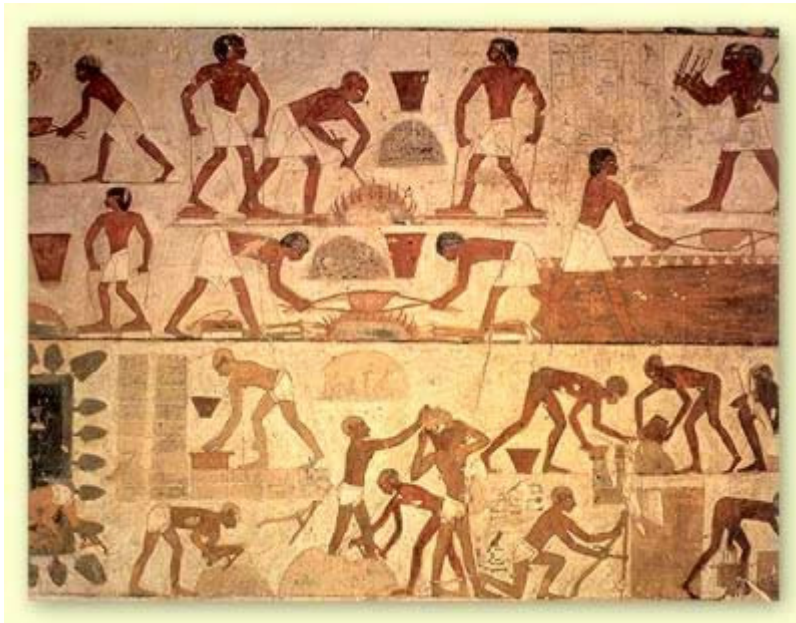


ממצרים גאלתנו...

# Super Seders 5767

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**Part I: Avraham and Moshe**

## Introduction to Superseders 5767

This course has two underlying central themes throughout:

### A. US – The awesome power of ritualistic re-enactment:

#### Pesach Haggadah – *Magid*

And the more you develop the story of the Exodus from Egypt the better.

#### הגדה של פסח – מגיד

וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משבח

#### Pesach Haggadah, Magid

In every generation a person is obliged to see themselves as if they themselves had left Egypt... not only our ancestors did the Holy One Blessed be God save, but us too God saved with them...

#### הגדה של פסח – מגיד

בכל דור ודור חיב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים, שנאמר וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם (שמות יג: ח). לא את אבותינו בלבד גאל הקדוש ברוך הוא, אלא אף אותנו גאל עימם, שנאמר וְאוֹתָנוּ, הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם לְמַעַן הִבִּיא אֹתָנוּ לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם. (דברים ו: כג)

“There can be no question: the psychological dangers through which earlier generations were guided by the symbols and spiritual exercises of their mythological and religious inheritance, we today must face alone, or, at best, with only tentative, impromptu, and not often very effective guidance.

This is our problem as modern, ‘enlightened’ individuals, for whom all gods and devils have been rationalized out of existence.

Nevertheless, in the multitude of myths and legends that have been preserved to us, or collected from the ends of the earth, we may yet see delineated something of our still human course.

To hear and profit, however, one may have to submit somehow to purgation and surrender.

And that is part of the problem: just how to do that.”

*The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell, p.105 (1949)

### B. EGYPT – The unique context of the story

#### Pesach Haggadah – *Magid*

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt...

#### הגדה של פסח – מגיד

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים

*Which Pharaoh? Why ancient Egypt? What is special about this location?*

*What does it teach us about the Exodus? Surely Egypt is more than just an inert context?*

(Employing hieroglyphics, pyramids etc. during the Seder)

## Introduction to Part I – Avraham and Moshe

(a) Avraham is where the story of the Haggadah begins:

“And I took your father. Avraham, from beyond the river and I led him through the whole land of Canaan.” (Joshua 24:2)

Why start with him?

(b) Moshe is only mentioned once in the Haggadah.

He too was a slave! How was he freed?

