THE PATRIARCHS' KNOWLEDGE OF JEHOVAH

A Critical Monograph on Exodus 6:3
Abridged by the Author
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"And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty; but
by my name Jehovah I was not known to them." (Ex. 6:3 A.S.V.)

   Anyone who has committed himself to a serious study of the Old Testament is
aware of the fact that certain portions of Old Testament history and in particular certain
verses have become focal points of critical and theological investigation. The text under
consideration is one such text. To a rather large group of Old Testament scholars this
verse has been more or less the basic proof text for the documentary analysis of the
Pentateuch. Others have either ignored a treatment of the verse or proposed unsupported
solutions to the problems it presents. For the conservative scholar, however, it gives
unmeasurable light into the relation of the Patriarchs to their God; and more generally,
the method and scope of Divine revelation in the Old Testament.
   Because Exodus 6:3 has become a basic proof text for the documentary analysis of the
Pentateuch, it is imperative that we briefly consider this very popular theory. This theory
originated with Jean Astruc, a French physician, who, by the way, did not deny the
Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. In his famous treatise, <u>Conjectures Concerning the
Original Memoranda which it Appears Moses Used to Compose the Book of Genesis,</u>
Astruc proposed that on the basis of the use of divine names two basic documents could
be distinguished: one called A (using Elohim) and B (employing Yahweh). It is
interesting to note that this idea was applied to Genesis alone. It was not until 1791 that
the theory was applied to the entire Pentateuch by Eichhorn. From this time on the
variant uses of the Divine names were employed as a basis for distinguishing various
documents. The theory gained popularity as the years passed and other methods were
also employed to distinguish source material for the Pentateuch. The documentary
analysis reached its peak under the leadership of Julius Wellhausen, who died in 1918.
This system as it is held today has basically four source documents: (J) Yahwist,
presumed to have been written about 850 B.C., (E) or Elohist, about 750 B.C., (D) or
Deuteronomy about 620 B.C. and (P) in the completed Pentateuch about 500 B.C.
Unlike the view of Astruc, those who advocate this theory today deny the Mosaic
authorship of the Pentateuch.
   Since the days of Wellhausen, there have been many modifications to this classic form
of literary criticism of the Pentateuch. The present day efforts are to assume the
existence of the documents and extend the analysis even further, that is, back to the
"traditions" which are contained in the documents.[1] In this monograph, we shall not
endeavor to examine this latter effort in Old Testament criticism. Our major concern is
with the basic four document analysis which underlies most of the present day
Pentateuchal criticism.

  With this rather brief introduction let us proceed to the problems of the text itself.

  1. MINOR PROBLEM: What is the significance of the name "El-Shaddai" in relation
      to the Patriarchs?
  There are two basic views in regard to this Problem. We shall consider each with a
brief evaluation.
  A. <u>The Liberal View</u>: The liberal view generally holds that this name for God is to be
traced back to a natural origin. It holds its origin to be like that of the tribal deities of the
nations that surrounded the children of Israel in their early history. This view contends
that El Shaddai represents a primitive form of worship among the Patriarchs. Their
worship, according to this view, was basically the same as the other nations except for the
fact that some of their ideas and moral codes were in some aspects higher.
  There are many views as to the etymology of this title among liberal scholars, but the
one most commonly held is that "Shaddai" comes from the Babylonian "Sadda'u," the
gentilic of Sadu, Saddu, the regular word for mountain. The chief defender of this view
is Albright.[2] Another writer states the liberal position in the following words:

      When the Hebrews left Mesopotamia, they brought with them a religion which in
      many respects was like the nature religion of the Fertile Crescent. . . Apparently their
      chief god was known as Shaddai (or El Shaddai), which means "the one of the
      mountains"--a mountain deity or storm deity usually known by the title Baal (lord)
      among the Canaanites.[3]

  The liberal view, as previously noted, holds that El-Shaddai was a humanly-conceived
mountain god of the Israelites. The relation of El-Shaddai to the Patriarchs, therefore,
was merely as a native god, who was only one of many such gods of the land. While this
view is extremely popular among the liberal critics, it is not a strong view in the light of
Biblical evidence. The refutation of this view is two fold: First, it is a view conceived
and based upon a false assumption: namely, that monotheistic religion is a natural
evolutionary product of human thought. To this we would reply that religious evolution,
upon which this concept is built, is not a proven theory, but a hypothesis; it does not,
therefore, provide a sound basis for the liberal view of developed monotheism. Secondly,
the Biblical evidence is most clearly against the view that man "conceived" or "became
aware" of high moral and religious concepts. The liberal view disregards the many texts
which clearly point out the fact that man in his sinful, fallen state, cannot conceive of,
and will not seek after a Holy God. (Psalm 14, Romans 3:11-18). Furthermore, this view
of the name El-Shaddai does not fit any context in which it appears unless it is forced
against the natural reading of the text. The textual and contextual evidence are totally
against the idea of this being a "mountain deity."
  If the liberal contention were true, we should expect to find indications of a lower
moral and religious idea in the use of this name, but such is not the case. The same moral
and religious concepts are associated with this name as with the name Yahweh. For
example, the blessing is the same (Genesis 17:1). Notice in this text Yahweh says "I am
El-Shaddai." It would seem from this statement that identity and equality are asserted of
both these names. The moral demand is

