

How a Young Boy Survived the Nazis¹

G-d told Moses, He will free the Jewish people from Egypt. **What happened next? The situation got worse. Pharaoh made their suffering even more unbearable.**

What's going on?

1. Exodus 5:1-9

¹Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness.'" ²Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? **I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go.**" ³Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Now let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, or he may strike us with plagues or with the sword." ⁴But the king of Egypt said, "Moses and Aaron, **why are you taking the people away from their labor? Get back to your work!**" ⁵Then Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land are now numerous, and you are stopping them from working." ⁶That same day Pharaoh gave this order to the slave drivers and overseers in charge of the people: ⁷"You are no longer to supply the people with straw for making bricks; **let them go and gather their own straw. But require them to make the same number of bricks as before;** don't reduce the quota. They are lazy; that is why they are crying out, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' ⁸**Make the work harder for the people so that they keep working and pay no attention to lies ..."**

a. **What was the "lie"?**—**That God would deliver His people!** If they *actually* believed that, they might hope that their circumstances could/would change for the better.

1) The "best" way to demoralize someone (or a group of people) is to persuade him/her/them that their difficult circumstances are fixed and cannot be changed.

¹⁹The Israelite overseers realized they were in trouble when they were told, "You are not to reduce the number of bricks required of you for each day." ²⁰When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them, ²¹and they said, "May the LORD look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us."

²²Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Why, Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? Is this why you sent me? ²³**Ever since I**

went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on this people, and you have not rescued your people at all."

b. Exodus 6:2-9

²God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD. ³I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself fully known to them. ⁴I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they resided as foreigners. ⁵Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant. ⁶"Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. ⁷I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. ⁸And **I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession.** I am the LORD.'"

⁹**Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and harsh labor.**

I want to share a true story (from the book *Aleinu L'Shabeach*²).

Yitzchak Slutzky was 16 years old when his family was murdered by the Nazis. He and his little sister miraculously escaped and the two hid in a dank, cramped underground cellar. Yitzchak did not allow his sister to leave the cellar, and he found ways to provide for her needs.

Several months passed with the girl remaining in the cellar and Yitzchak leaving occasionally to bring whatever food, clothing, or other items they needed. One day, he returned from one of these errands and his sister was gone.

He ran from the cellar, asking around whether anyone had seen his sister or knew where she was. Confirming his worst fear, they pointed to the Nazi headquarters in the center of the village. Yitzchak ran to the building and burst inside, running right by the guards stationed outside. When he entered the building, he began to scream, "Bring me my sister, now!"

The Nazi officials, who were not accustomed to scenes like this, cocked their rifles and aimed at him, ready to shoot. But as they were about to

² Based on the private writings, *shiurim* (a Talmudic study session), and conversations with Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein, a son-in-law of Rav Elyashiv Shlita, and a noted rav and *posek* (decider) in his own right, *Aleinu L'Shabeach* is a remarkable compendium of Torah wisdom, stories of great men, anecdotes, *mussar*, and insight into our daily lives and challenges. *Aleinu L'Shabeach* includes a stunning range of stories, based on *pesukim* (phrase of Torah) from each *parashah*.

¹ Chana Weisberg, *Shabbat deLights, Bereishit/Shemot* (Chabad.org), pp. 161-164.

shoot, their commander heard the strange screams. He poked his head out of his office and summoned Yitzchak to enter.

Yitzchak would not be silent even in the commander's office. He continued to shout that his sister be returned to him immediately.

Amused by the scene, the commander decided to goad Yitzchak even further. "I'll give you back your sister" the Nazi commander said contemptuously, "on one condition, that you open your palm and show me that there's hair on it."

Yitzchak turned to the satanic commander and said, "If I show you that there is hair on my palm, you will give back my sister?"

"I already told you the answer," the commander said derisively.

Yitzchak held out his hand and the commander nearly fainted.

There was hair growing on the palm of his hand!

German culture depicts a satanic person as someone who has hair on the palm of his hand. "Give him his sister," the frightened commander shouted, "and get him out of here immediately"

Yitzchak and his sister survived the war. When he told the story of his sister's miraculous rescue, he showed people that he actually had hair growing on the palm of his hand. He explained that nine years earlier his hand was hurt badly and he was rushed to the hospital.

"My father owned a large bakery in Poland. As a child, I loved to walk between the ovens and the mixers. When I was seven years old, I put my hand into one of the mixers and large pieces of skin were torn from the palm of my hand. My parents rushed me to the hospital, but the techniques used there were very primitive."