## Avraham in Egypt

Compare Avraham’s experience in Egypt (Bereishit 12:10-20) with that of Bnei Yisrael (Shemot 1:1-15:26)

### Genesis 12:10-20

(10) And there was a famine in the land; and Avram went down to Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was severe in the land. (11) And it came to pass, when he came near to enter to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that you are a pretty woman to look upon; (12) Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see you, that they shall say, This is his wife; and they will kill me, but you they will keep alive. (13) Say, please, that you are my sister; that it may be well with me for your sake; and my soul shall live because of you. (14) And it came to pass, that, when Avram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw the woman that she was very pretty. (15) The princes of Pharaoh also saw her, and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken to Pharaoh’s palace. (16) And he treated Avram well for her sake; and he had sheep, and oxen, and male asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and female asses, and camels. (17) And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Avram’s wife. (18) And Pharaoh called Avram, and said, What is this that you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? (19) Why did you say, She is my sister? so I might have taken her for my wife; now therefore behold your wife, take her, and go your way. (20) And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

### בראשית יב:י-כ

י וַיְהִי רָעֵב בְּאֶרֶץ; וַיֵּרָד אַבְרָם  
מִצְרַיִם לְגֹר שָׁם כִּי כָבֵד הָרָעֵב  
בְּאֶרֶץ. יא וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר הִקְרִיב לְבוֹא  
מִצְרַיִם; וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל שְׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ  
הִנֵּה נָא יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אִשָּׁה יִפְתַּ מְרָאָה  
אַתְּ. יב וְהִיא כִּי יִרְאוּ אֹתָךְ  
הַמִּצְרַיִם וְאָמְרוּ אִשְׁתּוֹ זֹאת וְהָרְגוּ  
אֹתִי וְאַתָּךְ יַחֲיוּ. יג אָמְרִי נָא  
אֲחֹתִי אַתְּ לְמַעַן יִיטֵב לִי בְעַבְרַתְךָ  
וְחִיִּיתָ נַפְשִׁי בְּגִלְגָל. יד וַיְהִי כְּבוֹא  
אַבְרָם מִצְרַיִם; וַיִּרְאוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם אֶת  
הָאִשָּׁה כִּי יָפָה הִוא מְאֹד. טו וַיִּרְאוּ  
אֹתָהּ שְׂרַי פְּרַעֲה וַיְהִלְלוּ אֹתָהּ אֶל  
פְּרַעֲה; וַתִּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה בֵּית פְּרַעֲה. טז  
וְלֹאֲבָרָם הִיטִיב בְּעַבְרַתָּהּ; וַיְהִי לוֹ  
צֹאן וּבָקָר וְחֲמֹרִים וְעַבְדִּים וְשִׁפְחוֹת  
וְאֶתְנֹת וְגַמְלִים. יז וַיִּנְגַע ה' אֶת  
פְּרַעֲה בְּנֹגְעִים גְּדֹלִים וְאֶת בֵּיתוֹ עַל  
דְּבַר שְׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ אַבְרָם. יח וַיִּקְרָא  
פְּרַעֲה לְאַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר מַה זֹאת  
עָשִׂיתְ לִי לָמָּה לֹא הִגַּדְתְּ לִי כִּי  
אִשְׁתְּךָ הִוא. יט לָמָּה אָמַרְתְּ אֲחֹתִי  
הִוא וְאָקַח אֹתָהּ לִי לְאִשָּׁה; וְעַתָּה  
הִנֵּה אִשְׁתְּךָ קַח וְלֵךְ. כ וַיֵּצֵאוּ עָלָיו  
פְּרַעֲה אֲנָשִׁים וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת  
אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ.

Avraham in Egypt	Bnei Yisrael in Egypt
Famine (Bereishit 12:10)	Famine (Bereishit 43:1)
Kill man, let woman live (12:12)	Kill boy, let girl live (Shemot 1:16)
Avraham sacrifices his wife (12:13)	Amram sacrifices the children*
God saves Sarai (12:17)	The midwives and Miriam save the children*
God sent plagues to Pharaoh & his house (12:17)	The Ten Plagues (see sidrot of Va'eira & Bo)
Centrality of woman in the story: Sarai	Centrality of women in the story**: Midwives, Pharaoh's daughter, Miriam*, wives***
Why did Avraham do the wife-sister switcheroo? We learn the answer later when he does exactly the same ploy again: it's due to a total lack of reverence for God (Bereishit 20:11)	Pharaoh refuses to recognise God (Shemot 5:2)
Later, Hagar joins Avraham as a maidservant. In the midrash she is Pharaoh's daughter (16:1)	Pharaoh's daughter saves Moshe (Shemot 2:5-10). Note: Bereishit 15:13 'your seed will be strangers ( <i>ger</i> )'
Avraham is sent out of Egypt (12:20)	Bnei Yisrael are sent out of Egypt (Shemot 12:33)

#### \*Talmud: Sotah 12a

Amram was the greatest in his generation but when he heard of Pharaoh's decree to drown all the boy infants, he said, "What's the point anymore..." and divorced his wife. All the men stood behind him and divorced their wives too... [Miriam said:] "Father your decree is worse than Pharaoh's - at least he only wanted to cut out the males, but your decree is against males and females!" Amram immediately arose and remarried his wife, and all the men did the same...

