



**TOURO COLLEGE &  
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**

**Touro Scholar**

---

Yearbooks and Newsletters

---

Spring 2019

## **Touro Torah Volume 4 Issue 10**

Lander College for Women

Follow this and additional works at: [https://touro scholar.touro.edu/archives\\_books](https://touro scholar.touro.edu/archives_books)



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), [Religious Education Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Lander College for Women. (2019). Touro Torah Volume 4 Issue 10. Retrieved from [https://touro scholar.touro.edu/archives\\_books/325](https://touro scholar.touro.edu/archives_books/325)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by Touro Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Yearbooks and Newsletters by an authorized administrator of Touro Scholar. For more information, please contact [touro.scholar@touro.edu](mailto:touro.scholar@touro.edu).

# TOURO TORAH

• Lander College for Women • Divrei Torah Newsletter • Nissan •

Volume 4 • Issue 10

ניסן תשע"ט

## Inside This Issue

My Story

Seeing *Kriyas Yam Suf*  
Every Day

From Slavery To  
Purpose

Learning To Care



## My Story

By Sarah Bracha Shuraytz

"Yesterday, I woke up at 6:59 and I was so tired, so I pressed snooze, and then I didn't get up until 8:23, and then it took a while until I decided to wear my blue shirt—you know, the one with the sparkly lines—and then I davened, and after that I was so hungry because I hadn't eaten anything since 10:00 the night before, so I quickly had coffee and a granola bar, and then I ran to my 9:00 class and ...."

When you tell a story about yourself, you put in all the details. It is personal. When you are telling a story about someone else, even if it is a close friend, you do not spend nearly as much time on all the fine points. Perhaps you do not know them. Perhaps they are just less relevant to you.

On *Seder* night, we proclaim about the mitzvah of *maggid*, "The more one tells of the story, the more praiseworthy it is." There are other commandments about which we might think "the more the better," such as Torah study, giving charity, and visiting the sick.

Why then do we only discuss quantity in relation to telling the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim*? Rabbi Immanuel Bernstein in *Darkness to Destiny* explains that expounding the story of our redemption is not just doing more of the mitzvah; it is accomplishing the *mitzvah* on an entirely different level.

The essence of our mission on *Seder* night is for each person to see himself as if he personally came out of *Mitzrayim*. When we share more details about the story of our salvation, we show that this is our personal story. This is the most praiseworthy way of fulfilling the *mitzvah*. In the same paragraph discussed above, we also say that even if we are all very intelligent, we are obligated to repeat the story. The *Hagaddah* presents several excuses why we would not feel that we need to talk about the Exodus: we are all wise and familiar with the story, we are all understanding and able to infer the implied meaning of the literal text, we all know the entire Torah. Nevertheless, the *Hagaddah* states that even if all of these statements are true, we would still be obligated to talk about *yetzias Mitzrayim*. Why is this so?

The reason is because it is not about us. It is not about making sure that we know the story. We retell the events to ensure that future generations know all the details. We are fulfilling the command, "And you shall relate to your child on that

*"When you tell a story about yourself,  
you put in all the details. It is personal."*

– Sarah Bracha Shuraytz



day, saying..." (Shemos 13:8). The essence of the *mitzvah* is to share the story with the next generation, so they too can be grateful to *Hashem* for redeeming us.

As discussed above, sharing a story is so much more effective when it is personal. Think about your life. When your parents share stories about their childhood, you listen more attentively when they tell you about how they were naughty in school and about their Purim costumes than when they speak about the general political issues of the time. When they talk about some distant ancestor, perhaps eight generations back, it does not draw your attention nearly as much as hearing the personal tales of the parent you live with, know, and love. So, let us make it personal. Let us delve into the details to ensure we can relate the story of the Exodus with the enthusiasm of someone talking about an incident that actually happened to him.

A large section of *Maggid* consists of verses from the Torah that highlight different parts of the story. After each major quote, we recite other verses that explain the main idea. One of the quotes is, "The Egyptians did evil to us." But the verses that follow, which are about Pharaoh plotting to outsmart the Jews so they would not overrun Egypt, do not seem to provide much explanation. These verses make it sound like Pharaoh is afraid of the Jews, so how do they illustrate the evil that the Egyptians did to us?

The literal translation of the verse is actually, "the Egyptians *made us* evil." Pharaoh knew that if he suddenly told his people to persecute the Jews, they might be unnerved. He, therefore, needed to create a setting that would make his people agree that the Jews deserved persecution. Consequently, Pharaoh made the Jews look bad by spreading the belief that they were using Egyptian resources to grow strong, with the eventual goal of rising up and taking over the land. Thus, it can be said that Pharaoh *made us evil*. Then, when Pharaoh started mistreating the Jews, everyone assumed he was merely doing everything he could to protect his people from them.

