



A New Understanding of Betzelem Elohim: Biblical Text Through the Lens of Disability Studies

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Exodus 4:10-16

(10) But Moses said to ה', "Please, O my lord, I have never been a man of words, either in times past or now that You have spoken to Your servant; I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." (11) And ה' said to him, "Who gives humans speech? Who makes them dumb or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, God? (12) Now go, and I will be with you as you speak and will instruct you what to say." (13) But he said, "Please, O my lord, make someone else Your agent." (14) ה' became angry with Moses and said, "There is your brother Aaron the Levite. He, I know, speaks readily. Even now he is setting out to meet you, and he will be happy to see you. (15) You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth—I will be with you and with him as you speak, and tell both of you what to do— (16) and he shall speak for you to the people. Thus he shall serve as your spokesman, with you playing the role of God to him.

שמות ד':י-ט"ז

(י) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־ה' בִּי אֲדוּשָׁם לֹא אִישׁ דְּבָרִים אָנֹכִי גַם מִתְּמֹל גַּם מִשְׁלָשׁם גַּם מֵאָדָּם דְּבַרְךָ אֶל־עַבְדְּךָ כִּי כְבֹד־פֶּה וְכֹבֵד לְשׁוֹן אָנֹכִי: (יא) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֵלָיו מִי שָׁם פֶּה לְאָדָם אֹי מִי יְשׁוּם אֱלֹם אֹי חֲרָשׁ אֹי פֶקַח אֹי עֵוֶר הֲלֹא אָנֹכִי ה': (יב) וַעֲתָה לָךְ וְאָנֹכִי אֶהְיֶה עִם־פִּיךָ וְהוֹרִיתִיךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּדְבֹר: (יג) וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדוּשָׁם שְׁלַח־נָא בְיָד־תְּשַׁלַּח: (יד) וַיַּחַר־אַף ה' בְּמֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלֹא אֶהְרֵן אַחִיךָ הֲלוֹי יִדְעָתִי כִּי־תִדְבֹר יִדְבֹר הוּא וְגַם הִנֵּה־הוּא יֵצֵא לִקְרֹאתְךָ וְרֹאֶךָ וְשָׁמַח בְּלִבּוֹ: (טו) וְדַבַּרְתָּ אֵלָיו וְשָׁמַתְתָּ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים בְּפִיו וְאָנֹכִי אֶהְיֶה עִם־פִּיךָ וְעִם־פִּיהוּ וְהוֹרִיתִי אֶתְכֶם אֵת אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּן: (טז) וְדַבַּר־הוּא לָךְ אֶל־הָעָם וְהִיָּה הוּא יְהִיֶה לָךְ לְפִהּ וְאַתָּה תְּהִיֶה־לוֹ לְאֱלֹקִים:

Exodus 2:11-14

(11) Some time after that, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his kinsfolk and witnessed their labors. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his kinsmen. (12) He turned this way and that and, seeing no one about, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. (13) When he went out the next day, he found two Hebrews fighting; so he said to the offender, "Why do you strike your fellow?" (14) He retorted, "Who made you chief and ruler over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Moses was frightened, and thought: Then the matter is known!

שמות ב':י"א-י"ד

(יא) וַיְהִי אַ בְּיָמִים הֵהֶם וַיַּגְדֵּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל־אָחָיו וַיֵּרָא בְּסַבְּלֹתָם וַיֵּרָא אִישׁ מִצְרִי מַכֶּה אִישׁ־עִבְרִי מֵאָחָיו: (יב) וַיִּפֶן כֹּה וְכֹה וַיֵּרָא כִּי אֵין אִישׁ וַיִּךְ אֶת־הַמִּצְרִי וַיִּטְמְנֵהוּ בַחֹל: (יג) וַיֵּצֵא בַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי וְהִנֵּה שְׁנַיִם־אֲנָשִׁים עֹבְרִים נֹצֵים וַיֹּאמֶר לָרִשָׁע לָמָּה תִכֶּה רֵעֶךָ: (יד) וַיֹּאמֶר מִי שָׁמַךְ לְאִישׁ שָׂר וְשִׁפְטָ עָלֵינוּ הֲלֹהֲרֹגְנוּ אַתָּה אָמַר כַּאֲשֶׁר הֲרַגְתָּ אֶת־הַמִּצְרִי וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אָכֵן נֹדַע הַדְּבָר:

Exodus 2:16-22

(16) Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw water, and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock; (17) but shepherds came and drove them off. Moses rose to their defense, and he watered their flock. (18) When they returned to their father Reuel, he said, “How is it that you have come back so soon today?” (19) They answered, “An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds; he even drew water for us and watered the flock.” (20) He said to his daughters, “Where is he then? Why did you leave the man? Ask him in to break bread.” (21) Moses consented to stay with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah as wife. (22) She bore a son whom he named Gershom, for he said, “I have been a stranger in a foreign land.”