#### \*\*Talmud: Sotah 11b

It was in the merit of the righteous women of that generation that Yisrael was redeemed from Egypt.

#### \*\*\*Talmud: Sotah 11b

The women would go out with soup and hot water to the fields where the exhausted men worked. They would wash and massage them, eat and drink, and make love there in the fringes of the fields, as it says: "*If you will lie in the fringes...*" (Tehillim 68:14)

#### מדרש תנחומא לך לך סימן ט

א"ר יהושע דסכנין סימן נתן לו הקב"ה לאברהם שכל מה שאירע לו אירע לבניו - כיצד?  
 ...לאברהם נאמר לך לך (בראשית יב) ולבניו נאמר אעלה אתכם מעני מצרים אל ארץ הכנעני  
 והחתי והאמורי והפרזי והחוי והיבوسی אל ארץ זבת חלב ודבש (שמות ג)  
 ...לאברהם נאמר ויהי רעב בארץ וירד אברם מצרימה לגור שם כי כבוד הרעב בארץ ולבניו כיון  
 ששבו למצרים והרעב היה בארץ (בראשית מג)  
 ...אברהם כשירד נזווגו לו המצרים ויראו המצרים את האשה כי יפה היא מאד (בראשית יב) אף  
 לבניו הבה נתחכמה לו פן ירבה והיה כי תקראנה מלחמה ונוסף גם הוא על שונאינו ונלחם בנו ועלה  
 מן הארץ (שמות א)...

### Ramban on Bereishit 12:6

*And Avram passed through the land* – I will tell you a principle which you will understand all the coming portions of Torah concerning Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov. It is indeed a great matter which our Rabbis mentioned briefly, saying: 'Whatever has happened to the patriarchs is a sign to the children' (Tanchuma, Lech Lecha 9). It is for this reason that the verses narrate at great length the account of the journeys of the patriarchs, the digging of the wells, and other events. Now someone may consider them unnecessary and of no useful purpose, but in truth they all serve as a lesson for the future: when an event happens to any one of the three patriarchs, that which is decreed to happen to his children can be understood.

### רמב"ן בראשית יב:ו

ויעבר אברם בארץ עד מקום שכס - אומר לך כלל תבין אותו בכל הפרשיות הבאות בענין אברהם יצחק ויעקב והוא ענין גדול הזכירוהו רבותינו בדרך קצרה ואמרו (תנחומא ט) כל מה שאירע לאבות סימן לבנים ולכן יאריכו הכתובים בספור המסעות וחפירת הבארות ושאר המקרים ויחשוב החושב בהם כאלו הם דברים מיותרים אין בהם תועלת וכולם באים ללמד על העתיד כי כאשר יבוא המקרה לנביא משלשת האבות יתבונן ממנו הדבר הנגזר לבא לזרעו :

### רמב"ן בראשית יב:י

ויהי רעב בארץ - הנה אברהם ירד למצרים מפני הרעב לגור שם להחיות נפשו בימי הבצורת והמצרים עשקו אותו חנם לקחת את אשתו והקב"ה נקם נקמתם בנגעים גדולים והוציאו משם במקנה בכסף וזהב וגם צוה עליו פרעה אנשים לשלחם :  
ורמז אליו כי בניו ירדו מצרים מפני הרעב לגור שם בארץ והמצרים ירעו להם ויקחו מהם הנשים כאשר אמר (שמות א כב) וכל הבת תחיון והקב"ה ינקום נקמתם בנגעים גדולים עד שיוציאם בכסף וזהב וצאן ובקר מקנה כבד מאד והחזיקו בהם לשלחם מן הארץ. לא נפל דבר מכל מאורע האב שלא יהיה בבנים.  
והענין הזה פרשוהו בבראשית רבה (מ:ח) רבי פנחס בשם רבי אושעיא אמר אמר הקב"ה לאברהם צא וכבוש את הדרך לפני בניך ואתה מוצא כל מה שכתוב באברהם כתוב בבניו באברהם כתוב ויהי רעב בארץ בישראל כתיב (להלן מה ו) כי זה שנתים הרעב בקרב הארץ :  
ודע כי אברהם אבינו חטא חטא גדול בשגגה שהביא אשתו הצדקת במכשול עון מפני פחדו פן יהרגוהו והיה לו לבטוח בשם שיציל אותו ואת אשתו ואת כל אשר לו כי יש באלהים כח לעזור ולהציל. גם יציאתו מן הארץ שנצטווה עליה בתחילה מפני הרעב עון אשר חטא כי האלהים ברעב יפדנו ממות. ועל המעשה הזה נגזר על זרעו הגלות בארץ מצרים ביד פרעה. **במקום המשפט שמה הרשע והחטא :**

