Not the Name Alone: A Linguistic Study of Exodus 3:14–15

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Published online: 5 May 2021

Abstract

Exodus 3:14–15 provide an answer to Moses' question in v. 13, but with surprising unanimity scholars have concluded that v. 14 is the heart of the section due to the supposed significance of the name YHWH for the determining YHWH's original character. This focus on v. 14 has led most scholars to overlook the fact that v. 15a is a second answer to the question, and that v. 15b presents two complementary, but distinct dimensions of the deity. In v. 15b, the demonstratives *זה* ... *זה*, the nouns *שמי* and *זכרי*, and the temporal adverbial compounds *לעלם* and *לדר דר*, each point toward two distinct referents: YHWH and Elohim. The first clause highlights the timeless nature of YHWH's name, while the second clause underscores the need to memorialize Elohim as the God of the ancestors and future Israelite generations.

Keywords

God's name – YHWH – Exod 3

The theophany in Exod 3 and the revelation of the divine name *אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר אֵלֶּיךָ* in v. 14 have been studied widely and have furnished many occasions for speculation and critical reflection. Verse 15, however, has received less attention.

וַיֹּאמֶר עוֹד אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵי מֹשֶׁה 15a
 כֹּה־תֹאמַר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרָהֶם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם
 זֶה־שְּׁמִי לְעֹלָם 15b
 וְזֶה זִכְרִי לְדֹר דֹּר:

When scholars do analyze this verse, they usually treat the two nominal clauses in v. 15b as parallel, expressing the same content. In this article, by contrast, I will argue that the clauses in v. 15b have to be differentiated for three reasons. First, the repeated demonstrative *זה ... וזה* serves to indicate distinct positions or entities in Biblical Hebrew. Second, the words “name” and “remembrance” refer to different aspects of God as noted already by Rashbam. And third, *לעלם* and *לדר דר* reflect different conceptions of time as Malbim has argued: *לעלם* expresses time that is continuous and indivisible, while *לדר דר* expresses time that is periodic, segmented according to each generation. Seen in this light, the first clause of v. 15b refers back to YHWH and the elucidation of his name given in v. 14, while the second clause refers to Elohim as he was described in v. 15a, namely as the God of the ancestors. The combination of both identifications (YHWH and the God of your fathers) in *יהוה אלהי אבותיכם* in v. 15a and v. 16a lays the groundwork for a third dimension, namely that future generations should remember both his name and the beneficial acts that he performed for their ancestors. In the present article, I will first discuss the separate elements of v. 15b and subsequently explore their position in the context of Exod 3:13–15.

1 The Repeated Demonstratives *זה ... וזה* and *זאת ... וזאת*

The repeated masculine demonstrative pronoun (here abbreviated as *זה ... וזה*) appears twelve times in the Hebrew Bible within consecutive clauses, including Exod 3:15.¹ The corresponding feminine construction, *זאת ... וזאת*, occurs twice in the same environment.² In addition, the terms *מזה ... מזה* (10×)³ and

1 In non-consecutive clauses, this word combination occurs in Job 2:23, 25.

2 In non-consecutive clauses, this word combination occurs in 2 Sam 7:19 and Isa 28:12.

3 Remarkably, this construction is exclusively used in the Torah and the Former Prophets: Exod 25:19 and 37:8 “one cherub at one end and the other cherub at the other end”; Exod 26:13 “the extra cubit from this side and the extra cubit from that side”; Num 22:24 (the messenger of YHWH is positioned) “in a lane with a fence on this side and a fence on that side”; Josh 8:22 “they were in the middle of Israel, these from this side and those from that side”; similar uses are found in 1 Sam 14:4; 17:3; 23:26; 2 Sam 2:13. Once, in Zech 5:3, the construction is used in a non-consecutive clause.

ומזה ... מזה (13×)⁴ are used more than twenty times in fixed constructions to designate opposing spatial positions, e.g., “on/from this side” and “on/from that side (or the other side).” In this section, I will discuss all attestations of the זה ... זה and זאת ... זאת construction in order to determine whether or not the repeated demonstratives point to distinct people, places, or things.

	זה	זה	זה
Gen 28:17	<i>This</i> is none other than the house of God	and <i>that</i> is the gate of heaven	
Exod 3:15	<i>This</i> is my name	and <i>that</i> is my remembrance	
Num 34:6–7	<i>This</i> will be your western boundary	and <i>that</i> will be your northern boundary	
1 Kgs 22:20	<i>This one</i> said thus	and <i>that one</i> said that	and <i>that one</i> shall mark his arm YHWH’s
Isa 44:5	<i>This one</i> shall say I am YHWH’s	and <i>that one</i> shall use the name of “Jacob”	
Ps 75:8	He brings down <i>one man</i>	He lifts up <i>another</i>	
Job 1:16	<i>This one</i> was still speaking	when <i>another</i> came and said	
Job 1:17	<i>This one</i> was still speaking	when <i>another</i> came and said	
Job 1:18	<i>This one</i> was still speaking	when <i>another</i> came and said	
Cant 5:16	<i>This</i> is my lover	and <i>that</i> is what my friend looks like	
1 Chr 22:1	<i>Here</i> will be the house of YHWH	and <i>there</i> the altar of burnt offerings for Israel	
2 Chr 18:19	Then <i>this one</i> said this	and <i>that one</i> said that	
	זאת	זאת	
1 Kgs 3:23	<i>This one</i> said	and <i>that one</i> said	
Isa 14:26	<i>This</i> is the plan	and <i>that</i> is the outstretched hand	

