



GEULAS YISRAEL

RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN

RAM YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

MAGGID SHIUR ALL PARSHA AND ALL DAF, OU.ORG

How History Becomes Memory

At the beginning of **Parashat Bo**, *Yetziat Mitzrayim* accelerates. Seven of the ten plagues have already struck Egypt, and Hashem prepares the final stage—the last three blows that will shatter Egypt and force Pharaoh to drive us from his land, just as Hashem promised: *b'yad chazakah yegarseim me'arto*.

These final plagues—hinted at in the gematria of נז (bet is two, alef is one)—deliver the decisive blow. They do not merely punish Egypt; they dismantle Pharaoh's sense of power and control.

When Hashem introduces these plagues to Moshe, He adds a striking instruction. These events are meant to become a story. The Jewish people are commanded to recount what happened in Egypt—the way Hashem confronted Pharaoh and revealed His power. This story must be told to children and grandchildren.

As redemption draws near, we become storytellers. The Exodus is not only an event to be

experienced, but a memory to be preserved and passed on.

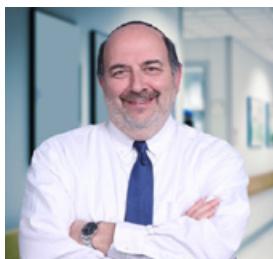
SOCIETIES AND FAMILIES

This new national identity is important in part because we are told *who* will hear our story. We are commanded to tell it to our children and to our grandchildren. That command itself is already a vision of redemption. Slaves do not have family life. They are reduced to property, bought and sold at will. Wives could be taken from their husbands, children seized at birth and sold in open markets.

Chazal note that the plague of *arov* included wild animals brought from distant places. This was, in part, *middah k'neged middah*—a fitting response to the Egyptian practice of sending Jewish slaves to far-off and isolated locations for long stretches of labor. Men were kept away from their wives, ensuring that the population growth which so frightened Egypt would be curtailed. In such a world, the very ideas of family, children, and certainly grandchildren were unimaginable.

Redemption of a nation includes redemption of family life. A society is built upon the quiet foundations of the home, where values are absorbed naturally, without slogans or performance. When values are learned only in public arenas, they often become brittle and artificial. History has shown that societies which attempt to build themselves without the backbone of

Arthur Samuels, DPM



PODIATRIST

Over 30 years experience

Licensed in Israel
& America

053-427-6363

ArthurMSamuels@gmail.com

CINEMA CITY MALL, JERUSALEM

family life ultimately fail.

In recent history, the Soviet Union attempted to weaken family identity and redirect loyalty entirely toward the state. The result was a society that appeared powerful but proved fragile, and eventually collapsed. Western civilization, now grappling with sustained challenges to family structure, may be courting similar danger. Without stable family life, values are not transmitted, and societies lose resilience. What looks strong on the surface begins, quietly, to fracture.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

The night of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* was a family event. The *korban Pesach* carries two unique halachot not found with other offerings, both of which ensure that it would be eaten within a family setting. First, the meat could be eaten only at night and had to be completed by morning. Rabbinically, the window became even narrower, with some opinions requiring it to be finished by midnight—leaving only a few short hours to consume an entire lamb.

Second, the meat could not be taken outside the house in which it was eaten. These two halachot, unique to the *korban Pesach*, effectively guaranteed that it would be shared by a family: enough people gathered together to finish the lamb on time, seated around a single table, remaining within one home.

Redemption from slavery meant redemption of family life. Being told that we would one day recount this story to our children and grandchildren planted that vision at the very outset of redemption. We would not remain slaves forever. We would become free, and we would one day build the kinds of families that slavery had denied us the ability to form.

The Holocaust also reshaped the structure and texture of Jewish family life. It produced a generation of survivors who, in many cases,

ב"ד

Highest Prices ■ Paid
Flawless Service
25 years +

Buying Member Diamond Club
Gold, Jewelry, Silver (All Types)
WANTED

Diamonds, Gems, Precious Stones, Jade, Carvings,
Fine Mineral Specimens, Etc.

*** Alan Sussman, "The Collector" ***
052-854-4504
Please call live, Text message or WhatsApp

were constrained—emotionally, physically, or financially—from raising large families. On a broader level, it drastically pruned the size of Jewish families as a whole.

Older readers may remember smaller *sedarim*, quieter tables marked by absence as much as by presence. Today, the large *sedarim*, crowded with extended families, stand as a quiet symbol of renewal. They reflect the slow regeneration of Jewish family life—something that could not fully emerge in the first two generations after the Holocaust, but has gradually returned as part of our collective healing.

UNDERSTANDING THE "MOMENT"

However, this message to Moshe—to ignite redemptive imagination—was also vital because it taught us to see ourselves as storytellers. Knowing that the events unfolding around us were larger than life allowed us to view them with proper gravity. These moments were not fleeting; they were becoming history. They would one day be told to future generations. Our children and grandchildren would ask—directly, or across time—what role we played in these history-shaping moments.



Tzitzit tying with Ruti

Beit Knesset HaNassi, 24 Ussishkin

Mondays 1:15-4pm
Wednesdays 12-3pm
no experience needed

At times, we fail to recognize the magnitude of our own story. We shrink back, rather than act with courage and vision.

