



### Bo 5776: Tale Ends

***“The tale of someone's life begins before they are born.”***  
— Michael Wood, *Shakespeare*

The opening line of Perashat Bo ties freedom to telling tales. God informs Moshe that the events in Egypt were carried out so that his children and grandchildren would tell the story to the following generations.

*G-d said to Moshe: ‘Come to Pharaoh! For I have made his heart and the heart of his servants heavy with stubbornness...in order that you may recount in the ears of your child and of your child's child...my signs which I have placed upon them (Egypt). (10:1-2)*

Aside from eating Matzah, telling the story is the one commandment<sup>1</sup> from the Torah that we must fulfil on the night of Passover. It is clear from the Torah's presentation of the great Exodus that it is meant to be seen as a momentous occasion that is woven into the very fabric of Creation. It was foretold centuries before to Abraham and here it was finally happening.

The Exodus is not meant to be seen merely as a serendipitous conclusion to an oppressive period in our history. On the contrary, It is to be seen as the moment in time cultivated and nurtured by God as integral to the unfolding of His plan for Creation. Freedom, then, is not something that is incidental but the core ideal and purpose of life. We are thus meant to see our own lives as part of an unfolding saga rather than as a collection of isolated moments.

In a sense, stories do not exist outside of our own minds. There doesn't seem to be anything in objective reality that binds one moment to the next, except for the fact that we experience them that way; we see occurrences as details to a whole and weave them into the stories that we tell.

The Torah intentionally takes us away from seeing the moments of our lives as a random conglomerate of instances and guides us towards seeing them as grand, unfolding tales. Torah guides us to see our own lives embedded as stories within the greater story of Creation; and to know that in our freedom we have a hand in how the story will develop. By living our lives this way, we see our days as meaningful and purpose driven rather than as incidental anomalies.

‘Freedom’ and ‘stories’ are connected because in true freedom I am not simply choosing what I wish to *do* in any given situation, rather, I choose what I wish to *become* and I choose my actions accordingly. When we see our lives as stories and that we are the central authors, our choices are informed and they gain their meaning from the narrative itself. When events are not elements of a tale we are not creating anything particular and therefore we do not see the consequences of our choices as being details of a larger picture. Without the narrative we have only what we do and choose based on how we see the option in the moment.

Setting freedom within a story teaches us that the fulfilment of our identity is at the heart of our freedom. The choices we make are developments of the plot and each life becomes a subplot in

<sup>1</sup> The other elements like the four cups of wine and bitter herbs were instituted by the rabbis.



the grand saga. For this reason the Torah presents the Exodus not as a singular, momentous event but as a triumphant blossoming of what was centuries in the making.

*It was at the end of four hundred and thirty years, on that very day: All of the forces went out of the land of Egypt. It is a night that G-d had awaited to bring them out of the land of Egypt; this is the very night...which is awaited now by the children of Israel throughout the generations. (12:41-42)*

This was a night awaited and singled out from the six days of Creation...<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Rosh HaShana, 11b



## Law and Lore

### About the Prayers

#### Amida II - Kedusha

When there is a minyan present (quorum of 10 men) during prayers, kedusha is said between the 2nd and 3rd berakhot of Section I of the Amida during the Amida's repetition by the hazzan/cantor.

There are two main versions of the kedusha that are recited depending on the service:

1. During Shharit and Minha of any Amida *Nakdishakh*<sup>3</sup> (lit. 'We will sanctify You') is said.
2. During Musaph *Keter Yitenu Lekha* (lit. 'We will crown You') is said.

The Ashkenazim have different texts for these respective Kedushot than those of the Sephardim.

During the recitation of Kedusha all who are present in the synagogue stand with feet together.

According to R Yoseph Karo in the Shulhan Arukh<sup>4</sup> only the hazzan is to recite the Kedusha and the congregation then answers 'kadosh! kadosh! kadosh!' (holy! holy! holy! is God, Lord of Hosts!) This is the custom of the Western Sephardim.

According to R Isaac Luria<sup>5</sup>, Kabbala requires that the congregation must recite the entire Kedusha together with the hazzan. This is the custom of the Oriental Sephardim.

The kedusha is often sung to a tune on special occasions.

Each time that we say 'holy' the custom is to lift our heels as a sign of respect by raising ourselves in reverence. Both Sephardim and Ashkenazim have this custom (as mentioned by Maran R Yoseph Karo in Bet Yoseph).

There are differing customs, however, regarding lifting heels when saying the subsequent lines that the congregation answers:

*Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le'olam va'ed*

and

*Yimlokh Adonia Le'olam Elohayikh Tsiyon leDor vaDor Haleluya.*

<sup>3</sup>

<sup>4</sup> 125:1. See also Rambam's Mishne Torah, Order of the Prayers.

<sup>5</sup> Sha'ar haKavanot, *Hazarat haAmida*, Derush III, 39a



Because there is no fixed custom one should essentially follow what the majority of the congregation does.

R Shemtob Gaguine records in *Keter Shem Tob* (vol. I, p. 53) that the S&P custom in London is not to lift the heels at all even for *kadosh*<sup>6</sup>. This is not surprising given that neither the Mishne Torah (Rambam) or the Shulhan Arukh (Maran R Y Karo) mention this custom.

It is the custom of the S&P in London to stand for the entire repetition of the Amida while other Sephardim and Ashkenazim often sit after Kedusha.

For every Musaph and during Shaharit on weekdays when there is a minimal minyan (10-12 men) the S&P custom in London is not to repeat the Amida. Rather, one Amida is recited aloud with kedusha.

### Parasha Perspectives

#### III Bo

- 15a Warning of Plague of Locusts (10:1-11)
- 15b Plague of Locusts (10:12-20)
- 16 Plague of Darkness (10:21-29)
- 17a Preparation (11:1-3)
- 17b Warning of Last Plague (11:4-8)
- 17c Reason for Pharaoh's stubbornness (11:9-10)
- 17d The First Pesach (12:1-20)
- 18a Moshe tells the people about Pesach (12:21-28)
- 18b Last Plague: Death of Firstborn (12:29-36)
- 19 Exodus (12:37-42)
- 20a Laws of Pesach (12:43-50)
- 20b That very day God took them out (12:51)
- 21 Pesach for all generations, *Tefillin* (13:1-10)
- 22a Laws of firstborns, *Tefillin*, memory (13:11-16)

**Taken from, 'Torah for Everyone' by Rabbi Dr Raphael Zarum, Dean of LSJS**

<sup>6</sup> In my observations the majority of the congregation at Lauderdale Road are now accustomed to raise their heels for *kadosh*. Although not for *barukh* and *Yimlokh*.