

Ingredients of Nationhood

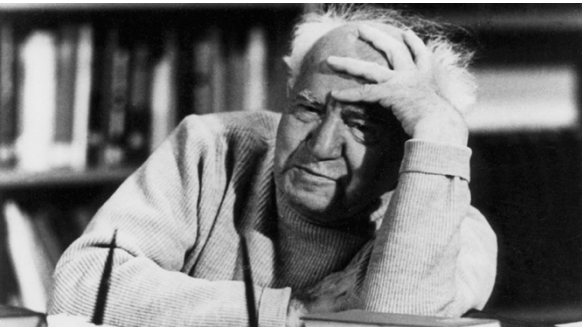
“A Shared Story”

Timely Torah, Jan 2nd 2022

This shiur is kindly sponsored by Elliot and Shandy Horowitz in honor of the yahrzeit of Elliot's father Mr. Harry Horowitz Yosef Tzvi ben HaRav Pesach HaLevi

Our Story

1. "The Jewish Case Before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine" (Jerusalem, 1947), p. 63, 65



'Three hundred years ago, a ship called the Mayflower set sail to the New World. In it were Englishmen unhappy with English society and government, who sought an uninhabited coast to settle and establish a new world. They landed in America, and were among the first pioneers and builders of that land.

'This was a major event in the history of England and America. But I would like to know: Is there a single Englishman who knows the exact date and hour of the Mayflower's launch? How much do American children — or grownups — know about this historic trip? Do they know how many people were in the boat? Their names? What they wore? What they ate? Their path of travel? What happened to them on the way? Where they landed?

'More than 3,300 years before the Mayflower set sail, the Jews left Egypt. Any Jewish child, whether in America or Russia, Yemen or Germany, knows that his forefathers left Egypt at dawn on the 15th of Nisan. What did they wear? Their belts were tied, and their staffs were in their hands. They ate matzot, and arrived at the Red Sea after seven days.

The Need for Stories

הָעוֹלָם אוֹמְרִים שֶׁסְּפֹרִי מַעֲשִׂיּוֹת מְסַגֵּל לְשָׁנָה,
וְאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי שֶׁעַל יְדֵי סְפֹרִי מַעֲשִׂיּוֹת מְעוֹרְרִין בְּנֵי
אָדָם מִשְׁנָתָם.

The world says that telling stories induces
sleep; but I said that by telling stories, we
awaken people from their sleep .

Rebbe Nachman - Chayei Mohoran #25

2. Kuzari I:10-12, 25

(י) אָמַר הַכּוּזָרִי: אֲנִי רוֹאֶה שֶׁצָּרִיךְ אֲנִי לִשְׁאֹל לַיהוּדִים, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהֵם שְׂאֲרִית בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁאֲנִי רוֹאֶה שֶׁהֵם הַטְּעֵנָה כִּי
לֹא לְבוֹרָא תוֹרָה בְּאֶרֶץ. אַחֵר כֵּן קָרָא חֶכֶם מִסְּכָמִי הַיהוּדִים וְשָׂאֵל אוֹתוֹ עַל אֱמוּנָתוֹ .

10. Al Khazari: Indeed, I see myself compelled to ask the Jews, because they are the relic of the Children of Israel. For I see that they constitute in themselves the evidence for the divine law on earth. He then invited a Jewish Rabbi, and asked him about his belief.

(יא) אָמַר לוֹ הַחֶבֶר: אֲנַחְנוּ מֵאֲמִינִים בְּאֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרָהֵם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב הַמוֹצִיא אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּאוֹתוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים
וּבְמִסּוֹת, וְהַמְכַלְכֵּלֵם בַּמִּדְבָּר, וְהַמְנַחִילֵם אֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, אַחֵר אֲשֶׁר הִעֲבִירָם אֶת הַיָּם וְהַיַּרְדֵּן בְּמוֹפְתִים גְּדוֹלִים, וְשָׁלַח מֹשֶׁה
בְּתוֹרָתוֹ, וְאַחֵר כֵּךְ כָּמָה אֱלֹפֵי נְבִיאִים אֲחֵרֵיוּ מְזַהֲרִים עַל תּוֹרָתוֹ, מִיַּעֲדִים בְּגִמּוּל טוֹב לְשׁוֹמְרֵהָ, וְעַנְשׁ קָשָׁה לַמַּמְרָה אוֹתָהּ.
וְאֲנַחְנוּ מֵאֲמִינִים בְּכָל מָה שֶׁכָּתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה, וְהַדְּבָרִים אֲרֻכִּים .

