

# XENOPHOBIC- DEMAGOGUE OR NATIONAL- SAVIOR!?

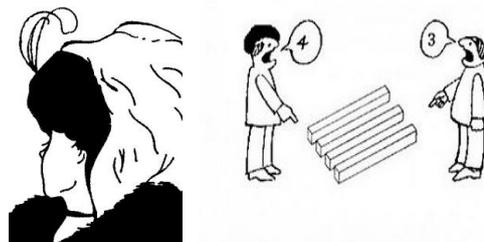
## CAN WE DISCUSS THIS CONSTRUCTIVELY?

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- I. **Want to engage in a difficult constructive conversation?**  
- **First understand the 49vs49/the 3<sup>rd</sup> story!**

1	Midrash Psalms, 12	מדרש תהלים מזמור יב
	<p>Rabbi Yanai said: The Torah was not given in a clear cut manner, rather on everything statement G-d said to Moses, He would say forty nine reasons the matter could be pure, and forty nine reasons why the matter could be impure. He (Moses) said to Him, 'Master of the Universe, when will we know the truth of the matter?' He said to him (Moses): 'Go according to the majority: if the majority rules it is impure – it is impure, if the majority rules it is pure – it is pure.</p> <p>Rabbi Abahu in the name of Rabbi Yonatan said: Rabbi Akiva had an old student who's name was Rabbi Meir, and he would (prove) that the reptile from the Torah was pure with forty nine reasons, and with prove that it was impure with forty nine reasons.</p> <p>Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Young students in the times of Saul, David and Samuel knew how to study the Torah with forty nine reasons to rule a matter pure and forty nine reasons to rule that the same matter was impure.</p>	<p>אמר ר' ינאי לא ניתנה דברי תורה חתיכין, אלא על כל דבור שהיה אומר הקב"ה למשה היה אומר מ"ט פנים טהור, ומ"ט פנים טמא, אמר לפניו רבונו של עולם עד מתי נעמוד על בירורו של דבר, אמר ליה אחרי רבים להטות, רבו המטמאין טמא, רבו המטהרין טהור, ר' אבהו בשם ר' יונתן אמר תלמיד וותיק היה לו לר' עקיבא, ור' מאיר שמו, והיה מטהר את השרץ מן התורה במ"ט פנים טהור, ובמ"ט פנים טמא. ר' יהושע בן לוי אמר תינוקות שהיו בימי שאול ודוד ובימי שמואל, היו יודעין לדרוש את התורה במ"ט פנים טהור, ובמ"ט פנים טמא.</p>

2	Stone, Patton, Heen, "Difficult Conversations" Penguin. Harvard Negotiation Project. 1999. p. 150
	<p>In addition to your story and the other person's story, every difficult conversation includes an invisible Third Story. The Third Story is the one a keen observer would tell, someone with no stake in you particular problem.... One of the most helpful tools a mediator has is the ability to identify the invisible Third Story. This means describing the problem between the parties in a way that rings true for both sides simultaneously. It's easy to describe the problem so that only one of the disputants would agree with it- in fact, that's what each of us does when we begin inside our own story. The trick is being able to get two people with different stories to sign on to the same description of what is going on.</p>





### III. Inviting in “Third Side” Commentators:

How did the various interpreters explain the Egyptian motivations behind the oppression?

#### *The First 49*

4	<p><b>Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews. Book II, Chapter 9:1. 100 CE</b></p> <p>NOW it happened that the Egyptians grew delicate and lazy, as to painstaking, and gave themselves up to other pleasures, and in particular to the love of gain. They also became very ill-affected towards the Hebrews, as touched with envy at their prosperity; for when they saw how the nation of the Israelites flourished, and had become eminent already in plenty of wealth, which they had acquired by their virtue and natural love of labor, they thought their increase was to their own detriment. And having, in length of time, forgotten the benefits they had received from Joseph, particularly the crown being now come into another family, they became very abusive to the Israelites, and contrived many ways of afflicting them; for they enjoined them to cut a great number of channels for the river, and to build walls for their cities and ramparts, that they might restrain the river, and hinder its waters from stagnating, upon its running over its own banks: they set them also to build pyramids, and by all this wore them out (exhausted our race); and forced them to learn all sorts of mechanical arts, and to accustom themselves to hard labor. And four hundred years did they spend under these afflictions.</p>
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5	<p><b>Rashbam Exodus 1:10</b> (1080-1160, France)</p> <p>And They will fight us and leave the land: To return to their native land. It is not good for us to lose our slaves and be called “a truncated kingdom.”</p>	<p><b>רשב"ם שמות פרק א פסוק י</b> ונלחם בנו ועלה מן הארץ - לשוב אל ארץ אבותיהם ולא טוב לנו לאבד עבדינו וקרו לי(ה) מלכותא קטיעא:</p>
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Jefferson Finis Davis (June 3, 1808 – December 6, 1889) President of the Confederacy

