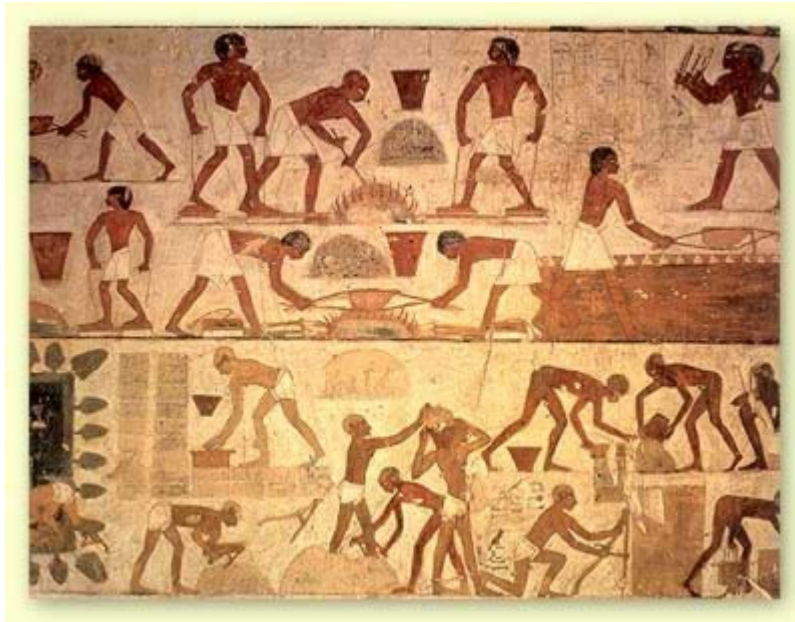


ממצרים גאלתנו...

# Super Seders 5767

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## Part II: Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt

# 1. Introduction

- How important is the historical context of the Exodus?
- What is unique about Pharaoh and Egypt?
- How would things have been different if the slavery was to another nation?
- A number of phrases in the Haggadah and the Torah prompt us to dig deeper:

## Deuteronomy 6:21

“You shall say to your children:

*We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt*

*and God freed us from Egypt with a mighty hand”*

וְאָמַרְתָּ לְבִנְךָ  
עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפַרְעֹה בְּמִצְרַיִם  
וַיִּצְיָאֵנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה

## The Haggadah

If the Holy One, blessed be God, had not brought out our ancestors from Egypt, then we and our children, and our children's children, would still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt.

ואלו לא הוציא הקדוש ברוך הוא את  
אבותינו ממצרים הרי אנו ובנינו ובני  
בנינו משועבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים

- Clearly the source of our enslavement is important: Egypt *and* Pharaoh.
- To which aspects of Pharaoh and Egypt were the Torah and the Rabbis referring?
- Why is Egypt uniquely called the *Beit Avadim* in Tanach?

## Exodus 13:3

And Moshe said to the People: remember the day that you came out of Egypt, from the *House of Slaves*, because with a mighty hand God took you from this...

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל הָעָם זְכוֹר אֵת הַיּוֹם  
הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר יִצְאָתֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבַּיִת  
עֲבָדִים כִּי בְּחֲזָק יָד הוֹצִיא ה' אֶתְכֶם  
מִזֶּה...

- ‘Amalek’ is a sworn enemy and there is much about their particular characteristics.
- What of Pharaoh (237 mentions in Tanach) and Egypt (482 mentions)?
- Hasidic approach: *Mitzrayim* (Egypt) = *metzarim* (dire straits):

## Psalm 118:5

Out of distress I call upon God,  
God answered me with liberation

מִן הַמִּצָּר קָרָאתִי יְהוָה  
עֲנָנִי בַמַּרְחָב יְהוָה:

- Historical approach: Mesopotamia and Egypt where the two super powers back then.
- Avraham had to deal with both.
- We need to learn about Egypt and what we left behind there....

## 2. Historical and geographical context

### The key Torah and Talmudic references:

#### Genesis 47:11

And Yosef provided abodes for his father and for his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Raamses, as Pharaoh had commanded.

וַיֹּשֶׁב יוֹסֵף אֶת אָבִיו וְאֶת אֶחָיו וַיִּתֵּן  
לָהֶם אֶחְזָה בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, בְּמֵיטֵב  
הָאֶרֶץ בְּאֶרֶץ רַעַמְסֵס כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה  
פַּרְעֹה.

