



## The Freedom of Pesach

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Pesach is an enigma - it is Zman Cheruteinu, the Season of our Freedom - and yet it's preparations leave us feeling anything but free. The Pesach Seder is replete with instructions of what to do, by whom, by what time, how much and in what order.

So where is this so called 'Freedom' if we have so much to do in so little time?

Rabbi Riskin points out that when we speak of Redemption whilst we tell the history of Pesach, we state that we were Redeemed in Egypt. The first ever Seder was held before the tenth plague, the Death of the Firstborn struck. We were free although we were still potentially under the thumb of Pharaoh.

Freedom then has to be seen in a different context. We were free from Egypt as we did not need to kowtow to Pharaoh nor his taskmasters, nor the population. A statement has been made, namely that we would follow the will of G-d and not of the Egyptians. We seized action, we took the 'deities' of Egypt - Pharaoh, sheep, the Nile - and refused to serve them but rather chose G-d. This was then reciprocated by G-d choosing us, by being led out of Egypt under the leadership of Moshe, by receiving the Torah at Sinai en route to our promised Land of Israel.

We achieved spiritual liberty - this enabled us to be Bnei Yisrael as a people and not just the extended family of the Patriarchs. This then led to the physical liberty of leaving Egypt. But it took longer to get Egypt out of the Jews than it took to get the Jews out of Egypt. Having been steeped in the culture of idol worship and subservience, it would take a considerable time to shake off the past and be removed from the mentality of idol worshippers and oppressors. We would stumble through episodes such as the Golden Calf as we were newborns in terms of self belief and self reliance.

In other words, we became free from Egypt and were able to choose the service of G-d. Not subjugated but willingly choosing to serve a G-d who loves us, who chooses us, who has given us a Torah in which we have instructions for a good, caring and honest society.

So Pesach is a busy time, Pesach is intense and leaves us physically drained. But yet it is a Season of Freedom - we celebrate our spiritual and physical freedom - we celebrate our ability to choose - we celebrate our history and our future.

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