

# ParShaT *Va'aYRaH*– One Pager Series

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**Rashi #1,#2,#3: Biblical Text:Ex06-03b,c:** I {God} appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as the Almighty (Kayl) and the Nurse (Shadai); but my Name *WillBe* (Tetragrammaton) I was not known to them.

**Rashi Text:** Almighty, Nurse: When promises were made to them it was then with the names *Almighty* and *Nurse*. Not Known: It is not written *I didn't tell them* but instead written *not known*. They did not know my name *WillBe* since I made promises to them, which were not fulfilled in their lifetime

**Rashiyomi Explanation - Background:** First some background on our translations. The English word *God* comes from the English word *Good*. *God* in English is perceived as the source of all *good*. In Hebrew, God has 70 names of which 7 are considered essential names and one is considered His Personal Name. The Personal Name of God is the future causative tense of the verb to be: We have translated it as *WillBe*. It is also known as the Tetragrammaton. Here, in this name, God is perceived as He who brings things to fruition over time. God has other names. Perhaps the most famous is the name *Kayl*, or *Ayl*. The Hebrew root **Aleph-Lamed-Lamed** means *strong* and therefore this name is translated as *the Almighty*. [There are those who translated as *Ayl* as coming from *El*, meaning *to*, indicating God as *to whom we pray*, but as we will see other names deal with this aspect of God]. The name of God, *Shadai* does not have a good English translation. The midrash sees this name as coming from *dai* meaning sufficiency and therefore, (and incorrectly), they translate *Shadai* as a synonym of *Ayl* meaning Almighty the God who has *sufficient resources* to provide. Note the fallacy here of establishing one of God's name (Almighty) as primary and then translating the other names similarly. The Rashiyomi thinking is that the Hebrew word *Shadai* means (Single) *breast*. The idea of *breast* as denoting *sufficiency* for the infant's needs is clear. But then the proper translation of *Shadai* would be *Breast* or to be more polite when talking about God, *The Nurse*. This is how we translated it to emphasize that it is distinct from *Ayl*, Almighty. Are we justified in so translating? To answer that we review the 6 texts where *Ayl Shadai* occurs. For example at Gn28-03, Isaac blesses Jacob with *Kayl Shadai*, he tells Jacob to flee home from his brother Esau who wants to kill him and go to a foreign land to a crooked uncle. Thus Jacob was in need of God providing for him as well as protecting him and hence Isaac uses the name *Almighty Nurse*. Similarly when Jacob blesses his children after the imprisonment of Shimon (Gn43-14) he uses *Almighty Nurse* to indicate that they will need both protection and provision of basics. The other four cases are treated similarly. In summary, each of the Patriarchs went through a helpless stage when they needed both God's protection (Almighty) and provision (Nurse).

**Rashiyomi Explanation – Explanation:** Rashi in an alternative explanation of this verse (listed at verse 9) clarifies: i) I promised each of the Patriarchs, Israel (But they never saw it happen; that is, they didn't see *it WillBe*; ii) Furthermore besides not owning Israel they had to pay a lot of money for basic needs (Abraham paid for Sarah's grave, Isaac had the wells he dug robbed from him; Jacob had to purchase land).

**Rashi #4: Biblical Text:** [Background: Moses had just gone to Pharaoh to free the people and instead of being freed, more slavery is imposed on them][Moses] A) God, why have you mistreated your servant (me)? For what purpose did you send me? Since I came to Pharaoh, things have gotten worse. God said: "You will see now what I do to Pharaoh: that he will let them [the Jews] go through a strong hand; he will expel them from the land with a strong hand.. God spoke to Moses; God said "I am God" B) I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob as Almighty Nurse but my name *Willbe* was not known to them I fulfilled my covenant with them to give them Israel...I have heard the screams of the Jewish people. Therefore tell the Jewish people "I am God; I will take you out of Egypt's burdens...

**Rashi Text- Incorrect reading of Text (Paraphrased):** Fulfilled: There are some who see A) and B) above as contrastive - A)Moses said: God why have you mistreated me; For what purpose did you send me? Since I came to Pharaoh things are worse - B) I (God) spoke to the Patriarchs as Almighty Nurse; my name *WillBe* was not known to them. In other words, when I didn't fulfill my promises to the Patriarch they did not complain; but you Moses complain.

**Rashi Text- Refutation of Incorrect Reading (Paraphrased).** This incorrect reading *only* looks at two verses A) and B) and hence sees them as contrastive However, there are three refutations. #1) Verse B) does not say "They (the patriarchs) didn't complain" but rather says "They didn't see my promises fulfilling, #2) If God is contrasting Moses and the Patriarchs, why mention in verse 5, "I have heard the screams of the Jewish people; #3) If God is contrasting how does verse 6 follow: "Therefore tell the Jews I am God (and will redeem)" Why the emphatic word "Therefore"?

**Rashi Text- Correct Reading(Paraphrased):** The correct reading of the text is that 1) I appeared to the Patriarchs as Almighty (Power to protect) Nurse (ability to Provide in helplessness), 2) They did not know my name, *WillBe*.; Even though I promised them Israel they never saw it *will happen*. 3) But now, besides hearing the cries of the Jewish people, 4) I am fulfilling the promises to the Patriarchs; 5) You Moses will see it now.

**Rashiyomi Explanation – Explanation:** Carefully read the *incorrect* and *correct* explanation. The incorrect explanation just looks at two verses labeled A and B above. It looks at *part* of the text. Although this opinion was stated in the Talmud, Rashi clarifies that it was like many other Talmudic opinions that were refuted. We don't have the refutation in the Talmud either because it was obvious, OR, because it was lost in some manuscript. Rashi therefore supplies the refutation. Rashi is not disagreeing with the Talmud but clarifying that this opinion was meant and intended to be refuted. Rashi then gives a *holistic* explanation which includes all parts of the text. In this *holistic* explanation, God is not comparing Moses and the Patriarchs but explaining his name *WillBe*. God makes promises which *WillBe* fulfilled and they are going to be fulfilled now both because of the promise and because of the great suffering of the Jewish people.