4 In Exod 17:12; 26:13; 32:15; 38:15; Josh 8:33; 1 Kgs 10:19, 20; Ezek 45:7; 47:7, 12; 48:21; 2 Chr 9:18–19.

1.1 **וזה ... זה and וזאת ... זאת** *Designating Distinct Persons*

In the tale of Solomon's judgement in 1 Kgs 3:16–28 Solomon is confronted with the testimonies of two women that contradict each other. The king summarizes the dilemma in v. 23: "This one (זאת) says: 'This is my son, the living one and your son is the dead one.' And that one (והזאת) says: 'No, the dead one is your son, my son is the living one.'" Here, the repeated feminine demonstrative serves to differentiate between the two women. Again in v. 25, the king distinguishes between both women, this time using the repeated phrase לזאת: "Give one half to the one (לזאת) and [give] one half to the other (לזאת)."⁵ In this context, it is clear that the constructions זאת ... זאת and לזאת ... לזאת refer to two distinct women seen from the perspective of the king.

In 1 Kgs 22, the kings of Israel and Judah consult various prophets in order to determine whether they should attack the Arameans. One of them, Micaiah, has a vision. He sees YHWH seated upon his throne, with the heavenly host standing in attendance on his right and left (v. 19). YHWH then poses a question to his divine retinue: "who of you will entice Ahab into battle?"⁶ According to the narrator of the passage, the members of the heavenly host respond as follows: "This one (זה) said this and that one (וזה) said that, until the רוח came forward and stood before YHWH and said: 'I will entice him'" (vv. 20b–21a). Here, the construction וזה ... זה serves to differentiate between various members of the heavenly host and their advice to YHWH. The same conclusion applies to 1 Chr 18, which is a retelling of 1 Kgs 22. Here, too, the construction וזה ... זה reflects the differences between the heavenly beings, who are positioned to the right and left of YHWH.

In the opening verses of Isa 44, YHWH states that he has chosen Jacob and describes the blessings that will accrue to him as a result. In the last line of the oracle, YHWH suggests that these blessings will entice individuals from other nations to join Israel: "This one (זה) shall say I am YHWH's, and that one (וזה) shall use the name 'Jacob,' and that one (וזה) shall mark his arm 'belonging to YHWH'⁷ and adopt the name of Israel." The threefold repetition of זה characterizes these people as distinct entities who are only united by their desire to join

5 For an extensive narratological study of 1 Kgs 3:16–28, see Wolde, "Who Guides Whom," 623–642. See also Lasine, "Riddle," 61–89, and Beuken, "No Wise King," 1–10.

6 Ten passages in the Hebrew Bible depict YHWH as the member or head of a heavenly council consisting of other (lesser) divinities, namely Deut 32:8–9; 1 Kgs 22:19; Isa 6:3; Zech 3:1; Pss 82:1, 6; 89:7; Job 1:6; Dan 7:25–27; 2 Chr 18:19.

7 They will mark their hands with the name of the deity, i.e., they will tattoo their hands to indicate ownership. See Huehnergard and Liebowitz, "Biblical Prohibition," 59–77, who conclude that tattoos served primarily to mark ownership of slaves, which seems to be the socio-logical background that this verse assumes.

Israel.⁸ The three demonstratives refer to distinct referents and are linked to the speaker's, i.e., YHWH's, viewpoint.

Psalm 75:8 speaks of God's judgment: "Truly God gives judgement; he brings down one man (זֶה) and lifts up another (זֶה)." The psalm as a whole underscores the different fates awaiting the wicked and the righteous and the construction זֶה ... זֶה marks this reference to distinct individuals as seen from God's perspective.

In the first chapter of the book of Job, three disasters befall Job, in vv. 13–19, which are reported by a series of three messengers. They arrive at Job's doorstep, one after the other, to tell him what happened: "This one (זֶה) was still speaking, when another one (זֶה) came and said" (repeated in vv. 16, 17, and 18). Here, the repeated use of the demonstratives serves to differentiate between a series of messengers, as seen from Job's point of view.