6	<p><b>Ramban Exodus 1:10</b> (1194-1270, b. Spain, d. Israel)</p> <p>It is possible to explain that Pharaoh is saying that “if wars will occur, the Israelites may join forces with our enemies to take the spoil, and to take the prey (Isaiah 10:6). They will get themselves up out of this land to the land of Canaan with all our belongings, and we will not be able to wreak our vengeance on them nor to war against them.”</p>	<p><b>רמב"ן שמות פרק א פסוק י</b> ויתכן לפרש שיאמר כי תקראנה מלחמות יהיה נוסף על שונאינו לשלול שלל ולבוז בז, ויעלה לו מן הארץ הזאת אל ארץ כנען עם כל אשר לנו, ולא נוכל אנחנו לנקום נקמתנו ממנו ולהלחם בו.</p>
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<b>7</b>	<p><b>Anchor Bible, Exodus 1:10 (W. Propp, 1999. p. 132)</b></p> <p>1:8 “New King”: “There arose a king that did not know Joseph” would have sufficed. Why a “new king”? Many speculate that the “new king” has founded a new dynasty (e.g. Josephus Ant. 2:202; Durham WBC 1987:7). A more conservative interpretation would be that the “new king”, like the “new wife” of Deut. 24:5, has not been king for very long. His headstrong action would exemplify the folly of youth upon attaining power (cf. I Kings 12:1-19)....</p> <p>1:9 “his people”. This might refer to the king’s advisors, or perhaps to the entire people. In any case, Pharaoh is not the only culprit. All Egypt is implicated in the oppression of Israel, as is clear from the plurals in 1:11-14 (Jacob 1992: 10). “People of Israel’s sons” ... There may be, moreover, an effort to balance the “people” of Israel against “ammo” his [Pharaoh’s] people, to emphasize that the conflict is between two sovereign nations [Fox 1986: 11]....</p> <p>“Greater and mightier than us”: ... Thus 1:9 makes the historically preposterous claim that the Israelites became more powerful than the Egyptians... Pharaoh’s paranoia is ludicrous, yet sinister. Demagogues often credit weak minorities with vast powers. Elsewhere, the Bible depicts the Egyptian ruling class as obsessively xenophobic (Gen. 42:9, 12; 43:32; 46:34). Egyptian sources attest to their tight control on immigration and emigration (Greenberg 1969:21-22).</p> <p>1:10 “Go up from the Land”: We might expect the Egyptians to fear that Israel would conquer the land. But I am not sure we can or should rationalize Pharaoh’s concerns... [Speculation: Those who favor interpreting “the land” (v 7) as the “Land of Ramses,” which I reject (see NOTE), might read similarly in v 10: Pharaoh simply fears that Israel might leave its ghetto.]</p>
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Jean-Marie Le Pen