#### Exodus 1:11 (quoted in the Hagadah)

So they set over them taskmasters to afflict them with burdens. And they build for Pharaoh treasure/store cities, namely Pitom and Raamses.

וַיִּשְׂמוּ עָלָיו שָׂרֵי מַסִּים לְמַעַן עַנְתּוֹ  
בְּסִבְלָתָם וַיִּבְנוּ עָרֵי מִסְכָּנוֹת לְפַרְעֹה אֶת  
פִּתּוֹם וְאֶת רַעַמְסֵס.

#### Exodus 12:37

And the children of Israel journeyed from Raamses to Sukkot, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children.

וַיִּסְעוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵרַעַמְסֵס סִכְּוֹתָה  
כֶּשֶׁשׁ מֵאוֹת אֶלְפֵי רִגְלֵי הַגְּבָרִים לְבַד  
מִטּוֹף.

#### Numbers 33:3-5

And they departed from Raamses in the first month, on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month; on the morrow after the Passover the children of Israel went out with a high hand in the sight of all Egypt. And Egypt was burying all their firstborn, whom the Lord had smitten among them: upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments. And the children of Israel journeyed from Raamses, and pitched at Sukkot.

ג וַיִּסְעוּ מֵרַעַמְסֵס בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן,  
בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן:  
מִמַּחֲרַת הַפֶּסַח יָצְאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיַד  
רָמָה לְעֵינֵי כָל מִצְרַיִם. ד וּמִצְרַיִם  
מְקַבְּרִים אֶת אֲשֶׁר הִכָּה ה' בָּהֶם כָּל  
בְּכוֹר וּבִאלֹהֵיהֶם עָשָׂה ה' שְׁפָטִים.  
ה וַיִּסְעוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵרַעַמְסֵס וַיַּחֲנוּ  
בְּסִכְוֹת.

#### Talmud - Sotah 11a

And they built for Pharaoh store cities [*miskenot*]: Rav and Shmuel differ in their interpretation, one said: They were so called because they endangered [*mesakkenot*] their owners, while the other said because they impoverished [*memaskenot*] their owners, for a master has declared that whoever occupies himself with building becomes impoverished.

**תלמוד בבלי - סוטה יא.**  
ויבן ערי מסכנות לפרעה - רב  
ושמואל, חד אמר: שמסכנות  
את בעליהן, וח"א:  
שממסכנות את בעליהן, דאמר  
מר: כל העוסק בבנין  
מתמסכן.

Pitom and Raamses — Rav and Shmuel differ in their interpretation: one said, Its real name was Pitom, and why was it called Raamses? Because one building after another collapsed [*mitroses*]. The other said that its real name was Raamses, and why was it called Pitom? Because the mouth of the deep [*pi tehom*] swallowed up one building after another.

(שמות א) את פיתום ואת  
רעמסס - רב ושמואל, חד  
אמר: פיתום שמה, ולמה  
נקרא שמה רעמסס? שראשון  
ראשון מתרוסס; וחד אמר:  
רעמסס שמה, ולמה נקרא  
שמה פיתום? שראשון ראשון  
פי תהום בולעו.

#### Ibn Ezra on Shemot 1:11

...

*Raamses* - The Gaon says that this is the name of a place called 'Eye of the sun'.

**אבן עזרא הפירוש הקצר שמות א:יא**  
מסכנות - אוצרות, וכמוהו ותהי למלך סוכנת (מ"א א, ד),  
לך אל הסוכן (ישעיה כב, טו).  
רעמסס כבר פירשתיו. ויאמר הגאון שהוא שם מקום  
נקרא 'עין השמש':