### Lessons

- What was Avraham doing?
- *Ma'aseh avot siman l'banim* vs. *Ma sh'ara l'avot siman l'banim*
- ie active vs. passive
- Trust and betrayal
- Empowerment and self-belief
- The nature of Egypt... (more on this next week)

# Moshe's reluctance

## Trusting Moshe

- Why did the elders accept Moshe's words (Shemot 4:31)?
- Because he used the code:

### Midrash: Pirkei deRabi Eliezer 47

The code was passed from Avraham to Yitzhak, from Yitzhak to Ya'akov, and Ya'akov revealed the code of redemption to Yosef: "דַּקּוּדָּא יִפְקֹד *Pacode yiphcode*": *God will rendezvous with you. . . (Bereishit 50:24)*. Then Yosef his son passed the code of redemption on to his brothers, and told them: "*Pacode yiphcode*" - *God will rendezvous with you. . . (Bereishit 50:25)*. Asher [his brother] passed the code to his own daughter, Serach.

When Moshe and Aharon came to the elders of Yisrael and performed signs before them, they consulted with Serach, Asher's daughter. "Someone came to us [claiming to be a redeemer] and performed these signs before us," they said. Said she, "It means nothing—ignore it!" They said to her, "But he told us to say, '*Pacode pacoditi*' (Shemot 3:16)." "Then it is he!" she exclaimed. "That is the man who will redeem us from Egypt. Those were the two code words I heard from my father: *pacode yiphcode*." That is when they believed God and His messenger, as it says: "*The people believed—they heard that God was pacode the children of Yisrael...*" (Sheinot 4:31)

- It was a literary password:

### Shemot 3:16-18 and Rashi's Commentary

"Say to them: The God of your fathers appeared to me... saying, '*Pacode pacoditi*' . . . and they will accept what you say... (Shemot 3:16-18) The moment you say those precise words, they will believe you, because this is the secret they were handed by Ya'akov and Yosef!

- This is the link with the past and the plan for the future - Yosef was key (Shemot 13:19).
- So why does it end in failure (Shemot 5:15-21)?
- Even Moshe is devastated (Shemot 5:22-23) and cannot reverse lost hope (Shemot 6:9).

## Moshe's mistake

- The mission was not futile, it was misappropriated over seven days:.

### Midrash: Shir HaShirim Rabbah 1:45

Rabi Shmuel bar Nachman: All seven days at the bush God urged Moshe to go on the mission to Egypt... (See also Rashi: Shemot 4:10 and Midrash: Vayikra Rabbah 11:6).

- God instructed him to secure an audience with Pharoah (3:10).
- Moshe changed the plan and demanded support for this! (3:13)
- God indulged Moshe (3:14-15) and was forced to give the code (3:16-17)
- ...but steered back to the main plan (3:18-22).
- Moshe was still not happy... (4:1). The signs (4:1-9) were only for *him*:

### Midrash: Shemot Rabbah 3:12

Moshe spoke improperly. The Holy One says, "They will listen!" (4:18) and Moshe answers "They will *not* listen!" God gave him these signs only in keeping with Moshe's own approach.

- He wanted to debate, not inform, Pharaoh (4:10). God was angry (4:11-14).
- Moshe tried to create a mass movement, a People's Revolution, with him as hero.
- He wanted to bring his family (4:20), and Aharon was shocked! (Rashi: Shemot 18:2).
- The results are tragic when you try to outdo God:

**Midrash: Shemot Rabbah 6:1**

*Who is a man to second guess the King about what He already did? (Kohelet 2:12)* This refers to Moshe. God told him in advance that Pharaoh will not listen at this point... but he came to improve upon what the Holy One had already decreed!