1.2 זֶה ... זֶה *Designating Distinct Spatial Positions*

In the story of Jacob's dream in Gen 28:10–22, the repeated usage of the term המקום "the place" emphasizes its great importance. Although he accidentally arrives at "the" place, Jacob soon discovers that it is much more than just a simple waystation.⁹ There he experiences a night-vision and receives a message from YHWH. In reaction he exclaims: "truly YHWH is in *this* place" (v. 16). The use of the proximal demonstrative pronoun זֶה in this phrase indicates that Jacob perceives the deity to be located nearby, in this place. But then, in v. 17 Jacob uses the word in combination with זֶה: "this (זֶה) is none other than ... and that (זֶה) is." With the first זֶה, Jacob refers to the place where he experienced YHWH's presence, while with the second זֶה, he points upwards to the heavens, which are connected to the earth by means of a ramp. The place nearby is qualified by Jacob as awesome and identified as Bethel, while the distant place called by him "the gate of heaven(s)" is not given a name. The repeated use of the demonstrative marks the contrast between the two places reflects Jacob's standpoint: "this" stands for a location near him, and "that" stands for a location distant from him.¹⁰

In Num 34, YHWH gives a set of instructions to Moses regarding the conquest of the land of Canaan that the Israelites are about to enter. In vv. 2–12, he addresses Moses who is then stationed (as we are told in the previous chapter,

8 See Paul, *Isaiah* 40–66.

9 For recent explanations of Gen 28:10–22, see Peleg, *Going Up*; Wolde, "Stairway"; and Wilson-Wright, "Bethel."

10 The NJPS translation acknowledges this and renders v. 17 correctly with "How awesome is this place! *This* is none other than the abode of God, and *that* is the gateway to heaven."

33:48–50) in the steppes of Moab, at the Jordan near Jericho. YHWH describes the boundaries of the land starting in vv. 3–5 with the southern boundary on Moses' left hand side, continuing in v. 6 with the area in front of Moses, that is, the western boundary, then goes on to define the border on Moses' right hand side or the northern boundary in vv. 7–9, and concluding with the eastern boundary in vv. 10–12.¹¹ In vv. 6–7, the construction *זה ... זה* points, therefore, in different directions: “this will be your western boundary and that will be your northern boundary.” The demonstrative *זה* “this” does not necessarily imply that the western boundary, the Mediterranean Sea, is nearby, nor does *זה* “and that” necessarily imply that the northern boundary is more distant. Instead, the construction *זה ... זה* indicates different directions from the addressee's point of view.

In 1 Chr 21, David buys a threshing floor from Ornan, the Jebusite, and sacrifices burnt offerings to YHWH on it. The following chapter describes David's preparations to build a temple there: vv. 2–4 tell how David recruited workmen and amassed raw materials for the temple and vv. 5–19 report why he decides to leave the construction of the temple for his son, Solomon. Only in v. 1, does David make reference to the construction of an altar: “This (*זה*) is the house of the deity YHWH and that (*זה*) is the altar of burnt offerings for Israel.” The altar that David refers to has already been built at this point, but 21:29–30 says that David could not go before the tabernacle and altar of burnt offering in Gibeon because of the angel's sword. The repeated demonstrative *זה ... זה* in this verse apparently refers to two distinct entities, namely the site of the future temple and the altar that David has built on Ornan's threshing floor. The verse does not indicate, however, how the two are located with respect to each other. But we do know that the construction *זה ... זה* refers to different entities and their distinct positions as seen from David's standpoint.

1.3 *זה ... זה Designating Distinct Referents*

In Isa 14:24–27, the prophet describes how YHWH of Hosts devises plans and acts according to them. Previously, he had decided to destroy Assyria, now he will make it happen: he will break Assyria and his yoke will drop off Israel. Verse 26 then states that YHWH's plans apply not only to Assyria, but to the entire earth: YHWH will stretch out his arm over all the nations. In this context, the plan and its realisation represent two different aspects of YHWH's power: his ability to formulate and execute plans and his power and willingness to destroy. Thus, it is preferable to understand these lines as: “This is the plan that

¹¹ For a detailed analysis of the boundaries sketched in Num 34:2–12, see Levin, “Numbers 34:2–12.”

is planned concerning the whole earth; and that is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.”

