7:17–34; Luke 1:68–75; Hebrews 2:14–18

Introduction: Redemption Begins Before Deliverance

1) Parashat Shemot does not begin with miracles, plagues, or confrontation

with Pharaoh. It begins with **silence**, **suffering**, and **waiting**. Israel is

enslaved. Generations pass. The promises to Abraham seem distant. Yet,

before God acts publicly, the Torah emphasizes something far more

foundational:

2) “And God heard... and God remembered... and God saw... and God knew.”

(Exodus 2:24–25)

3) Redemption begins not with visible power, but with **divine awareness**

rooted in covenant faithfulness.

Main Discussion

I. “THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL GROANED” – THE CRY THAT PRECEDES

REDEMPTION - EXODUS 2:23

“The sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out...”

A. The Hebrew Verbs Here Are Deliberate And Cumulative.

B. Hebrew Word Study

1. **אָנָה** (ʾānah) – “to groan, sigh deeply”

- a) Not a formal prayer
- b) A word associated with pain that cannot yet be articulated
- c) God responds even before words are fully formed

2. **זָעַק** (zāʿaq) – “to cry out for help”

- a) Used in legal and covenantal contexts
- b) Often the cry of the oppressed toward a higher authority

c) This is the same verb used for victims of injustice in Torah law

3. Israel does not yet pray with clarity—but God responds to **anguish itself**.

II. FOUR VERBS THAT REVEAL GOD’S COVENANT CHARACTER -

EXODUS 2:24–25

(The Torah uses four verbs to describe God’s response. Each one is
theologically loaded)

A. “**God Heard**” – וַיִּשְׁמָע אֱלֹהִים (Vayyishma‘ Elohim)

שָׁמַע (shama‘)

1. More than hearing sound

2. Includes **attention, response, and obedience to covenant obligation**

3. God is not merely aware—He is **engaging**.

4. In Torah thought, to “hear” is to be moved to action.

B. “**God Remembered** His Covenant” – וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים (Vayyizkor Elohim)

זָכַר (zakhar)

1. Not recalling forgotten information
2. Acting in faithfulness to a prior commitment
3. God remembers:
 - a) His covenant with **Abraham**
 - b) Confirmed to **Isaac**
 - c) Reaffirmed to **Jacob**
4. Israel’s redemption is grounded not in Israel’s righteousness, but in **God’s covenant fidelity.**

C. “**God Saw**” – וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים (Vayyar Elohim)

רָאָה (ra’ah)

1. Seeing with understanding and concern
2. The same root used in Genesis 16 when Hagar declares:

3. “You are El Roi—the God who sees me”

4. God sees **systems of oppression**, not merely individual pain.

D. “**God Knew**” – וַיֵּדַע אֱלֹהִים (Vayyēda‘ Elohim)

יָדַע (yada‘)

1. The most intimate verb in Biblical Hebrew

2. Used for covenant relationship, not data collection

3. This is **relational knowledge**, not detached awareness.

E. God Hears The Cry, Remembers The Covenant, Sees The Affliction, And

Knows His People **from within the relationship**.

III. “I HAVE SURELY SEEN” – GOD SPEAKS FROM THE FIRE

EXODUS 3:7–8

A. At The Burning Bush, God Restates What Was Already True In Exodus

2—But Now He speaks it aloud.

1. “I have surely seen the affliction of My people...
2. I have heard their cry...
3. I know their sufferings.”

B. The Burning Bush Is A Theological Image:

1. Fire = divine presence
2. Bush not consumed = suffering without annihilation

C. God Is Present In Affliction, Not Distant From It.

**IV. HAFTARAH CONNECTION: ISAIAH 27–28 – DISCIPLINE, NOT
ABANDONMENT**

A. Key Themes From The Haftarah

1. Israel’s Affliction Has Purpose
 - a. Isaiah 27:7–9 — discipline, not destruction
 - b. God strikes in measure, not rage

2. The Same Covenant Faithfulness

- a. Israel will “take root, blossom, and fill the world with fruit” (27:6)
- b. Echoes the multiplication theme of Shemot 1

3. Hearing vs. Refusing to Hear

- a. Isaiah 28 warns leaders who refuse instruction
- b. Contrast: God hears Israel’s cry, but leaders refuse God’s voice

B. Link To Shemot: God Hears The Oppressed, Even When Human

Authorities Do Not.

V. KETUVIM HANOTSRIM: CONTINUITY, NOT REPLACEMENT

ACTS 7:17–34 (STEPHEN’S SPEECH)

A. Stephen Explicitly Frames The Exodus As:

1. Covenant-driven

2. God-initiated

3. Long before Moses acts

B. “I Have Surely Seen The Oppression Of My People...

I have heard their groaning...” (Acts 7:34)

C. This Is A Direct Citation Of Exodus Theology—Not A Reinterpretation.

D. Luke 1:68–75 (Zechariah’s Prophecy)

1. Zechariah praises God for:

a) Remembering His holy covenant

b) The oath sworn to Abraham

E. This Is Exodus Language Applied Forward, Not Replaced.

F. Hebrews 2:14–18

1. Yehoshua is portrayed as:

a) One who **enters suffering**

b) One who **knows affliction**

c) One who helps those oppressed by fear of death

2. This reflects the same divine pattern

3. God does not redeem from afar—He redeems from within history.

VI. APPLICATION FOR THE COMMUNITY

A. God Hears Groans Before Prayers

B. Waiting Is Not Abandonment

C. Covenant Faithfulness Precedes Visible Deliverance

D. Leadership Flows From Compassion, Not Ambition

E. Torah Obedience Follows Redemption—Not The Other Way Around

(Exod. 3:12)

Conclusion

Before Pharaoh is confronted...

Before plagues fall...

Before the sea splits...

God is already:

1. Hearing
2. Remembering
3. Seeing
4. Knowing

Parashat Shemot teaches us that **redemption begins in the heart of God**, long before it appears in history.

Ha Sof