

# Zoom20: Names of God

Source Sheet by Shmuel Veffer

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## LIVE FROM ISRAEL

Special Zoom Study Session  
with Rabbi Shmuel Veffer

### HEBREW NAMES OF GOD

#### *Why are there so many?*

How can the one True God of Israel  
have more than one Name?

What do the Names mean?

Join us for a deep dive

**Wednesday September 2, 2020**

Eastern (EDT)..... 12 Noon

Pacific (PDT)..... 9:00 am

London..... 5:00 pm

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#### Exodus 3:13-14

(13) Moses said to **God**, “When I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘**The God of your fathers** has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”

(14) And God said to Moses, “*Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh*.” He continued, “Thus shall you say to the

#### שמות ג': י"ג-י"ד

(יג) ויאמר משה אל־ה'אלהים הַנִּה אֲנֹכִי בָא  
אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתִּי לָהֶם אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם  
שָׁלַחַנִי אֵלֵיכֶם וְאָמְרוּ־לִי מִה־שְּׁמוֹ מָה אֶמַר אֲלֵהֶם:

(יד) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֲהִיֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיֶּה  
וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲהִיֶּה שָׁלַחַנִי

Israelites, 'Ehyeh sent me to you.'”

אליכם:

**Exodus 3:15**

(15) And **God** said further to Moses, “Thus shall you speak to the Israelites: **The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob**, has sent me to you: This shall be **My name** forever, This My appellation for all eternity.

**שמות ג': ט"ו**

(טו) ויאמר עוד אלהים אל־משה כה־תאמר אל־בני ישראל יהוה אלהי אבותיכם אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב שלתני אליכם זה־שמי לעלם ונה זכרי לדור דר:

**Exodus 6:3**

(3) I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as **El Shaddai**, but I did not make Myself known to them by My name יהוה.

**שמות ו': ג'**

(ג) ואני אל־אברהם אל־יצחק ואל־יעקב בא אל שדי ושמי יהוה לא נודעתי להם:

**Mishneh Torah, Foundations of the Torah 6:2**

(2) There are seven such names:

**משנה תורה, הלכות יסודי התורה ו' ב'**

Tetragrammaton, but written to be pronounced Lord (*YHVH - A-donoi*)

(ב) ושבעה שמות הם השם הנקטב יו"ד ה"א נא"ו ה"א והוא השם המפךש. או הנקטב אדני.

All Powerful; *EL*  
God; *ELO-AH*  
God of the universe; *ELOHIM*  
God of our Fathers; *ELOHAI*  
Almighty; *SHADDAI*  
and Hosts. *TZEVAOT*

ואל.  
אלוה.  
ואלהים.  
ואלהי.  
ושדי.  
וצבאות.



**What's in a Hebrew Name?**

**Genesis 2:19-20**

(19) And the LORD God formed out of the earth all the wild beasts and all the birds of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that would be its name. (20) And the man gave names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to all the wild beasts; but for Adam no fitting helper was found.

**בראשית ב': י"ט-כ'**

(יט) וַיִּצְרֶה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן־הָאֲדָמָה כָּל־תַּיִת הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֵת כָּל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיְבִא אֶל־הָאָדָם לְרְאוֹת מִה־יִּקְרָא־לּוֹ וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא־לּוֹ הָאָדָם גִּפְשׁ תְּהִי הוּא שְׁמוֹ: (כ) וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שְׁמוֹת לְכָל־הַבְּהֵמָה וְלְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלִכְל תַּיִת הַשָּׂדֶה וְלֹא־מָצָא עֹזֵר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ:

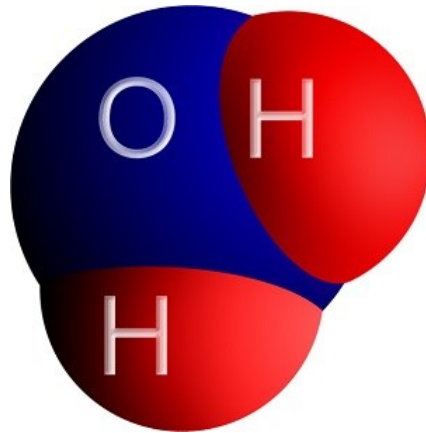
Name

שם

There

שם

**Biblical Hebrew - Lashon HaKodesh - Like Chemistry. Describes the World**



"Water" is an arbitrary label (name) in English.

"H2O" has intrinsic meaning in Chemistry. You cannot call water CO2!

