



## PESACH

Believe it or not, Pesach is upon us again. It has been said before, and only partially in jest, that maybe the reason for all the cleaning, cooking, and preparing is so that we can experience a "taste" of the freedom that we are supposed to be celebrating on Passover.

But the truth is, that we are indeed obliged to see ourselves as "free" on Pesach. The Haggadah tells us, "In every generation, each person is obligated to see him/herself as though s/he went out of Egypt."

We know it cannot be taken literally. I would venture a guess that most readers of this weekly D'var Torah column (you know who you are!) have never even BEEN to Egypt (if you actually have, let me know!).

So how do we experience freedom? The first and most important step is to figure out what is enslaving you. Because, in a way, we are ALL slaves to something.

Some obvious items to which people are enslaved include smoking, alcohol, gambling. No question about the need to free oneself from such terribly harmful addictions. But let us examine some other possibilities. Perhaps you are enslaved to your cellphone? It holds you so tight in its grip that you have tuned out to your spouse, your children, the traffic around you. It is time to hang up and break free. Try it during a Shabbat dinner! Experience the freedom of being disconnected for a few moments.

Maybe you are enslaved to a routine. You must do things in a certain way, even if it is inefficient and wasteful. People around you may have pointed out a better way, but you cannot accept their advice. Take counsel from others, and learn how to do things differently, you may find that it is so much better.

Is it possible you are enslaved to only one way of thinking, specifically, YOUR way? Are other people's opinions only valid if they happen to agree with your line of thought? Break yourself free! Remember that you get a much better view of the world when you can see things from different perspectives! We can learn something from everyone, including our spouses, our students, and our children!

Are you enslaved to the clock? Yes, it is very important to be on time, not keep others waiting for you, and keep a schedule. But are there some moments in your day that you can "stop and smell the roses?" Or maybe allow yourself a few minutes of self-reflection or sincere prayer?

As you chew on your Matzah this Seder night, give yourself a few precious moments to think about what enslaves you. Commit, in some small way, to start the process of breaking free. And above all, take a good look around at the seder table, and remember to appreciate the friends, family, and children who surround it. This is what freedom is all about.



GOTTESMAN RTW ACADEMY  
Weekly D'var Torah



On behalf of my personal family, and the entire GRTWA family, I wish you a Chag Kasher VeSame'ach – A Healthy, Happy and Kosher Passover. May we see the ultimate redemption speedily in our days.

Rabbi Cohen