"walk before me, and be thou perfect." To contend that Shaddai is merely a mountain deity is to disregard the place the name is given in the Scriptures. Also, in this regard, it should be observed that in some contexts the names Yahweh and El-Shaddai are used alternately with equal majesty and holiness (cf. Ruth 1:20f.).

   It should also be noted that this view fails to provide a motive and a reason why the other nations did not evolve into monotheistic concepts. How did Israel, a small nation surrounded by idolatry and sin, rise above nature worship and arrive at a high monotheism while the other nations did not? Without the fact of Divine intervention and revelation, no reasonable answer is possible. On the basis of these facts, and the positive evidence to be presented, the writer considers the liberal view false and untenable.

   B. The Conservative view: The basic understanding of the conservative view is that the name "El Shaddai" is of divine, not natural origin. The name, it is asserted, was revealed by God, and not conceived by man. While all conservative scholars agree on this basic principle, there is little agreement as to the etymology and significance of this name in relation to the patriarchs.   There are four basic views in this regard. The first view is that Shaddai comes from the root sadad "to be strong" or "powerful." This view seems to be the more popular. The emphasis, therefore, in respect to the patriarchs, is that of God's power and strength. Oehler favors this view in his Theology of the Old Testament.[4]

   The second view of the name Shaddai is that its root is sadad "to destroy" or "to terrify." This view is held by Mack.[5]

   The third view maintains that Shaddai comes from a compound word (from se (<'aser) and day which in Hebrew means "sufficiency." For a statement of this view compare John Calvin.[6]

   The fourth, and not too well accepted view is that proposed by the Scofield Bible.[7] This view contends that the name comes from sad which has primary reference to the female breast. The name, therefore, signified nourishment and strength to the Patriarchs.

   The writer feels the conservative view is the proper view and is the one best supported by the Scriptures. The most probable etymology of this title will be discussed in the following arguments in defense of this view. The arguments for the conservative view are two-fold:

   1. Exegetical Argument

   The phrase under consideration is in the English, "and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob as God Almighty . . . " The key words are "appeared" and "God Almighty" in this phrase. The verb 'era (appeared) is the niphal imperfect first person singular of the root raah. This root has the basic meaning of "to see, to observe, to look at."[8] The niphal, however, carries the idea of "letting oneself be seen," or "to appear," when used with 'el or l^e.[9] The sense of this statement seems to be that to these Patriarchs God "revealed" Himself or made Himself to appear "in the capacity of" El Shaddai. The prepositional prefix b^e gives the idea of "in the character of" or "in the capacity of."

The name El Shaddai has been the subject of much conjecture and argument especially as to its etymology. The writer has become aware of the fact that this name, apart from Biblical material, may be explained by several suggested roots, which are equally attractive, but he feels that in the light of all evidence that the name Shaddai comes from the root <u>sadad</u> which means "to be strong" or "powerful." Supporting this assumption is a well respected lexicographer, Gesenius, who identifies this name thusly:

<u>Shaddai</u>-Almighty, omnipotent as an epithet of Jehovah, sometimes preceded by <u>'el</u> Genesis 17:1, 28:3, Exodus 6:3. . . [10]

The writer will not attempt to argue further on this point, for the argument would be like the liberal argument, purely subjective. He will let the case rest here and proceed to a stronger and more conclusive proof for this position--the contextual argument.

2. Contextual Argument:

The strongest argument in favor of the view that Shaddai comes from <u>sadad</u> meaning "to be strong," and that this name characterized Yahweh as the Mighty One or the Almighty who was able to perform the things promised, is found in the contexts in which this name appears both in the Pentateuch and in the other books.

