

PESACH

Exiting Egypt again and again

If there is one event concerning the people of Israel that Rabbis have made sure remains at the forefront of our minds, giving substance to our collective memory, its *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, - the Exodus from Egypt.

Let us review the references to this in tfillot:

Daily we read *Shirat Hayam*, the song Moshe and the people of Israel sang when crossing the Red Sea and leaving Mitzraim behind.

In the Shema, and the blessings that accompany it, twice a day we remember the Exodus from Egypt.

In the Kiddush on Shabbat and holidays we say *Zecher LeYetziat Mitzrayim*.

Therefore, every holiday and every Shabbat are moments in which we exercise our freedom, by recalling the fact that we were not always free.

Only when we are free we can divert our sacred time to connect with the *Makor Chaim* - the source of life - as the law proclaims, *Min Patur hamitzvot eved*, the slave is exempt from compliance with the requirements, because his will, his life, his time are not his.

The Chassidic masters add a personal dimension to the experience of Passover, by calling it *Zman Heruteinu* - the time of our liberation - not as a referenced to the past, but as an application, or contribution to our daily lives.

We can summarize the first of the contributions as follows:

"He who does not remember leaving Mitzrayim every day of his life, is inevitably returning to Mitzrayim."

Therefore, by not remembering *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, a person is not remaining in the same place, but actually moving backwards.

Freedom is a task, and not something that was given to us once and forever. It is something we must continue to build on and win, and we must

always consider the danger of not being able to continue to exercise it.

Freedom is something we must win in every moment of our lives, and know that it requires hard work, honesty and effort.

It is no coincidence that the whole generation that came out of Egypt were never allowed to enter the Land of Israel, as the popular phrase says, we left Egypt on Passover, but how much time did it take for Egypt to leave us?

The second contribution of the Chassidism has to do with the idea that Mitzrayim is not a geographical place but a spiritual state.

For the Children of Israel, Mitzrayim was a country of the restriction, darkness, being closed-in, and hostility.

The Exodus from Egypt, is the holiday in which we expand our consciousness.

We leave thoughts of the land of the monumental buildings, the country where from the very start of each Pharaoh's reign they began to prepare their own grave. We enter the desert, a place with no limits, where our mind can become aware of the infinite, consciousness of the Creator, and thus, of freedom.

The Exodus was not only a physical release from the oppression of the Pharaoh, but a path which led us to receive the Torah.

Only when we expand our awareness and expand our horizons can we see the voice that calls us daily to be free from Sinai.

May this Pesach be an opportunity to exit Mitzrayim once again, to rid ourselves of those experiences that restrict and overwhelm us, so that we can be free, again and again.

Pesach Kasher Vesameach.

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