Rabbi Shlomo Kluger also comments on the wording of the phrase, "the Egyptians made us evil." He notes that the unusual structure adds emphasis to the root of the word, which, aside from meaning "evil," also means a "fellow man." This is because Pharaoh viewed the Jews as "fellow men" who were on the same page as he was. He knew that if he were in the Jews' position, in terms of numbers and strength, he would certainly plan to overthrow the ruler and take over the land. In other words, the Egyptians acted on the assumption that we were their equals, their fellow men, and that we would act the same way that they would.

Thus, they afflicted us terribly, crushing our spirit to the extent that we would not even dream of fighting back. They did not have us build storage cities because they needed them—they did so to "afflict us with the burdens." The Talmud says they had us build the cities on unstable ground, so that after the Jews put in days of

*"Let us delve into the details to ensure we can relate the story of the Exodus with the enthusiasm of someone talking about an incident that actually happened to him."*

*—Sarah Bracha Shuraytz*

backbreaking labor, the buildings would collapse, and they would have to start building all over again the next day. The Egyptians hoped this would discourage us and destroy our spirit.

“And then we cried out to *Hashem*.” According to the actual verses in *Sefer Shemos* (2:24-26), we did not even cry out. We merely groaned because of the terrible labor. *Hashem*, with His infinite mercy, accepted our groans as prayers and responded by redeeming us.

These are just some of the details of the story that we should discuss at the *Seder* on *Pesach*. Human nature is such that we forget details over time, so we must review them in order to fulfill the commandment to tell the story at such length that we can say, “This is *my story*.” If so, we will accomplish the *mitzvah* of feeling that we personally were taken out of Egypt and of effectively transmitting the story to future generations.

Based on *Darkness to Destiny* by Rabbi Immanuel Bernstein and *Midrash Haggadah—The Malbim Haggadah*.

## Seeing *Kriyas Yam Suf* Every Day

By Zahava Pfeifer and Dina Resnick

*Yetzias Mitzrayim* is an event that is full of miracles. One of them is the *neis* of *Kriyas Yam Suf*. However, with most people focused on the *makkos*, this amazing wonder of *Hashem* does not get the attention it deserves. Perhaps, a *mashal* from Rabbai Chaggai Vilosky can help us properly appreciate the *neis* of *Kriyas Yam Suf* as well as teach us a powerful lesson for life.

There once was a king who wanted to show his love for his people. He decided to make an exquisite statue of a horse and place it in the center of town. By doing so, he hoped the people would realize that he truly appreciated them. The king went to the finest sculptor, who was known for his precision and his ability to make a statue look as authentic as possible. After much time, money, and effort, the finished statue was put out on display in the center of the city. It looked as real and as beautiful as an actual horse. Day after day, the townspeople passed by without seeming to even notice or mention its beauty. The king was very upset; he had invested so much in order to create this horse as a gift for his people and they ignored it. How could this be? One of the king’s advisors suggested an explanation: perhaps no one had acknowledged the statue’s appearance because it looked so real. Perhaps, the people could not even tell it was a sculpture because its features were so exact. The advisor suggested that the king split the statue in half, so that, when the people would pass by, they would realize that it was not actually a horse, but rather a masterpiece of art given to them as a gift from their king. The king had the statue split and, as expected, the people passing the horse were now awestruck. The masterpiece now drew their attention. It was now clear that the horse was not living, rather a symbol of the king’s love for them.







“ We must work to be able to recognize our Creator in the ordinary, not merely in the miraculous. ”

- Zahava Pfeifer and Dina Resnick

The same principle applies to *Kriyas Yam Suf*. *Hashem* created a magnificent world with intricate wonders collectively known as nature. We tend to just sail through life, without noticing the beauty, complexity, and details of this world that *Hashem* created. We tend to view nature as ordinary instead of acknowledging and appreciating its beauty as His gift. When *Hashem* split the *Yam Suf*, the world finally saw that it was He who had made the sea. The One who created nature had shown His hand in it. Everything in nature is a wonder created by *Hashem*. It is our job to recognize and acknowledge its beauty and intricate design, without waiting for something to miraculously split.