## What is the "Essence" of a Dog?



A dog's main attribute is its unconditional love and loyalty to its master

dog

כֶּלֶב

similar to

כ

a heart

לֵב





Donkey - *Chamor*

*Thanks Patti Davis*

תמור



Camel - *Gamal*

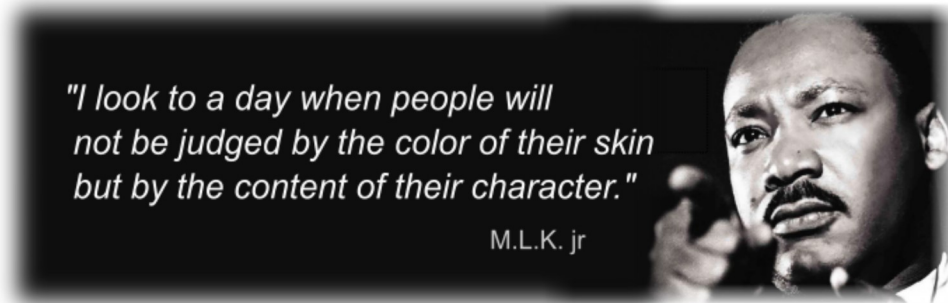
*Thanks Marcia & Lin Applegate*

גמל

*If Hebrew, like Chemistry, describes the essence of the world around us,  
what can it NOT describe?*

Soul - Breath  
Angel - Messenger  
God??

*Neshamah* - נְשָׁמָה  
*Malach* - מַלְאָךְ



### What is the measure of a person?

Measure  
Character Trait

*Middah* - מִידָה  
*Middah* - מִידָה

A person's character is determined by how they relate to the world around them.



### Some of My Names

**Shmuel -- Rabbi Veffor -- Abba -- Reb Shmuel -- Zaida -- Sam -- Rav**

No one name describes my essence. Each name is indicative of the relationship and character traits that manifest in the context of the relationship that I have with the person calling me by that name.

So too with Names of God. No name can reflect the true essence of God. Each name is labeling a "trait" that God is manifesting in our relationship with Him in that context.

Saying a person's name will cause a person to respond and begin behaving in a way that's consistent with that name. There are things a "Sam" might do that a "Rabbi Veffor" would never do.

Never mispronounce a person's name.. you won't get the response you were looking for. When I hear a telemarketer ask me if I'm "Mr Besser," I immediately shut down.



### Names of God - As Attributes of God

א-ל-ה-י-ם

ELOHIM

power **אל**  
Supreme Power  
Behind Nature

Immanent  
Justice/Judgement  
Nature

י-ה-ו-ה

YHVH

was **היה**  
is **הוה**  
will be **יהיה**

Transcendent  
Kindness/Mercy  
Miracles



### A Note on Gender

1. Male/Female - Zachar/Nekevah - Acting-Projecting-Giving/Receiving Nurturing
2. Relationships are masculine or feminine independent of the subject
3. Why are Names of God primarily Masculine?
4. Feminine name for God.
5. Names used in context are a commentary on the verse.



#### Genesis 1:1

(1) When God began to create heaven and earth—

בראשית א':א'

(א) בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

#### Exodus 3

(1) Now Moses, tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, drove the flock

שמות ג'

(א) וּמֹשֶׁה הָיָה רֹעֵה אֶת־צֹאן יִתְרוֹ חֹתֵנוֹ פֶּתַח מִדְיָן וַיִּנְהַג אֶת־הַצֹּאן אֶת־רֶגֶל אֶת־מִדְיָן וַיָּבֹא אֶל־הַר

into the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of **God**. (2) An **angel** of the **LORD** appeared to him in a blazing fire out of a bush. He gazed, and there was a bush all aflame, yet the bush was not consumed. (3) Moses said, "I must turn aside to look at this marvelous sight; why doesn't the bush burn up?" (4) When the **LORD** saw that he had turned aside to look, **God** called to him out of the bush: "Moses! Moses!" He answered, "Here I am." (5) And He said, "Do not come closer. Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground.

(6) I am," He said, "the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (7) And the **LORD** continued, "I have marked well the plight of My people in Egypt and have heeded their outcry because of their taskmasters; yes, I am mindful of their sufferings.

(10) Come, therefore, I will send you to Pharaoh, and you shall free My people, the Israelites, from Egypt." (11) But Moses said to **God**, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and free the Israelites from Egypt?" (12) And He said, "**I will be** with you; that shall be your sign that it was I who sent you. And when you have freed the people from Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain."

(13) Moses said to **God**, "When I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The **God** of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"

(14) And God said to Moses, "**Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh**." He continued, "Thus shall you say to the Israelites, '**Ehyeh** sent me to you.'"