In Song of Songs, in the last part of the woman's speech in 5:10–16,¹² she gives a part-by-part depiction of her lover's body.¹³ Verse 16b consists of two short nominal clauses: the first, *זה דודי* “this is my lover,” harkens back to the introductory statement “my lover is ...” in v. 10, while the second, *זה רעי* “this is my friend,” stands alone. The second clause is commonly treated as restatement of the first: “this is my lover, and this is my friend.” In her commentary on Song of Songs, by contrast, Cheryl Exum offers a translation that emphasizes the isolated position of the second demonstrative: “this is my lover, this, my friend.” She also comments on the fact that the woman's use of the term *רעי* here stands out as extraordinary: “the woman calls him ‘my friend,’ her only use of a term of endearment he uses frequently of her.”¹⁴ The man only uses the phrase “my friend” when describing his lover's beauty and body. Because of these three characteristics (the odd grammatical position, the rareness of the woman's use, and the man's use of the term *רע* “friend” when describing the woman's body), I consider it plausible that the first demonstrative in v. 16b refers to the beloved person in his totality as lover, whereas the second demonstrative refers to his bodily characteristics, which the woman has just described: “This is my lover, and that is what my friend looks like.”¹⁵

1.4 Conclusion

In the Hebrew Bible, the repeated demonstrative *זה ... זה* appears to be a fixed construction used to refer to two comparable but distinct persons, positions or referents: “this (one)” and “that (one).” Because the same word combination occurs in Exod 3:15, this verse should be understood in similar vein: (God says to Moses:) “*This* is my name..., and *that* is my remembrance.” In using this fixed construction, the speaker points toward distinct positions or referents, linking the former to *שם* and the latter to *זכר*. The repeated possessive pronoun “my” refers to the speaker God/YHWH, indicating that his perspective is paramount. While modern scholars have often assumed that *שם* and *זכר* both refer to the same aspect of God, I agree with Rashbam (see below) in seeing a difference between God's name (*שם*) and his remembrance (*זכר*).

12 The second long speech of the woman starts at 5:2 (after the man concluded his first speech in 5:1, followed by the short refrain of the female chorus) and finishes in 6:3.

13 See Exum, *Song of Songs*, 209.

14 See Cant 1:9, 15; 2:2, 10, 13; 4:1, 7; 5:2; 6:4.

15 It cannot, however, be excluded that Cant offers these poetic lines in a form of poetic overbid, “this one, indeed this very one.”

Unlike Rashbam, however, I argue that name and remembrance not only have distinct meanings, but distinct referents as well. Name refers to YHWH, and remembrance to Elohim.

2 Name and Remembrance

In his commentary on Exod 3:14–15, Rashbam draws a distinction between the name and the remembrance: “the name **אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה**, ‘the Eternal’ which I told you in verse one (14) is My most illustrious title, a reference to My essence (the ineffable name), whereas the name(s) I told you in verse two (15) is a description of My being Royalty.”¹⁶ William Propp contests this conclusion and offers a different interpretation of the potential difference between name and remembrance in this passage: “Implausibly, Rashbam differentiates between God’s *zēker* (Yahweh) and his *šēm* (I-will-be).” If there is such a distinction, more likely his “name” (*šēm*) is Yahweh, while his “designation” (*zēker*) is “the deity of Abraham ... Isaac ... Jacob.”¹⁷ In what follows, I intend to show why I partly agree and partly disagree with both Rashbam and Propp. In order to do so I will explore the usage of the terms in combination with the deity in the Hebrew Bible.

In the Hebrew Bible, the word **שֵׁם** designates a name that stands for a person, place, deity, group of people, etc., representing its identity. The verb **זָכַר** and the noun **זִכָּר** indicate the act of remembering and the concept of remembrance, respectively—that is to say, they express the memory someone has of someone or of something that happened in the past. Whereas the concept of “remembrance” entails a notion of time, construed as it were from a later temporal position and reflects on its past events, the notion of “name” does not include a temporal dimension.

With regard to the deity, the Hebrew Bible closely associates **שֵׁם** or **הַשֵּׁם** with YHWH, so that “the name” comes to represent YHWH.¹⁸ The name is also used in relation to YHWH Elohim,¹⁹ and when it is used in combination

16 See www.Sefaria.org: Rashbam on Exod 3:14–15.

17 Propp, *Exodus* 1–18, 205.

18 The pair **שֵׁם** and YHWH occurs in 90 texts; indirectly it occurs many more times, for example in cases where “the name” alone stands for YHWH.

19 Exod 20:7; Deut 5:11; 12:21; 14:24; 16:6; 18:7; 26:2; Josh 9:9; 1 Kgs 5:17, 19; 8:17, 20; 2 Kgs 5:11; Isa 24:15; 60:9; Jer 15:16; 26:16; Joel 2:26; Mic 4:5; 5:3; Ps 20:8; 1 Chr 22:7; 2 Chr 2:3; 6:7, 10; 33:18.

with Elohim, it often refers indirectly to YHWH.²⁰ The noun שם is also used in combination with “other gods” five times, twice in contrast to “the name of YHWH.”²¹ In addition, שם often appears alongside the root זכר in descriptions of the deity.²² In many these texts, however, the two terms are part of the formula: הזכר את-שם “cause to remember my/your/his name.”²³ Only a few poetic texts use both terms שם and זכר in relation to the deity, namely Isa 26:8; Hos 12:6, and Ps 135:13, but Exod 3:15 is the only narrative text that pairs זכר with שם. A closer look at these attestations may help us to see whether name and remembrance should be treated as near synonyms or not.

