

UP AND UP

by Rabbi Label Lam

For I am HASHEM your G-d- you are to sanctify yourselves and you shall become holy, for I am holy; and you shall not make your souls impure through any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. For I am HASHEM Who brings you up from the Land of Egypt to be a G-d unto you: you shall be holy, for I am holy. (Vayikra 11:44-45)

For I am HASHEM Who brings you up: In all other verses (that refer to HASHEM taking Israel out of Egypt) it's written "I brought you out", but here it is written, "Who brings you up". The House of Rabbi Yishmael explains the verse to mean, "Had I only brought Israel out of Egypt for no other reason other than that they do not make themselves impure through creeping things as other nations do, this would be sufficient justification (for bringing them up). This is the explanation for the word, "brings up" (To gain spiritual elevation). (Rashi)

What's the difference between the expressions of "going out" and "bringing up" from Egypt? They both sound awfully similar. Rashi, though, understood that a special, albeit subtle meaning is implied by this change of language.

"Cut off from the world, in an isolated camp in the Sudetenland, Jewish slave laborers kept the Yom Kippur fast and even celebrated Pesach as much as possible. We were three hundred and fifty young women in the camp. Hadassah Pesserman was the one we looked to for leadership. Even the Germans recognized her position and granted her special privileges. Unlike the other prisoners they did not call her by her first name, "Hadassah"; instead they called her, "die Fraulein Pesserman" a token of respect for her personality, her excellent leadership, and her devotion to religion...

Hadassah had been a member of Agudas Yisrael girls' organization back in the Zbirce, Poland. She kept all the Mitzvos carefully even in the camp, including praying every day and observing Shabbos. She was extremely particular about Kashrus, which meant that she never ate any cooked food in the camp. Eventually a close friend of hers got permission to cook potatoes for her in a special pot set aside for that purpose. All the same, Hadassah agreed only to a potato that had been cooked whole in its skin. She was concerned that some well-meaning person might add some oil to the pot, wishing to give her some added nutrition (The cooking oil was usually not Kosher).

The prisoners worked in a cotton thread factory. It was true die Fraulein Pesserman no longer produced her daily quota of thread, since was slowly withering away from starvation. But the factory

manager, a Nazi by the name of Theodore Rommler, respected her as a person even though she was not worth much anymore to his factory.

By the time the infamous Dr. Mengele arrived at the camp to conduct a selection among the prisoners, Hadassah was nothing but skin and bones so and ended up among those marked for Auschwitz and the crematoria... But Herr Rommler saved her, claiming, "I need this woman for the factory."

Die Fraulein Pesslerman, whose whole life was a sanctification of G-d's name, died of exhaustion in 5704, without ever having defiled herself with non-Kosher food." (Testimony of Mrs. Miriam Schneider from Czanow in Shema Yisrael)

The Zohar asks a question wondering why Jews shake- swaying back and forth when they pray. The explanation is that just as the flame on a candle strives to go up, back to its source, the sun, so the soul of the Jew, which is compared by King Solomon to the candle of G-d, longs to return to his Creator, even though he knows that in that greater light his tiny light will become so overwhelmed that it will be virtually nullified.

It might be that the difference between "taking out" and "bringing up" is that it is possible to go out from Egypt, without going up. It's also possible that without having even been taken out one can still go **up and up**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).