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## My Personal Exodus

### The Inner Journey from Slavery to Liberation: Egypt and Exodus as Metaphors for Personal Growth

An excerpt from *Mirrors in Time: A Psycho-Spiritual Journey through the Jewish Year*  
by Joel Ziff

*"The Exodus from Egypt occurs in every human being, in every era, in every year and even in everyday." — Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav (Ukraine, 19th C.)*

The liberation from slavery in Egypt marks the birth of the Jewish nation. The event serves not only as a marker of turning points in the development of the Jewish people; it is also symbolic of critical moments in our lives. For this reason, we read in the Haggadah, that "each of us is obligated to consider ourselves as coming out of Egypt." The coming out of Egypt is an archetypal image of life transitions. It embodies every narrow passage we traverse as we give birth to ourselves: leaving home, career changes, marriage, divorce, birth, sickness, death, addiction, and recovery from trauma.

Each of us has journeyed into our own Egypt and each of us struggles to achieve a personal Exodus... We can easily make the mistake of imagining that the experience of liberation is one of joy and relief. However, liberation is often stressful and filled with uncertainty. The Hebrews struggled with their anxiety, uncertain whether to oppose Pharaoh. This reminds us that our own liberation also may be stressful and that we may be ambivalent about change.

The story of the Splitting of the Sea provides an archetypal image of the struggle we experience as we disconnect from the old identity. It is only after the miracle of the Splitting of the Sea that Moses, Miriam, and the children of Israel, for the first time, sing praises of gratitude to God. Until this moment, the Israelites were skeptical. They did not believe they could escape Pharaoh's oppression. With the miracle of the sea, they realize that liberation is possible. In this same way, we experience joy as we are freed; we experience the freedom of choice rather than compulsion.