

The Fifth Question**By: Rabbi Yanki Tauber**

And it shall come to pass, when your child asks you in the future, "What is this?", you shall say to him: "With a mighty hand did G-d take us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage"

Mah nishtanah halailah hazeh... "Why is this night different from all other nights?" our children ask us at the Passover Seder. Because, we answer, we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and G-d set us free.

Free? Are you free?

Can a person with a mortgage be free? Can a person with a mother-in-law be free? Can a person with a job be free? Can a person without a job be free?

Freedom! Is there anything more desired yet more elusive? Is there a need more basic to our souls, yet so beyond our reach? How, indeed, do we achieve freedom from the demands, cares and burdens of daily living?

But look at your child. Observe her at play, immersed in a book, asleep and smiling at her dreams. Assured that father and mother will feed him, protect him and worry about all that needs worrying about, the child is free. Free to revel in her inner self, free to grow and develop, open to the joys and possibilities of life.

This is why Passover, the festival of freedom, is so much the festival of the child. For it is the child who evokes in us the realization that we, too, are children of G-d, and are thus inherently and eternally free. It is the child who opens our eyes to the ultimate significance of Passover: that in taking us out of Egypt to make us His chosen people, G-d has liberated us of all enslavement and subjugation for all time.

The child is the most important participant at the Passover Seder. The entire Seder is constructed around the goal to mystify the child, to stimulate his curiosity, to compel him to ask: Why is this night different from all other nights?

The child asks, and we answer. But there is another dialogue taking place -- a dialogue in which we ask, and the child explains.

Take a good look at your child this Passover. Pay her close attention -- enter her mind, view reality from her perspective. For how else might we taste freedom?

7 January | 3 Shevat

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Shabbat Begins: 3:54 pm

Shabbat Ends: 5:04 pm