### *Now for the other 49!*

<b>8</b>	<p><b>Jubilees, Chapter 46, (200 BCE, Charles, Pseudopigrapha)</b></p> <p>5. And he (Joseph) commanded the children of Israel before he died to carry his bones at the time when they would go out of the land of Egypt. And he made them swear an oath concerning his bones because he knew that Egypt would not again bring them forth and bury them in the land of Canaan because when Makamaron, <u>the king of Canaan, was dwelling in the land of Asshur, he fought in the valley with the king of Egypt. And he killed him there.</u> And he pursued after the Egyptians as far as the gates of Ermon. And he was unable to enter because another new king ruled Egypt and he was stronger than he. <u>And he returned to the land of Canaan and the gates of Egypt were shut up and there was none who could leave or enter Egypt.</u> And Joseph died in this forty- sixth jubilee in the sixth week in the second year. And they buried him in the land of Egypt. And all of his brothers died after him. 9. And the king of Egypt went forth to fight with the king of Canaan in this forty-seventh jubilee in the second week in the second year. And the children of Israel brought forth the bones of the children of Jacob, all except the bones of Joseph. And they buried them in the field in the cave of Machpelah in the mountain. And many returned into Egypt but a few of them were left in Mount Hebron. And Amram, your father, was left with them. 11. And the King of Canaan was victorious over the king of Egypt and he closed the</p>
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gates of Egypt. And he [King of Egypt] conceived an evil thought against the children of Israel so that he might cause them to suffer. And he said to the men of Egypt, "Behold, the people of the sons of Israel have grown and increased more than we. Come let us act wisely concerning them before they increase. And let us cause them to suffer in slavery before war comes to us, or before they battle with us, or if not (that, then) they will mix with our enemy. And they will depart from our land because their hearts and their faces are upon the land of Canaan." And they appointed over them taskmasters to make them suffer in slavery. And they built strengthened cities for Pharaoh, Pithom, and Ramses. And they built all of the walls and all of the ramparts which had fallen in the cities of Egypt. And they made them slaves by force. And to the extent that they acted cruelly against them, they likewise increased and multiplied. And the men of Egypt regarded the sons of Israel as defiled.

9	<p><b>Rabbi Samuel David Luzzatto, Exodus 1</b> (Italy 19<sup>th</sup> cent.)<sup>1</sup></p>	<p><b>שד"ל שמות פרק א' (איטליה מאה 19):</b></p>
	<p>1:8. "a new king ascended the throne." According to the opinion of the scholar Yast, the Pharaoh that reigned during that period belonged to the Ramses dynasty. The kings from that dynasty had defeated the shepherd kings who had themselves invaded Egypt from the West and had ruled over Egypt for about two centuries. He claims that Joseph and the brothers had come to Egypt during the era of these shepherd kings. The close relationship between the kings of that dynasty and Joseph and the Hebrews, was due to the fact that both were descendants of Shem and originated in Asia Minor. The Egyptians at that time spoke a language which was similar to ancient Hebrew. It is also possible that the reason they were called "Hebrews" was that they were descended from Yokton the son of Ever, a grandson of Shem. (Genesis 10,25) The Pharaoh reigning during Joseph's time was fond of the Hebrews and settled Yaakov's sons in the most fertile part of the country in the province of Goshen near the province and capital Ramses. It is most likely that this whole province was owned by members of one family, Ramses, and that the Israelites took over most of that province and settled there. Two hundred years later the members of the Ramses family got involved in a war, rebelling against alien kings from the dynasty of the shepherds and they defeated them and wiped them out. They took over the whole land of Egypt at about that time. Seeing that the members of the Ramses family were sworn enemies of the Israelites, due to having been deprived by them of their ancestral land, plus the fact that the Israelites were so friendly with the old ruling class, the result of all this was the decrees against the Hebrews.</p>	<p>(ח.) "ויקם מלך חדש": דעת החכם יאסט, כי פרעה שהיה בזמן יצאת מצרים היה ממשפחת רעמסס, ומלכי משפחת רעמסס הכריתו כמאתים שנה קודם לכן את המלכים הרועים אשר באו מארץ ערב וכבשו את המצרים ומשלו במה שנים. והנה הוא אומר כי יוסף ואח"כ כל בית אביו באו מצרימה בזמן ממשלת הרועים, והמלכים הרועים אהבו אותם להיותם מבני שם ומאנשי אסיה ומדברים לשון הקרובה ללשון הקודש, ואולי היו גם הם נקראים עברים מבני יקטן בן עבר (בראשית י' כ"ה). והנה פרעה שבימי יוסף שהיה אוהב העברים הושיב בני יעקב במיטב הארץ בארץ רעמסס, והארץ היא קרוב להאמין שהיתה ארץ אחוזת משפחה אחת של מצרים הנקראת משפחת רעמסס, ובני ישראל לקחו נחלתם כולה או רובה וישבו בה, ואחרי מאתיים שנה אירע כי אנשי משפחת רעמסס מרדו במלכים הנכרים ממשפחת הרועים והכריתו אותם, ומלכו תחתיהם ולהיות אנשי המשפחה היא שונאי ישראל מפני שלקחו נחלתם, וגם מפני שהיו אוהבי הרועים היה שפרעה גזר על ישראל מה שגזר.</p>