11. The Rabbi replied: I believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, who led the children of Israel out of Egypt with signs and miracles; who fed them in the desert and gave them the land, after having made them traverse the sea and the Jordan in a miraculous way; who sent Moses with His law, and subsequently thousands of prophets, who confirmed His law by promises to the observant, and threats to the disobedient. Our belief is comprised in the Torah--a very large domain.

(יב) אָמַר הַכּוּזָרִי: מִסְּכָמִי הָיִיתִי שֶׁלֹּא אֲשָׂאֵל יְהוּדִי מִפְּנֵי שֶׁיִּדְעָתִי אֲבוּד זָכְרָם וְחִסְרוֹן עֲצָתָם, כִּי הַשְׁפָּלוּת וְהַדְּלוּת לֹא עֲזָבוּ
לָהֶם מִדָּה טוֹבָה. וְהִלָּא הֵיכָּה לֹד לֹמֵר, הַיהוּדִי, כִּי אֵתָּה מֵאֲמִין בְּבוֹרָא הָעוֹלָם, וּמִסְדְּרוֹ וּמִנְהִיגוֹ, וּבְמִי שֶׁבְּרָאָה וְהִטְרִיףָהּ
וְהַדּוּמָה לְסִפּוּרִים הָאֵלֶּה, אֲשֶׁר הֵם טַעֲנַת כָּל מִי שֶׁיִּשְׁלֹו דָת, וּבְעֵבּוּרָהּ הוּא רוֹדֵף הָאָמֶת, לְהַדְמִיּוֹת לְבוֹרָא בְּצִדְקוֹ
וּבְחֻקָּתוֹ :

12. Al Khazari: I had not intended to ask any Jew, because I am aware of their reduced condition and narrow-minded views, as their misery left them nothing commendable. Now shouldst thou, O Jew, not have said that thou believest in the Creator of the world, its Governor and Guide, and in Him who created and keeps thee, and such attributes which serve as evidence for every believer, and for the sake of which He pursues justice in order to resemble the Creator in His wisdom and justice?

אמר הקבר: על הדרך הזה השיבותיך כאשר שאלתני. וכן פתח משה לדבר עם פרעה פשעאמר לו: אלהי העברים שלחני אליה, רצונו לומר: אלהי אברהם יצחק ויעקב מפני שהיה אברהם מפרסם אצל האמות, וכי התקבר אליהם דבר האלהים והנהיג אותם ועשה להם נפלאות, ולא אמר: אלהי השמים והארץ שלחני אליה. ולא: בוראי ובוראד, וכן פתח אלהים דבריו אל המון ישראל: "אנכי יי אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים", ולא אמר: "אני בורא העולם ובוראכם". וכן פתחתי לך מלך הכוזר כאשר שאלתני על אמונותי, השיבותיך מה שאני חייב בו וחיבין בו כל קהל ישראל, אשר התקבר אצלם המעמד ההוא בראות עיניהם ואחר כן הקבלה הנמשכת שהיא כמראה העין :

25. The Rabbi: In this way I answered thy first question. In the same strain spoke Moses to Pharaoh, when he told him: 'The God of the Hebrews sent me to thee,' viz. the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For Abraham was well known to the nations, who also knew that the divine spirit was in contact with the patriarchs, cared for them, and performed miracles for them. He did not say: 'The God of heaven and earth,' nor 'my Creator and thine sent me.' In the same way God commenced His speech to the assembled people of Israel: 'I am the God whom you worship, who has led you out of the land of Egypt,' but He did not say: 'I am the Creator of the world and your Creator.' Now in the same style I spoke to thee, a Prince of the Khazars, when thou didst ask me about my creed. I answered thee as was fitting, and is fitting for the whole of Israel who knew these things, first from personal experience, and afterwards through uninterrupted tradition, which is equal to the former.