The name Shaddai appears some forty-eight times in the Old Testament. The greater majority of these texts regard Shaddai or El Shaddai in the primary aspect of power and might.   Power and might are many times demonstrated in special blessings and acts. In the book of Genesis the name appears only six times (Genesis 17:1, 28:3, 35:11, 43:14, 48:3, 49:25) and in almost every case the name is used in connection with some blessing. A careful study of the nature of these blessings will reveal the fact that only an all powerful God could fulfill these promises. The name occurs in Exodus only once (Ex. 6:3), and Numbers twice (Num. 24:4, 24:16). This name really displays its significance in the books of Ruth and Job. In Ruth it occurs only twice (Ruth 1:20, 21) but the basic idea connected with it is that of chastisement and affliction. In Job it occurs thirty-one times and has the same idea basically as that in Ruth. In many of the passages the idea connected with this name is decidedly power and majestic glory. (cf. Job 5:17, 6:4, 14, 8:3, 15:25, 21:20, 22:25, 23:16, 27:2, 34:12). In Job 37:23 Shaddai is clearly characterized as "excellent in power." In use of the name Shaddai in the Psalms (Ps. 68: 14, 91:1) seems to support this meaning also. El-Shaddai is spoken of as "scattering kings," (Psalm 68:14), which is an open display of sovereign power. The other uses of this name, Isa. 13:6, Ezek. 1:24, 10:5 and Joel 1:15 also indicate the same basic idea of power and might. It will be seen from the preceding material that while other etymologies of the name Shaddai such as in (breasted one) could possibly apply in one or two texts, the greater majority of occurences support the idea of power and might. It should be remembered that these names for God in the Old Testament were not used without purpose or plan. It will be shown that when various ideas and acts of God were discussed, the writer under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, carefully selected the name that characterized the God who was performing or was about to perform these acts.

II. <u>MAJOR PROBLEM</u>: Was the name "Yahweh" known to the Patriarchs?

There are three main solutions proposed for this problem. Each shall be stated and evaluated. A more lengthy treatment of the last view will be given because it is considered to be the proper explanation of Exodus 6:3b.

A. <u>First Occurrence View</u>: This view contends that the name Yahweh was not known to the Patriarchs but was first made known to Moses. It generally argues for a natural origin of the name rather than a supernatural revelation of it. This is essentially the view of all liberal Old Testament theologians. John Edgar McFadyen expresses this view as follows:

> Of very great importance is the passage, 6:2-13, which describes the revelation given to Moses, asserting that the fathers knew the God of Israel only by the name El Shaddai, while the name of Jehovah, which was then revealed to Moses for the first time, was unknown to them.[11]

Some holding this view trace the origin of the name back to the Kenites, a branch from the Midianites. This view is expressed by Karl Budde as follows: "Yahweh, therefore, is the God of the tribe to which Moses, on his flight from Egypt, joined himself by marriage; the mountain god of Horeb, who appears to him and promises him to lead his brethren out of Egypt."[12]

The supposed textual basis for this view is Exodus 18. From this chapter two basic assertions are made which are claimed to be the proof for the origin of the name Yahweh. First, Moses is conceived to be a subordinate to Jethro (Ex. 18:24) and second, Jethro sacrifices to Yahweh (Ex. 18:12). It is concluded therefore, that Jethro, priest of Midian, is in effect a priest of Yahweh. The objections to this view are many.

First: The account in Exodus 18 is hardly a decisive proof of the subordination of Moses to Jethro officially. What Moses received in this chapter was gracious counsel, not an official command.

Second: Verse twelve does not say explicitly that Jethro himself offered the sacrifice but only that he "took" the sacrifice.

Third: Jethro's first mention of Yahweh is after the exodus and after he is told of these events by Moses.

Fourth: Jethro is not called a priest of Yahweh but a priest of Midian. The Midianites were regarded as an idolatrous people (Num. 25, 31). There is no evidence that the Midianites worshipped Yahweh.

Other arguments could be brought to bear which would demonstrate the errors of this view, but the foregoing should suffice.

It may be asked at this point, why this verse is so important to the critics. As previously pointed out, the material found in the Pentateuch can, according to the liberal critics, be traced to four main source documents (J, E, D, P). Up to Exodus 6:3, P (by the critical analysis) is quite careful not to use the name Yahweh. The reason for this, it is claimed, is that P believed that the name was first revealed to Moses and therefore refrains from anachronisms by not using the name in the earlier Genesis narratives Exodus 6:3 therefore is the reason for the anomaly in P's use of the divine names. The characteristic name for P is Elohim according to their analysis.

The primary basis of the documentary analysis of the Pentateuch, at least originally, was the use of different names of God in various passages. The critics of this school of thought assume that the employment of various names for God indicates the use of various documents in the compilation of the Pentateuch. There are other areas of study that are employed to support this theory, but it is only the use of Divine names that the writer is interested in at this point.

The critics of this school assume that writers of the original source documents never used any name other than was assigned to him or that was in accordance with his peculiar views. This assumption, in the opinion of the writer, is not the result of a careful study of the occurrence of Divine names, but an arbitrary assumption designed to support an untenable theory. If it could be proven that in just one case a writer used a name other than by habit, the theory would collapse.