The same is true on a spiritual level. There are times in our lives where we see *Hashem* clearly. We see the *Yam Suf* splitting, the split horse statue, and it is obvious that He is constantly involved in our lives. Our *avodah* is to see *Hashem* in the complete horse statue, in nature, in our day-to-day lives where things get tough and His presence is not obvious. We must work to be able to recognize our Creator in the ordinary, not merely in the miraculous.

# From Slavery To Purpose

By Elisheva Marcus

The numerous customs, practices, and *halakhos* that pertain to *Pesach* symbolize one of the main underlying themes that characterizes this holiday - namely, the Jewish redemption from Egyptian servitude. A prime example of such a custom is the drinking of four cups of



wine, each of which symbolizes one of the four expressions used to describe redemption:

והוצאתי, והצלתי, וגאיתי, ולקחתי. Regarding this practice, the Talmud (*Pesachim* 117) teaches us that one may not drink between the third and the fourth cup. The *Imrei Emes* explains this *halakhah* by referring back to the corresponding redemptive phrases mentioned above and the connection between them. When *Hashem* acted as our Redeemer, redeeming us from Egyptian slavery, He immediately gave us the *Torah*, thereby taking us as His nation, as the ones who would serve Him in the most optimal way possible.

*Hashem* did not grant us freedom simply for the sake of freedom itself; in fact, the *Torah* attributes very little, if any, value to a freedom that comes devoid of an overarching objective or goal. The *geulah* we were granted was for the purpose of *Matan Torah* - the first stage of a two-step process. Rav Meir Shapiro insightfully notes that the *gematria* of יציאת מצרים is 891; the same as the *gematria* of "נעשה ונשמע", since the whole purpose of יציאת מצרים was "נעשה ונשמע", the acceptance of the *Torah* that would concretize our status as a free nation subject only to the will of God. Since the third and fourth cup symbolize two redemptive stages that are truly indivisible, one may not create a *hefsek* (a pause) between them.

This bond between the Exodus and the giving of the *Torah* is illustrated in the following interpretation as well. The *passuk* (*Shemos* 56:67) states, "ולא יתן המשחית לבא אל בתיכם לנגף"; when

*Hashem* saw the blood on the Jewish doorposts, He forbade the "משחית" (the "destroyer") from harming those inside. My great-grandfather, Rav Aharon Soloveichik zt"l, understood the משחית as a form of freedom itself. When one is presented with sudden liberty unaccompanied by a broader objective, he is faced with what seems to be a Divine blessing but is really threatening in nature. Indeed, history has demonstrated time and again how national liberation movements were often followed by long periods of intense chaos and violence. Whether it be the French Revolution of the 18th century, the Bolshevik revolution of the 20th century, or the relatively recent Arab Spring, the victims of oppressive regimes overthrew the existing social order and in doing so, many times, abandoned any notion of moral behavior, becoming criminals themselves. Those at the vanguard of what was considered a "liberation" later initiated the mass murder of innocent bystanders, the very people they claimed to be liberating. By יציאת מצרים, however, the Jews were not left with this void that often follows freedom; they were immediately given a few

---

*"The Torah attributes very little, if any, value to a freedom that comes devoid of an overarching objective or goal. The geulah we were granted was for the purpose of Matan Torah."*

—Elisheva Marcus

---



*mitzvot* and eventually, the entire *Torah*. Our freedom was not characterized by a lack of responsibility or obligation; rather, we were blessed with a real *cheirus*, a *cheirus* that is realized through a commitment to that which is *charus al ha-luchos* - the *Torah* as etched on the *luchos*.

When studying and contemplating the nature of our redemption, the single object that evokes for many the imagery of salvation is *matzah*, the unleavened bread Jews hastily prepared as they hurried out of Egypt. Yet, as Rav Mayer Twersky points out, although the *matzah* acts as the quintessential symbol of salvation, it is simultaneously referred to as "*lechem oni*", the bread of our suffering and poverty. How can the *matzah* itself symbolize two seemingly contradictory symbols? As humans, we are intellectually limited to that which we experience, so to us, salvation and slavery seem like

*"As humans, we are intellectually limited in that which we experience, so to us, salvation and slavery seem like two opposites, in which one negates the other. In reality, however, redemption is not a termination of suffering; rather, it is the culmination of it."*

*- Elisheva Marcus*

two opposites, in which one negates the other. In reality, however, redemption is not a termination of suffering; rather, it is the culmination of it. Slavery and salvation belong to one indivisible process - the *avdus* creates the *cheirus* by shaping us into individuals worthy of freedom. The suffering the Jews underwent in *Mitzrayim*, in the כור הברזל, molded them into a nation ready and worthy of becoming Hashem's chosen people.

