

Massai

The Parsha tells us that "Moshe wrote their goings forth, stage by stage by the commandment of the Lord; and these are their stages at their goings forth." The question posed by many commentaries is why in the first part of the sentence it says Moshe wrote it *Motzaeyhem* before *Maseyhem* and in the second part of the sentence the sequence is reversed *Maseyhem L'motzaeyhem*?

The Dubner Maggid makes the trenchant comment that for Moshe the goings out of Egypt were for a *Tachlis* to reach their final destination, the land of *Kedusha*. For the Bnai Yisroel the important fact consisted in their going out, to be free from slavery and oppression. They did not as yet possess the necessary positive orientation enabling them to appreciate the transcendent significance of Eretz Yisroel.

Today, too, a sizeable element of our people were educated only on the negative dimensions of living among the nations of the world. The Jew experienced, of course, the oppression and the overt or sometimes subtle discrimination of his neighbors. He was taught by his secular mentors that this was an abnormal condition and he must therefore make every effort to "normalize" his condition and to establish a state wherein he can find the normal security and freedom that every normal citizen in every normal country enjoys. This Jew was never taught that he has a rendezvous with destiny in Eretz Yisroel, that Eretz Yisroel is something metaphysical, and that it is part of *Nitzchiyut*. It is therefore not surprising to see surveys which indicate that young people who come from secular backgrounds in Israel say that if given another chance they would have preferred to be born not Jewish. A sense of idealism cannot be nourished merely by *Motzaeyhem*, by concentrating merely on the negative aspects of living outside of Eretz Yisroel.

Idealism can only be the product of a positive sense of national purpose, an awareness of a sacred mission, a feeling that you have a unique responsibility. Moshe wrote *L'maseyhem* before *L'motzaeyhem* because he understood the challenge and he knew that the establishment of the nation of Bnei Yisroel was only the beginning of a long and arduous journey towards a magnificent goal.