Two prophetic texts in the Hebrew Bible allude to YHWH in terms of “name” and “remembrance”: Isa 26:8 and Hos 12:6. In Isa 26:8 the prophet proclaims his trust in YHWH and his righteousness: “For your just ways, O YHWH, we look to you; the desire of the soul is for your name (לשמך) and for the remembrance of you (לזכרך).” Because no further qualification or explanation is offered, it is difficult to conclude whether name and remembrance are intended as synonyms in this passage.

The other prophetic text, Hos 12:6, contains the lexeme זכרו, which could be either a verb or a noun. If it is a verb, then it must be an imperative: “And

20 This is either expressed by the possessive pronoun “my/your/our God” or through an indirect reference to YHWH. See Lev 18:21 “Do not profane the name of your God: I am YHWH”; Lev 19:12 “You shall not swear falsely by my name, profaning the name of your God: I am YHWH”; Lev 21:6 “They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God” (translations NJPS, with the exception of the tetragrammaton). See also 1 Kgs 18:25; Ps 20:2, 6; 44:21; 48:11; 54:3; 68:5; 69:31, and Prov 30:9.

21 Exod 23:13 “Make no mention of the name of other gods”; Deut 18:20 “But any prophet who presumes to speak in my name an oracle that I did not command him to utter, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die”; Josh 23:7 “Do not utter the names of their gods”; 1 Kgs 18:24 “You will invoke your gods by their name, and I will invoke YHWH by name”; Mic 4:5 “Though all the peoples walk each in the names of its gods, we will walk in the name of YHWH our God forever and ever.”

22 The pairing of both terms in relation to human beings is only used three times: Ps 83:5 “Israel’s name (שם) will be remembered (זכר) no more”; Prov 10:7 “the remembrance (זכר) of the righteous is for blessing, but the name (שם) of the wicked will rot”; Job 18:17 “his remembrance (זכר) vanishes from the earth, he has no name (שם) all over the earth.”

23 Exod 20:24 (with regard to altar and sacrifices) “in every place where I will cause to remember (זכר *hiphil*) my name”; Isa 12:4 “Make his deeds known among the peoples; cause to remember (זכר *hiphil*) that his name is exalted”; Isa 26:13 “YHWH ELOHENU ... only in you shall we cause to remember (זכר *hiphil*) your name”; Amos 6:10 “so that no one will cause to remember (זכר *hiphil*) in the name of YHWH”; Ps 20:8 “They call on chariots, they call on horses, but we cause to remember (זכר *hiphil*) in the name of YHWH our God”; Ps 45:8 “I cause to remember (זכר *hiphil*) your name for all generations, so people will praise you forever and ever.” Only once, in Ps 119:55, the *qal* of זכר is used: “I will remember your name at night, O YHWH.”

YHWH, Elohim of the hosts, YHWH invoke him [alone],” meaning, do not remember any of the other heavenly hosts’ members.²⁴ If זכרו is a noun, then v. 6b forms a nominal clause: “And YHWH, Elohim of the hosts, YHWH is his remembrance.”²⁵ Context helps us decide between the two options. The first part of Hos 12 condemns Ephraim and Judah (vv. 1–3a), and the second part (vv. 3b–7), to which v. 6 belongs, criticizes Jacob. This section provides a virtual précis of the Jacob cycle found in Gen 25–35, beginning with Jacob’s fight with his brother in the womb, his fight with the divine messenger as an adult (vv. 4–5a), and ending in v. 5b with the story of how Jacob eventually met “him” in Bethel.²⁶ The next verse, v. 6, opens in v. 6a with the conjunctive *waw* (וַיְהִי), identifying the “him” of the previous verse as both YHWH and אֱלֹהֵי הַצְבָּאוֹת. Verse 6b then exhorts the listener to remember YHWH or otherwise describes the remembrance of YHWH. Verse 7 picks up on the theme of remembrance, urging the audience to return to “your God” and “to put your trust in your God.” This time, Hosea does not mention YHWH, but instead uses the term אֱלֹהֶיךָ “your God” to refer to YHWH. It is a remarkable text, since it defines YHWH, the אֱלֹהִים of the hosts of heavenly beings, as the one who met Jacob in Bethel, and twice as אֱלֹהֶיךָ “your God.” Nevertheless, its meaning is clear: both YHWH and the memory of his actions are worth remembering. The connection between the two is pivotal for vv. 6–7: YHWH, Elohim and his actions on Jacob’s behalf form the ground for the future trust in this God; they allow future generations to consider him as their God. In this oracle, remembrance of past events is the prerequisite for future hope and fear.

