

Journey into Pesach: a Meditation

This Year Is Different from Other Years Happy Pesach from the Wexner Foundation

"Chag Samayach" we say...when Nisan arrives.
The first month of all the months,
A new Year that we began marking
when we were slaves in Egypt.
We notice budding flowers *BREATH*
This season of celebrating liberation:
our liberation.

B'chol dor vador...
chayav adam lirot et atzmo k'ilu hu/k'ilu he yatzah m'miztrayim.
In every generation and place
we are challenged to personally experience
the night we escaped Egyptian bondage

in our generation
It is Day 193 of the war
hostages remain in Gaza
Israeli soldiers are not home for seder
This year's celebration **IS** different from all other years.

To be a Jew is this...
holding on to promise and pain,
to despair and hope.
let us gather at our tables,
And breathe in redemption
and sing והיא שעמדה
even as chairs remain empty

Let us be liberated
From hatred, ignorance
Indifference, insensitivity
Let hearts open
Let us learn and listen: Shma
embrace the love: ahavat olam
that lives at the center of our tradition

Even when it is suddenly resonant:
The truth of our ancestors
is our truth on this Pesach
Vehi sheamda lavoteynu vLANU
Shelo echad bilvad omed aleynu l'chaloteynu

Eleh, sheb'chol dor v'dor omDIM aleynu l'chaloteynu

CAPTION:

וְהִיא שְׁעֵמֶדָה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ

שְׁלֹא אֶחָד בְּלֶבֶד עָמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ

אֶלֶּא שְׁבִכָּל דּוֹר וְדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ

וְהַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם

It was not only one person who rose up against us to destroy us,

But rather in every generation there are those who rise up against us to destroy

us. And the kadosh Baruch hu saves us from their hands

we celebrate as commanded,
a link,
to our ancestors across history,
Some who faced adversity
Some who knew redemption

No matter where
And so we sing
V'Hakadoesh Barechu matzileynu m'yadam

We celebrate together
with those who are in darkness
longing for redemption

Achshav, this moment
when we are called on to remember
that **WE** were slaves in Egypt,
we sadly,
but willingly and connectedly,
approach this part of our story
with deeper understanding
Connecting,
We sit with our ancestors *min hameitzar*,

(BREATH)
and with our mishpacha around the world,
and with ourselves
and our Pharoahs
in narrow places,
maybe a bit longer this year,
before moving through the deep
to an opposite shore.

Imagine yourself carried on eagle's wings,
In a clear blue sky,

find yourself safely tucked beneath a holy wing
placed gently down
on a soft water's edge.
Feel yourself moving,

Moving,
Moving
from bondage to freedom,
(narrator breathes out)
Mi yagon l'simcha
m'afela,
l'or gadol

Breathe in the eternal wind
the ruach hakodesh
Experience sun on your face.
Hold your face.
Smell the sea.
We move forward one step at a time,
Each step an act of courage,
Summoning Nachshon ben Aminadav,
Who stepped into the sea,
The unknown,
The waters parted
(Deep breath)

A mixed multitude of leaders,
walking together to a new place
(BREATH)

from our doorways in America
and Canada
and Israel
a succession of Jewish leaders
across history.

We are not to rejoice
in the drowning
of Egyptians,
of those whom we fear,
Kol dichfin yeytey v'yeychol...
All those who are hungry,
Let them come eat.

Dayeinu
that would be enough this year.

To feel the slightest hint
Of redemption
until it is time to say
The morning shema

Blessing Breaths
of Life
of Love
of Festival
of Springtime
BREATH
rebirth
of this year
of next year
in a Jerusalem
of life.