- At the very end God says: *Now you'll see, now we do it My way...* (6:1).

**Moshe's needs**

- He grew up as an outsider, with no clear identity.
- It was an emotional quest for roots and significance.
- A *Prince of Egypt* indeed (2:14). Rejected by all.
- He never really appreciated the covenant and nearly died because of this (4:24).
- That's why he refused the call at the very beginning (3:11). A classic problem (Mishlei 1:24-27,32)

**Covenantal responsibility**

- The process starts with *brit*, covenant (2:24).
- It seems that only the women really appreciated the covenant:
  - Zipporah saved her husband and son (4:25-26).
  - The midwives, traditionally Yocheved and Miriam, stood up to Pharaoh (1:19).
  - Miriam berated her father for giving in (Talmud: Sotah 12a)
  - And all the women refused to give up their commitments (Talmud: Sotah 11b)
- The deepest covenant is the Commitment to Life itself - no matter the quality.
- Building the world and perfecting Creation. This redemption was due to women (ibid.).
- Conversely, the men in this story are self-centred and unable to cope:
  - Moshe, Pharaoh, Amram, the elders, the taskmasters etc.

**Authentic redemption**

- Redemption is never a product of nationalism or messianism, it is always *brit*, covenant.
- Moshe had to outgrow his impetuous notions of 'premature evacuation'.
- He too was a slave in Egypt...
- Only after the *sidra* of Shemot did Moshe's first fumbblings make way for real responsibility.
- Only God knew this (2:25), intimately and individually:

**Midrash: Shemot Rabbah 1:36**

*God saw the children of Yisrael, and God knew (Shemot 2:25)* ...No one else knew—no one knew that anyone else was thinking the same thing but *God* knew. So that each person individually searched their own heart and found their own way to *teshuva* (repentance).

## The repeating pattern

- The pattern now reasserts itself: In politics, bloodshed and moral decay.
- The path is painful:

### **Talmud: Sotah 49b**

In the footsteps of the Messiah insolence will increase and honour dwindle; the vine will yield its fruit [abundantly] but wine will be dear (due to mass drunkenness). The government will turn to heresy and there will be none [to offer them] reproof; the meeting-place [of scholars] will be used for immorality; the *Galil* will be destroyed, *Gablan* desolated, and the dwellers on the frontier will go about [begging] from place to place without anyone to take pity on them...

- The death of fixed ideologies and wishful thinking is the birth of natural true freedom:

### **FrameWorks *exodus* (Matis Weinberg, FJP 1999)**

There never *really* was any way to exchange the Covenant for mere love of the soil. There never *really* was any way to satisfy the Jewish yearning for significance with puerile 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalism. There never *really* was a way to infuse with an indigenous culture a society deprived of its roots. There never *really* was any way to excuse the Jewish claim of uniqueness without Sinai. But the racial drives of the *pacode*, the ingrained beliefs of a great destiny-in-waiting, the weight of thousands of years of anticipating and believing made the children of Yisrael ready to sanctify and invest in spurious dreams as long as they seemed to contain some element of the long-dormant visions...

But now we have entered the hidden time, the gestation, the “days of anguish.” The dreams give way to the cold light of realism. The lovers of the soil have turned to foreign workers and industrial investment. The original builders of *Eretz Yisrael* now view Jewish settlers in Judea and Samaria as unenlightened embarrassments. Those who would once have given their right arm for an exclusively “Hebrew” culture watch CNN and Eurovision. The progeny of Maccabees who gave their lives to fight Hellenism commemorate their achievement with a *Maccabiad* pseudo-Olympics (and fail to see any irony!). The children of great national leaders share the aspirations of their contemporaries — emigration. “Economic Zionism” now espouses a sanitized dream: a grand vision of a children of Yisrael who have achieved at last a standard of living comparable with that of the United States. But all this is how it must be — the crunch has come, the dreams have dissolved and the real choices need to be made...

Yet in reality there is only one choice and eventually it must be confirmed. We are sustained still by *pacode yifcode*, by a covenant that will not die and by a history that will not leave us alone. But there can be nothing counterfeit in redemption, and that is why it takes so long. It has taken a very long time indeed for us to run out of ideologies, religious and secular. There are still the last myths that must run their course, do their damage, and expose their sham.

- It takes time for ideologies to run out of steam.
- Especially if we are enslaved by them.
- The search for truth and the commitment to an underlying covenant continues...