

## **I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt; I shall rescue you from their service; I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm...I shall take you to Me for a People. (6:6,7)**

The *Torah* employs *arba leshonos shel geulah*, four expressions of redemption, which allude to the distinct stages of the Jews' liberation from the Egyptian exile. **Horav Gedalyah Shorr, z"l**, posits that the four expressions relate as equally to the individual as they do to the entire nation. Every person experienced his own personal redemption from the Egyptian culture. Every individual must liberate himself from the shackles of his own enslavement to the *yetzer hora*, evil inclination. He cites the **Sfas Emes**, who says that these expressions coincide with the four elements which comprise man: fire, water, wind and dust. The characteristics of these elements fuse together to create the emotional/physical composition of man, the *gashmius*. Man's body, his corporeal essence is but a container in which the *neshamah*, soul, is placed. **Horav Chaim Vital, z"l**, says that these four elements of man are also the source of every negative character trait within man. Every bad *middah* originates in some manner from these physical foundations of man. The *neshamah*, spiritual dimension, is ensconced within the body as if it were in exile. The function of transcending the physical with the spiritual, by sublimating the physical dimension of man to its higher calling, is the process by which man "liberates" himself from his physical bondage. This is one's personal *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. We strive to transform these purely physical elements to serve Hashem so that they become vehicles for spiritual development.

In four places in the *Torah*, we are enjoined to relate the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* to our children. *Chazal* have derived from this apparent redundancy that children may be categorized into four groups, or "four sons." They are: the *chacham*, wise son; the *rasha*, wicked son; the *tam*, simpleton; and the *she'eino yodea lish'ol*, the child who does not even know what to ask. **Horav Yehudah Leib Chasman, z"l**, feels that these "four sons," actually represent four distinct personalities. The traits typified by these four sons represent the inner struggle within each one of us. There are moments when we act with wisdom, reflecting common sense and forethought. There are times when we "lose it," and we foolishly carry on like the wicked son. There are times when we act like the simple son, unsure of the direction in which we should go, unclear of the manner in which we should act. The last son, the one who does not know to ask, is not that far from us. We can all relate to moments when we just do not know what, how, or whom to ask.

We must address these life situations in the same manner that the *Torah* responds to the individual sons. In keeping with *Horav Shorr's* thesis that the four expressions apply equally to the individual, we may suggest another area of focus; the individual's unique tendencies. We are adjured to address those areas of our personality that are deficient. Likewise, as we find with the wise son, we must cultivate and enhance the areas in which we excel. This concept is underscored in the words of the *Hagaddah*, "*In every generation it is one's duty to regard himself as if he personally had gone out of Egypt.*" We are obligated to experience a personal liberation in which we elevate the physical, addressing those areas of our character which need improvement.