The doctor cut a piece of skin from a different part of his body and grafted it onto his hand. The transplanted skin had hair growing from it and the hair continued to grow from his palm ever since. "Along with the feelings of gratitude that my parents had when my hand healed from the injury, my mother was distressed by the strange appearance of my palm. She would instruct me to put my hand in my pocket so that people wouldn't see it. I was also very embarrassed by the strange sight and my friends used to make fun of it, too. **Only G-d knew that the hair growing on my hand's palm would one day save my little sister.**" G-d's ways are indeed mysterious.

There are times in our lives when we can look back at a chain of events and finally understand why it had to happen. Sometimes, it can take many years—nine for Yitzchak—until comprehension dawns. **And sometimes, we may never merit understanding. We are just left with our belief that our Creator seeks only our good.**

Once in awhile, the heavenly curtain parts and we are granted understanding. For the Jewish people in Egypt and for Yitzchak Slutzky—and for so many of us nowadays, that may only happen years later.

We can't fathom G-d's ways or how something negative can benefit us. G-d is bigger than our little minds.

May the day quickly dawn when we too can understand how the stage of exile has been set only for our benefit, as we prepare for the ultimate redemption.

2. *Sometimes, it can take many years—nine for Yitzchak—until comprehension dawns.*

a. **Genesis 12:1-4—twenty-five years for Abraham and Sarah**

¹The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. **"I will make you into a great nation**, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ²I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

³So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. **Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. (Sarah was sixty-five years old).**

Genesis 17:1-6

¹**When Abram was ninety-nine years old**, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. ²Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." ³Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, ⁴"As for me, this is my covenant with you: **You will be the father of many nations.** ⁵No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you.

Genesis 17:15-17

¹⁵God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

¹⁷Abraham fell facedown; **he laughed** and said to himself, "**Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?**"

Genesis 18:9-11

⁹"Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him. "There, in the tent," he said. ¹⁰Then one of them said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, **and Sarah your wife will have a son.**" Now Sarah

was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him.

¹¹Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and **Sarah was past the age of childbearing (eighty-nine years old) ...**

b. **Genesis 29:18-20—seven/fourteen years for Jacob**

¹⁸Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, **"I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."** ¹⁹Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." ²⁰So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but **they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.**

²⁵When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?" ²⁶Laban replied, "It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one." **²⁷Finish this daughter's bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work."**

c. **Acts 7:23-34—forty years for Moses**

²³When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites. ²⁴He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. ²⁵Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not. ²⁶The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?' ²⁷"But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us?' ²⁸Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' ²⁹When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons.

³⁰**After forty years had passed**, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. ³¹When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to get a closer look, he heard the Lord say: ³²'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look. ³³"Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.' ³⁴I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.'

d. **Genesis 50:18-21—twenty-four years for Joseph**

¹⁸(Joseph's) brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? ²⁰**You intended to harm**

me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. ²¹So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

1) Joseph was 17 when he was sold into Egypt.

2) He was 30 when he was made overseer.

3) He was 39 when his brothers first came to Egypt (second year of the famine, or nine years after being made overseer).

4) He was probably 41 or so when the brothers came a second time and Jacob comes to Egypt

e. **Numbers 13:30-32—forty years for Caleb and Joshua**

³⁰Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, **"We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."** ³¹But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." ³²And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size.

Numbers 14:20-25

²⁰The LORD replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked.

²¹Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the LORD fills the whole earth, ²²not one of those who saw my glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times—²³**not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their ancestors. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it.** ²⁴**But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it ...**

f. **Luke 1:30-35—thirty-one years for Mary**

³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Yeshua. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and **he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."** ³⁴"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

1) Mary was present at Yeshua's execution (John 19:25), burial and resurrection.

2) It can sometimes be difficult to remember or even sort through ... the women ... (who gather together at Yeshua's tomb). It doesn't help that four of them have the same name, Mary, and two of the Marys have sons with the same names (James and Joseph/Joses). This illustrates the commonality of certain names in first-century Galilee. The name Mary, in particular, was exceedingly common in first-century (Israel), hence the need to distinguish them by way of their hometown (*Mary Magdalene*) or in association with their husband (*Mary of Clopas*) or sons (*Mary mother of James and Joses*).³

a) Luke 24:10

¹⁰It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.

g. Romans 8:18-25—5,781 years for creation

¹⁸I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹For **the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.** ²⁰For **the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it,** in hope ²¹that **the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.** ²²We know that **the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.** ²³Not only so, but **we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.** ²⁴For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

1) 2Corinthians 5:1-5

¹For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. ²**Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling,** ³because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. ⁴For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

³ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/who-were-the-six-women-who-saw-the-risen-christ/>