

I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt...and I shall redeem you. (6:6)

It was not enough that Hashem was prepared to take the Jews out of Egypt; it was also necessary for them to want to leave. Perhaps they had become complacent with their way of life, albeit miserable, but it was the only one they knew. Indeed, they might even have wanted to stay in Egypt. They might not have been able to accept a lifestyle so different from their accustomed one. The story is told about *Horav Nochum M'Chernobel*, who once spent a night at an inn owned by a Jewish couple. It was *chatzos*, midnight, when *Rav Nachum* arose from his bed to recite his *Tikkun Chatzos*, a special prayer recited by *tzaddikim*, mourning the destruction of the *Bais Hamikdash* and the ensuing exile. *Rav Nachum* became so carried away in his expression of grief that his cries awoke the entire household. Immediately, the innkeeper ran over to him and asked, "Why does the *Rebbe* cry? Perhaps you are not well, or something hurts you?" "No," answered *Rav Nachum*, "I am fine. I am crying for the *churban Bais Hamikdash*, the destruction of the Temple." "What are you talking about?" asked the innkeeper, "What *Bais Hamikdash*? What *churban*?" "Do you not know," asked *Rav Nachum*, "that we once had a *Bais Hamikdash* that was destroyed as a result of our transgressions? Every night I pray to Hashem that He finally send us *Moshiach Tzidkeinu* who will redeem us from our exile and take us to *Eretz Yisrael*. Are you ready to move to *Eretz Yisrael*?" "Wait, " said the innkeeper, "I will speak it over with my wife and relay our decision to you."

About an hour passed, and the innkeeper returned with his answer, "We will not go! We cannot leave our cows and sheep, our donkeys and horses, and our chickens. How can we follow 'some' *Moshiach* and ignore our animals?" *Rav Nachum* was not provoked by his response. He said to him, "And what will happen if the robbers and thugs that surround us will one day decide to overrun your field and kill all of your animals?" The innkeeper, obviously neither astute nor erudite, went back and asked his wife what to do. She responded with a brilliant answer, one that left him in awe of her. He said, "My wife tells me that you should gather together the thugs and have them sent to *Eretz Yisrael*, so that we can remain here with our livestock and chickens."

While this story may be anecdotal, it relays an important lesson. There are people who, as a result of ignorance, complacency, or pure malevolence, are content to remain in exile.