## The archaeological evidence

Era of Ancient Egypt*	Approx. Yrs (BCE)	Egyptian dynasties	Similar period in Tanach (based on traditional sources)
Foundation of Egyptian state	c.3050	-	The ten generations from Adam to Noach (starts 3760 BCE)
Early Dynastic period	2920-2575	1 <sup>st</sup> to 3 <sup>rd</sup>	
Old Kingdom	2575-2134	4 <sup>th</sup> to 6 <sup>th</sup>	
1 <sup>st</sup> Intermediate Period	2134-2040	9 <sup>th</sup> to 10 <sup>th</sup>	
Middle Kingdom	2040-1640	11 <sup>th</sup> to 13 <sup>th</sup>	Avraham
2 <sup>nd</sup> Intermediate Period	1640-1532	15 <sup>th</sup> to 17 <sup>th</sup>	Yitzchak
New Kingdom	1550-1070	18 <sup>th</sup> to 20 <sup>th</sup>	Yosef, Ya'akov Moshe & Exodus (1312 BCE), Yehohua, Judges
3 <sup>rd</sup> Intermediate Kingdom	1070-712	21 <sup>st</sup> to 25 <sup>th</sup>	First kings of Israel.
Late Period	712-343	25 <sup>th</sup> to 30 <sup>th</sup>	Southern Kingdom exiled 586BCE

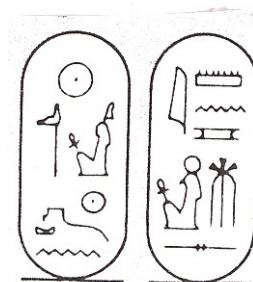
\* (p.36, *Atlas of Ancient Egypt*, J. Baines & J. Malek, Equinox (Oxford), 1984)

Egyptian kings of the 19 <sup>th</sup> dynasty*	Approx. Yrs (bce)
Ramesses I	1307-1306
Sethos I	1306-1290
Ramesses II	1290-1224
Merneptah	1224-1214
Sethos II	1214-1204
Siptah	1204-1198
Twosre	1198-1196

### So who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus?

“Ramesses II, who reigned for over half a century, was one of the great kings of the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty. He conducted many military campaigns in Western Asia, and carried out numerous building operations throughout Egypt. Among these he was active in completing a royal residence begun in three east Delta by his father Sthos I, which he named *Per-Ramesses*, ‘House of Ramesses’, in his honour. This building work appears to correspond to that involving the Israelites during the ‘oppression’ (Ex. 1:8-11). Coupled with the evidence of the Merneptah Stela (which implies that the Israelites were a wandering group in Palestine c. 1208 BCE, with a possible Exodus in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE), this suggests Ramesses II as a possible Pharaoh of the Exodus. This matter is still debated however, however, and the evidence of the destruction levels at Palestinian sites, which may be connected with the period of the Israelite conquest, does not lend itself to a simple conclusion.”

(*The Bible in the British Museum: Interpreting the Evidence*, p.41 T.C. Mitchell, 1988)



Ramesses II

The name Israel:  
Line 27, reading  
from right to left



isrir = isril = Isra'el

## And where did the Exodus take place within Egypt?

“The Israelites, under the oppression, were conscripted to build the cities of “Pithom and Raamses” and it was from the latter site that the people started their march of liberation out of Egypt. It is known that in the course of the two hundred odd years that elapsed between the collapse of the Hyksos rule over Egypt and the XIXth Dynasty (ca.1306-1200 BCE ), the eastern Delta had been neglected. It was Pharaoh Rameses II (ca. 1290-1223 BCE) who set up his capital here in his newly built city and that he named for himself. It is highly significant that Genesis 47:11 equates the area of Israelite settlement with “The region of Rameses,” which description is a reflex of a genuine historic reality even though in context it is anachronistic. Finally, Psalm 78:12, 43 locates the Israelites in Egypt in the in the “plain of Zoan”. Now Zoan is in the north eastern Nile Delta. The conclusion seems to be inescapable that the oppression, or at least the final and most severe stage of it, took place during the reign of Rameses II. His prodigious building activities, provide a convincing backdrop for the biblical narrative. The thirteenth century BCE emerges, therefore, as a very likely candidate for the events described in the Book of Exodus.”

(*Exploring Exodus*, Nahum Sarna Schocken, 1987)

## Are the Israelites mentioned in ancient Egyptian texts?

- The Merneptah Stela (see other sheet)
- From the end of the text:

The princes are prostrate, saying: “Mercy!”  
Not one raises his head among the Nine Bows.  
Desolation is for Tehenu; Hatti is pacified;  
Plundered is the Canaan with every evil;  
Carried off is Ashkelon; seized upon is Gezer;  
Yanoam is made as that which does not exist;  
Israel is laid waste, his seed is not;  
Hurru is become a widow for Egypt!  
All lands together, they are pacified;  
Everyone who was restless, he has been bound  
By the King of Upper and Lower Egypt....