(15) And **God** said further to Moses, "Thus shall you speak to the Israelites: The **LORD**, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you: **This shall be My name forever, This My appellation for all eternity.**

(16) "Go and assemble the elders of Israel and say to them: the **LORD**, the **God of your fathers**, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has appeared to me and said, 'I have taken note of you and of what is being done to you in Egypt, (17) and I have

הָאֱלֹהִים חֹרֵבָה: (ב) וַיֵּרָא מִלְּאֵף יְהוָה אֵלָיו בְּלַבַּת־אֵשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּינָה וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה הַסִּינָה בֹעֵר בְּאֵשׁ וְהַסִּינָה אֵינָנוּ אֹכֵל: (ג) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְרֶה־נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת־הַמַּרְאֶה הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה מִדּוֹעַ לֹא־יִבָּעַר הַסִּינָה: (ד) וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה כִּי סָר לְרַאֲוֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹהִים מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּינָה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִינִי: (ה) וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־תִּקְרַב הָלֵם שְׁלִי־נִעְלִיךָ מֵעַל רִגְלֶיךָ כִּי הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עוֹמֵד עָלָיו אֲדַמְתִּי־קֹדֶשׁ הוּא:

(ו) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֱלֹהֵי אֲבִיךָ אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וַיִּסְתַּר מֹשֶׁה פָּנָיו כִּי יָרָא מִהִבֵּית אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים: (ז) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה רְאֵה רְאִיתִי אֶת־עַנְי עַמִּי אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֶת־צַעֲקוֹתָם שְׁמַעְתִּי מִפְּנֵי נַגְשָׁיו כִּי נִדְעָתִי אֶת־מִכְאֲבָיו:

(י) וְעַתָּה לָכֵה וְאַשְׁלַחְךָ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וְהוֹצֵא אֶת־עַמִּי בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם: (יא) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים מִי אֲנֹכִי כִּי אֵלֶךְ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה וְכִי אוֹצִיא אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם: (יב) וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי־אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ וְנִהְיֶה לְךָ הָאוֹת כִּי אֲנֹכִי שְׁלַחְתִּיךָ בְּהוֹצִיאֶךָ אֶת־הָעָם מִמִּצְרַיִם תַּעֲבֹדוּן אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים עַל הַהָר הַזֶּה:

(יג) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים הַנִּיחָה אֲנֹכִי כֹּה־אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתִּי לָהֶם אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם וְאָמְרוּ־לִי מִה־שְּׁמוֹ מָה אֶמַר אֲלֵיכֶם:

(יד) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶהְיֶה שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם:

(טו) וַיֹּאמֶר עוֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כֹּה־תֹאמַר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם זֶה־שְּׁמִי לְעֹלָם וְגַם זִכְרִי לְדֹר דָּר:

(טז) לָךְ וְאֶסְפֹּת אֶת־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם נִרְאָה אֵלַי אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם



declared: I will take you out of the misery of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'

(18) They will listen to you; then you shall go with the elders of Israel to the king of Egypt and you shall say to him, '**The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, manifested Himself to us.** Now therefore, let us go a distance of three days into the wilderness to sacrifice to the LORD our God.'  
(19) Yet I know that the king of Egypt will let you go only because of a greater might. (20) So I will stretch out My hand and smite Egypt with various wonders which I will work upon them; after that he shall let you go.

#### Exodus 6:6-8

(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.'

#### Exodus 14:30-31

(30) Thus the LORD delivered Israel that day from the Egyptians. Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the shore of the sea.

(31) And **when Israel saw the wondrous power** which the LORD had wielded against the Egyptians, **the people feared the LORD; they had faith in the LORD and His servant Moses.**

#### Exodus 20:1-3

(1) God spoke all these words, saying: (2) **I the LORD am your God** who brought you out of the

יִצְחָק וַיַּעֲקֹב לֵאמֹר פְּקֹד פְּקֹדֹתַי אֲתֹכֶם וְאֶת־הָעַשְׂוִי  
לְכֶם בְּמִצְרַיִם: (יז) וְאֹמַר אֶעֱלֶה אֲתֹכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם  
מִצְרַיִם אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהָאֱמֹרִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי  
וְהַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי אֶל־אֶרֶץ זְבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ:

(יח) וְשָׁמְעוּ לְקֹלְךָ וּבֵאתָ אִתָּהּ וְזָקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אֶל־מִלְךְוּ מִצְרַיִם וְאָמַרְתֶּם אֵלָיו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי  
הָעִבְרִיִּים נִקְרָה עָלֵינוּ וְעַתָּה גִלְכֶה־נָּא דָרֶךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת  
יָמִים בַּמִּדְבָּר וְנִזְבַּחְתָּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: (יט) וְאָנֹכִי  
יִדְעֵמִי כִּי לֹא־יִתְּנוּ אֲתֹכֶם מִלְךְוּ מִצְרַיִם לְהִלָּךְ וְלֹא  
בְיַד חֲזֹקָה: (כ) וְשַׁלַּחְתִּי אֶת־יָדִי וְהִפִּיתִי אֶת־מִצְרַיִם  
כְּכֹל נִפְלְאוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֶעֱשֶׂה בְּקִרְבּוֹ וְאֶחָרֵיכֶן יִשְׁלַח  
אֲתֹכֶם:

