

I shall take you to Me for a people. (6:7)

Hashem chose the Jews as His People when He gave them the Torah. This was the watershed event that began with the Jews' liberation from Egypt where they had been subjugated to the most cruel and debasing enslavement. When *Klal Yisrael* left Egypt, it was hardly evident that they would, in the space of a few months, be privy to the greatest Revelation of all time and receive the Torah, which would establish them as a nation under Hashem – His Nation. Veritably, the *raison d'être* of the Jews' liberation from Egypt was their receiving the Torah. This might be impressive months after they left Egypt, but what was their merit at the time that they left? They had, unfortunately, sunk to the forty-ninth level of *tumah*, spiritual defilement; except for a few redeemable factors, they appeared and acted no different than their Egyptian slave masters. Yet, they had sufficient merit which would catalyze their redemption and selection as Hashem's chosen People.

Horav Yaakov Moshe Charlop, zl, explains that *yetzias Mitzrayim*, the redemption from Egypt, allowed *Klal Yisrael* to penetrate the Torah, plumb its depths, and concomitantly permit the Torah to imbue and profoundly impact their lives. When they left Egypt, they were no longer the same people who had lived there the past 210 years. They were different because now they had the Torah. True, they had yet to receive the Torah, but now they had entered the gestation period. This is similar to a woman who is pregnant, but does not show for the first few months. It is only later on that her full-fledged pregnancy is an indicator that she had been pregnant months earlier.

A similar idea applies to *yetzias Mitzrayim* and *Kabbolas HaTorah*. It was a few months after the liberation occurred that *Klal Yisrael* stood at the foot of *Har Sinai* and resoundingly declared, *Naaseh v'nishma*; "We will do and we will listen." While this may have been their formal acceptance, it was clearly apparent that months earlier, when they left Egypt, they had developed an inseparable relationship with the Torah. It was this inexorable bond with the Torah that engendered their release from bondage.

A powerful lesson can be derived from here. Nothing happens overnight, and nothing happens in a vacuum. When a fellow begins his relationship with Torah later in life, and, in the space of a few months, develops an affinity with Torah that is unreal, considering the length of time that he has been engaged in it, the affinity does not just happen. The man had previously cultivated a positive attitude towards spirituality and sought to come close to Hashem. A seed had somehow been planted (at an earlier venue), and it was germinating. It had been concealed, waiting for the right moment to burst out in full bloom. Those, however, whose relationship with Torah and *mitzvos* seem to wane after a short interval, such that their observance has become lax, demonstrate by their dispassionate attitude that the fire they had thought was there – was not.