A few explanatory comments on the text are in order before we analyze the inscription and assess its significance’

The term for “Mercy” is the Canaanite word *shalam* which is the Hebrew *shalom*: the “Nine Bows” are the traditionally hostile neighbours of Egypt; the Tehenu are one of the Libyan peoples; Hatti is the land of the Hittites, now Asiatic Turkey; Ashkelon and Gezer are two southerly Canaanite towns; Yanoam is a town in the north of the country; Hurru, the land of the Hurrians, who are the biblical Horites, is an Egyptian term for Palestine and Syria.

The historic reality behind this triumphal poem has been questioned, primarily because of the conventional phrasing and because of the omission of any details about the battles, contrary to the usual style of pharaonic campaign inscriptions. Yet it is not unreasonable to assume that the Canaanite city kingdoms took advantage of the massive Libyan invasion, and of Merneptah’s preoccupation with the western border of Egypt, in order to revolt and it is probably that following his victory the king would make a show of force in Canaan. In fact independent evidence for some military action by the pharaoh inside Canaan comes from an important inscription found in the temple at Amada in Nubia, present-day Sudan. Engraved at the entrance doorway, it celebrates Merneptah’s defeat of the invasion of Egypt from Libya in the fourth year, and it accords him the title “Reducer of Gezer”. That city is in Canaan, and the epithet proves that the pharaoh did campaign in that land.

The fascination that the “Stele of Merneptah” holds is due to the fact that it features the first mention of the people of Israel to be found in an extrabiblical source, and the only one, so far, to occur in any Egyptian text. It is ironic and instructive that this should be an obituary notice; “Israel is laid waste, his seed is not!” Curiously, the second mention of Israel in an extrabiblical source – that in the triumphal inscription of Mesha, king of Moab – is of similar character. It pronounces the verdict in the ninth century BCE, that “Israel has perished for ever!”

Be that as it may, the reference has a bearing on the issue at hand. The name “Israel” in the stele is marked with the hieroglyphic determinative or special sign that indicates the class of meanings to which the term so marked belongs – in the present case, that of a people. The other names in the poem bear the determinatives for city or land. It can be safely assumed that no Egyptian scribe would have mentioned such a politically insignificant entity as Israel then was, let alone have placed it in Canaan, unless it reflected reality. Moreover, there are four names listed between the synonymous terms Canaan

and Hurru, three of which represent the traditional city-state system characteristic of the country. The cities of Ashkelon and Gezer form a pair, both being situated in the south. Yanoam and Israel are similarly paired, the former lying in the north. Hence, "Israel" must also be in the north, or at least in the central highlands. Accordingly, it may be concluded

that ca. 1220 BCE the people of Israel was located in Canaan, but had not yet settled down within definable borders. Its presence there was of recent origin, so that the Exodus would have taken place in the course of the thirteenth century BCE.

(*Exploring Exodus*, Nahum Sarna Schocken, 1987)

- Aspects of these theories are changing all the time – to this very day excavations of lower Egypt and the Delta continue.
- The nature of the location makes excavations very difficult...
- See: Biblical Archaeological Review, Jan/Feb 2007 [www.biblicalarchaeology.org](http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org)

### 3. The gods of Egypt

#### The Haggadah

"And the Lord brought us forth from Egypt" - ...

As it is written: "*And I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast: and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments.*" (Exodus 12:12)... I, and not a messenger...

#### The Haggadah

Had He executed judgments against the Egyptians, and not their gods, It would have been enough, *Dayenu*.

הגדה של פסח  
אלו עשה בהם נִפְטִים,  
וְלֹא עָשָׂה בְּאֱלֹהֵיהֶם, דִּינֵנוּ:

#### Talmud - Mas. Nedarim 25a

Idols too are called 'god', as it is written, "*And against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment.*" (Shemot 12:12)

"Western man places religion in a compartment of its own, separating it from other aspects of his existence. To an Egyptian this would have been unthinkable. Religion permeated his whole life – socially, politically and economically. As he saw it, every detail of his own life and of the life around him – from the predictable flooding of the Nile to the chance death of a cat – depended entirely on the attitude of the gods. The New Testament injunction, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and the God the things that are God's" would have meant nothing to him. His Caesar was the Pharaoh, and the pharaoh was a god.