Stones or Lessons?

Canaan is captive with all woe. Ashkelon is conquered, Gezer seized, Yanoam made nonexistent; Israel is wasted, bare of seed"

3. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Radical Then, Radical Now: On Being Jewish* [London: Continuum Books, 2003], pp. 29-36



Egypt and Israel three millennia ago were nations that asked themselves the most fundamental human question of all: How do we defeat death and conquer mortality? How, in the brief span of a human life, do we participate in something that will endure long after we are no longer here? The Egyptians gave one answer—an answer that through the ages has tempted emperors and tyrants, rulers and kings. We defeat mortality by building monuments that will stand for thousands of years.

Their stones will outlive the winds and sands of time. The Jews gave an entirely different answer. The Israelites, slaves in Egypt for more than two hundred years, were about to go free. Ten plagues had struck the country. Whatever their cause, they seemed to convey a message: The God of Israel is on the side of freedom and human dignity. On the brink of their release, Moses, the leader of the Jews, gathered them together and prepared to address them. He might have spoken about freedom. He could have given a stirring address about the promised land to which they were travelling, the “land flowing with milk and honey.” Or he might have prepared them for the journey that lay ahead, the long march across the wilderness. Instead, Moses delivered a series of addresses that seemed to make no sense in the context of that particular moment. He presented a new idea, revolutionary in character whose implications remain challenging even now. He spoke about children, and the distant future, and the duty to pass on memory to generations yet unborn. Three times he turned to the theme:

And when your children ask you, ‘What do you mean by this rite?’ you shall say . . .

And you shall explain to your child on that day, ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me when I went free from Egypt.’

And when, in time to come, your child asks you, saying, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him . . .

About to gain their freedom, the Israelites were told that they had to become a nation of educators.

Freedom, Moses suggested, is won, not on the battlefield, nor in the political arena, but in the human imagination and will. To defend a land, you need an army. But to defend freedom, you need education. You need families and schools to ensure that your ideals are passed on to the next generation and never lost, or despaired of, or obscured. The citadels of liberty are houses of study. Its heroes are teachers, its passion is education and the life of the mind. Moses realized that a people achieves immortality not by building temples or mausoleums, but by engraving their values on the hearts of their children, and they on theirs, and so on until the end of time. The Israelites built living monuments—monuments to life—and became a people dedicated to bringing new generations into being and handing on to them the heritage of the past. Their great institutions were the family and education via the conversation between the generations. In place of temples they built houses of prayer and study. In place of stones they had words and teachings.

The Stories that Bind Us

4. The Stories that Bind Us, Bruce Feller, March 17 2013, NY Times Article¹



I first heard this idea from Marshall Duke, a colorful psychologist at [Emory University](#). In the mid-1990s, Dr. Duke was asked to help explore myth and ritual in American families. “There was a lot of research at the time into the dissipation of the family,” he told me at his home in suburban Atlanta. “But we were more interested in what families could do to counteract those forces.”

Around that time, Dr. Duke’s wife, Sara, a psychologist who works with children with learning disabilities, noticed something about her students. “The ones who know a lot about their families tend to do better when they face challenges,” she said. Her husband was intrigued, and along with a colleague, Robyn Fivush, set out to test her hypothesis. They developed a measure called the “Do You Know?” scale that asked children to answer 20 questions.

Examples included: Do you know where your grandparents grew up? Do you know where your mom and dad went to high school? Do you know where your parents met? Do you know an illness or something really terrible that happened in your family? Do you know the story of your birth?

Dr. Duke and Dr. Fivush asked those questions of four dozen families in the summer of 2001, and taped several of their dinner table conversations. They then compared the children’s results to a battery of psychological tests the children had taken, and reached an overwhelming conclusion. The more children knew about their family’s history, the stronger their sense of control over their lives, the higher their self-esteem and the more successfully they believed their families functioned. The “Do You Know?” scale turned out to be the best single predictor of children’s emotional health and happiness.



