Although we were redeemed from Mitzrayim on the first day of Pesach, the geula was not complete until the seventh day, when G-d drowned the Egyptians in Yam Suf. The Seforno explains that until then we were still like slaves running away from their master. But when our “masters” drowned in Yam Suf, we became fully free.

Perhaps we can extend this idea further. The ultimate conclusion of the Exodus occurred when we entered Eretz Yisrael and built the Beit HaMikdash, as we conclude the 15 stages of the geula in the Haggadah with “VeHichnisanu l’Eretz Yisrael ubana lanu et Beit HaBechira” – And He brought us in to Eretz Yisrael and built the Temple for us. Until that point, we were still running away from Egypt – physically, mentally and spiritually. The 40 years in the desert were needed to extricate Egypt and all that it represented from within us. Once we entered Eretz Yisrael, we were fully redeemed people, ready to utilize our freedom and direct it towards drawing nearer to G-d and His will. We created a society in Eretz Yisrael which was the antithesis of all that Egypt represented – one of holiness, purity, and total dependence on G-d and His Torah. We were then able to build the Beit HaMikdash and spread the Torah’s ideals across the world.

As individuals, we too must all go through these stages of geula, extricating ourselves from our personal Mitzrayim and fully freeing ourselves from them. We must then utilize this freedom to sanctify ourselves by creating an environment of holiness and purity for ourselves and our families, ideally in the holiness and purity of Eretz Yisrael. Finally, we must build a Mikdash to spread holiness to all around us.

As in the days when we left Egypt, may G-d continue to show us miracles with the coming of the Mashiach speedily in our days.

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