



לעילוי נשמת
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תנ"צ'ב'ה'

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קאלער



Push the Limits

Going Out of Mitzrayim

מצרים הוא לשון מיצר וגבול. גלות מצרים ברוחניות הוא מה שנפש הבהמית מגבלת ומסתרת על הנפש האלקית, עד שנפשה"א מתמצצמת כל כך שנועשה בקטנות והעלם. ויציאת מצרים הוא הסרת המיצר והגבול. והיינו דהשכל שבמוח מאיר בלב במדות טובות בפועל ממש.

The word "Mitzrayim" expresses constriction, limitation. The *galus* of Mitzrayim in the spiritual sense is how the *nefesh habahamis* restricts and conceals the *nefesh ha'Elohis* so severely that the *nefesh ha'Elohis* is compressed to the degree that it is diminished and obscured. "Yetzias Mitzrayim" is the removal of the constriction and bounds; i.e. the intellect in the brain illuminates the heart, bringing about *middos tovos* (fine character traits) translated into actual practice.

(היום יום ד' שבט)

"זכר ליציאת מצרים"—a phrase that is repeated and referred to quite often in our davening and learning. We are commanded to remember *yetzias Mitzrayim* each and every day (twice a day, in fact), and so many of the mitzvos we do are associated with it.

The author of Sefer HaChinuch, explaining the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*, asserts that this mitzvah is "a great foundation and pillar of our faith."¹

But the going out of Mitzrayim was seemingly a one-time occurrence. Why is there so much emphasis on an exodus that happened so long ago?

In truth however, leaving Mitzrayim is an ongoing process.

The Mishnah teaches: "בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות"—In every generation a person must see himself as if he personally left Mitzrayim. In Tanya, the Alter Rebbe adds the words "בכל יום ויום"—i.e. the obligation is not only in every generation, but each and every day!

As we know, there is more to going out of Mitzrayim than just leaving the actual confines of

the land of Egypt, and Chassidus explains that the word מצרים can also mean מִצְרִים וגבולים—boundaries and limitations.²

That's why it's so important to **remember** yetzias Mitzrayim:

“The power of memory, imagination, and imagery is such that it can bring the soul of the thinker to a state of being identical to the one he is thinking about. The more control afforded to one's spiritual powers over his body, the closer his soul will be to the original occurrence he is trying to reach...

“For this reason, we are commanded to remember yetzias Mitzrayim daily; because every day we need to free our soul from the confines of the body...”³

THIS IS YIDDISHKEIT

In order to properly fulfill all of Torah and mitzvos, one must do away with all personal limitations and constraints, going out of his personal Mitzrayim. You can't just do the mitzvos that you understand, or learn Torah in the amount that you feel befits you. You need to do things because that's what Hashem wants and no other reason! Otherwise, your performance of mitzvos is for ulterior motives and not in order to fulfill Hashem's Will.

This is one of the principal teachings of *Toras haChassidus*: to put oneself on the side. The Frierdiker Rebbe related a story about the Tzemach Tzedek, who was approached by a Chossid lamenting of the fact that he has no desire to study Torah (“cheshek”). The Tzemach Tzedek replied: “Fool! What should I do that I **do** have the desire to study?!”

In other words: when someone enjoys studying Torah, even if he is studying *lesheim Shamayim*, he still derives intellectual pleasure, and the mitzvah is not free of ulterior motives. Whereas someone who lacks the desire and pleasure will have an easier time fulfilling the mitzvah properly.

(Yud-Tes Kislev 5714)

Everyday Doings

So what exactly is the *avodah* of leaving our personal Mitzrayim?

The Frierdiker Rebbe explains:

A person sets up his life by planning and scheduling everything according to his needs, setting up clearly defined limitations on his time.

First and foremost, a person must go out of Mitzrayim. That is, regardless of his plans and schedules, he must add a set time to study Torah every day, and properly devote himself to davening (“ס'זאל זיין געדאווענט; נישט אפגעדאווענט”).

Then, after yetzias Mitzrayim there is *krias yam suf*. Once a person starts on the path of *avodah* of yetzias Mitzrayim, he will immediately encounter various disturbances along the way, all of them being powerful and intimidating. For that, you will need Hashem's help, much like *krias yam suf* was performed by Hashem Himself. But in order to receive the Heavenly assistance, one first needs to “jump into the sea”—the approach of *mesiras nefesh*. Then, Hashem will turn the “sea” into “dry land,” removing all the obstacles along the way.⁴

The Rebbe takes matters a step further:

We say in *krias shema* that we love Hashem, not only בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך—with all our heart and with all our soul, but also בכל מאדך—with all our might. Meaning, more than our regular capacity, reaching further than what we may have perceived as normal *avodas Hashem*.

