

Dear Chavraya,

From the very moment of conception, we are ever becoming. To be is to become. This is one facet of what it means to be created in God's image, to be called through God's name. In last week's Torah portion, *Parashat Sh'mot*, Moses asks to know God's name, that he might answer the people when they ask, "who sent you?" God answers Moses, telling him to say to the people that he has been sent by *Ehiyeh Asher Ehiyeh/I Will Be That Which I Will Be*. God then simplifies the name to one word, *Ehiyeh/I Will Be*.

At the outset of this week's Torah portion, *Parashat Va'era*, God draws Moses closer, into a more intimate relationship, now sharing the most holy Name, that which is formed of the letters *yud, hey, vav, hey*. Arranged only to form God's name, these are the letters of the verb "to be," neither masculine nor feminine, only letters, which as God's name reflect the holiness of Being. This name is called the *Shem Havaya/the Name of Being*. It is also called the *Shem Ha'm'forash/the Ineffable Name*, or, *the Explained Name*. At one and the same time, God's Name is both intimately knowable and ultimately unknowable.

Drawing on the most holy name of God, the title of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel's very first book, a book of Yiddish poems written when he was a teenager, is *Der Shem Ha'm'forash: Mentsch*. *Mentsch* means Human Being. Each one of us, by whatever name we are called, is God's name. Arranged vertically, the human form is reflected in the letters of the *Shem Havaya, yud, hey, vav, hey* -- head, shoulders and arms, spine, hips and legs.

God's Name is dynamic, a reminder that life is ever unfolding, that neither God nor we are static, that we are not limited in what we can be and become. Calling on God's Names of Being, we discover our own possibility. *Ehiyeh/I will be!* Created in God's image, we, like God, are ever becoming.

Shabbat shalom,
Rabbi Victor