As one of the first few generations living in a post-World War II world, the concept of liberation is not foreign to us nor is it something we take lightly. Our nation's collective memory is still seething, still recovering, still rebuilding from the unprecedented blow it was dealt during the Holocaust. We recognize that the liberation Hashem has so graciously bestowed upon us is accompanied by a mission, a national mission that is to be carried out by each one of us as individuals. It is now our responsibility to carry on our *mesorah*, to preserve that which others attempted to obliterate by re-affirming our unwavering commitment to the *Torah*, the spiritual guide that assures our eternal existence. As we celebrate our *cheirus* this *Pesach*, let us not forget the very nature of our freedom as illustrated by the words of Rav Yehuda Halevi - "Slaves of time - slaves of slaves are they; a slave of The Master of All, he alone is free."



# Learning To Care

By Meira Sheffey

There is a *halakhah* brought down in the *Shulchan Arukh* that recommends one begin learning *Hilkhos Pesach* 30 days before *Yom Tov*. Presumably, this is because there are so many



*halakhos* involved, it is always helpful to have a reminder. The Rama adds to this *halakhah* an addendum stating that it is customary for people to buy wheat and distribute it to the poor before *Pesach*. What is the connection between these two *halakhos*?

Rav Yaakov Galinsky, the famed *maggid* from Bnei Brak, sheds light on the connection between these two seemingly unrelated *halakhos*. In his *sefer*, he relates a story that happened to him during World War Two. Towards the beginning of the Germans' conquest of Europe, they made a pact which left Lithuania a free country. This was

pure *hashgachah pratis*, because it created a safe oasis for the Jews in the midst of war-torn Europe. As a result, many seized the opportunity to seek refuge in Lithuania, including Rav Galinsky and many yeshiva students.

Living in the city at the time was the great *gadol*, Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, the Torah leader of European Jewry. With the help of a friend, Rav Galinsky was able to secure a morning appointment to meet this Torah giant. The night before his appointment, Rav Galinsky did not sleep. He was learning *Masekhes Yevamos* at the time, and, anticipating that Rav Grodzinski would ask him questions about what he was learning, he spent the whole night reviewing.

When he arrived at Rav Grodzinski's house the next morning, he found a line of thirty people before him. Each person had a sad look on his face due to of all the *tzaros* of the war, and each wanted to unburden himself to the Rav and ask for advice at this trying time. After waiting on line, Rav Galinsky was called for his turn. He felt elated to be standing in front of the Rav who was a leader of *Klal Yisroel*.

Rav Galinsky was sure that the Rav would first ask him about what he was learning and what *chiddushim* he had thought of on the topic. Unexpectedly, the Rav's first question was about the last time he had contact with his parents. Rav Galinsky answered that he had not heard from his parents in over six months, because they stayed on the Russian side, while he ran to the German side and came to Vilna. Then, Rav Grodzinski continued to ask another surprising question. He asked if Rav Galinsky had a blanket to sleep with. Fortunately, Rav Galinsky had a blanket, and immediately Rav Grodzinski seemed visibly more at ease. Rav Grodzinski then asked a third unexpected question: "Would I be able to see your shoes?" Embarrassed, Rav Ga-

---

*"The night before his appointment, Rav Galinsky did not sleep. He was learning Masekhes Yevamos at the time, and, anticipating that Rav Grodzinski would ask him questions about what he was learning, he spent the whole night reviewing."*

—Meira Sheffey

---



linsky removed his worn-out shoes and showed them to him. Immediately, Rav Grodzinski gave him money to buy a pair of shoes. He reassured Rav Galinsky that his house was open twenty-four hours a day if he ever needed any help. After seeing how much Rav Chaim Ozer cared about him, Rav Galinsky started to cry. He felt loved and cared for.

This story reveals the connection between the *halakhah* of learning *Hilkhos Pesach* in advance and helping the poor before *Pesach*. Rav Grodzinski made it clear that when a person sits down to learn all the intricate *halakhos* of *Pesach*, it is very nice. However, something that is "*tov ve'yafeh*" (even nicer) is to make sure that poor people have what to eat before *Pesach*.

# Chag Kasher Ve'Sameach!



## ~Touro Torah~

### Faculty Advisor

Dr. S. Weissman

### Editors

Chava Romm

Shoshana Rosenthal

Chana Schuster

### Contributors

Sarah Bracha Schuryatz

Zahava Pfeifer

Dina Resnick

Elisheva Marcus

Meira Sheffey

Want to write for Touro Torah?

Contact srosenth2

@student.touro.edu.