The roots of Egyptian religion go far back into primeval times, before there was a pharaoh. Pre-historic Egyptians, like most early peoples, were reverential toward the wonders of nature and the fearsome or admirable traits of animals – the ferocity of the lion, the strength of the crocodile, the tender care of a cow for her young. The first divinities to arise – and divinities continued to rise throughout Egyptian history – were frequently represented in animal form, though they dealt with or oversaw human occupations.

Khnum, one of the gods associated with Creation, was portrayed as a ram, an animal the Egyptians considered unusually prolific. Anubis,

the faithful guardian of tombs and a god of the dead, was represented as a recumbent jackal – paradoxically, for the jackal was known to dig up human bones, and indeed the earliest graves were covered with stones not only to mark them for posterity but to keep them safe from marauding jackals. Thoth, the god of learning and wisdom, the inventor of writing, the vizier and official scribe of the after world, was alternately symbolized as an ibis and as a baboon, perhaps because the grave facial expressions of these creatures suggested thoughtfulness.

During much of Egyptian history, live animals associated with gods were maintained in the temples, where they dwelt in pampered luxury. A crocodile representing a god of sun, earth and water lolled in the temple pool at Crocodilopolis; the ibis of Thoth was kept at Hermopolis; a cat representing a goddess of joy and love lazed in the temple at Bast; Apis, a sacred bull, was maintained at Memphis. These animals were mummified like human beings when they died.

Besides animals, the Egyptians were in awe of the manifestations of nature. Among their manifold object of worship, one had eminent qualifications for reverence – the sun. Probably the Egyptians perceived that life was dependent upon the sun, and they worshiped it by various names and in various cults. One of these names was Re. The centre of the cult of Re was Heliopolis (a name given the town by the Greeks and meaning “City of the Sun”). Re was among the first of the gods to achieve nationwide recognition, and throughout Egyptian history he remained one of the most important deities in the land.

The worship of animals and nature is common to early societies, when man is dominated by the world around him and exists at its mercy. As he grows in sophistication as he learns to come to grips with nature, as his awe of its mysteries diminishes and his appreciation of his own talents awakens, then his gods undergo a transition from zoomorphic to anthropomorphic concepts. So it was with the Egyptians. Sometime before the rise of the First Dynasty, anthropomorphism, the conception of gods in human form, made its appearance in Egyptian religion.

But tradition does not die easily, and old religious concepts are not replaced at one stroke. The Egyptians adopted anthropomorphism gradually, fusing the three ideas of nature, animal and man. One of the earliest deities to undergo this fusion was Hathor, the goddess of love and childbirth; she was given a human body and head but retained an element of her animal manifestation – a pair of cow’s horns. Another was Thoth, who acquired a human body but kept the head of the ibis. Still after Anubis – who came to play a role as judge of the dead as well as guardian of the tombs – took on a human body but kept his jackal’s head. Khnum assumed a human body but retained the head of a ram; and when he did, the myth surrounding his role in Creation had him fashioning men (and every baby still to be born) on a potter’s wheel.

(p.71-72. *Ancient Egypt*, L. Casson, Time Life Books, 1965)

## רמב"ם הלכות עבודת כוכבים פרק א

ונעשית בעולם אומה שהיא יודעת את ה', עד שארכו הימים לישראל במצרים וחזרו ללמוד מעשיהן ולעבוד כוכבים כמוותן חוץ משבט לוי

### Midrash Rabbah - Leviticus 22:8

R. Phinehas in the name of R. Levi said: The matter may be compared to the case of a king's son who thought he could do what he liked and habitually ate the flesh of *nevelot* and *terefot*. Said the king: I will have him always at my own table and he will automatically be hedged round (i.e. not eat that stuff).

Similarly, because Israel were passionate followers after idolatry in Egypt and used to bring their sacrifices to the satyrs, as it is written, "And they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices unto the satyrs" (*Vayikra 17:7*) – and these satyrs are nothing but demons, as is borne out by the text which says, "They sacrificed unto demons, no-gods" (*Devarim 32:17*), these demons being nothing but satyrs, as it says, "And satyrs shall dance there" (*Yishaya 13:21*) [in the ruins!] -- and they used to offer their sacrifices in the forbidden high places, on account of which punishments used to come upon them, the Holy One, blessed be God, said: Let them offer their offerings to Me at all times in the Tent of Meeting, and thus they will be separated from idolatry and be saved from punishment.