“Serve Hashem beyond all worldly calculations,” the Rebbe says. “Disregard all the talk of your neighbors and the trends they wish to pressure upon you. Disregard the talk of your own *guf* and *nefesh habahamis*; what it thinks is *geshmak* and what is not. Disregard even the calculations presented by the *nefesh ha'Elohis*. All of these calculations do not matter. The only important thing is to serve Hashem and do what He wants without any limitations whatsoever.”

The Rebbe specifies what this *avodah* means practically: “Every person must have his own personal *geulah*; going beyond his limitations and constraints. One must give tzedakah without limitations. One must daven properly; even if he thinks that his busy schedule and business life doesn't allow him to daven with a *minyan* and have adequate *kavana*, he should pay no heed to these thoughts. The same is true with setting times for Torah study, especially on Shabbos. One must study Torah in a manner that transcends all limitations.”⁵

It's All Relative

Even after one leaves his personal Mitzrayim, breaking his nature and moving up to another level in *avodas Hashem*, there will always still be room for growth.

Although you have left that “Mitzrayim,” you are essentially still in a “Mitzrayim” in comparison to a higher level. And so the going out of Mitzrayim is actually a constant, never-ending *avodah*.

The Rebbe gives an example:



LIVING LESSONS, HAGGADAH

We know that davening is like climbing a ladder, one step at a time.

First, we make a preparation for davening. This is the first step, freeing one's heart and mind of worldly affairs and preparing to daven to Hashem.

"Just putting on a *gartel* and getting ready to daven is already a form of *yetzias Mitzrayim*," the Rebbe explains. "Freeing yourself from worldly matters and personal limitations.

"But this is obviously not enough. For although you left one level of *Mitzrayim*, in comparison to the next level, you are still in a personal Egypt with all its limitations. You then need to begin with '*Hodu*,' moving one level up and leaving the current *Mitzrayim*, and then move on to the next, and so on, until you reach the 'climax' at *Shmoneh Esrei*.

"But no matter how high a level you reached today with your davening, tomorrow morning you will start this process of leaving *Mitzrayim* yet again; only this time it will begin on a higher plane. There is always room for growth, with every exodus from *Mitzrayim* being followed by another."⁶

TIME TO LEAVE

At the Purim farbrengen of 5711, just a month after the Rebbe accepted the *nesius*, the Rebbe spoke throughout the *sichos* about the *yom tov* of Purim as being a time that every person must go beyond himself.

Towards the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe related a story of how the Rebbe Rashab recited Chassidus for the Friediker Rebbe on the last Simchas Torah of his lifetime (in the year תר"פ). When he concluded, he told the Friediker Rebbe, "You must go out of your current self and become a new person" ("ארויסגיין פון זיך און ווערן אן אנדערער").

The Rebbe concluded with a lesson:

We all must go out of our current selves and become new people; each one according to his level.

Some people think that if they walk out in the street while their beard is not rolled up or their tie is not exactly fashionable, they can hardly be considered human. They must go out of their current selves!

Each person must leave his current state, every person according to his own level. Even in matters

of holiness, Torah and mitzvos, we need to push ourselves out of our current state and become new people!

Key to the Final Geulah

Completing this *avodah* of *yetzias Mitzrayim* will ultimately bring the *geulah*.

The Rebbe explains:

In *Mitzrayim*, the Yidden suffered from עבודה כבדה—backbreaking labor. The Gemara interprets this as "women's tasks were assigned to men and men's tasks to women." This was especially difficult, for even if the tasks themselves were not so hard, the workers were not accustomed to doing such work.

In our time as well, in order for us to leave this *galus*, we don't necessarily need to do the biggest and most difficult tasks. We need to break ourselves by doing those things that we are not accustomed to—changing our usual habits (in Chassidus terms: שינוי הרגילות).

It's about pushing ourselves to go the extra mile. As the Alter Rebbe quotes in Tanya, when one hired a donkey driver for ten *parsa*, he paid one *zuz*; but to go eleven *parsa* the rate was two *zuz*. Because the extra *parsa* made the trip longer than the usual distance, it cost the rider double, even if it wasn't double the distance.

In our generation, we only need to complete the small tasks in order to bring Moshiach. Everything else was already accomplished by our predecessors. We need to break ourselves and do things small but significant, small but difficult for our nature.

With that we will merit the *geulah* from today's *Mitzrayim*.⁷ **T**

1. Chinuch mitzvas aseh 21
2. Torah Ohr B'shalach 64a, et.al.
3. Igros Kodesh vol. 7 p. 205
4. Sichas Shemini Atzeres 5693; quoted from the Rebbe's Igros Kodesh vol. 4 p. 15
5. Maamar B'chol Dor V'Dor 5734.
6. Likutei Sichos vol. 2 Mattos-Maasei p. 349
7. Sichas Shabbos parshas Vaera 5711