Against this view we raise the following objections:

First: A careful exegesis of this verse will not support this view. A proper understanding of the idiom "to know the name Yahweh" reveals that a first occurrence of the name is not implied here. A more complete discussion of the exegesis of the verse will be presented later.

Second: If Exodus 6:3 were a reference to merely the name of God as a name only, the passage would prove equally that before this time Elohim was unknown as a name for Deity, and God should appear uniformly as El-Shaddai in Patriarchal history.

Some negative or liberal critics, in answer to this argument would remind us that Exodus 6:3 is the first time P used the name Yahweh. They argue that P was quite careful in his use of Yahweh in order to avoid anachronisms. J and E, however, were not so careful. The writer of this paper will show later, that these assumptions will not stand for at least two reason. First, P does use the name Yahweh before Exodus 6:3 (Gen. 17:1, 21:1). The critics realizing this is a serious problem have concluded that these passages must have been changed by a redactor. This answer is not at all acceptable as will be shown later in this discussion. Second, the assertion that J and E are not careful as to their use of the Divine names is easily disproved by a careful study of the contexts in which these names appear.

Third: The early occurrence of the name in Genesis destroys this assumption.
a. The fact that Yahweh occurs in conjunction with Elohim in Genesis chapter two causes the critics considerable difficulty. How shall the documents be distinguished in this case?
b. There are passages in the book of Genesis where the name of Yahweh is introduced in a way which utterly precludes the supposition that it is used proleptically, or that it is anything but

a correct account of the incident and the actual term employed. For example the use of Yahweh in Genesis 15:7, where God clearly asserts, ". . . I am Yahweh. . . " or when Jacob on his deathbed declares "I have waited for thy salvation, Yahweh" (Genesis 49:18). A more striking passage than even these is found in Genesis chapter four. There Eve states, . . . I have gotten a man with the help of Yahweh."

    c. The use of the name Yahweh after the dispersion of tongues is frequent and vital to the significance of many passages. Genesis 22:14, 24:35, 40, 42, 48, 56, 24:50, 51, 26:22.

    d. The name Yahweh is compounded with other names long before the time of Moses.

    For example the name appears in the name of the mother of Moses, Jochebed (Yokebed) meaning "Yahweh is glorious" (Exodus 6:20, Numbers 26:59). Against this argument some have suggested that Moses changed her name. This, however, is but a futile attempt to discredit unmistakable evidence. That Moses would have done this, to say the least, is highly improbable. There are also some other names from ancient time which occur in the genealogies in I Chronicles (I Chron. 2:25, 7:8, 4: 18, Ahijah, Abiah) that are compounded with Yahweh.

    The occurrence of the name in the word "Moriah" (Hamoriah cf. Genesis 22:14) suggests an early knowledge of the name.

    <u>Fourth</u>: The idiom "to know a name" as it is used in the Old Testament will not permit the liberal understanding of Exodus 6:3. Consider the following example, noting the book in which the reference is found and the chronological setting: Isa. 52:5-6: verse six reads:

      "Therefore <u>people shall know my name</u>: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak; behold it is I." (cf. also Jer. 16:21).

  Upon a careful reading of these texts, it is at once obvious that the higher critical view of the expression "to know the name of Yahweh" as it is found in Exodus 6:3 is not only misleading but incorrect. If they are correct, then these texts could mean the name was not actually known until Isaiah's and Jeremiah's time, but this on the other hand, would then be in conflict with the statement of Moses. The contradiction disappears when the proper view of the idiom is realized. For other examples of this expression compare II Chron. 6:33, Isa. 19:20-21, Ezek. 20:5,9, 39:6-7, Psa. 33:18.

    Fifth: The higher critical method of analysis mutilates the Biblical text, and beside that, it is not a consistent theory. That this theory mutilates the text is proven by the analysis of Genesis 28:19-29 where writers give many alternate changes from E to J back and forth.

That this theory is saturated with obvious contradictions in application is evidenced by the following facts:

    a. The name "Yahweh" occurs in two passages of P before Ex. 6:3 (Gen. 17:1, 21:16). In both cases a redactor or copyist is invoked to provide the solution to this embarrassing occurrence.

    b. As to E, the name "Yahweh" occurs in four passages (Gen. 15:1, 2, 22:11, 27:7b). In these cases as in the previous a redactor is employed.

   c. J uses the term Elohim in many passages (Gen. 3:1, 3, 5, 4:25, 7:9, 9:27, 16:24). Once again redactors are employed to relieve the difficulty.

   d. P contradicts J if the liberal critic's theory is maintained, for J states that God was worshipped by the name Yahweh even before the flood (Gen. 4:25), that He revealed Himself by that name to Abram (Gen. 15:7), while P declares in Ex. 6:3 that the name Yahweh was not known to the Patriarchs.

   Sixth: The experience of literary men and the history of literature are here in open conflict with the pretensions of the critics. None of these scholars now claims to discover in the Pentateuch less than four main writers and a "redactor," while most of them require many more. This skill, it might be noted, is asserted in investigating a foreign and ancient tongue, with no outside documents for comparison, and no knowledge of the alleged writers. We therefore ask, what is the basis for these assumptions of the critics? The answer is not a careful, objective study of Biblical literature and language, but an arbitrary, biased presupposition that the religion of Israel is the natural product of evolutionary processes. The fact that there are so many divergent opinions among the critics is evidence that this analysis is not a system, but a scheme. A scheme in which there is an agreement on the end to be accomplished, and on the starting point, but the process is largely the application of individual and subjective notions.

   Seventh: A serious logical fallacy is also to be discerned in the use of Divine names as it relates to the documentary analysis. It can be demonstrated that the higher critical method of documentation is to argue in a circle. Differences are first created and then arguments are based on them. Documents are distinguished on the basis of the use of Divine names and then their correspondences with certain assumed traits or characteristics are claimed as proof for the objective existence of these documents.

   Eighth: The documentary analysis assumes that the varied use of the Divine names is usually an indication of authorship. The same argument is applied in respect to various literary differences. A more dependable and proven explanation for these phenomena is that different situations and subject matter called for both different literary styles and vocabulary.

   The constant appeal, by the critic, to a redactor is a strong evidence that the theory bears many fallacies and weaknesses. The redactor is called to serve in Genesis 2:4b, 3:24, 4:2, 7:9, 9:27, 17:1, 21:1b, 20:18, 28:21, 22:11, etc. Now, the writer should like to ask at this point, how is it to be determined what is and what is not the work of a redactor? If the Divine names are indications of source documents of the Pentateuch, then they must be dependably consistent at this point. If but one name has been changed by a so-called redactor, then how are we to know if the other names have not been changed? Or furthermore, how do we know, for example, that where a redactor is claimed to have changed Elohim to Yahweh in the E document that perhaps the text is correct and a very energetic redactor has not changed the other portion of the context? Perhaps the context was really the work of J and a redactor changed all the names of Yahweh to Elohim. The reader might argue at this point that the writer is arguing from conjecture. The writer would most quickly admit this and at the same time, would point out that the critics holding this theory must be charged with the same fallacy. They have no more objective

proof for their contentions that the passage was an E document in which a redactor changed a name to Yahweh than his contention that it was a J document which had the Divine name changed to Elohlm.

   B. Interrogative View: This view holds that the reading of the text is in the form of a question not a statement. It would have Exodus 6:3 read:

      "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty: but by my name Yahweh was I not known to them?"

   Two writers who find this view acceptable are Jamieson and Scott.

   This view is not necessarily contrary to the writer's view, but it is not an easily supported view. The grammar may permit this view but a consideration of the movement of the general context does not easily support such a reading. Such a reading could have been more clearly indicated in the Hebrew if this reading were intended, but it is not. Finally, very few, if any translations have understood this to be the reading of the Hebrew text.

   C. The Special Revelation View: The special revelation view contends that the name "Yahweh" was known to the Patriarchs but in a somewhat limited sense. They did not have a complete knowledge of many of the aspects of this name especially in its redemptive significance. Special redemptive aspects of the name were revealed and experienced in the days of Moses and in particular in the exodus from Egypt. This view is expressed clearly by Henry Cowles:

      The meaning is, not that the name of Yahweh was never used by them or given of God to them: but that its special significance had not been manifested to them as He was now: about to make it manifest.[13]

   Others who hold this view or a similar form of it are Hastings, Patrick, Wordsworth, Keil, Raven, Wiener, Allis, Unger and Oehler.

   In the light of all the evidence from the Biblical text, the writer considers this to be the proper view.

   The arguments in support of this view are three-fold:

   1. Exegetical Argument: In order to deal accurately with the text at hand, it is imperative that there be a clear understanding of the text as it reads in the Hebrew text Many of the errors which have arisen in the interpretation of this verse could have been avoided if the language and the syntax of this text were more carefully considered. Since the first part of the text was dealt with under the consideration of the minor problem, the writer shall proceed to examine the last phrase of the text which translated literally reads: "and (in the capacity of) my name Yahweh I was not known to them."

   In the first place it should be observed that the emphatic word of the sentence is Semi ("name") and is so considered because it is first in the Hebrew sentence. The fact that this
word is

emphatic is not without important implications, for it will be shown that the Hebrew concept of a name is far more than just that of an identifying title. In the Old Testament there was a peculiar signification attached to the name.[14]

The name "Yahweh" is an important word not only to this text but to the whole Old Testament. The etymology of this word has been disputed by many men for many years. Some have attempted to connect it with the Arabic <u>hawa</u> which means to "blow" or "breathe." Others have traced the origin of this word to Egyptian, Phoenician and Canaanitish influences. Their arguments for this etymology are not convincing at all, especially since they are based upon the presupposition that the religion of Israel may be traced to natural origins as may the religions of the heathen nations.