- So *Bet Avadim* could be *Bet Avdei Avodah Zara* – i.e. the slavery was to their gods

### Midrash Rabbah - Deuteronomy 3:17

R. Johanan b. Zakkai was asked: Why were the first Tablets the work of God and the second two the work of man? He replied: It is like the case of a king who took a wife to himself and himself defrayed the cost of the paper [for the marriage document] and the [fee of] the scribe; he also adorned her at his own expense and brought her into his house. Seeing her behaving in a familiar manner with one of his servants he became angry with her and sent her away. Her groom man came to the king and said to him, 'Sire, do you not know whence you took her? Was she not brought up among slaves? Since she was brought up amongst the servants she is familiar with them.' Said the king to him: 'And do you wish that I should become reconciled with her? Then bring at your expense the paper and the scribe and I will append my signature to it. Similarly Moses spoke to God after Israel had done that deed. (Golden calf!) He said to Him: 'Do You not know from where You brought them out? Was it not from Egypt, from the **place of idolatry**? 'Whereupon God answered, 'And do you desire that I should become reconciled with them? Then bring the Tables at your own expense and I will append My signature.' As it is said, *And I will write upon the tables, etc. (Exodus 34:1).*

### ויקרא רבה – כב:ח

רבי פנחס בשם רבי לוי אמר משל לבן מלך שגס לבו עליו והיה למד לאכול בשר נבילות וטרופות אמר המלך זה יהיה תדיר על שולחני ומעצמו הוא נדור (גדור) כך לפי שהיו ישראל להוטים אחר עבודת כוכבים במצרים והיו מביאים קרבניהם לשעירים דכתיב (ויקרא יז) ולא יזבחו עוד את זבחיהם לשעירים ואין שעירים אלו אלא שדים שנאמר (דברים לב) ויזבחו לשדים ואין שדים אלו אלא שעירים שנא' (ישעיה יג) ושעירים ירקדו שם והיו מקריבין קרבניהם באיסור במה ופורעניות באות עליהם אמר הקב"ה יהיו מקריבין לפני בכל עת קרבנותיהן באהל מועד והן נפרשים מעבודת כוכבים והם ניצולים הה"ד איש איש מבית ישראל וגו'.

### דברים רבה – ג:יז

ד"א פסל לך שאלו את רבי יוחנן בן זכאי מפני מה לוחות הראשונות מעשה שמים והשניים מעשה אדם אמר להן למה"ד למלך שנשא אשה והביא הנייר והלבנר משלו עיטרה משלו והכניסה לביתו, ראה אותה המלך שוחקת לעבד אחד משלו כעס עליה והוציאה, בא שושבינה אצלו ואמר לו מרי אי את יודע מהיכן נטלת אותה לא בין העבדים גדלה וכיון שגדלה בין העבדים לבה גס בהן, אמר לו המלך ומה אתה מבקש שאתרצה לה הבא הנייר והלבנר משלך והרי כתב ידי, כך אמר משה להקב"ה בשעה שבאו לידי אותו מעשה א"ל אי אתה יודע מאיזה מקום הוצאת אותם ממצרים ממקום עבודת כוכבים א"ל הקב"ה ומה אתה מבקש שאתרצה להן הבא את הלוחות משלך והרי כתב ידי וכתבתי על הלוחות

## Zohar, Vayikra III 50b

The houses of Egypt were full of magic and idolatry.

### Concerning particular gods:

- See Exodus, chapter 12

### Midrash Rabbah - Exodus 16:2

DRAW OUT, AND TAKE YOU LAMBS (Exodus 12:21)

It is written: In sitting still and rest shall you be saved (Isaiah 30:15). We have learnt: Everything may be used for healing, save idolatry, immorality, and murder.

For example: If one should say to a man: Kill this man and you will be healed, he should not hearken unto him, for it says: Whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed (Genesis 9:6). Since he who sheds blood has his own blood shed, how can the sufferer be healed by the shedding of blood?