In the book of Psalms, YHWH is three times associated with remembrance in a rather abstract way. In Ps 6:6, the psalmist cries out for help and laments that “there is no remembrance of you זכרך (referring to YHWH) in death or in Sheol.” And in Pss 30:5 and 97:12 YHWH is represented by his holiness and his memorial leads to praise and celebration.²⁷ Only in two Psalms is the combination of YHWH and זכר more substantial and in both psalms the remembrance of YHWH is connected with future generations: Ps 102:13 “your remembrance is

24 So NJPS.

25 So DCH vol. 3, III.

26 The personal pronoun “him” in v. 5b grammatically refers to the messenger mentioned in the previous verse, but the term Bethel suggests that the prophet’s audience are supposed to know that Jacob met YHWH in Bethel, so that the deity is implied. Chalmers, *Struggle*, and some of the scholars that he cites argue that מלאך is secondary in Hos 12:5 and that the verse originally read “he wrestled with El.” Such a reading also better fits the connection between this episode and the etiology of Peniel.

27 Ps 30:5 “Sing to YHWH, his faithfuls, and praise for the remembrance of his holiness (לִזְכֹּר קִדְשׁוֹ),” and Ps 97:12 “Praise for the remembrance of his holiness (לִזְכֹּר קִדְשׁוֹ).”

from generation to generation (לִדְרֹר וּדְרֹר) and Ps 135:13 “YHWH, your name (שֵׁם) is forever, YHWH your remembrance (זִכָּר) from generation to generation (לִדְרֹר וּדְרֹר).”²⁸ The latter psalm is very instructive, because it distinguishes between the name of YHWH and his remembrance like Exod 3:15. The first nominal clause in v. 13a expresses the identity or present state of the deity and qualifies it as enduring forever. The second nominal clause in v. 13b refers to the memory of YHWH and of what he did in the past, which must be kept in mind for future generations.

To sum up: On the few occasions in which the noun זִכָּר is used in the Hebrew Bible in combination with the deity, the honoring of the memory by future generations is crucial. Hosea 12:6 exhorts listeners to preserve the memory of YHWH’s actions vis-à-vis Jacob at Bethel. It defines YHWH as the god of the hosts who saved in the past and who shall in the future be remembered as “your God.” In Pss 102:13 and 135:13, the combination of זִכָּר with לִדְרֹר וּדְרֹר refers to the remembrance of YHWH throughout the generations. When the deity is represented by “his holiness” in Pss 30:5 and 97:12, remembrance takes the form of praise and celebration, to be performed as part of festivals and in the temple. Isaiah 6:8 describes the longing of the prophet’s soul for “your name and for the remembrance of you,” but does not refer to future generations. Yet on the only other occasion in which שֵׁם and זִכָּר are both mentioned, namely in Ps 135:13, the name and remembrance are distinguished and do not act as near synonyms. In fact, the notion of remembrance is explicitly linked to future generations, whereas the name seems to refer to the state, presence or identity of the deity. This suggests that Exod 3:15 also distinguishes between the “name” and the “remembrance” of the deity.

3 Temporal Markers

The temporal expressions לְעֵלָם and לִדְרֹר וּדְרֹר also serve to distinguish between the first clause of v. 15a and the second clause of v. 15b. As the nineteenth century exegete Meïr Leibush ben Yehiel Michel Wisser (d. 1879), also known as Malbim notes, the terms “forever” (לְעֵלָם) and “every generation” (לִדְרֹר וּדְרֹר) convey different senses of temporality: לְעֵלָם expresses time that is continuous and indivisible, while לִדְרֹר וּדְרֹר expresses time that is periodic, segmented according to each generation: “He parses what is patently an emphatic avowal

28 Cf. also Ps 45:18, in which the fixed construction זִכָּר *hiphil* with the direct object שֵׁם is explicitly related to the future “I cause to remember your name for all generations, so people will praise you forever and ever.”

of durability into a proclamation of two different dimensions to the human encounter with God, resulting in different perceptions of God.”²⁹ Malbim’s explanation can be confirmed by a study of the distribution of these terms as well as the related set phrases לדר ודר and לדר דר in the Hebrew Bible.

The noun דר designates a generation (166×),³⁰ that is, all the people in a group or family of a similar age, and thus the concept of דר assumes a genealogy. More seldomly, it denotes an assembly or group of people or gods (15×) without this genealogical connotation. Because of the explicitly mentioned shared ancestry, דר in Exod 3:15b represents a generation, and includes notions of shared ancestry and a limited period of time. The noun עלם (440×), by contrast, designates a perpetual state, which is unlimited and unsegmented. The two nouns express vastly different conceptions and experiences of time and this distinction is reflected in their syntax. One of the main characteristics of דר, generation or group, is that it is countable, see, e.g., “thousand generations” in Deut 7:9; Ps 105:8, and 1 Chr 16:15, “four generations” in Job 42:16, “in the fourth generation” in Gen 15:16, and “in the tenth generation” in Deut 23:3, 4. Because of its countability it is often combined with quantifiers, such as “every,” “all.”³¹ עלם, by contrast, indicates time that is limitless, and is, therefore, uncountable and is never used with quantifiers.³²

The combination of דר(ו) לדר³³ and לעלם occurs often in the Hebrew Bible.³⁴ On these occasions, the terms sometimes figure as near synonyms, but most of the time they represent distinct meanings. Whereas the collocation דר(ו) לדר refers to the segments of times as they are experienced by human beings in each generation (and the morphology reflects this segmentation), the term לעלם designates everlastingness, limitless time—a perpetual state, independent of human experience. In Exod 3:15b “my name” (שמי) is associated with לעלם, that is, with limitless time independent of human experience.

