

# המוסד למען קדושת חיי אדם



## **TORAH READING:**

Bo: Exodus 10:1 - 13:16

In this week's Torah portion, Bo: Exodus 10:1 - 13:16, the Jews are released from their servitude in Egypt. Pharaoh orders their immediate and hasty exit. They have only a little time to gather their flocks of animals, a few personal belongings, and the Egyptian gold and silver that would later be used to adorn G-d's sanctuary - and off they go!

Why so quickly and why then? Our tradition teaches that the enslaved Jews had become almost thoroughly inculcated with pagan culture - Idol worship, child sacrifice, depravity of all sorts, denial and ignorance of the G-d of Abraham. They were enslaved not only to a harsh taskmaster, Pharaoh, but also to the normalized habits and attitudes of the Egyptian lifestyle. They were inured to the misery of forced labor and the lack of human dignity, which were accepted in exchange for the security of food, shelter and a craven lifestyle. In effect, the Jews in Egypt were identifiable only by their labor, and not by any cultural differences. It is explained that these Jews were out of time....one more day and they would have been entirely consumed and gone forever!

Overnight, we were spared from imposed servitude and depravity, and given the responsibilities of freedom and spiritual integrity, made possible only through a dependency on HaShem as evidenced by the many miracles to be witnessed on their journey.

We Jews are still on this journey. Reflective of our plight in Egypt, it is of great temptation to abandon our Jewish spiritual foundations and rely instead on the secular constructs around us. Money, employability, reputation, peer, family, and community attitudes, and political affiliation are false gods, the worship of which over time incurs a debt of shame, guilt, remorse, confusion, and despair. Today, our spiritual exile is simply remedied. We need not hurry out into a nighttime scary unknown. We need only cast off the dependencies that keep us in bondage and look to HaShem for deliverance!