“We were blown away,” Dr. Duke said.

And then something unexpected happened. Two months later was Sept. 11. As citizens, Dr. Duke and Dr. Fivush were horrified like everyone else, but as psychologists, they knew they had been given a rare opportunity: though the families they studied had not been directly affected by the events, all the children had experienced the same national trauma at the same time. The researchers went back and reassessed the children. “Once again,” Dr. Duke said, “the ones who knew more about their families proved to be more resilient, meaning they could moderate the effects of stress.”

Why does knowing where your grandmother went to school help a child overcome something as minor as a skinned knee or as major as a terrorist attack? “The answers have to do with a child’s sense of being part of a larger family,” Dr. Duke said.

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/17/fashion/the-family-stories-that-bind-us-this-life.html>

Dr Martin Luther King – Connecting to the Story

5. "I've Been to the Mountaintop," 3rd April 1968, Mason Temple, Memphis, Tennessee



Something is happening in Memphis; something is happening in our world. And you know, if I were standing at the beginning of time, with the possibility of taking a kind of general and panoramic view of the whole of human history up to now, and the Almighty said to me, "Martin Luther King, which age would you like to live in?" I would take my mental flight by Egypt and I would watch God's children in their magnificent trek from the dark dungeons of Egypt through, or rather across the Red Sea, through the wilderness on toward the promised

land. And in spite of its magnificence, I wouldn't stop there.

I would move on by Greece and take my mind to Mount Olympus. And I would see Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Euripides and Aristophanes assembled around the Parthenon. And I would watch them around the Parthenon as they discussed the great and eternal issues of reality. But I wouldn't stop there.

I would go on, even to the great heyday of the Roman Empire. And I would see developments around there, through various emperors and leaders. But I wouldn't stop there.

I would even come up to the day of the Renaissance, and get a quick picture of all that the Renaissance did for the cultural and aesthetic life of man. But I wouldn't stop there.

I would even go by the way that the man for whom I am named had his habitat. And I would watch Martin Luther as he tacked his ninety-five theses on the door at the church of Wittenberg. But I wouldn't stop there.

I would come on up even to 1863, and watch a vacillating President by the name of Abraham Lincoln finally come to the conclusion that he had to sign the Emancipation Proclamation. But I wouldn't stop there.

I would even come up to the early thirties, and see a man grappling with the problems of the bankruptcy of his nation. And come with an eloquent cry that [we have nothing to fear but "fear itself."](#) But I wouldn't stop there.

Strangely enough, I would turn to the Almighty, and say, "If you allow me to live just a few years in the second half of the 20th century, I will be happy."

Now that's a strange statement to make, because the world is all messed up. The nation is sick. Trouble is in the land; confusion all around. That's a strange statement. But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough can you see the stars. And I see God working in this period of the twentieth century in a way that men, in some strange way, are responding.

Something is happening in our world. The masses of people are rising up. And wherever they are assembled today, whether they are in Johannesburg, South Africa; Nairobi, Kenya; Accra, Ghana; New York City; Atlanta, Georgia; Jackson, Mississippi; or Memphis, Tennessee -- the cry is always the same: "We want to be free."

The Rasha – Disconnecting from the Story

6. Hagadah shel Pesach

רָשָׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מַה הָעֲבוּדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם. לָכֶם – וְלֹא לוֹ. וְלִפִּי שְׁהוֹצִיא אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִן הַכֹּלל כְּפֶר בְּעֶקֶר. וְאִם אֵתָּה הִקְדַּח אֶת שְׁנָיו וְאָמַר לוֹ: "בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם". לִי וְלֹא-לוֹ. אֱלֹהֵי הָיָה שָׁם, לֹא הָיָה נִגָּאֵל :

What does the evil [son] say? "'What is this worship to you?' (Exodus 12:26) 'To you' and not 'to him.' And since he excluded himself from the collective, he denied a principle [of the Jewish faith]. And accordingly, you will blunt his teeth and say to him, "'For the sake of this, did the Lord do [this] for *me* in my going out of Egypt' (Exodus 13:8)." 'For me' and not 'for him.' If he had been there, he would not have been saved.