שמות ב':ט"ז-כ"ב

(טז) וּלְכַהֵן מִדְיָן שִׁבְעַת בָּנוֹת וַתִּבְאֲנָה וַתִּדְלֹקָה וַתִּמְלֹאנָה אֶת־הַרְהָטִים לְהַשְׁקוֹת צֹאן אָבִיהֶן: (יז) וַיָּבֹאוּ הַרְעִים וַיִּגְרְשׂוּם וַיִּקַּם מֹשֶׁה וַיּוֹשִׁיעֵן וַיִּשְׁק אֶת־צֹאנָם: (יח) וַתִּבְאֲנָה אֶל־רְעוּאֵל אָבִיהֶן וַיֹּאמֶר מִדּוּעַ מְהֵרָתָן בָּא הַיּוֹם: (יט) וַתֹּאמְרֵן אִישׁ מִצְרִי הִצִּילָנוּ מִיַּד הַרְעִים וְגַם דָּלָה דָּלָה לָנוּ וַיִּשְׁק אֶת־הַצֹּאן: (כ) וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־בְּנֹתָיו וְאֵינִי לָמָּה זֶה עֹשֶׂתֶן אֶת־הָאִישׁ קִרְאֵן לּוֹ וַיֹּאכֵל לֶחֶם: (כא) וַיּוֹאֵל מֹשֶׁה לְשִׁבְתָּ אֶת־הָאִישׁ וַיֵּתֶן אֶת־צִפּוֹרָה בִּתּוֹ לְמִשְׁהָ: (כב) וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ גֵּרְשׁוֹם כִּי אָמַר גֵּר הָיִיתִי בְּאֶרֶץ נְכַרְיָה: {פ}

Exodus 6:9-12

(9) But when Moses told this to the Israelites, they would not listen to Moses, their spirits crushed by cruel bondage. (10) ה' 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 ה', saying, “The Israelites would not listen to me; how then should Pharaoh heed me, me—a man of impeded speech!”

שמות ו':ט'-י"ב

(ט) וַיִּדְבֹר מֹשֶׁה בֵּן אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ: אֶל־מֹשֶׁה מִקְצֶר רוּחַ וּמִעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה: {פ} (י) וַיִּדְבֹר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: (יא) בֵּא דַבֵּר אֶל־פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרָיִם וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ: (יב) וַיִּדְבֹר מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי ה' לֵאמֹר הֵן בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ אֵלַי וְאֵיךְ יִשְׁמַעֲנִי פַרְעֹה וְאֲנִי עֶרְל שִׁפְתַּיִם: {פ}

Numbers 11:10-12

(10) Moses heard the people weeping, every clan apart, at the entrance of each tent. ה' was very angry, and Moses was distressed. (11) And Moses said to ה', “Why have You dealt ill with Your servant, and why have I not enjoyed Your favor, that You have laid the burden of all this people upon me? (12) Did I produce all these people, did I

במדבר י"א:י'-י"ב

(י) וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָעָם בֹּכֶה לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָיו אִישׁ לִפְתַּח אָהָלוֹ וַיַּחֲרֹאֲף ה' מְאֹד וַבְּעֵינָיו מִשְׁהָ רָע: (יא) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־ה' לָמָּה הִרְעִיתָ לְעַבְדְּךָ וְלָמָּה לֹא־מָצִיתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְשׂוֹם אֶת־מִשְׁאֵל כָּל־הָעָם הַזֶּה עָלַי: (יב) הֲאֵנֹכִי הָרִיתִי אֶת כָּל־הָעָם הַזֶּה אִם־אֲנֹכִי

engender them, that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom as a caregiver carries an infant,' to the land that You have promised on oath to their fathers?

וְלִדְתֵיהֶם כִּי־תֹאמַר אֵלַי שְׂאֵהוּ בְּחִיקוֹךָ כְּאִשׁוֹר
יִשָּׂא הָאִמּוֹן אֶת־הַיֶּלֶד עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאֲבֹתָיו:

Numbers 12:7-8

(7) Not so with My servant Moses; he is trusted throughout My household. (8) With him I speak mouth to mouth, plainly and not in riddles, and he beholds the likeness of ה'. How then did you not shrink from speaking against My servant Moses!"