As to the formation of the name Yahweh, it is agreed among most lexicographers and other writers on the subject that the term Yahweh, however it might be pointed, is the regularly formed Qal imperfect of the verb <u>Havah</u> (to be) an obsolete form of <u>Hayah</u>. This view is not shared by all authorities, however. Some would contend that the name is to be understood as a Hiphil imperfect.[15] While this view is permissible grammatically, it is in conflict with Exodus 3:14 where the name is explained. There the form is clearly a Qal. When Moses asked the Lord what name he should use in identifying the "God of your fathers" (vs. 13), the Lord answered saying, <u>'ehey eser 'ehyeh</u> "I am that I am." He also told them that <u>'ehyeh slahni 'alekem</u> "I am has sent me unto you." The verb translated "I am" in both phrases is ʻ<u>ehyeh</u>, which is the Qal imperfect first person singular of <u>hayah</u>. If <u>'ehyeh</u> therefore, is understood as the Qal imperfect first person singular from the verb <u>hayah</u> and is His name, it is also reasonable to regard Yahweh as it appears in Exodus 6:3 as coming from the same root and also the Qal stem. The latter form, of course, is the third person singular of that stem and is translated "He is." The only difference between the two names is, that the one is a verb in the first person, and the other is the same verb in the third person. The meaning of the one is "I am," and the meaning of the other is "He is."

Supporting the view that this stem is the Qal is Edward Mack who makes the following remark:

It is evident from the interpretative passages (Exodus 3:6) that the form is the future of the simple stem (Kal) and not future of the causative (Hiphil) stem in the sense of "giver of life" an idea not borne out by any of the occurrences of the word.[16]

The writer maintains therefore, that the translation "I am" or" He is "is the proper one in view of the fact that the Qal is used in these texts. But the case for this understanding does not rest here. The fact that the imperfect is used in connection with these verbs also supports this conclusion. The imperfect state of the Hebrew verb does not always have to designate future time as some have erroneously assumed. A careful examination of the scope of the imperfect state will reveal that it may have primary reference to present states or actions as well as future.[17]

By the expression "I am," Yahweh is to be understood as a God who is eternal and self-existent. If the Hiphil stem is understood in regard to His name, the meaning is somewhat lower. He then is regarded as the "first cause of all things" or "life-giver."

That the translation of the verb <u>'ehyeh</u> is properly "I am" is further substantiated by the rendering of the Septuagint. The first phrase of Exodus 3:14 reads <u>ego eimi ho on</u>. <u>Eimi</u> is a present active indicative and <u>on</u> is a present participle of the same verb, <u>eimi</u>. This phrase would be

literally translated "I am the one who is." The other occurrence of 'ehyeh is also translated with the present participle, on. If the translators had understood the imperfect state with future implications, they would have used the future tense, but such, apparently was not the case.

   Another strong argument for the rendering "I am" is found in the translations and interpretation of the name Yahweh in the New Testament. There are three very clear instances where this name is given definite meaning. The first is found in Matthew 22:32. There we read:

     "I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not
   the God of the dead, but of the living."

   The verb translated "I am" is eimi, a present active indicative. The same form is found in Mark: 12:26 which is a similar quotation of Exodus 3:6. The last instance of this phenomenon is seen in John 8:58. Here the Greek once again for "I am" is ego eimi.
   It would seem, therefore, if the idea of the imperfect were "I will be" or "He will be," both the LXX and the Greek of the New Testament would have recognized it. But such is not the case, so the writer therefore contends for the rendering "I am" denoting the eternal, self-existence of Yahweh.
   The next word of the phrase under consideration is a vital word, and it is this word that holds the key to the meaning and interpretation of the text under consideration. The word noda'ti which appears in the text of the Hebrew Bible is a Niphal perfect, first person singular, from the verb yada' "to know." The real problem, involved in this word, is to determine what is meant when it is used in the expression "to know a name." The liberal critics have maintained that to know the name is to be acquainted with the title. "To make known a name," to their way of thinking, is merely to present the name for the first time.
   This assumption, it will be shown, is not the case, and the fact is, that the uses of this idiom in the Old Testament furnish the clue to the solution of this whole problem. When the expressions "to know Yahweh" or to "know the name of Yahweh" are used in the Old Testament they carry more than the idea of just to be acquainted with the radicals yhwh. For example the verb yada' is used five times in respect to Yahweh in the book of Exodus alone, and in every case it is quite obvious that it has reference to more than just an acquaintance with a name.[18] In every case it suggests an experiential knowledge of both the person and power of Yahweh. In every case the knowledge of Yahweh is connected with some deed or act of Yahweh which in some way reveals both His person and power. In Exodus 16:12 Yahweh spoke to Moses saying "I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them saying, at even ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am Yahweh your God." It should be noted that first, in respect to time, this is considerably later than the account of Exodus 6:3. Is it to be assumed, therefore, on the basis of the liberal or negative understanding of the verb yada', that the children of Israel still didn't know who Yahweh was? Secondly, that his knowledge involves more than just an acquaintance with a name, is proven by the fact that the knowledge of Yahweh was the result of a particular experience of provision by Yahweh. They were to know Yahweh in a special manner. They had already learned of Him as deliverer; now they would know Him as their provider.

