



Hineih (Here!) and *Hineini* (Here I am!) signal heightened spiritual moments.

Some names for God - Elohim: strict God - *Yah* (*YHVH*): big-hearted God – *Hamakom*: God as the ‘place’ where everything exists - *HaShem*: the ‘Name’

Encountering God - Judaism

1. ***Hineini* ‘Here I am!’:** “*Elohim* put Abraham to the test, saying to him, ‘Abraham.’ He answered, ‘Here I am / *Hineini*.’ ‘Take your son, your favourite, Isaac, whom you love, and go ... and offer him ... as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you.’” (Gen.22:1-2) “And Abraham picked up the knife to slay his son. Then a messenger of *Yah* called to him from heaven: ‘Abraham! Abraham!’ And he answered, ‘Here I am / *Hineini*.’ ‘Do not raise your hand against the boy or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear *Elohim*, since you have not withheld your son, your favoured one, from Me.’” (Gen.22:10-12)
2. **Jacob’s ladder:** “[Jacob] came upon a certain place [*hamakom*]; he had to spend the night there, for the sun had come in. He took one of the stones of the place and set it at his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamt: here! [*hineih*], a ladder was set up on the earth, its top reaching the heavens, and here! messengers of *Elohim* were going up and down on it. And here! *Yah* was standing over him. (Gen.28:11-13) “Jacob awoke from his sleep and said: ‘Why, *Yah* is in this place, and I, I did not know it!’ He was awestruck and said: ‘How awe-inspiring is this place! This is none other than a house of *Elohim*, and that is the gate of heaven!’” (Gen. 28:16-17)
3. **Wrestling at Jabok:** “Jacob was left alone. And a figure [*ish*, lit. ‘man’] wrestled with him until the break of dawn. ... Jacob asked, ‘Pray tell me your name.’ But he said, ‘You must not ask my name [*shem*]!’ And he took leave of him there. So Jacob named the place *Peniel* [face of God], meaning, ‘I have seen *Elohim* face-to-face, yet my life has been preserved.’” (Gen.32:25, 30-31)
4. **Burning bush:** “When *Yah* saw that he had turned aside to look, *Elohim* called to him out of the bush: ‘Moses! Moses!’ He answered, ‘Here I am / *Hineini*.’ He said, ‘Do not come closer! Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place [*hamakom*] on which you stand is holy ground!’ and continued, ‘I am *Elohim* of your father— *Elohim* of Abraham, *Elohim* of Isaac, and *Elohim* of Jacob.’ And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at *Elohim*.” (Ex. 3:4-6) “Moses said ..., ‘When I come to the Israelites ... and they ask me, ‘What is [God’s] name? what shall I say ...?’ And *Elohim* said to Moses, ‘*Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh* / I-Am-Becoming-What-I-Am-Becoming ... Thus shall you say ..., ‘*Ehyeh* / ‘Becoming’ sent me to you.’” (Ex. 3:13-14)
5. **Face-to-face:** “And when Moses entered the Tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the Tent, while [God] spoke with Moses. ... *Yah* would speak to Moses face-to-face, as one person speaks to another. And he would then return to the camp ...” (Ex. 33:9-11)
6. **Not see My face and live:** “[Moses] said, ‘Oh, let me behold Your Presence!’ And [God] answered, ‘I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim before you the name *Yah*, and the grace that I grant and the compassion that I show,’ continuing, ‘But you cannot see My face, for a human being may not see Me and live.’ And *Yah* said, ‘See, there is a place near Me. Station yourself on the rock and, as My Presence passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock and shield you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will take My hand away and you will see My back; but My face must not be seen.’” (Ex.33: 18-23)
7. **Challenging God is welcomed in Judaism:** Abraham at Sodom (Gen. 18), Jacob at Jabok (Gen. 32), Moses after the Golden Calf (Ex. 32), Elijah (Kings), Jonah, Jeremiah, David (Psalms), Job.
8. **God is everywhere:** “I am ever mindful of *Yah*’s presence” (Ps 16:8) “If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I descend to the underworld, You are there too.” (Ps 139:8) “There is no place devoid of God.” (Tikkunei Zohar 57)
9. **Encountering God in the ‘in-between’ of ‘I-Thou’ relating:** “through everything that becomes present to us, we gaze toward the edge of the eternal You; in each we perceive a breath of it; in every ‘You’ we address the eternal You...” (Martin Buber, ‘I and Thou’, 1923)
10. **Bringing God into the world:** “Where does God dwell? Wherever you let Him in.” (Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, 1787–1859) “to pray ... means to bring God back into the world.” (A J Heschel ‘Man’s Quest for God’ 1954, p.62)