במדבר י"ב:ז-ח'

(ז) לֹא־כֵן עִבְדִי מֹשֶׁה בְּכָל־בֵּיתִי נֶאֱמַן הוּא:
(ח) פֶּה אֶל־פֶּה אֲדַבֵּר־בּוֹ וּמְרֹאֶה וְלֹא בְּחִידֹת
וּתְמַנֵּת ה' יִבְטֵט וּמִדְּוַעַל לֹא יִרְאֶתֶם לְדַבֵּר
בְּעִבְדִי בְּמִנְשָׁה:

Numbers 20:7-12

(7) and ה' spoke to Moses, saying, (8) "You and your brother Aaron take the rod and assemble the community, and before their very eyes order the rock to yield its water. Thus you shall produce water for them from the rock and provide drink for the congregation and their beasts." (9) Moses took the rod from before ה', as he had been commanded. (10) Moses and Aaron assembled the congregation in front of the rock; and he said to them, "Listen, you rebels, shall we get water for you out of this rock?" (11) And Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod. Out came copious water, and the community and their beasts drank. (12) But ה' said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust Me enough to affirm My sanctity in the sight of the Israelite people, therefore you shall not lead this congregation into the land that I have given them."

במדבר כ':ז-י"ב

(ז) וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: (ח) קַח אֶת־
הַמַּטֵּה וְהַקְהֵל אֶת־הָעֵדָה אֹתָהּ וְאַהֲרֹן אֹחִיךָ
וְדַבְּרָתֶם אֶל־הַסֵּלַע לְעֵינֵיהֶם וְנָתַן מִיַּמִּי
וְהוֹצֵאתָ לָהֶם מַיִם מִן־הַסֵּלַע וְהִשְׁקִיתָ אֶת־
הָעֵדָה וְאֶת־בְּעִירָם: (ט) וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־
הַמַּטֵּה מִלִּפְנֵי ה' כְּאִשְׁרֵי צִוְּהוּ: (י) וַיַּקְהֵלוּ
מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶת־הַקְהֵל אֶל־פְּנֵי הַסֵּלַע וַיֹּאמֶר
לָהֶם שְׁמַעוּ־נָא הַמַּרְיָם הַמִּן־הַסֵּלַע הַזֶּה נוֹצֵיא
לָכֶם מַיִם: (יא) וַיִּרְם מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיַּךְ אֶת־
הַסֵּלַע בְּמַטְּהוֹ פַּעַמַּיִם וַיֵּצְאוּ מַיִם רַבִּים וַתִּשְׁתְּ
הָעֵדָה וּבְעִירָם: {ס} (יב) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־
מֹשֶׁה וְאַל־אַהֲרֹן יַעַן לֹא־הֶאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי
לְהַקְדִּישֵׁנִי לְעֵינֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָכֵן לֹא תָבִיאוּ
אֶת־הַקְהֵל הַזֶּה אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַתִּי לָהֶם:

Psalms 23

(1) A psalm of David.

The LORD is my shepherd;
I lack nothing. (2) He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me to water in places of repose;-a
(3) He renews my life;
He guides me in right paths
as befits His name. (4) Though I walk through a valley of deepest darkness, I fear no harm, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff—they comfort me.
(5) You spread a table for me in full view of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
my drink is abundant. (6) Only goodness and steadfast love shall pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for many long years.

Psalms 18:10

(10) He bent the sky and came down, thick cloud beneath His feet.

Psalms 97:2

(2) Dense clouds are around Him,
righteousness and justice are the base of His throne.

Job 12:22

(22) He draws mysteries out of the darkness,
And brings obscurities to light.

תהילים כ"ג

(א) מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד ה' רָעִי לֹא אֶחְסָר: (ב) בְּנֵאֻת
דָּשָׂא יִרְבִּיצֵנִי עַל־מֵי מְנוּחֹת יִנְהַלֵּנִי: (ג) נִפְשִׁי
יִשׁוּבֵב יִנְחֵנִי בְּמַעְגְלֵי־צֶדֶק לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ: (ד) גַּם
כִּי־אֵלֶךְ בְּגִיא צְלֻמוֹת לֹא־אֵירָא רָע כִּי־אֵתָהּ
עִמָּדִי שְׁבֻטְךָ אִמְשֶׁעֲנֶתְךָ הַמָּה יִנְחַמְנִי: (ה)
תַּעֲרֹךְ לִפְנֵי אֵשׁ לְחֹן נֶגְדַת צִרְיִי דִשְׁנֵת בְּשִׁמְךָ
רֹאשִׁי כּוֹסֵי רִוְיָהּ: (ו) אֵךְ אֵטוֹב וְחֶסֶד יִרְדְּפוּנִי
כָּל־יְמֵי חַיֵּי וְשִׁבְתִּי בְּבֵית־ה' לְאָרְךָ יָמִים: {פ}

תהילים י"ח:

(י) וַיִּט שָׁמַיִם וַיִּרְדּוּ עֲרַפְלֵי תַחַת רַגְלָיו:

תהילים צ"ז:

(ב) עָנָן וְעַרְפֵּל סָבִיבוּ צֶדֶק אִמְשַׁפֵּט מְכוֹן
בְּסֻאוֹ:

איוב י"ב:

(כב) מִגְלֵה עֲמֻקּוֹת מִנִּי־חֹשֶׁךְ וַיֵּצֵא לְאוֹר
צְלֻמוֹת: