



Passover: Recounting and Redemption



Speech—telling our own stories—is, itself, redemption.

We recount our liberation from Egypt and, through the telling, we experience redemption. Telling and re-telling our stories is worthy—in fact, commanded—for reasons beyond gaining and sharing knowledge. What is the transformative power of recounting and sharing our common stories—and our personal ones?



The Power of Storytelling

Haggadah

We were slaves to Pharaoh in the land of Egypt. And Adonai our God took us out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. And if the Holy Blessed One had not taken our ancestors from Egypt, we and our children and our children's children would [all] be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. And even if we were all sages, all discerning, all elders, all knowledgeable about the Torah, it would be a commandment upon us to tell the story of the exodus from Egypt. And anyone who spends extra time telling the story of the exodus from Egypt is praiseworthy.

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים, ויוציאנו יהוה אלהינו משם ביד חזקה ובזרע נטויה. ואלו לא הוציא הקדוש ברוך הוא את אבותינו ממצרים, הרי אנו ובנינו ובני בנינו משעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים. ואפילו כלנו חכמים כלנו נבונים כלנו זקנים כלנו יודעים את התורה מצוה עלינו לספר ביציאת מצרים. וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משבח.

Rabbi Yitzchak Luria

The word "Pesach" can be read as two words, Peh Sach, "the mouth speaks." On this night, the heart and the mouth come together, and Pharaoh's grip is loosed from our throats. Coming out of exile means the fulfillment of one's potential. And there is no greater fulfillment than when one touches the root of one's soul, and gives expression to it in ways that are uniquely one's own.

Zohar Vayera 6:65

Come and see, as long as speech was in exile, voice was gone from speech, and speech was voiceless...Moses was voice without speech because speech was in exile. And Moses went while speech was in exile to Mount Sinai and the Torah was given. At that time, voice joined with speech and he spoke words.

תא חזי, כל זמנא דדבור הוה בגלותא, קלא אסתלק מניה, ומלה הוה אטיס בלא קול, כד אתא משה, אתא קול. ומשה הוה קול בלא מלה, בגין דהוה בגלותא, וכל זמנא דדבור הוה בגלותא, משה אזיל קלא בלא דבור, והכי אזיל עד דקריבו לטורא דסיני, ואתיהיבת אורייתא, ובהוה זמנא, אתחבר קלא דדבור, וכדין מלה מליל, הדא הוא דכתיב, (שמות כ':א) 'וידבר אלהים את כל הדברים האלה. וכדין, משה אשתכח שלים במלה כדקא יאות, קול ודבור כחדא בשלימו.

Kol lip—the flow of our inner experience—is Truth that pours forth without contour. *Dibur* דבור is speech, that shapes the *kol* into words so that our true selves can be named and shared to master our own lives and create relationships with each other and God.

Questions for Discussion

- *Kol*, the flow of our inner experience, pours forth without contour. *Dibur*, speech, shapes *kol* into word
 - When *dibur* is in exile, and our inner truth has no vessel for expression,—are we, too, in exile?
- Can you recall experiencing *kol* for which you lacked *dibur*?
 - What did that feel like?
 - What might have helped you?
 - Why might that be likened to Exile?
- Can you recall using Speech that was disconnected from your inner Truth?
 - What did that feel like?
 - What helped you reunite Speech with Truth?
 - How might that union help you Master your own life?
 - Find a place in a larger context such as family and community?
- Why might children in foster care experience *dibur*-in-exile?
- How might new parents, foster or adoptive, help a child to unite *Kol* and *Dibur*?



What is Family?

This story—the birth and rescue of Moses—is one of the Torah’s most powerful narratives of love, loss, courage, and protection. It’s about a mother who must let go to save her child, a sister who watches over him, and another woman — Pharaoh’s daughter — who steps in to care for him.

For kids in foster care and for the adults who love them, this text holds layers of recognition: being separated and cared for by others, being protected by more than one kind of parent, being drawn out from danger into new possibilities.