The verb yada' is not only used to convey the idea of knowledge of a thing, but knowledge as a result of specific experience. This seems to be the idea expressed in Ezekiel 25:14.[19]

If the reader is not convinced at this point of this use of the verb yada', there are several more uses of this verb that most clearly demonstrate that its meaning goes far beyond a mere knowledge of facts. This verb is also used for knowledge when both revelation and experience are involved. It is in this sense that the writer feels it is to be understood in the text under question, and to give evidence to this assertion he will present several cases for consideration. First, Jer. 28:9:

> "The prophet that prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that Jehovah hath truly sent him."

According to this text a prophet was really "known" as the man sent from God when his words were fulfilled. This is the sense of Exodus 6:3, Yahweh was to be "known" or "made known" as He manifested and revealed Himself in the special acts of deliverence. The writer should also if like to point out that here the verb form used in Jer. 28:9 is yiudada' the niphil imperfect third person singular masc. of the verb yada'. It is interesting to note, that the stem used in Exodus 6:3 is also the niphal. It would seem, therefore, that this form, when used, carried more than a superficial knowledge of a thing. It conveyed the idea of knowledge as a result of revelation experience.

Other examples of this idea may be found in Prov. 10:9, Ex. 32:12-17, I Sam. 3:7, Jer. 16:21.

In this exegetical argument, the writer has endeavored to establish the following facts: First, the name Yahweh is the Qal imperfect of the verb hayah and denotes the eternal, unchanging character of God as evidenced by its use in Exodus 3:14. Second, the verb noda'ti used in Exodus 6:3 must mean more than being acquainted with a title as such. Third, the fact that the niphal form is used in Exodus 6:3 strongly suggests knowledge in respect to revelation and experience. Fourth, the idiom "to know Yahweh" or "to know the name of Yahweh" as it is used in the Old Testament, generally signifies knowledge of some particular act or attribute of Yahweh as it is revealed in His dealing with men.

2. Theological Argument: The writer considers Exodus 6:3 to be a positive declaration of the fact that in the past the character of God has been revealed in His names, El-Shaddai, Elohim and Yahweh. But now He is going to reveal Himself further as Yahweh in a special way through revelation and the experience of deliverance. He is going to provide a demonstration of the fact that He is not only Yahweh who made a covenant with Abraham but is Yahweh who is faithful in keeping it. New aspects of His glory, majesty and redemption are to be known by Israel. The great redemptive power of Yahweh was now going to be known in various aspects as it had not been known before. The deliverance from Egyptian bondage is often referred to as the great illustration of this redemptive power in both the Old and New Testaments.

The following arguments are presented in support of this view: First, it is clear from Exodus chapter three that the name "Yahweh" was well established in the minds of the Israelites, for if

this were not the case, why would God tell Moses to tell the people of Israel if they should ask in whose name he comes, that "I am hath sent me unto you" (Ex. 3:14) or "Yahweh, the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you . . ." Did it not occur to either Moses or the Lord that the people might say, "Who is Yahweh?" But there is no problem in this respect. The silence of the Scriptures speak clearly to the fact that no such problem would arise because they know the name of the God of their fathers.

Second, the simple reading of Exodus 6:3 supports the view that a new revelation is meant, not that the name was not known. The text literally reads:

"And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob as (or in the capacity of) El-Shaddai but (in the capacity of) my name Yahweh, <u>I was not known to them</u>.

It should be remembered that the verb for "known" is <u>nodat'ti</u> a niphal perfect, <u>first person</u> singular of the verb <u>yada'</u> ("I to know"). If the text meant to say that the name, as such, was not known, the third person singular would have been employed. It was in "the capacity of" the name Yahweh that He was to further reveal <u>Himself</u>.