Chazal comment that had Reuven fully understood that the Torah would record his attempt to save Yosef, his response would have been bolder and more decisive. Instead of merely pleading with his brothers not to kill Yosef and then disappearing—only to return and discover that Yosef had been sold—he would have acted differently. He would have carried Yosef back to Yaakov on his shoulders. Reuven did not realize that history hung in the balance, and so his response was hesitant rather than daring.

Recognizing that our moments are chapters in a larger story lends weight to our actions and calls for greater courage.

Every part of Jewish history is a single strand woven into the larger fabric of redemption. Redemption did not begin in 1948; it is a cumulative process built from every mitzvah, every moment of Torah study, and every act of chesed across two thousand years of exile. Still, there are moments when history accelerates. Over the past century, with the return of our people to their Land and the restoration of sovereignty, history has shifted into high gear.

Our children will one day ask what our role was during these seismic changes. How did we respond when new horizons opened before the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael? How did we face moments of darkness, and how did we carry ourselves through the shattering rupture

of October 7th?

The generation that left Egypt had an extraordinary story to tell. So do we.

MEMORY VS. HISTORY

Finally, we were not only told to become storytellers; we were instructed how to tell the story. At the end of the parashah, the Torah describes a future scene in which a child asks a parent about the rituals and practices of Pesach and *Yetziat Mitzrayim*. The Torah does not merely command us to answer. It provides the framework for our response. We are to say that Hashem took us out of Egypt with great strength, and that when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to listen, Hashem struck the firstborn of Egypt to break his intransigence. Evidently, it was not enough for Hashem to tell us to recount the story. He also wanted us to shape it carefully.

There are many ways to tell the story of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*. Yechezkel, in chapters 16 and 23, presents the image of a young woman who betrays the trust of her redeemer. Yechezkel chapter 20 offers a darker account still: a people commanded to abandon paganism and prepare themselves for redemption, yet stubbornly refusing to listen. Hashem becomes so angered that He considers abandoning redemption altogether, rescuing the people only to prevent a greater *chillul Hashem*.

Similarly, Tehillim—especially chapters 78 and 106—juxtaposes Hashem’s miracles and steadfast commitment with the people’s repeated rebellions, beginning already at the Yam Suf. Yet Sefer Shemot records none of these failures. It presents a cleaner, more luminous account of the Exodus—not to rewrite history, but to emphasize different elements of the story and to shape a very different narrative.

Hashem did not want our foundational story

All your jewelry needs in one place!

A 5th generation skilled craftsman will fix, refurbish, polish or restore your family heirlooms, Kiddush cups, candlesticks, and any gold/silver jewelry. Deliveries directly to/from your home in Jerusalem area

Details: Santo - 052-228-9627

to be told in only one register. He wanted it told with intention, with selectivity, and with purpose—so that the memory we pass on would not only recall what happened, but would also form who we are meant to become.

The Torah reminds us that a story is memory, not history. What we choose to include—and what we leave out—shapes how events are remembered. Where we place emphasis, and where we remain silent, defines the contours of the story itself.

On the night of Pesach, we tell the story of the Exodus along carefully guided lines. We begin with the unflattering elements of our past—*matchil b'genut*—and conclude with uplift and gratitude—*umesayem b'shevach*. We follow a deliberate script rather than recounting every detail. We choose how the story is told.

Storytelling is not historical documentation. It is how we interpret events, how we process meaning, and how we construct a narrative that shapes identity and faith.

OUR STORY

We have just lived through a complicated period—years marked by triumph alongside heartbreak, victories shadowed by enduring challenges. Moments of national strength were coupled with profound strain on the State of Israel and on Jewish communities abroad. All this unfolded while many of us continue to carry the weight of war and the lingering toll of trauma. How we choose to frame these years will shape how they are remembered and how future generations understand them.

That framing must be nuanced. It should include what truly matters and leave aside what is secondary, including much of the political noise—both domestic and geopolitical. Leaders and actors will come and go; their names will fade. The central figures of the story are the quiet people who showed up, who fought for



077-2050015
052-2678749
golanchasim@gmail.com



Meir
Golan

BAKA: New 4 room, 88m, ceiling height 5.3m, Shabbat elevator, balcony, 4,850,000 NIS

OLD KATAMON: 5-room, 122m, bright, Shabbat elevator, parking 5,950,000 NIS

REHAVIA: 4-room apartment, large terrace, great view, elevator, bright, parking, 5,600,000 NIS

our people, who sustained the struggle, and who carried one another through it.

The story must recognize the great miracles we witnessed, without erasing pain or simplifying complexity. It must include the powerful reawakening of Jewish identity across the world, alongside the dark resurgence of aggressive antisemitism that this conflict unleashed.

Above all, it must reflect the gentle presence of Hashem—felt in moments of darkness as well as light.

That ancient instruction echoes across the generations. We are living through history, and we will be the storytellers for those who come after us. ■



OU Press is honored to partner with Rabbi Moshe Taragin on his new volume in Hebrew regarding the recent war ('Emunah B'toch Hahastara). This remarkable book is also available in English, "Dark Clouds Above, Faith Below"

Pesach & year round kitchen kashering

053-3725341
026431427

KASHER ME NOW

