

# Mussar HaTorah

Torah Insights into Human Nature – Dedicated in memory of Rabbi A. Henach Leibowitz zt"l

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Shabbos HaGadol

“TODAY YOU ARE GOING FORTH IN THE MONTH OF AVIV [SPRING].”  
(SHMOS 13:4)

**Would they mind having  
to walk through a snowfall  
to their freedom?**

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE in Egyptian slavery was not merely one of hard labor without compensation. Tortured by the taskmasters and their newborn babies murdered en masse, the Jews suffered in Egypt to an unimaginable degree. When Hashem freed them from bondage, with an unparalleled revelation of His awesome mastery of the forces of nature, the Jews must have felt an overwhelming sense of ecstasy. Imagine concentration camp inmates being liberated by Allied forces, or prisoners being released after years of suffering and torture in Soviet prisons. Would it make an iota of a difference to them if the weather was less than favorable? Would they mind having to walk through a snowfall to their freedom? To our Father in heaven, it did make a difference.

Hashem, in His infinite love for His Chosen People, did not merely take us out of Egypt with wondrous miracles and a total upheaval of the entire structure of natural law, from horrible torture to complete freedom. He did it in the springtime. As Rashi explains here, “See the kindness He has done for you, that He brought you forth in a month in which it is fitting to go forth, not too hot, not too cold and without rains.” Moshe Rabbeinu points this out to B’nei Yisrael as they are leaving Egypt. “Take note,” he implores them, “of the beautiful weather that Hashem provided you with today.”

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Could the Jewish people, inundated by this enormous deluge of kindness from Hashem, focus on and appreciate this extra “bonus” that Hashem bestowed upon them? From Moshe’s exhortation, we see the extent of man’s extraordinary capacity to recognize kindness and feel gratitude. Even in the midst of the most glorious redemption in history, being rescued by Hashem’s mighty hand and outstretched arm, every Jew possessed a measuring apparatus so delicately calibrated that it registered every detail of Hashem’s *chesed* – kindness, clearly and distinctly.

This amazing ability, and the resultant responsibility to show gratitude, is shared by every person, in every generation. If we simply spend a few moments contemplating the unending flow of goodness bestowed upon us by Hashem, we will realize that all our prayers and *mitzvos* cannot even begin to thank Hashem for all His kindness.

During these hectic days of final preparations for Pesach, probably the most pressured period in the calendar of the Jewish household, our *middos* are often put to the test, and our patience stretched to the breaking point. If we keep in mind, and put into practice, the statement of our sages quoted in the Haggadah, “Every Jew is obligated to feel as if he himself was just redeemed from Egypt,” our task will be less challenging. Could any of the Jews leaving Egypt have complained about his fellow man’s lack of consideration in some way? Wrongs and slights inflicted seem insignificant in the face of the joy of redemption. If we feel this gratitude to its full extent we will be privileged to celebrate the Festival of Freedom in its true meaning.