<p>1:10. "They will make war against us and leave the country"...Personally, I would say that it is true to say that the new King of Egypt was afraid of a public uprising against him, but was confident on the other hand, that if such an uprising would materialize and he would kill the leaders of the revolt, the original Egyptian population would be grateful to him for having put down the uprising and having restored law and order in the country. Not only that, but from that point on the population would be fearful, and therefore obedient to him. But he was even more afraid of the Israelites, who, seeing that they were newcomers and relative strangers in the country, did not have firm enough roots to stay in the country if war would break out and all that this entails. Even if the king would prevail in the war or against an internal uprising, he was not confident that he could prevail against the Hebrews. He suspected them of only biding their time before leaving the country <i>en masse</i>. Once having left, they would make common cause with Egypt's enemies.</p>	<p>(י.) "ונלחם בנו ועלה מן הארץ".. ואני הייתי אומר כי הנכון שהמלך החדש שקם על מצרים היה ירא ממרידת מצרים, אך היה בטוח, שאם יתחילו למרוד, יכה בהם ויהרוג גדולי המורדים וכל העם ישמעו וייראו, אך יותר היה ירא מבני ישראל, כי להיותם נכרים וגרים בארץ ההיא, ולא היתה נפשם דבקה בארץ מצרים כמו המצרים, קרוב היה שיתקוממו נגדו, כשתזדמן להם שעת הכושר, ואף אם תגבר יד המלך על אויביו ועליהם, לא יוכל להינקם מהם כי ועלו מן הארץ ההיא אל ארץ האויבים אשר התחברו עמהם.</p>
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White farmers in Zimbabwe now oppressed by President Mugabe.

10a	<p><b>Targum Yerushalmi Exodus 1:10</b> (2<sup>nd</sup> Cen. CE, Land of Israel)</p> <p>And they will kill us and go up from the land unscathed.</p>	<p><b>תרגום ירושלמי שמות א:י:</b> <u>ויקטלון יתן</u> ויסקון להון בשלם מן ארעא.</p>
10b	<p><b>Targum Pseudo – Jonathan Exod. 1:10</b></p> <p>And not leave a single one of us [alive] and then depart from the land.</p>	<p><b>תרגום יונתן שמות א:י:</b> <u>ולא ישיירונו מינן אופ לא חד</u> ומן בתר כדין יפקון להון מן ארעא.</p>
11	<p><b>Babylonian Talmud Sotah 11a (500 C.E)</b></p> <p><i>And fight against us and get them up out of the land</i> (Exod 1:10). It should have read "and we will go up!" (ועלינו). R. Abba b. Kahana said: It is like a man who curses himself and hangs the curse upon somebody else.</p>	<p><b>בבלי סוטה יא ע"א</b> (שמות א) "ונלחם בנו ועלה מן הארץ" – "ועלינו" מיבעי ליה! א"ר אבא בר כהנא: כאדם שמקלל את עצמו ותולה קללתו בחבירו.</p>

#### IV. Contemporary Case Studies?

Where are similar conflicts taking place in society today?

To what extent can we understand the different perspectives on these issues and engage in more constructive conversations about them?

<p> The 9Adar Project Jewish Week of Constructive Conflict <a href="http://WWW.9ADAR.ORG">WWW.9ADAR.ORG</a></p>	<p>February 19-25, 2017 – Join the 9AdarProject in cultivating a culture of constructive conflict across personal, political, religious and other divides. See <a href="http://www.9Adar.org">www.9Adar.org</a></p>
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