29 See www.Sefaria.org—Malbim’s commentary on Exod 3 (in Hebrew). See Diamond, “YHWH,” on which my description of Malbim is based.

30 All numbers are DCH’s, vol. 2, 428.

31 This also explains why both ancient and modern translations often add a numeral before the word generation: Tg Onkelos and Tg Jonathan add “all” or “every” in v. 15b with שמי דין ודר לעלם ודין דכרני לכל דר ודר (“This is his name for ever, and this is his memorial to every generation”).

32 The only exception to this rule is Ps 145:13, in which מלכות כל־עלמים is set in opposition with וממשלתך בכל־דור ודור.

33 Only Exod 3:15 and Prov 27:24 (qere) have לדר דר, the other attestations have דר לדר.

34 This combination occurs in Exod 3:15; Deut 32:7; Isa 34:10; 51:8; 58:12; 60:15; Joel 2:2; 4:20; Pss 33:11; 45:18; 49:12; 61:7,8; 79:13; 85:6; 89:2; 100:5; 102:13; 119:89, 90; 135:13; 145:13; 146:10; Prov 27:24; Lam 5:19; Qoh 1:4. Three times, in Isa 34:17, Pss 89:5, and 106:31, דר(ו) לדר is used in combination with עד־עולם, and once, in Ps 77:9, it is used with לנצח.

In contrast, “my remembrance” (זכרי) is combined with לדר דר and the remembrance of the deity through the generations. It refers to the deity as experienced by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This then is the deity, האלהים, whose deeds the Israelites should remember in “successive generations.”

We can conclude, therefore, that “my name” and “my remembrance” in Exod 3:15b are complementary attributes of the deity. The name represents YHWH, his presence and identity for limitless time, while the remembrance refers to past events that future generations must memorialize.

4 Exodus 3:15b in the Context of 3:13–15

The pericope of Exod 3:13–15 has provoked philological study for centuries, with a special focus on v. 14. The present article limits itself to a discussion of how the proposed interpretation of v. 15b fits into the context of vv. 13–15.

God’s reaction to Moses’s question in v. 13 about his name is twofold. First, in v. 14, he answers with אהיה אשר אהיה, then in v. 15a, he gives a second answer (introduced by “And God said further to Moses”): “Thus you shall speak to the Israelites: ‘YHWH, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob have sent me to you.’” In his first reaction in v. 14, the triple usage of אהיה (v. 14a, אהיה אשר אהיה and v. 14b, “אהיה ‘I am’ sent me to you”) denotes an event of being/existence/presence and/or of becoming/happening, in which the name YHWH is associated with the verb היה. The אהיה אשר אהיה utterance is an example of an *idem per idem* construction, in which the relative clause is situated within the phrase structure of the anchor, that is, the deity represented by the first person. As a *yiqtol* the verb indicates continuity: beginning in the present time it stretches out into the future. Thus the utterance expresses prospectivity and points forward to a continuous being and becoming. This continuity in time is analogous to the concept of limitless time, עלם, presented in v. 15b, in the sense that both expresses a notion of time that is not segmented.

Yet this is not God’s only answer to Moses’ question about his name. He responds a second time in v. 15a—as is indicated by the adverb עוד—and in this answer the deity points towards the past. In contrast to v. 14 in which YHWH identified himself in terms of “being” in the cognitive domain of time and not in relation to human beings or other creatures, in v. 15a he presents himself as the God of a particular genealogical line. This dimension, YHWH as the Elohim of the ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is repeatedly mentioned earlier, and here again in v. 15a. It will also return in v. 16, where Moses is told what to tell the elders. Verse 15b is crucial because it presents exactly

these two aspects, “my name forever” and “my remembrance for the generations.” Both distinctive features of the deity are combined in v. 15b. This helps explain the apposition of YHWH in the phrase יהוה אלהי אבותיכם in vv. 15a and 16a, where YHWH is associated with the “deity of the fathers.” The two clauses in v. 15b thus represent the two tracks of God’s self-disclosure: the first clause in v. 15b (“this is my name forever”) relates YHWH’s name to his self-identification in v. 14a and v. 14b, while the second clause in v. 15b (“and that is my memorial/remembrance from generation to generation”) refers to the deity as the God of the ancestors.³⁵ This juxtaposition of YHWH’s name and the remembrance of Elohim as he was experienced by Israel’s ancestors lays the ground for the third dimension, namely that YHWH, Israel’s God, should be honored by future generations not by his name alone, but also by keeping in mind how he acted in the past that entails a promise of support for future generations.

