

## I am Hashem, your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Egypt. (20:2)

Yashem identified Himself to *Klal Yisrael* as the One Who performed the miracles of the Exodus. It would have been logical for Hashem to have identified Himself as the Creator of the Universe, which is clearly a more encompassing title than the Liberator Who freed them from bondage. While it is true that his liberation involved many miracles which attested to Hashem's awesome powers, they still pale in comparison with the creation of the Universe. In the *Kuzari*, *Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, zl*, explains that Hashem spoke of the Exodus because it was a phenomenon that was **seen**, as the entire nation witnessed it. While they all **knew** that there had been a Creation, no one had actually been there to substantiate it. Interestingly, with all of the logical deductions that the world **must** have been created by a Supreme Being, some still foolishly dispute the concept of Creation *ex nihilo*. 600,000 men over the age of twenty-years old experienced, and saw with their own two eyes, the Exodus and its many marvels. Hashem followed up these events with the seminal event in history, the Revelation at Sinai. Yet, there are still skeptics who force themselves to dispute this verity of verities.

*Ramban* writes that the Exodus, with its unprecedented miracles and wonders, availed the nascent nation an unparalleled awareness into the workings of Heaven. They were acutely aware that, without the phenomenon of the Heavenly miracles, they would have never have been able to leave Egypt. Thus, the Exodus and the Splitting of the Red Sea are testaments to Hashem's existence and power. It is as if they are the barometers by which we believe in all miracles. They represent Hashem proving Himself, so to speak.

The concept of *Zeicher l'yetzias Mitzrayim*, remembering the Exodus, is connected to a number of *mitzvos* and it seems to play an integral role in Jewish life and observance. Even *mitzvos* such as not mistreating the convert, orphan, or widow are tied into our remembering that we were once slaves in Egypt and it was Hashem Who redeemed us. *Shabbos*, which is "set in stone" from the time of Creation, is based on the core belief that the world was created in six days. Yet, in the *Shabbos Kiddush*, we recall a "remembrance to the Exodus from Egypt." The Torah itself (*Devarim* 5:15) admonishes us to remember that we were once slaves in Egypt, and it was Hashem Who liberated us. Therefore, He commands us to observe *Shabbos*. If, in fact, the Exodus is how Hashem wants us to realize that He created and continues to guide the world, why is *Shabbos* – which is clearly a remembrance of the creation of the world – connected to *yetzias Mitzrayim*? Is it not, somewhat backward reasoning?

*Horav Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg, zl*, cites the *Alter, zl, m'Slabodka*, who offers a new understanding of the principle which we have accepted as a verity: Hashem

continually recreates the world anew every moment. This means, explains *Horav Chaim Volozhiner, zl*, that every moment of one's existence – and the existence of every

creature –everything in the world is dependent upon Hashem’s constant Will that it If for one millisecond Hashem’s Will would cease, if Hashem would remove Himself from the world, everything would revert to *tohu va’vohu*, astonishing emptiness. It would just disappear.

The *Alter* explains that one should not think that Hashem creates the world anew every moment, and once created the world and everything in it is readily available to its inhabitants. No. There is a deeper understanding of this sustained creation. Hashem creates the world for each person in accordance with his individual needs. The world as created for A is not the same as the world created for B, since their individual needs are not identical. This is the meaning of *Chazal’s* axiom, “A person is obligated to say *Bishvili*, ‘for me (specifically),’ the world was created.” This means that no person takes randomly from the “*smorgasbord*” called the world. Whatever I take is exclusively for me. I ask for it, and I receive it. If Hashem wants me to have something, it is created specifically for me at that time. What is mine – is mine. I am not taking away another’s livelihood, or whatever else I seek.

We see this from the plagues that struck the Egyptians. The blood was rampant all over the land. Whatever water an Egyptian touched turned to blood, but this did **not** happen to the Jews. Indeed, if a Jew and an Egyptian drew water from the very same well, the Egyptian discovered blood, while the Jew had water. They could drink from the same cup, and the individual results would be different.

We think that the candle that lights for one person lights equally for a hundred people. We have no compelling reason that the sun which shines for A will also shine for B, who stands next to him. In Egypt, the three days of pitch darkness affected only the Egyptians. The sun shone for the Jews. How do we understand this? *Rav Weinberg* says that for those three days, the sun simply was not created for the Egyptians.

This is why we constantly reiterate a reminder of *yetzias Mitzrayim*. It was in Egypt that we gained a completely new perspective on Creation. We learned that each and every one of us has a unique individual responsibility toward Hashem, Who constantly creates the world anew – specifically for him! Each of us is a witness to this phenomenon – **constantly, continually**.

This gives new meaning to the opening words recited prior to the *Shemoneh Esrai* – *Hashem s’fasai tiftach u’fi yagid tehilasecha*, “My Lord, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your Praise.” As we are about to say *Shemoneh Esrai*, Eighteen Benedictions, that comprise the *Amidah*, which is the true prayer and praise to Hashem, we pause a moment and ask that the Almighty grant us the ability to speak. We realize that everything that we do is contingent only upon Hashem’s intervention.