



## ***The Pesach Perspective 2023, the holiday of freedom***

*The Pesach Perspective is in honor of the immediate and speedy recovery of Daniel Aaron Moshe Ben Ruth. May he and all those who need a Refuah Shlema experience G-d's mercy and compassion swiftly!*

*The Pesach Perspective is in loving memory of Leah Mintche Bas Ya'akov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.*

We are about to celebrate Pesach, the holiday of freedom. After cleaning our homes to near perfection, we eat ancient but spiritual bread, the Matzah; we drink four cups of wine in honor of our liberation. Most importantly, we remember, recall and relate the story of our Exodus from Egypt.

One of the more notable parts of the Seder is asking the four questions, the Ma Nishtana. Typically, the youngest child at the table will recite the four questions, followed by the adults. If no children were present, all the adults asked the four questions together.

The Ma Nishtana examines and describes some differences between the Seder night and the rest of the year.

- Why do we dip not once but twice during the Seder?
- Why do we only eat Matzah during Pesach?
- Why do we specifically eat the Maror, bitter herbs?
- why must we recline and lean back during the Seder night?

Following the Ma Nishtana, we read "*Avaim Hayinu - we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt.*" We recount in detail the pain and suffering our ancestors endured and the mistakes they made during their journeys. We say, "*In the beginning, our ancestors were idol worshipers, but now we have come close to G-d and only serve Him.*"

A question comes to mind: During the Seder night, we lean to the left as we eat the Matzah and drink the four cups of wine to celebrate our freedom. Yet, as previously mentioned, we first detail the misery and agony our forefathers endured. We describe the various ways the Egyptians tormented and oppressed the enslaved Jewish people.

But why do we even mention the pain and suffering while celebrating freedom? Why do we spend a moment focusing on slavery rather than celebrating our Exodus from Egypt?!

Rabbi Sacks of blessed memory furthers this question in his Pesach Machzor (*a book with the Haggadah and the prayers for Pesach*). He asks why we mention that our ancestors were Idol worshipers if it refers to Terach, Avraham's father, not the Jewish people. Why bring up the idol worship?!

The great sages of the Talmud explain that we first begin with the bad and then expound on the good. Rabbi Sacks answers this question by explaining that Pesach is not just the holiday of freedom but the holiday of hope.

The statement that Terach worshiped false G-ds is our past; our ancestors' pain and suffering is our story. But now we can experience the good and serve the Master of the universe, the King of all kings.

Rabbi Sacks writes that with our birth and origins already written, we write the final paragraph. How improved we are from our former selves. How we are using our freedom to share G-d's Name throughout the world. How the suffering of our ancestors shaped our identity and our unwavering belief in G-d.

One of the rules of telling the story of Pesach is that each person must feel as if they had personally left Egypt. The Seder and expounding on the Exodus turns our history into memory, making the past become the present.

The struggle for our freedom never ends; thus, every generation adds its mark to a tale as old as time itself. Empowering us to truly experience the statement *"that had the Exodus not happened, we would have still been slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt."*

Rabbi Sacks explains that the Seder night is meant to strengthen our beliefs and give us hope. By describing our beginnings, we are empowered because of how far we have come. But most importantly, we have hope for the future, to add our mark to our storied history and bring about the ultimate Redemption!

***May we experience ultimate redemption and celebrate this Pesach in Yerushalayim with the third Beis Hamikdash.***

*Have a Joyful and meaningful Pesach!*

*Rabbi Sholom Yemini*