Third, Exodus 6:3 is not a contrast between the use of Divine names. The name Elohim is not even mentioned in this verse. The text is a comparison of ideas which the names represent. It is a comparison between what has been revealed by Yahweh and what is about to be revealed. The character of Yahweh that is considered in the text as it relates to His name. Fourth, it can be shown that the use of Divine names in the Pentateuch, in most cases at least, is obviously deliberate. For example it may be generally noted that when the power, majesty and faithfulness of God are in view Elohim is generally used (Gen. 1, 6-9, etc.) But when the writer is writing in respect to salvation and the covenant relationship of God with Israel, Yahweh is generally used (Gen. 3:9-15, 4:1, 26, 8:20, etc.)[20]

Fifth, that the name Yahweh could have been known and used by the Patriarchs not knowing its full significance and implications is proven possible from every day occurrences. It is possible for a man to bear the name of a certain office before he fulfills any of its functions. President, magistrate, and policeman are titles which may be borne by several persons to whom they legally belong, before any of the acts peculiar to those offices are performed. The president as acknowledged on his inauguration is known to be such by his administrative acts, the magistrate by his administration of justice and the policeman by the apprehending of criminals.

In the preceding arguments the writer has endeavored to show: 1. That the reading of Exodus 6:3 clearly reveals that a special revelation in relation to the nature and character of Yahweh is under consideration. 2. That Exodus 6:3 is not a contrast between the use or occurrence of Divine names but a comparison of the ideas which El-Shaddai and Yahweh represent.[30] That the use of Divine names in the Pentateuch is in most cases deliberate.

4. That the name of Yahweh has a peculiar redemptive significance in the Pentateuch and is generally used in this sense. 5. That practical experience indicates the possibility of knowing a name or title without having a complete knowledge of all the functions and attributes of that title.

3. <u>Contextual Argument</u>: The contextual argument simply consists of an examination of the immediate context to see if the interpretation suggested by the writer fits in logically and naturally.

It should be observed, first of all, that the children of Israel are, in this book, at a very unique stage of their history. From the moment of their departure, they will be recognized as a nation in the true sense of the term. It is in this capacity, i.e. as a nation, that Yahweh is going to deal with them. It is Yahweh's intention to reveal Himself as He had never done so before. This covenant-making God was about to demonstrate both His power and faithfulness in the redemption of Israel (cf. Ex. 3:8-12, 15-22). In the immediate context of Exodus 6:3 we find the in which Yahweh was to reveal Himself to Israel. Exodus 6:4 restates the covenant made with Israel. Verses six to eight presents the plan of Yahweh for the nation of Israel. Verse six clearly promises redemption from bondage. Verse seven states Yahweh's purpose in His redeeming the children of Israel. This verse is very important in our consideration for it clearly explains the latter phrase of Exodus 6:3. We have already suggested that there was a particular sense in which Yahweh had not revealed Himself to the children of Israel. That aspect, or part of revelation is explained in this verse. Notice the reading of this verse:

"And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am Yahweh your God, who bringeth you out from under the burdens of Egyptians."

There are two basic assertions in this verse. First, Yahweh declares the election of the children of Israel as a people for His name. Secondly, He states that they shall know Him, not for the first time, but as the one "who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." This means they would "know Yahweh as their redeemer and deliverer." The whole message of the book of Exodus is centered around this theme (cf. Exodus 7:5, 17, 8:23, 10:3, 12:12-13, 14:13ff, 15:2ff). This revelation and experience was a mountain peak in Israelis history. Whenever Israel slips away from fellowship with Yahweh, as in Micah 6, Yahweh reminds them of this deliverance from Egypt.

"For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of bondage. . ." (Micah 6:4)

In the eighth verse of Exodus, chapter six, Yahweh restates His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and promises its fulfillment. The basis for this promise is "I am Yahweh."

It is the conclusion of the writer that the immediate context of Exodus 6:3 and the greater context of the book reveal the fact that before this time, the children of Israel had not known all that was involved in the covenant name "Yahweh." Only in these particular circumstances could the truth of the redemptive power of Yahweh be revealed.

English Paraphrase

And I revealed myself unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob in the capacity of the God Almighty, but in the full redemptive significance of my name Yahweh, I was not made known (revealed) unto them.

DOCUMENTATION

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4. Gustave Friedrich Oehler. Theology of the Old Testament. (Zondervan Publishing House).
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15. Gustave Friedrich Oehler. op. cit. pp. 95, 96.
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17. Kautzsch, E. (ed) Genesius' Hebrew Grammar. 2d. Eng. ed,. of 28th Ger. ed. Trans. A. E. Conley. (Oxford: University Press)p. 313.
18. Exodus 6:7, 10:2, 14:4, 16:12, 29:46.
19. Cf. also Josh. 23:14, Isa. 9:8, Psa. 14:4, Ezek. 20:9, Hosea 9:7.
20. Oehler. op. cit. Pp. 98, 99.