#### שמות ו: וי-ח

(ו) לָכוֹ אֹמַר לְבְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אָנֹכִי יְהוָה וְהוֹצֵאתִי  
אֲתֹכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם וְהִצַּלְתִּי אֲתֹכֶם  
מִעַבְדֹתָם וְגִאלְתִּי אֲתֹכֶם בְּזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה וּבִשְׁפָטִים  
גְּדֹלִים:

(ז) וְלִקְחֹתִי אֲתֹכֶם לִי לְעָם וְהִנִּיתִי לְכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים  
וַיִּדְעֹתֶם כִּי אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הַמוֹצִיא אֲתֹכֶם  
מִמִּצְרַיִם:

(ח) וְהִבֵּאתִי אֲתֹכֶם אֶל־הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַתִּי אֶת־יָדִי  
לְתַת אֲתָהּ לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלַיַּעֲקֹב וְנִתְּתִי אֲתָהּ  
לְכֶם מוֹרְשָׁה אָנֹכִי יְהוָה:

#### שמות י"ד: לז-ל"א

(ל) וַיֹּשַׁע יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד  
מִצְרַיִם וַיִּרְא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־מִצְרַיִם מֵת עַל־שַׁפְּת  
הַיָּם:

(לא) וַיִּרְא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַיָּד הַגְּדֹלָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה  
בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיִּירָאוּ הָעָם אֶת־יְהוָה וַיִּאֱמְלוּ בִּיהוָה  
וּבְמֹשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ: (פ)

#### שמות כ': א-ג

(א) וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת פְּלִי־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְאֹמַר:

land of Egypt, the house of bondage: (3) You shall have no other **gods** besides Me.

(ס) אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ  
מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדֶּךָ יָם: (א) לֹא יִהְיֶה-לְךָ אֱלֹהִים  
אֲחֵרִים עַל-פְּנֵי

#### Deuteronomy 6:4

(4) Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.

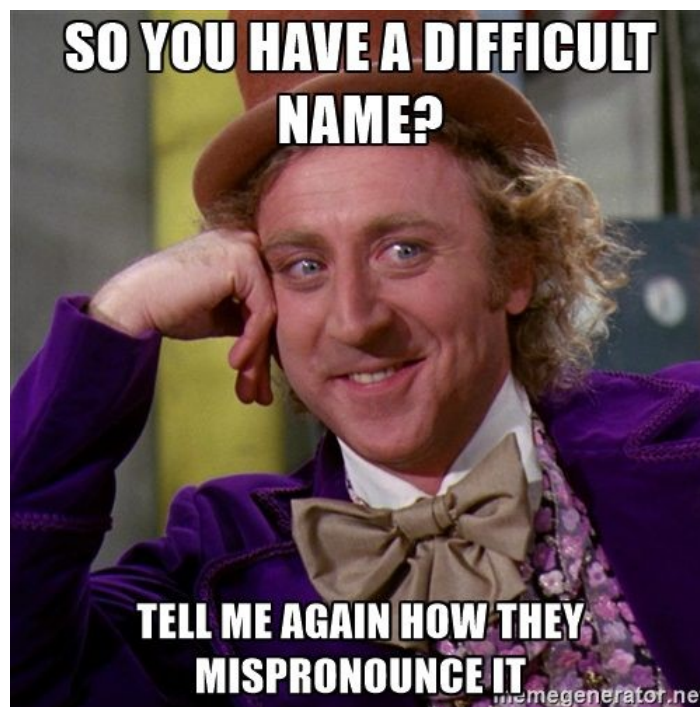
דְּבָרִים ו' ד'

(ד) שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:



### A Note on Pronouncing Names of God

1. Respect - for certain names
2. We don't know how to pronounce them
3. Theurgy



### Summary

1. Since God transcends time and space, there can be no name to define His essence. To define/name something is to "put a boundary or limit something."
2. The Hebrew names of God are ways to articulate how we perceive God relating to the world. They

are "attributes" or "traits" that God expresses, they do not reflect His essence.

3. Each name has intrinsic meaning.

4. Understanding the Names of God can give us insight into the verses in the Torah.

5. We don't articulate certain names of God out of respect and theurgical reasons.

6. God relates to us in many "human-like" attributes to teach us how to be God-like by emulating those attributes.

7. Ultimately we have to understand and teach the world, that God is ultimately One and He is the source of all attributes.

Hashem, He is the ELOKIM



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