Exodus 2:2-10

The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw how beautiful he was, she hid him for three months. (3) When she could hide him no longer, she got a wicker basket for him and caulked it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child into it and placed it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile. (4) And his sister stationed herself at a distance, to learn what would befall him. (5) The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe in the Nile, while her maidens walked along the Nile. She spied the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to fetch it. (6) When she opened it, she saw that it was a child, a boy crying. She took pity on it and said, “This must be a Hebrew child.” (7) Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and get you a Hebrew nurse to suckle the child for you?” (8) And Pharaoh’s daughter answered, “Yes.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. (9) And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will pay your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed it. (10) When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, who made him her son. She named him Moses, explaining, “I drew him out of the water.”

ותהר האשה ותלד בן ותרא אותו כי־טוב הוא ותצפנוהו שלשה ירחים ולא יכלה עוד הצפינו ותקח־לו תבת גמא ותחמרה בחמר ובזפת ותשם בה את־הילד ותשם בסוף על־שפת היאר ותתצב אחתו מרחק לדעה מה־יעשה לו ותדד בת־פרעה לרחץ על־היאר ונערתיה הלכת על־יד היאר ותרא את־התבה בתוך הסוף ותשלח את־אמתה ותקחה ותפתח ותראה את־הילד והנה־נער בכה ותחמל עליו ותאמר מילדי העברים זה ותאמר אחתו אל־בת־פרעה האלך וקראתי לך אשה מינקת מן העברית ותינק לך את־הילד ותאמר־לה בת־פרעה לך ותלך העלמה ותקרא את־אם הילד ותאמר לה בת־פרעה הילכי את־הילד הזה והינקו לי ואני אתן את־שכרך ותקח האשה הילד ותניקוהו ויגדל הילד ותבאהו לבת־פרעה ויהי־לה לבן ותקרא שמו משה ותאמר כי מן־המים משיתוהו

Questions for Discussion

- The name Moses (*Moshe*) means “drawn out.” What does it mean to be “drawn out” — from danger, from water, from one world into another?
- How many people help protect Moses in this story—even ones who do not speak in this text?
 - What does each of them do?
- Have you or someone you know taken a big risk in order to keep someone safe?
 - Like Yocheved, did you have to send a beloved away, or like Miriam and Bat Paro, were you part of a chain of care?
 - Were you raised by a “team”? What did that look like?
 - What might it mean for a child to know that different people stepped in to raise them?
- Bat Paro must have known Hebrew babies were being killed throughout Egypt. But this one she saved.
 - What does this suggest about our capacity to imagine and act on what is not right in front of us?
 - Is that lack of imagination and empathy problematic or simply practical? We can’t do everything.
- How does this shed light on how best to be part of that chain of care for kids in the foster system in our city?
 - If your synagogue is a Second Nurture partner, are you involved yet? If so, how?
- Pharaoh’s daughter recognizes Moses as a Hebrew child and risks herself to save him. Why?
- How can difference and belonging coexist—all their identities as one.
- How can we “draw out” what is sacred, brave, or beautiful in ourselves and in those we care for?
- What does this story teach about resilience — the ability to survive and grow even after being “set adrift”?



Passover Poster (To exhibit at a Passover event, community seder. etc.)

MOSES, LIKE ESTHER & RUTH, REDEEMED THE JEWISH PEOPLE.

WHAT ELSE
DO THESE THREE
HEROES HAVE IN
COMMON?

They were all adopted!

Synagogues are
stepping up for kids in
foster care.

To learn more, go to
2Nurture.org or contact
info@2Nurture.org





Postcard (Passover, for the information table, etc.)

Moses was the First "Open Adoption"

You can help a youth
in foster care find their
path out of *Mitzrayim*!

Learn about how you can join
other **YOUR COMMUNITY** in
parting the sea for foster kids!

Contact...



Coming out of exile means the fulfillment of one's potential.

Rabbi Yitzhak Luria


Second Nurture
Every Child Deserves a Family and a Community