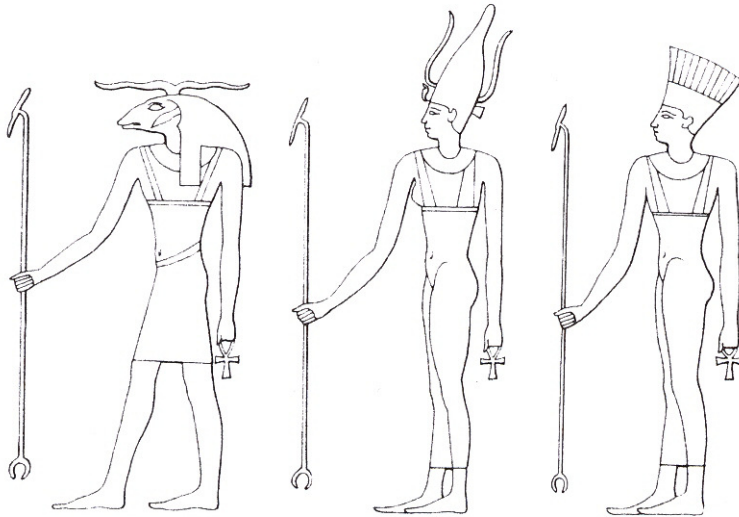
Now come and listen once again to the praises of God after this exposition of the shame of the idols, for it says, Not like these is the portion of Jacob; for He is the former of all things (ib. 16). God, therefore, said: 'Since it [idolatry] is like a mute stone (Habbakuk 2:19) and mere make-believe, and others have to guard it from being stolen, how can it possibly give new life to those who are suffering?' It is for this reason that one must not seek a cure from anything that belongs to it.




You will find that when Israel were in Egypt, they served idols, which they were reluctant to abandon, for it says: They did not every man cast away the detestable things of their eyes (Ezek. 20:8). God then said to Moses: '*As long as Israel worship Egyptian gods, they will not be redeemed; go and tell them to abandon their evil ways and to reject idolatry.* This is what is meant by: DRAW OUT AND TAKE YOU LAMBS. that is to say: Draw away your hands from idolatry and take for yourselves lambs, thereby slaying the gods of Egypt and preparing the Passover; only through this will the Lord pass over you. This is the meaning of ' In sitting still and rest shall ye be saved '.

1. Again, this is the *internal* battle again.
2. Must fight gods before fighting the armies of Egypt.

"Ever since prehistoric times Egyptians had kept flock of *Ovis longipes palaeoegyptiaca*, a sheep with long spiral horns spread out horizontally, of tall stature and with a long tail. In the Middle Kingdom another species arrived, *Ovis platyura aegyptiaca*, with spiral horns close to the head, lower build and short fat tails. The former type was seen as the incarnation of Khnum, god of the First Cataract, and a few other deities with ram's heads, while the second was the symbol of the Theban god Amun, who became the chief divinity during the New Kingdom. Despite, or perhaps because of this, sheep's milk and meat did not figure among offerings to the dead. Priests were forbidden, especially during the Late Period, to eat mutton or wear wool."

(p.111 *Life in Ancient Egypt*, E. Strouhal, Cambridge University Press, 1992)



**Khnum** , **Satis**  and **Anukis**   
 Khnum: ram or ram-headed; Satis: feather headdress; Anukis: white crown flanked by two gazelle horns/triad worshiped in the 1st cataract region, hence Khnum's connection with the inundation; Khnum also ancient creator god (because of procreative powers of ram), sometimes shown molding men on a potter's wheel/Elephantine, but Khnum also at Esna and *Herwer* (Hur, near el-Ashmuncin).

(p.213, *Atlas of Ancient Egypt*, J. Baines & J. Malek, Equinox (Oxford), 1984)

## Conclusions

Hence the necessity of plagues – the only thing we'll listen to:

### Midrash Rabbah - Exodus 6:5

5. AND MOSES SPOKE SO UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL; BUT THEY HEARKENED NOT UNTO MOSES FOR SHORTNESS OF SPIRIT (6:9). It was so difficult for them to abandon idol worship. Thus does Ezekiel explain when he says, "Cast you away every man the detestable things of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt." (Ezekiel 20:7). But see what is written: They did not every man cast away the detestable things of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt (20:8). GO IN, SPEAK UNTO PHARAOH KING OF EGYPT (6:11): the proverb has it: "There is no benefit to be derived from acacia-wood except when it is cut down." Hence: AND MOSES SPOKE BEFORE THE LORD (6:12).

- So the slavery is the *slavery of the spirit* which is what ancient Avodah Zara did.
- Fit into the norms, unchanging structure of reality, Egypt was around for 1000s of years.
- The Pyramids were 100s of years old by the time we turned up!