Recently, Jean-Pierre Sonnet has analyzed the rhetorical function of the name in Exod 3 (as well as the rest of Exodus).³⁶ He does so by using Sternberg’s categories of suspense, curiosity, and surprise to describe the name’s dynamics.³⁷ According to Sonnet, “suspense” refers to things not yet known and is represented in Exod 3 by v. 12, “I will be (אהיה) with you,” and by v. 14, when God spells out his name, אהיה אשר אהיה. In the latter verse, the imperfect אהיה refers to the future, while the *idem per idem* construction expresses indetermination: “I can/may/want to be what I can/may/want to be.”³⁸ “Curiosity” bears on things past, on accomplished facts, and in Sonnet’s analysis, it is represented by God’s references to the past in Exod 2:24 and 3:6 that include an indirect act of promise. The third element, “surprise,” is represented in v. 14, when God reveals to Moses the first person name, אשר אהיה אהיה, which is reduced to its core אהיה at the end of the verse. This name is reserved to Moses, and it prepares for the revelation of the third person name

35 The two lines in Exod 3:15b are often read as parallel, partly due to the rhyme and rhythm of זה-שמי // זכרתי // וזה זכרתי // לעולם // לדר דר. Since Lowth, *Lectures*, 1x defined “parallelism” in terms of sharing “a certain equality, resemblance, or parallelism between the members of each period,” scholars often read parallel clauses as synonymous. O’Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure*, 640; Dobbs-Allsop, *On Biblical Poetry*, 56, and Holmstedt, “Hebrew Poetry,” 622, criticised Lowth’s standard description as a misleading semantic definition of parallelism and argue instead that a poetic line is a syntactic phenomenon. Syntactically, the second clause in Exod 3:15b is a nonrestrictive appositive that provides an additional or alternative description of the anchor, the deity: it clarifies and extend aspects of the deity that the first clause does not articulate itself.

36 Sonnet, “*Ehyeh*.” See *ibid.*, for a survey of commentator’s positions and a bibliography.

37 Sternberg, *Expositional Models*, 65; Sternberg, “Narrativity,” 117.

38 Sonnet “*Ehyeh*,” 336.

יהוה to the people, which is associated with the remembrance of God's action in history.

My analysis of Exod 3:15b shows continuities with and differences from Sonnet's study. Like Sonnet, I consider v. 15b to proceed along a double track, namely the track of name and the track of history. And I agree with him that the name is related to יהיה and to YHWH. I find his explanation of the distinction between the name אהיה and the name יהיה fascinating and convincing. However, I differ from Sonnet in the explanation of v. 15b. While v. 15b does proceed along the tracks of name and history, these tracks are more distinct than Sonnet thinks. He too quickly links all elements in the two clauses of v. 15b to YHWH and makes no distinction between YHWH and his name, on the one hand, and the God of history and his memory, on the other hand. Instead, I argue that the two demonstratives זה ... זה form a fixed linguistic construction that point at different referents or positions. I also differ from Sonnet in distinguishing between name and the memory and argue that שמי is associated with YHWH, while זכרי is associated with "the deity of Abraham ... Isaac ... Jacob." The adverb עוד "further" in v. 15a provide an additional reason not to associate שמי with אהיה אשר אהיה. Indeed, I would distinguish more broadly between the two clauses in v. 15b as a whole, seeing a distinction between name and history, between YHWH and Elohim, and between "forever" and "from generation to generation."

5 Conclusion

The vv. 14 and 15 in Exod 3 provide an answer to Moses' question to YHWH in v. 13, but with surprising unanimity scholars have concluded that v. 14 is the heart of the section due to the supposed significance of the name YHWH for the determining YHWH's original character. This focus on v. 14 has led most scholars to overlook the fact that v. 15a is a second answer to the question, and that v. 15b presents two complementary, but distinct dimensions of the deity. In v. 15b, the demonstratives זה ... זה, the nouns שמי and זכרי, and the temporal adverbial compounds לעלם and לדר, each point toward two distinct referents: YHWH and Elohim. In the first clause of v. 15b, זה, שמי and לעלם all refer to YHWH, while in the second זה, זכרי, and לדר refer to Elohim. The first clause, therefore, highlights the timeless nature of YHWH's name, while the second clause underscores the need to memorialize Elohim as the God of the ancestors and future Israelite generations. Together they form two poetic lines that constitute a perfect summary and appropriate ending to this section of Exodus.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Lut Callaert and Aren Wilson-Wright for their readings and comments.

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