7. Mishna Torah, Hilchos Teshuva 3:11

הַפּוֹרֵשׁ מִדֶּרֶךְ צִבּוּר אִם עַל פִּי שְׁלֹא עָבַר עֲבֻרוֹת אֲלָא נִבְדֵּל מֵעֵדֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִינוּ עוֹשֶׂה מִצְוֹת בְּכָלֵן וְלֹא נִכְנָס בְּצִרְתָּן וְלֹא מִתְעַנֶּה בְּתַעֲנִיתָן אֲלָא הוֹלֵךְ בְּדֶרֶכּוֹ בְּאֶחָד מִגִּזְרֵי הָאָרֶץ וְכֹאֵלּוּ אִינוּ מֵהֶן אֵין לוֹ חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא

One who secedes from the paths of the congregation, although he committed no transgressions, but remains separated from the congregation of Israel, observes no commandments together with them, does not include himself in their troubles, nor afflicts himself on their fast-days, but follows his own path as the rest of the people of the land, acting as if he was not one of them, he has no share in the World to Come.

Social Contract or a Ideological Society

8. TB Brachos 14a

אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹנָה אָמַר רַבִּי זֵירָא: כָּל הָעוֹשֶׂה חֻפְצָיו קוֹדֵם שְׂתִּתְפַּלֵּל — כְּאִלּוּ בָּנָה בֵּמָה. אָמְרוּ לוֹ "בֵּמָה" אָמַרְתָּ? אָמַר לָהֶם: לֹא, אֲסוּר קָא אָמִינָא .

With regard to this same verse, **Rabbi Yona said** that **Rabbi Zeira said: Anyone who tends to his own affairs before he prays, it is as though he built an altar. They said to Rabbi Yona: Did you say that it was as if one built an altar? Rabbi Yona responded to them: No; I said simply that it is prohibited.**

9. Ein Aya, ad loc.



טבעי, ימצא ג"כ אצל שכחי אלה. אמנם כשנתבונן בדבר נראה, שיש הבדל גדול בין האחדות שתמצא ע"י הסבה האמיתית הגבוהה, מצד ההכרה בחפץ התכליתי העליונה שבאה רק ע"י שלום הבריות, ובין האחדות שתמצא מפני הערת טובתו של כל יחיד. כי הראשונה נוסדה באהבת הכלל באמת, ע"כ כרבות ימי' תוסיף אהבת הכלל להתגדל והיא כנסי' שהיא לש"ש שסופה להתקיים². אבל האחדות למטרה של אהבת כל יחיד לעצמו, היא אחדות מקרית, ויסודה הוא אהבת הפרט העצמית, אין סופה להתקיים, כי אין לה מרכז אמיתי. ואע"פ דלכאורה מתגדלת האחדות אבל לסוף כל יחיד יחפץ למשך לעצמו רב הנאה, ותצא כאש שנאה ומלחמת אחים. והנה בהיותנו על אדמתינו ונבנה בית עולמים, ה' הוא המרכז ומקום האחדות, ע"כ נאסרו הבמות הפרטיות אע"פ שהי' אפשר להתאחד ג"כ ע"י הבמות בקיבוצים קטנים. אבל הבקשה הקטנה מביאה פירוד להמרכז הגדול, ותבטל אחדות האומה, שרק ממנה תצא תכלית רצון ד'. ע"כ הנותן שלום לחיבורי קודם שיתפלל, מראה לדעת שאינו מכיר שיסוד השלום וקיומו הוא תלוי רק ע"י הכרת דעת את ד' והיא הסבה הראשית המקיימת את השלום לא בארח מקרי רק בדרך עצם, וחושב שייסוד השלום מפני ההכרה הטבעית, אבל ענינה הוא רק אהבת עצמו, והחיבור הזה מביא לידי פירוד, כאילו עשאו כמה, שחשוב חיבור לפי הנראה וקיבוץ לנפוזים לעבודת ד', אבל הוא מפריד אל התכלית הגדולה. כמו כן