

Who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt. (6:7)

The word *sivlos*, which is translated as “burdens,” is used by the commentators (**Kotzker Rebbe, zl**) to connote a sense of complacency in adapting to slavery. Thus, *sivlos* is connected to *savlanus*, patience, reticence. The Jews had become content, accepting their situation in life, obsequiously willing to submit to being Egyptian slaves. Furthermore, they had become part of Egyptian culture to the point that it had become their culture, their mindset. The Egyptian way of life was not foreign to them; it was not an anathema. It was the way they were willing to live. This bespeaks the *galus*, exile, mindset to which the Jews in Egypt were subject. In this sense, Hashem not only redeemed us from Egypt; He expunged Egypt from within us.

I have always been bothered by this exegesis. Among the *z'chusim*, merits, for warranting our redemption were: we did not change our Hebrew names; we retained our Hebrew language; and we dressed in the same distinctive manner which characterized us in our original home. How then did we adopt the Egyptian culture? We did not speak like Egyptians; dress like Egyptians; or take Egyptian names. It seems that we did preserve our “Jewishness.”

Apparently, being “Jewish” means more than having a Hebrew name, speaking the language and maintaining a distinctive mode of dress. It is how we think that determines our essence. If one dresses like a Jew, but thinks like a *goy*; speaks like a Jew, but acts like a gentile; has a Jewish name, but limits his Jewishness to these traits, he retains Egypt within himself.

In contemporary society, we dress differently, speak differently, even converse in a different language. Can we assert, however, that our lifestyle, our mindset, is really different from those around us? If our adherence to the Jewish way of life is external, but our consciousness is state of the art American, we maintain *galus* within us. Acting outwardly *yeshivish*, but thinking inwardly “worldly” does not render us “*yeshivish*,” “*chassidish*,” or much of anything Jewish for that matter.